

The Supervisor as Advisor

In the last chapter, we presented several communication skills supervisors can use to understand how a member/volunteer may be feeling about a challenging or troubling situation. The member's/volunteer's situation may relate to an individual performance problem, or it may have more to do with program issues. The active listening you practice will lead naturally to wanting to do something about the member's/volunteer's problem.

To help you do just that, we discuss three skills in this chapter:

- Problem solving,
- Coaching, and
- Helping members/volunteers build commitment.



By using these skills at the right times and appropriately, you will empower your members/volunteers to learn—rather than teaching them. When we talk about the supervisor as “advisor,” we do *not* mean “expert” or “advice-giver.” On the contrary, we mean counselor, facilitator, mentor, and coach.

Supervisor **S** TOOLK

(These tools begin on page **2** 27)

Problem Solving

Brainstorming

A step-by-step guide to using this technique with individuals or small groups—useful for generating possible solutions

Using Force Field Analysis for Problem Solving

An explanation and illustration of how to use this technique to analyze helping and hindering forces at play in a problem situation

Responses that Kill Creativity

Phrases that tend to stifle creativity during a problem-solving session

Common Errors in Problem Solving

Pitfalls to watch out for when problem solving

Coaching

The GROW Model for Improved Performance Through Coaching

A coaching model based on a four-phase questioning technique—useful for helping members/volunteers resolve individual or program-related issues through careful goal setting

Service Learning—How to Make it Happen

A discussion of what service learning is and how to do it with your members/volunteers



Helping Members/ Volunteers Build Commitment

Worksheet on Member/ Volunteer Motivation

Checklist for identifying and ranking primary reasons for serving as a National Service member/volunteer

Why Members/ Volunteers Do Not Do What They Are Supposed to Do

Information on how to address common

A Day in the Life ...

On Tuesday morning, Betty holds a meeting with three of her members who work in the Resource Mothers program. In this program, members work with low-income, single mothers to help them develop life and job skills that will promote stability and independence in them and their families. As Betty listens to the members report on their activities, she's impressed with how far the program (and members) have come in the short time the program has been running. It is obviously filling a need. There seems to be no shortage of things the members can do with the mothers. If anything, they seem overwhelmed by the variety and sometimes the severity of the mothers' problems. The last time Betty met with these three members, their overall mood was one of anticipation and enthusiasm. Now it appears the excitement is wearing off and giving way to frustration.

During the meeting, Betty praises the group for the many activities they've already planned and have begun implementing. She asks them to share some of the highlights and then explain any major issues or concerns they have. Betty notices that two of the members dominate most of the discussion while the third, Mike, hardly says anything at all. He looks preoccupied, so Betty decides not to ask him any probing questions in front of the others. At the end of the meeting, she discretely pulls Mike aside

and asks if anything in particular is bothering him and if she can be of any

assistance. Mike fumbles at first, then starts explaining a situation he has become involved in with Mrs. Smith, one of the mothers in his project cluster. Betty listens actively as Mike describes feelings of dismay and confusion. He explains that Mrs. Smith lost her job, one of her kids is beginning to misbehave seriously, and now it seems she might even lose her apartment. After Mike finishes, Betty lets him know that his concern for Mrs. Smith is admirable. Then she suggests to him that because Mrs. Smith's problems seem so complicated, perhaps they should have a meeting that focuses specifically on her. Although Mike appears a bit skeptical, he agrees to come to Betty's office the following afternoon.

Back at her office, after her discussion with Mike, Betty spends a few minutes writing down information and impressions from the meeting. She is concerned about Mike. Her assessment of his performance is that he reacts emotionally to clients' needs, so much so that he becomes "tied up" and can't seem to figure out where to begin taking action. Betty is glad he accepted the invitation to



work one-on-one with her and is looking forward to their meeting.

As she double-checks her date book to be sure she's penciled in her meeting with Mike, Betty hits the button to check her phone messages. She finds a message from Carol, another one of her members. Carol is nearing the end of her term of service as an AmeriCorps member. She joined when she graduated from high school. Now, with the post-service award and some careful saving, she has enough money for the first two years

of college, but she doesn't know where or how to get started with the selection and application process. She has called Betty to explain her dilemma and wants to come by for a meeting. Betty has been reading about a coaching model called GROW and thinks this might be a good opportunity to use it. She calls Carol to confirm an appointment for the next day. Later in this chapter, we'll learn more about Betty's follow-up meetings with Mike and Carol.

Problem Solving

Why You Do It

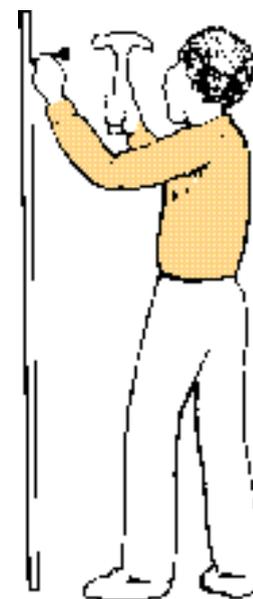
It is probably safe to say that you'll never run out of problems to solve in National Service (or in life)! Members/volunteers turn to their supervisors for help with social, family, health, transportation, and emotional problems. Some members/volunteers have only their stipend as a means of support and consequently look to their supervisors for help with basic needs. Still others run into trouble because of poorly developed life skills—maybe they can't manage their money, or they avoid fulfilling responsibilities, or they don't know appropriate professional protocol for their workplace. On the programmatic side, members/volunteers are often placed in difficult jobs with insufficient support (e.g., mentoring at-risk students at an understaffed school). By helping your members/volunteers accurately identify their problems and then determining viable solutions together, you will be fulfilling one of your most important supervisory functions.

How You Do It

Although there are a number of slightly different models for problem solving, the basic process involves

- identifying and describing the real problem or problems,
- identifying possible solutions,
- predicting consequences of and, testing out the possible solutions,
- selecting what seems to be the best solution(s),
- making and implementing an action plan, and
- evaluating the outcomes.

Supervisors with strong advisory skills create ways to make the process truly collaborative. That means you must resist the urge to take over and dictate solutions. Keep in mind that we all



have to experience, define, and resolve our own problems with a little help from our friends (or supervisors). There are at least six possible ways to help a member/volunteer solve his or her problems:

- Use your own reality (similar past experiences) to acknowledge and validate the member's/volunteer's experience;
- Ask clarifying questions for additional information about the problem;
- Ask goal-oriented questions and reinforce the member's/volunteer's goal statements;
- Clarify obstacles and resources and develop strategies and step-by-step plans that begin in the here-and-now and are likely to lead to the identified goal;
- Provide information about resources and strategies that might help the member/volunteer overcome obstacles and achieve his or her goal; and
- As necessary, refer the member/volunteer to professional resource people and services that may be more qualified to help than you are.

Throughout the problem-solving stage, try to remember these three guidelines:

1. Continue active listening to make sure you don't take over the conversation.
2. Avoid making judgments, especially about what goal the member/volunteer should adopt and what action steps he or she should take to reach it.
3. Avoid making decisions for the member/volunteer.

On the following page, we describe a collaborative problem-solving process in detail and show you how Betty and Mike work out a plan for helping Mrs. Smith, one of the women in Mike's Resource Mothers project.

Problem Solving with Members/Volunteers: A Collaborative Process

Validate Experience

After hearing the member/volunteer out, thank him or her for confiding in you. Then, if it's appropriate, briefly share a similar experience of yours. It's likely the member/volunteer has been feeling somewhat isolated or alone and has the idea that no one has experienced the problem he or she is experiencing. By expressing your empathy with the situation, you help the member/volunteer to feel less alone.

You cannot really know whether you completely understand or completely share the member's/volunteer's feelings. "I know how you feel," often gets a "No, you don't" reaction. You can say, for example, "I've been hurt before, and I sympathize with what you are going through." A statement about your experience, not the member's/volunteer's, helps to acknowledge and validate the member's/volunteer's experience and feelings.

Let's go back to Betty and Mike and see how well Betty is able to validate Mike's experience. She is still listening to Mike describe his feelings about Mrs. Smith's situation. If you recall, Mrs. Smith is one of the mothers in Mike's Resource Mothers program.

A Day in the Life



B: Mike, I remember once a couple of years ago when I felt pretty helpless to do anything for a woman and her kids who came into a shelter where I was working. I wanted to help but I didn't want to get in over my head.

M: Yeah, I guess I feel that way too. But this woman really needs somebody to help her get on a good track. She's got too many bad things happening at once. I really want to figure out how to do something for her.

standing of her problems.

B: *What* was Mrs. Smith's reaction?

M: Well, at first she seemed suspicious of me. She said I looked like someone who had never had to worry about where my next dime was coming from.

B: *How* did that make you feel?

M: A little hurt, but then after I talked to her a while longer, I realized she was worried I would just run out on her like other people had done in the past. I think I convinced her otherwise.

B: Can you share with me some of the things you told her?

M: I told her that part of my job was to do whatever I could to help her stay in the program and that I would learn a great deal about the community's needs and hers in particular if she'd let me try to help her. I think she trusts me because I've done some tutoring and other stuff with her grandson she takes care of.

B: Good for you, Mike! I'm sure she really values that. *What* do you think is her main problem?

M: Well, she lost her job at the day care school where she was teaching and soon

Clarify the Problem

Once a person's experience is heard and validated, he or she will usually feel comfortable sharing additional information about it. Then you can begin to clarify by asking questions, especially questions that begin with who, what, where, when, and how.

This type of question will help to clarify the problem (feelings, the meaning behind the feelings, etc.). Let's check back with Betty and Mike...

B: *Who* talked to you in the first place about Mrs. Smith?

M: Her son told me some things, and I confirmed it with one of the social workers at the Resource Center. After that, I told Mrs. Smith about my under-

she won't even have a place to stay. There's a whole eviction process going on to kick her out of her apartment. Maybe the job issue can wait a few weeks, but the eviction seems scary. I can't believe they really do that to people....

In many problem situations, a larger issue can be identified, and it needs to be clearly understood before it can be resolved. Perhaps it needs to be broken down into a number of smaller issues that can then be addressed individually. Another way to clarify is to discuss why and how the problem is related to other problems. The ultimate goal is to be able to restate the problem in simpler terms, and in manageable parts.

Clarify the Goal

You get to the goal by turning the problem inside out. Useful questions for doing this are:

- How do you want the situation (or yourself) to be different?
- If the problem were solved what would it look like? What would be going on?
- How would you know if the problem were solved?
- Where do you want to be in relation to where you are now?

Reinforce any statements the member/volunteer makes about what she or he wants as a goal by using active listening and encouragement. Explore with the member/volunteer the same *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *how* questions you used to explore the problem. The goal should be as specific as

possible. After Betty and Mike do some more exploring of the issues, Mike's goal might be

I want Mrs. Smith to be able to stay in her apartment this winter (instead of being evicted).

Identify Obstacles, Resources, Strategies

With a specific goal defined, ask questions and offer information about possible resources, obstacles to achieving the goal, and resources to overcome the obstacles. Obstacles can include people, agencies, laws, rules, infrastructure, ignorance, and money. Resources include the same things, but they substitute knowledge and information for ignorance. Sometimes it is useful to list the obstacles and resources next to each other in two columns. Such a list can help suggest possible strategies.

Look at Betty and Mike's analysis of Mrs. Smith's problem (on the next page). The list of resources provides ideas about short-term legal delays, short-term credit solutions, a long-term legal solution, and a long-term employment strategy. See if you can find them or perhaps discover other possible strategies. (For additional information on this problem-solving approach, see the tool on "Using Force Field Analysis for Problem Solving.")

Provide Information

At this point, the supervisor's knowledge and resources can be helpful. If you were Betty, you could tell Mike that you know people in

Mike's Analysis of Mrs. Smith's Eviction Problem

GOAL:

I want Mrs. Smith to be able to stay in her apartment this winter.

RESOURCES:

Her son gives her money for food.
 She has 20 days to pay her landlord.
 There is a 30-day appeal policy.
 She applied for a city teaching job.
 The law puts teeth into alimony compliance.
 Legal Assistance is close by.
 The local grocer extends her credit.
 There's a local fund for heat and light.
 She has \$1,500 left on her VISA.

OBSTACLES:

She has no job, and welfare has dropped her.
 The landlord gave her an eviction notice.
 The Housing Authority backs landlords.
 The city school budget was cut.
 Her ex-husband is an alimony fugitive.
 She knows nothing about legal rights.

the Housing Authority, Legal Assistance, the power company, the school system, or other useful organizations. You may know something about relevant laws, rules, and procedures. Or you may know someone who knows. Make your resources available by making phone calls and introductions. Help the member/volunteer decide which strategies to follow. Then break them down into tasks, responsibilities, and due dates.

In this case, Betty and Mike decide to talk with Mrs. Smith and recommend that she select a legal delay strategy along with a list of action steps. Mrs. Smith herself must be included in the problem-solving process at least by this point, if not earlier. She needs to have input into—and agree with—any strategies on how to prevent her apartment eviction. If Betty and Mike did not include her in the problem-solving process, they would run two risks—that she wouldn't be

committed to carrying out her part of the plan and/or that she might become dependent on Mike to solve the problem for her. It's also likely that Mrs. Smith will have some ideas and resources to contribute to the problem solution.

Now let's take a look at how Mike and Mrs. Smith might devise a strategy and some tasks aimed at helping Mrs. Smith stay in her apartment (see box on page 211).

Problem solving is an extension of active listening and helps the member/volunteer to adjust his or her focus. Rather than dwelling on the negative implications surrounding the issue at hand, the member/volunteer can step back, review alternatives, and seek a positive solution. The situation may involve legal, family, psychological, or medical issues that are beyond your problem-solving capability. If so, the outcome of the problem-solving

Mrs. Smith's Eviction Problem

STRATEGY

Invoke legal delay for rent payment

<u>TASKS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>WHO</u>
Get landlord's name, address, and phone number and a copy of the eviction letter	8/10	Mrs. Smith
Set up a meeting with Legal Assistance	8/10	Betty
Get a copy of the Housing Authority eviction policy	8/11	Mike
Meet with Legal Assistance (by deadline)	8/15	Mrs. Smith
Follow up on Legal Assistance action	8/18	Mike and Mrs. Smith
Offer the landlord a partial payment using food money	8/20	Mrs. Smith (accompanied by Betty)
Review the success of the strategy	8/25	All

process could be the member's/volunteer's decision to seek an appropriate professional resource (like Legal Assistance in the above example).

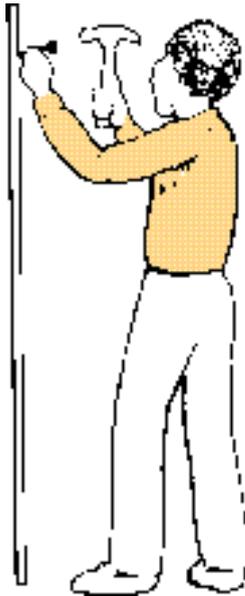
Make Referrals

Making appropriate referrals means communicating information to members/volunteers about the right professional resources, people, and services available to help, given their particular concerns.

A referral is appropriate when neither you nor the member/volunteer has sufficient knowledge, skills, or other resources to address the problem. You need to understand the nature of the problem to be able to refer a member/volunteer appropriately to

professional resources in substance abuse, counseling, crisis intervention, education, employment, housing, law, law enforcement, mediation, medicine, welfare, and child care.

Your agency, or one of your agency partners, may already have a referral system. If not, a local crisis intervention center or hotline may be able to help in getting the resources and referrals together. A visit to get to know your local crisis intervention center's resources bank can tell you a lot about resource people and social services in your community. Once a referral has been made, be sure to follow up with the member/volunteer and with the agency to which you referred the member/volunteer to ensure that the service has been provided and the member/volunteer is satisfied with the services.



Coaching

Why You Do It

National Service is about getting things done through strengthening communities and encouraging responsibility. An added benefit is expanding opportunity for its members/volunteers. The quality of what gets done depends on the performance of members/volunteers. Member/volunteer performance and quality of supervision are closely linked. Through coaching, you accomplish two equally significant objectives:

- You improve individual and program performance; and
- You develop member/volunteer capacity.

How You Do It

The term coaching is described in so many different ways by so many different people, we'll try to relate it as specifically as possible to the context in which you work.

Coaching means unlocking members'/volunteers' potential and helping them improve their problem-solving and planning skills. The goal is to help members/volunteers learn rather than teach them. Your role as a coach is to help members/volunteers define their personal and professional goals and provide them with the information, resources, knowledge, and skills they need. Your resources are your knowledge, skills, and ability and the world of other training, coaching, and teaching resources in the community.

The GROW Model—Ask, Don't Tell!

In his book, *Coaching for Performance*, John Whitmore presents a simple and straightforward coaching model called GROW. In this model, the overall context is one of increasing the member's/volunteer's awareness (of self and of surroundings) and sense of responsibility for learning. The supervisor facilitates this process by using questions to guide the member/volunteer in exploring

what needs to happen to improve performance. The elements of the GROW model are as follows:

GROW Model for Coaching

CONTEXT

You are striving to help members/volunteers attain awareness of self and surroundings and responsibility for learning and improving.

METHOD

The method consists of asking questions in the following sequence:

G - Goal-setting for the meeting, short-term and long-term;

R - Reality checking to explore the current situation;

O - Options and alternative strategies, or courses of action; and

W - What is to be done, when, by whom, and the will to do it.

The following is a sample list of the coaching questions you can start with to help your members/volunteers work on a variety of issues or problems. Use the list as a guide first, then modify and expand it to suit your own needs and style.

GROW Model Coaching Questions

GOAL

- What is the goal of this meeting (or conversation or discussion)?
- What do you want to achieve (short-term and long-term)?
- By when do you want to achieve it?
- How is your goal positive, challenging, attainable, and measurable?

REALITY

- What (when, where, how much) is happening now?
- Who is involved?

“Life is the sum of all your choices.”

Albert Camus

REALITY (*Continued*)

- What have you done about this so far?
- What results did that produce?
- What is happening both internally and externally?
- What are major constraints to finding a way forward?

OPTIONS

- What options do you have?
- What else could you do?
- What if...?
- Would you like another suggestion?
- What are the benefits and costs of the alternatives?

WILL

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Will this meet your goal?
- What obstacles could you face?
- How will you overcome them?
- Who needs to know?
- How will you get that support?
- Rate yourself on a 1-to-10 scale as to the likelihood of your carrying out this action.

As you can see from the list, most of the questions begin with words that quantify —what, when, who, how much, and how many. These are the most effective question starters for helping members/volunteers explore issues around awareness and sense of responsibility because these questions ask for more specific, factual answers. On the other hand, asking why often implies blame and may provoke defensiveness on the part of the member/volunteer. Why questions don't always bring that response, but exercise caution if you do use them.

The GROW model may be applied to both one-on-one coaching sessions and group development. Given some orientation and guidance, members/volunteers themselves can use the GROW

approach for peer coaching. (Be sure to study the detailed description of the GROW model in your Coaching Tool Kit before trying it out for real.)

Remember Betty's coaching meeting with Carol?
Here's how she uses the GROW model to help
Carol set future goals and start a plan of action....

Betty and Carol Chart Some



- B:** Hi Carol, have a seat! I got your message about your educational award—about figuring out how to use it and sort of charting a course for what you want to do after your service is up. I'm glad you called. I'm happy to help you work things through. To get ourselves off to a good start, though, what are some specific outcomes you'd like to see from our meeting?
- C:** Well, I don't know about specific outcomes. I guess I'm just generally trying to get a handle on what I'll be doing after my AmeriCorps stint is over. We have to fill out this form by next week—the form that tells AmeriCorps where to send our educational award—and I don't have a clue! There are so many options! Deciding on a college. Figuring out what I want to study. There's so much to think about. I'm having a hard time taking a first step.
- B:** That's certainly understandable. But actually, it sounds like you have thought about some specifics. I heard two basic questions you're considering. First, you're concerned about what you want to study. The next question seems to be where? Anything else on your mind specifically?
- C:** I guess those are the two major things. Now that you put them in two boxes like that, it seems more manageable. I
- was just feeling so overwhelmed.
- B:** I'm glad you're feeling a bit more focused. Let's take the questions one at a time. Thinking long-term, what do you hope to get out of going to college? Is it part of a career plan you're starting to form?
- C:** Well, I've always thought I was good with people. Working at the Family Resource Center this past year has helped me to see this as a strength I have. And I loved working with the parents and kids resolving their problems—with housing and child care and other basic life skills stuff. I think I'm good at building relationships with people where they trust me to help them. I want to be in a career where I can use these skills.
- B:** I think you're right on target. I've noticed how the people at Family Resource have responded to you. I would have to agree with your assessment of your own skills! [Smiling] What specific careers do you think might require these skills?
- C:** Well, I've done a little exploring. I walked down to Greenburg College a few weeks ago—it's only a few blocks from where I live and I was just taking a

walk around the lake—and I decided to check out the admissions office. I picked up some information about applying, and the woman at the desk sent me down to the career counseling library. I got some brochures about human services careers, and I found this book about what it takes to break into the field, the degree you need, the kind of experience, things like that.

B: Incredible! You've been "on the job" with this, Carol. So what did you find out?

C: I found out that if I want to really establish a career in human services, maybe run a program like the Family Resource Center some day, I'm going to have to get that four-year degree and do an internship somewhere. You know, as I say that—the part about running a program—I think that's really what I've had in the back of my mind for a long time.

B: It sounds like you've answered your first question, Carol! And it sounds like you've got a good idea of what it will take in terms of time and commitment to make this happen. Have you done this kind of thinking yet about where you might want to study? You mentioned Greenburg College. Do you think you might want to stay in town for school?

C: There are definite advantages to staying in town, I guess. In-state tuition, free room and board where I'm staying. I know the town, the ins and outs. And adjusting to a new situation wouldn't be as much of a big deal.

B: What about advantages to going out of state?

C: It would be more of an adventure, I guess. But I think I'd rather start my course work here and transfer later on. Just to get my footing.

B: So Greenburg is one college you've checked out. Any place else you're thinking about?

C: While I was at the library, I looked at another book that described all the colleges in the state. Most of them seemed to have pretty good human services programs. But Greenburg definitely has the best variety of courses. You know, I just thought of something. If I go to Greenburg, I could continue to volunteer at Family Resource. Maybe do my internship there.

B: That would work out nicely. So, you're thinking about a four-year human services degree that would lead to a career as a social services administrator, and you'd like to stay in touch with the Family Resource Center for a possible internship later on. You've done some checking on a few colleges and found one that offers the classes you're interested in. That sounds like a plan to me! And it sounds like you know exactly where you want that educational award to go. What are the next steps for getting enrolled at Greenburg?

C: Well, first I have to pick up the application and fill it out. I think they make you write a statement of purpose. Then I send them a \$25 check and cross my fingers.

B: How about setting a date with yourself to do those things? Pick a day to go get the application, then pick a date for finishing it.

- C: Monday. I'll go Monday. And I think I can finish it up in a week. The director at Family Resource went to Greenburg. Maybe I'll talk to her about my statement of purpose.
- B: The director at Family Resource went to Greenburg? That's perfect! She'll be an excellent resource for you in filling out your application.
- C: Yeah. You know, it's really amazing. Before I came in, none of this seemed to fit together. But now that I've talked it through and come up with some specific ideas, it all makes so much sense.
- B: Feels good, huh? [Betty and Carol smile and lean back in their chairs. Mission accomplished. Then Betty speaks.] Not to bring you down or anything, Carol. But let's just say something comes up that delays the application process. Can you think of anything right now that could possibly throw you off track?
- C: The only thing that could stop me from getting completed,
- director at Family Resource can't work with me. Maybe she's out next week, or doesn't have time or something.
- B: How would you work around this, or how could you prevent it?
- C: I guess I could call her to see if she can help me. And if she can't, maybe the two of us could set up a time to talk? [Carol points at the phone on Betty's desk and raises her eyebrows.]
- B: Sounds good to me. You want to call her right now? Sure, use my phone. And if she doesn't have time next week, why don't we meet at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday? [Carol nods agreement. As she dials the number for the Family Resource Center, Betty waits. Carol puts her hand over the receiver and tells Betty she's on hold. Betty continues.] If the director can meet with you, will you call me after the meeting and set up a time for us to talk anyway? I'll be curious to see how your plan is coming together. I'm really psyched for you, Carol!



Opportunities for Coaching Members/Volunteers

Sometimes members/volunteers will directly solicit your coaching help (as Carol did with Betty in the sample dialog on the previous page). More often than not, though, you will have to seek opportunities to guide members/volunteers in their personal and professional development. Here are a number of suggestions for when and how you can coach your members/volunteers during their service year. This is only a starter list so feel free to add your own ideas.

Coaching Through Orientation

The orientation is the first experience most members/volunteers have to learn about National Service.

- Use the initial orientation meeting to establish the expectation that service learning is part of the job.
- Ask the member/volunteer to think about learning objectives as he or she moves through the orientation.
- Start work on a service learning plan at the end of the orientation.
- Conduct a background review with the member/volunteer to help you identify areas in which he or she may be able to teach, coach, or train another member/volunteer.
- Treat any of the four National Service priority areas that are components of your program, education, environment, public safety, and human needs, as subjects for research in the context of the community you are serving. Encourage research, exploration, debate, and program applications among the members/volunteers.

Coaching Through Performance Assessment

Members/volunteers need specific information about how they are performing. The performance assessment should focus on both positive and negative behaviors.

- Use performance assessment any time you provide feedback to identify training and learning opportunities.
- Active listening and problem solving on members'/volunteers' personal issues may lead to training and learning opportunities. If a personal issue seems to have no clear solution, ask the member/volunteer to research it and report back on any training opportunities, informal groups, or other resources that are focused on the issue.
- At about the halfway mark of members'/volunteers' terms of service, conduct a midpoint review of their performance to evaluate backward and plan forward. Treat it as a problem-solving exercise: Define the present state (where you are) and the desired future state (where you want to be). Help members/volunteers define obstacles, resources, strategies, and tasks for moving toward an improved future. The plan may include training, reading, contacts, interviews, conferences, tutoring, etc.

Coaching By Accessing Community Resources and CNCS

- Identify and access resources in your parent organization, the immediate community, the city and county, and state commission program and training offices.
- Find out what the National Service Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) resources are and how to access them.
- Talk to the Human Resources people in your agency and in your partnership agencies.
- Identify service clubs, associations, and informal groups in your areas of interest and get on their mailing list for training opportunities.
- Start an Open University in which anyone can present a topic, workshop, or invite an outside speaker.

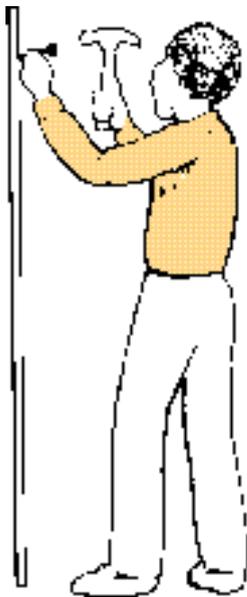
- Create a training bulletin board (physical or electronic), and lobby to get as many supervisors and members as possible to contribute information on training resources.
- Use this Resource Guide as a tool for study, discussion, role playing, and skill practice.

Coaching Through Sharing and Reflecting on Learning

In your role as a National Service supervisor, you can seize opportunities to incorporate service learning into members'/volunteers' lives. You can turn coaching sessions into learning plans, issues into research projects, and conflict into intellectual development. Service learning may become a part of the organizational culture and a lifetime “habit of the heart.”

- Establish plans for member/volunteer development, including learning objectives.
- Structure meetings to review learning plans and share information on resources and achievements.
- Organize group discussions on topics relevant to member/volunteer project concerns, such as “environment vs. community development,” or “the daily routine and the ‘big picture’—where do they meet?”
- Incorporate learning objectives into performance assessment sessions.
- Use members/volunteers and other supervisors as trainers, tutors, and coaches.

(See your tool kit for more information on service learning.)



Helping Members/Volunteers Build Commitment

Why You Do It

People who are high performers usually have high commitment to their work. As a National Service supervisor, it is critical that you understand what your members/volunteers want to get out of their assignments and what motivates them to do their job well. Different people will be motivated by different things, depending upon what they value. What might be a risk to one person may be rewarding to another. For example, some members/volunteers may be excited by an assignment that requires a high degree of creativity and flexibility in scheduling; others may find the same work too unpredictable and stressful. Once you begin learning about your members'/volunteers' internal incentives (what they want for themselves, not what you want for them), you can help them find ways to achieve their personal rewards through helping the program accomplish its goals.

How You Do It

Theories on “worker motivation” abound. If you haven’t studied this subject much, you may want to check out some of the books in the Suggested Reading List or in your local library. For our purposes, we find it useful to approach the term “motivation” in the following manner: You cannot motivate your members/volunteers; motivating is something we can only do to ourselves, not to other people. What you can do is help your members/volunteers develop and sustain their own motivation.

Members/volunteers are likely to develop their commitment to program goals when:

- They are *clear* about their mission, values, and goals and can see them in action.

Supervisors must not only provide information about the mission, values, and goals of National Service and their particular program, they must also model these ideals. In their daily interactions with members/volunteers, agency partners, and the community, supervisors must “walk the talk” to be convincing. Members/volunteers observe the actions of their supervisor and use what they see as a reference or guide for what behaviors are acceptable. Members/volunteers often imitate supervisors who “lead by example.”

- They feel *appreciated* for their contributions.

Members/volunteers usually value a direct supervisor’s approval more than that of any other person on the job. Let them know that their diligence, contributions, service, and positive attitudes really matter to you.

- They are *competent and confident*.

Performance assessment, praise, and constructive feedback help identify problems early and build competence and confidence. Over time, members/volunteers begin to feel more and more empowered. If the job requirements are beyond the members’/volunteers’ present skills, arrange for the needed training.

- They have *influence* over developing their roles in the program.

Influence creates ownership and ownership builds commitment. Let members/volunteers participate actively in the planning processes that determine their roles and responsibilities. They will have creative ideas for how to get the work done and begin to feel that the project is theirs.

- Their *personal goals* are met.

Get to know your members/volunteers as individuals and try to understand what motivates each one (e.g., self esteem, team affiliation, social interaction, technical expertise, professional recognition). As a start, you might ask your members/volunteers to fill out the “Worksheet on What Motivates Members/Volunteers” included in the tool kit at the end of this chapter. Once you know what they hope to get out of their service, then assign them work that they

I know why there are so many people who love chopping wood. In this activity, one immediately sees the results.

Albert Einstein

“A vision without a task is a dream; A task without a vision is drudgery; A vision and a task is the hope of the world.”

Anonymous

regard as valuable and that will help them achieve their personal goals.

At times, trying to satisfy individual member/volunteer motivations within the larger context of addressing the mission and goals may seem overwhelming. National Service is very demanding of your members/volunteers and of you. After a few months of service, when members/volunteers have adjusted to the changes service has brought into their lives, enthusiasm may lag. What was new may become routine. One way to help members/volunteers sustain their energy level and commitment is to build a supportive, high-energy organizational culture.

Culture Building

Social science researchers do not agree on what organizational culture is, but they do agree on some basic characteristics:

- Culture is shared by a group.
- Culture is both invisible (beliefs, attitudes, ideas, values), and visibly expressed (dress codes, office furniture, stories, celebrations, communication patterns).
- Culture both influences the behavior of group members and is influenced by their behavior.
- A culture that “works well” encourages the people who are a part of it to both work for their own satisfaction and toward the achievement of the group’s objectives.

These basic characteristics suggest some ideas for using culture as a tool for supporting member/volunteer energy, enthusiasm, and commitment. Here is a list we hope you’ll use and expand throughout your project year:

Ideas for Culture Building

Create shared experiences and symbols of shared values

- Distribute information on National Service accomplishments.
- Promote service learning as a shared activity.
- Sponsor joint activities with other nearby National Service programs.

- Arrange for time and space that belong to the members/volunteers.
- Encourage their use for sharing information and experiences.
- Create celebrations of accomplishments.
- Develop a newsletter and calendar of events.
- Display, in highly visible areas, photographs of group activities. Be sure that each member/volunteer is in at least one of the photographs.

Model values that National Service stands for

- Develop yourself as a supervisor/leader.
- Develop members/volunteers in their roles.
- Practice community involvement to solve problems at the local level.
- Encourage people of diverse backgrounds to work together toward common goals.

Create cultural stories and myths

- Identify National Service heroes, both individuals and groups, and talk about their accomplishments.
- Tell stories related to the origin of National Service and the origin of your programs.
- Have members/volunteers create metaphors to express the vision and goals of their programs. Metaphors are picture words that make abstract ideas easier to understand.
- Use the local newspapers to make program accomplishments public.
- Bring in outside people to tell success stories and pat members/volunteers on the back.

Match individual member/volunteer visions and goals with service visions and goals

- Use any one-on-one discussion including performance assessments as opportunities to explore member/volunteer visions and goals.
- Look for opportunities to match members with challenges that fit their goals.

Brainstorming



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Brainstorming is a simple technique for quickly generating a long list of creative ideas. Here's how it works:

1. State the problem you're working on as a question.
2. Tell everyone you are going to brainstorm ideas. This means your group will generate as many ideas as possible in a set period of time (say, five minutes).
3. Tell the group it's all right to "piggyback" on an idea (suggest a new idea that adds to one already given). However, no one is allowed to evaluate or comment on any idea until the brainstorming session is over.
4. Set a time limit. Restate the question. And start. Have a recorder write every idea on newsprint so that everyone can see the growing list. Your role as a neutral group leader is to encourage the group, prod them to give more ideas, and remind them of the time limit. Encourage everyone to participate. If people begin evaluating ideas before time is up, remind everyone of the non-evaluation rule.
5. When time is up, call "stop." Now you can begin evaluating your ideas—eliminating, combining, adding—and developing a winning solution or definition for the problem you're solving.

If your group has trouble generating ideas, have each member/volunteer first write down a few ideas, then start brainstorming. If some members/volunteers are very shy or dominant, begin by going around the group and asking each person to share his or her idea one at a time. Success depends on not evaluating ideas during the brainstorming sessions. Every idea is acceptable, regardless of how strange it may seem at first. Remember, the goal of brainstorming is to generate as many ideas as possible, not to discuss those ideas.

Using Force-Field Analysis for Problem



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In every problem there are forces working to make the problem worse or to make it better. Force-field analysis, a technique developed by Kurt Lewin, helps you isolate those forces so you can create strategies to increase the positive forces and decrease the negative ones. It allows you to break up a problem and tackle it one piece at a time, which leads to more concrete and comprehensive solutions.

Using newsprint to record ideas, ask the group to brainstorm a list of “negative forces,” those working to make the problem worse or contribute to its existence. Then do the same with the “positive forces,” those that would contribute to resolving the problem or keep it from getting worse.

Force-field analysis is one of the most powerful problem-solving techniques available. It will help you quickly generate creative, high-quality strategies for solving problems in your organization. Once you have developed a number of strategies, you can decide which strategies to implement and then plan how to implement them.

An Example of Force-Field Analysis

Scenario

On National Service Day, your program was to complete a community cleanup. The results were disappointing. Not as many people as expected showed up to participate. Instructions on how the big trash bags were to be handled did not get distributed to the people involved, which caused pickup problems. Animals got into the trash bags that weren't picked up. There was no media coverage. As a result, the city doesn't want to fund next year's community cleanup.

By using force-field analysis, you and your members/volunteers identify several positive and negative forces occurring in this situation. A sample is shown on 2 29.

Once you have a solid list, you and your members/volunteers begin looking for ways to strengthen the positive forces and reduce the negative ones. For example, to strengthen the positive forces you might put the new member/volunteer with prior experience in charge of a checklist of tasks that must be done to make sure the event is successful. Or you might decide to build more interest in the community around such themes as beautification. Your community cleanup day

Using Force-Field Analysis for Problem Solving

CONTINUED 2 OF 3

Problem Analysis

The city does not have confidence in our ability to conduct a successful community cleanup on National Service Day.

POSITIVE FORCES

Strong local government support

Complaints about trash all over town

Top priority from members/volunteers

New member/volunteer with successful prior experience with cleanup days

Project commitment to conduct cleanup

Research showing cleanup discourages rodents

School in the area looking for community activity for its students

NEGATIVE FORCES

No money available from local government

Bad history due to last year's problems (lack of planning, no media attention, lack of organization, and coordination)

Apathetic general community

Lack of media interest last year

Activity not exciting to potential corporate sponsors

Concern over possible low turnout based on last year's experience

can be one part of an overall plan to improve last year's experience by addressing all the issues that were not addressed properly last time. To reduce the negative forces, consider approaches such as these: Be able to show the Parks and Recreation Department your briefing materials on what to do with bagged trash and your arrangements for its prompt pick-up; develop a cordial and ongoing

relationship with several people in the television and newspaper media; match them with supportive county leaders interested in media techniques.

[Force-field example borrowed from: *Starting Strong: A Self Help Guide to Effective AmeriCorps Pre-Service Training*, MOSAICA, 1995.]

Using Force-Field Analysis for Problem Solving

CONTINUED 3 OF 3

Positive/Negative Forces Analysis

Problem: _____

Strategies for Increasing These Forces	Positive Forces	Negative Forces	Strategies for Diminishing Forces

Responses That Kill Creativity



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Nothing can kill the creative flow of ideas faster than a manager's ill-chosen words. If it seems your employees are not generating as many good ideas as they once did, you might check the response of your managers. The following phrases are guaranteed to kill any degree of creativity.

1. Don't be ridiculous.
2. We tried that before.
3. It costs too much.
4. It can't be done.
5. That's beyond your responsibility.
6. It's too radical a change.
7. We don't have time.
8. That will make our equipment obsolete.
9. That's not our problem.
10. We've never done it that way before.
11. Let's get back to reality.
12. Why change it? It's still working.
13. You're two years ahead of your time.
14. It isn't in the budget.
15. Can't teach an old dog new tricks.
16. We're not ready.
17. Too hard to sell.
18. Top management would never go for it.
19. Let's shelve it for now.
20. We did fine without it.
21. Will you guarantee it will work?
22. What we have is good enough.
23. It's against policy.
24. Don't rock the boat.
25. Has anyone ever tried it?

If you have heard or said any of these phrases, chances are you have found an obstacle to creative thinking in your organization.

Common Errors in Problem Solving



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1. The problem is not clearly defined or the group does not have enough information to understand the problem.
2. The problem is stated too narrowly. Only a symptom is dealt with—not the real problem.
3. Tentative solutions are chosen too early in the process (before the problem is understood).
4. The range of information gathered is too narrow.
5. Some major constraints to solving the problem are ignored.
6. Traditional solutions are preferred despite lack of effectiveness.
7. Priorities among problems are not established. A plan for carrying out the solution, specifying who will do what when, is not developed or is not well thought out.
8. Resources needed to carry out a solution are not clearly specified and obtained early enough in the process.
9. The cost of a solution is not weighed against potential benefits.
10. Feedback and evaluation procedures are not built into the solution, so there is no mechanism to monitor progress and determine effectiveness.



Coaching for Improved Performance

The GROW model is based on using a series of questions to help a member/volunteer make appropriate decisions about what course of action to take to improve performance or develop skills. As the “coach,” you are helping to unlock the member’s/volunteer’s potential. The overall goal or context of this process is to coach the member/volunteer to higher levels of awareness and responsibility. Awareness means two things in this context: First, it is knowing what is happening around you, and second, it is self-awareness or knowing what you are experiencing. Responsibility is being accountable for learning and growing. Together, awareness and responsibility are crucial to the member’s/volunteer’s performance in any activity.

The components of the GROW model are as follows:

Context: Awareness of self and surroundings, and responsibility for learning and improving (you are striving to help the member/volunteer attain these two qualities)

Method: Asking questions in the following sequence:

G - *Goal* setting for the meeting, short-term and long-term;

R - *Reality* checking to explore the current situation;

O - *Options* and alternative strategies, or courses of action;

W - What is to be done, when, by whom and the *will* to do it.

Goal Setting

Whether the supervisor or the member/volunteer has initiated the coaching discussion or session, it is the member/volunteer who needs to determine what goal he or she wants to work toward. The supervisor asks broad questions that help the member/volunteer to consider where he or she is going and to state it in goal language. The goal should be SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-phased.

Reality

Once the goal (or goals) is defined, the current reality in which the member/volunteer lives and works needs to be examined. What is happening right now that relates to the goal? During this phase, it is important to maintain objectivity and detachment. The questions

The Grow Model: Coaching for Improved Performance

CONTINUED 2 OF 3

here should use descriptive rather evaluative terminology. The coach follows the member's/volunteer's lead, allowing a free flow of information exchange and intervening only when the member/volunteer veers off course and begins talking about a totally unrelated subject.

Options

The purpose of the options phase is not to find the “right” answer, but to create a list of courses of action. The quantity of options is more important here than the quality. The coach's main task during the options phase is to create and maintain an open and safe environment in which the member/volunteer will feel comfortable. Both coach and member/volunteer need to guard against snuffing creativity by making negative assumptions (e.g., “it can't be done” or “they'd never agree to that”). If you and the member/volunteer fall into that trap, counterbalance it by playing the what if game (what if you had someone teaming with you on the project?, and so forth). Once a comprehensive list of options has been generated, it may be a simple matter of picking the best one. However, if the issue is complex, you may need to guide the member/volunteer in examining the costs and benefits of the options that seem most sound. At this point it is “okay” for you to offer a couple of suggestions based on your own experience and expertise, but these should not be considered any more or less valid than options offered by the member/volunteer.

Will

In the final phase of the coaching session, the coach facilitates turning the discussion into a decision. This phase also includes developing an action plan to meet the goal set out in the beginning phase. By asking the question “What are you going to do?” (not what could you do, or what do you prefer to do), you help the member/volunteer make a firm decision. For most coaching issues, the final action plan will incorporate parts of two or more alternatives. Once the decision is made, the coach continues with several more questions that facilitate identifying specific activities and realistic timelines. As you move through the action planning, you and the member/volunteer should review the original goal to make sure you aren't veering off course.

The list below is a “starter set” of coaching questions. As you begin coaching with members, use the list as a guide first, and then modify and expand it to suit your own needs and style.

GROW Model Coaching Questions

Goal

What is the goal of this meeting (or conversation or discussion)?

The Grow Model: Coaching for Improved Performance

CONTINUED 3 OF 3

What do you want to achieve (short-term and long-term)?

By when do you want to achieve it?

How is your goal positive, challenging, attainable, and measurable?

Reality

What (when, where, how much) is happening now?

Who is involved?

What have you done about this so far?

What results did that produce?

What is happening both internally and externally?

What are major constraints to finding a way forward?

Options

What options do you have?

What else could you do?

What if...?

Would you like another suggestion?

What are the benefits and costs of the alternatives?

Will

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Will this meet your goal?

What obstacles could you face?

How will you overcome them?

Who needs to know?

How will you get that support?

Rate yourself on a 1-to-10 scale on what is the likelihood of your carrying out this action?

As you can see from the list, most of the questions begin with words that quantify—*what, when, who, how much, and how many*. “W” words are the most effective question starters for helping members/volunteers explore issues of awareness and responsibility because these questions ask for more specific, factual answers. Asking why on the other hand, often implies blame and may provoke defensiveness on the part of the member/volunteer. Why questions don’t always bring that response, but exercise caution if you do use them.

The GROW model may be applied to both one-on-one coaching sessions and group development. Given some orientation and guidance, members/volunteers themselves can use the GROW approach for peer coaching.

[Adapted from: *Coaching for Performance*, by John Whitmore. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company, 1994.]

Service Learning



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How You Make It Happen

What is it?

Service learning is a method by which members/volunteers can learn and develop through active participation in experiences that are thoughtfully organized and that

- meet actual community needs;
- are coordinated with the project site sponsors;
- are integrated into the daily program schedule;
- provide structured time for a member/volunteer to think, talk, write about, and understand the significance of what he or she did and saw in the actual service activity;
- provide members/volunteers with the opportunity to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities and others; and
- help to foster a sense of caring for others.

Characteristics of Quality Service Learning

1. Effective service-learning efforts strengthen service and community learning.
2. Model service learning provides members/volunteers with the opportunity to learn new skills and to think critically.
3. Preparation and reflection are essential efforts in service learning.
4. Members'/volunteers' efforts are recognized by their peers and the community they serve.
5. Members/volunteers are involved in planning.
6. The service performed by members/volunteers makes a meaningful contribution to the community.
7. Service learning connects the program and the community in new and positive ways.
8. Service learning is understood and supported as an integral element in the life of the program and the community.
9. Skilled staff guidance and supervision is essential to the success of service learning.
10. Staff development that includes the philosophy and methodology of service learning is the best way of ensuring that program quality and continuity are maintained.

Core Elements of Service Learning Activities

Preparation

Simply put, preparation is getting to know the community—and the issues you're working on—before you go out to perform the service. For example,

- Discuss member/volunteer responsibilities and how to perform the service work.
- Get information on the individuals to be served.
- Get information about the social and contextual issues related to the service.
- Get information about the service site (the purpose, functions, etc., of the agency or school...).
- Conduct some problem solving about difficult situations that may arise.
- Do some group building among participants.

Meaningful Service

Meaningful service means serving real needs through the service you perform. Here are questions to help you check your project's appropriateness:

- Are projects designed around real community needs?

- Are the members/volunteers and the project sponsor involved in defining and designing the service project?
- Are the project sponsors committed to the program goals and willing to work in partnership to achieve them?
- Is the service work engaging, challenging, and meaningful for the members/volunteers?

Structured Reflection

Structured reflection is time for members/volunteers to think and talk about the service experience. Members/volunteers basically answer the question, What did I learn about myself and the community? Structured reflection is

- A reality check to guard against reinforcing inaccurate perceptions of the population being served.
- Problem solving—specific situations, issues, etc.
- Ongoing education on general issues relating to service.
- Clarifying values as members/volunteers confront new situations.
- Integrating service-related learning with the rest of one's life.
- Community building among the participants.

Service Learning

CONTINUED 3 OF 3

The following are some suggested reflection questions:

1. What was special about this experience?
2. Will what you learned from this activity help you offer a higher quality of service in future projects?
3. Was the service project meaningful to the community? How?
4. If you faced the same situation again, would you do anything differently?
5. What was an impressive example of leadership you observed today?
6. Why was this example of leadership so impressive?
7. How did you personally exhibit leadership today?
8. How are you doing in meeting the leadership and service goals you have set for yourself?
9. What can you do tomorrow to further the goals you have set for yourself?

[From: *Team Building and Leadership Session Workbook*, United Way/AmeriCorps Workshop, April 30–May 2, 1995.]

Worksheet on Member/Volunteer



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This worksheet lists some factors that many people consider to be important in their work, volunteer activity, or service assignment.

- Working individually, please rank these factors in terms of the relative importance to YOU in your assignment. Put your ranking in the first column, and use the following scale:

1 = The ONE most important factor

2 = Very important

3 = Moderately important

4 = A little important

5 = Not at all important

- Now share your rankings with the team and come to a consensus about the five most important factors for your team in order of importance.

	<i>Importance to YOU personally</i>	<i>Importance to the team</i>
1. Recognition for my efforts	_____	_____
2. Physical working conditions	_____	_____
3. Community or public visibility	_____	_____
4. Having a good supervisor	_____	_____
5. Making contacts	_____	_____
6. Friendly, helpful people	_____	_____
7. The assignment itself	_____	_____
8. Participating in planning and decision making	_____	_____
9. Helping to meet a real need in the country or community	_____	_____

Worksheet on Member/Volunteer Motivation

CONTINUED 2 OF 2

	<i>Importance to YOU personally</i>	<i>Importance to the team</i>
10. Opportunity for increased responsibility	_____	_____
11. A feeling of personal accomplishment	_____	_____
12. Developing new skills	_____	_____
13. Freedom in doing my work	_____	_____
14. Agreement with host program and mission	_____	_____
15. Meeting new challenges	_____	_____
16. Educational stipend	_____	_____
17. Desire for new experiences	_____	_____
18. Opportunity to develop marketable skills	_____	_____
19. Other	_____	_____

[Concept of motivating factors is adapted from: *The 1979 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*, University Associates, San Diego, pp. 71–76.]

[Different list of factors and method of prioritization developed for volunteers and staff of nonprofits and then further revised for AmeriCorps members by Emily Gantz McKay of MOSAICA.]

Why Members/Volunteers Do Not Do What They Are Supposed To Do



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Most reasons for members'/volunteers' poor performance are controlled by the supervisor. There are specific, effective strategies supervisors can use to influence performance and to circumvent almost all of the reasons people have for not doing what they are supposed to do at work. The following list describes some common reasons why members do not do what they are supposed to do—and what to do about it:

1.

They do not know why they should do it. Members/volunteers don't understand the reasons for or the importance of doing the task. People are often required to do things a certain way that is clear to supervisors but not as clear to the members/volunteers.

Give them the big picture, and make it personal. Members/volunteers should know the benefit to the organization of doing a task right as well as the harm caused by doing it wrong.

2.

They do not know how to do it. Telling is not teaching. Supervisors often want to minimize training time to get members/volunteers working quickly. Supervisors may be hired or promoted because they know how to do something well, but that does not necessarily mean they know how to teach it to someone else.

Provide training, practice, and testing. Give members/volunteers practice in simulations of the actual work they will do; test them so you will know if learning has occurred.

3.

They think their way is better. Members/volunteers resist directions not because they think they are wrong but because they think their way is better; they are being innovative. Most supervisors like members/volunteers to think for themselves and to be innovative—when it works. When it fails, supervisors tend to say, “Why can't they just follow instructions?” The problem may be that members/volunteers are misinformed about the success of their method.

Seek members'/volunteers' opinions. Explain in detail the cause-and-effect relationship between the intended action and the expected result. Then compare the performance outcomes of “your way” and “their way.”

4.

They think something else is more important. Members/volunteers don't know the priority of the many tasks and projects assigned to them. They're working on what they think is important rather than on what the supervisor thinks is important.

Why Members/Volunteers Do Not Do What They Are Supposed To Do

CONTINUED 2 OF 4

Label work according to the priority you assign. Describe the formula you use to differentiate between the most important work and the less important work. Give members/volunteers the same formula to use when the work they do comes from other sources. When work priorities change, let them be the first to know. Don't label everything top priority.

5.

There is no positive consequence to them for doing it. People keep doing things for which they are rewarded and don't do things for which they are not rewarded. Rewards may be external—i.e., delivered by someone else—and may be tangible (a certificate of excellence) or intangible (a smile). They can also be internal—i.e., delivered to the performing member/volunteer by herself or himself. All internal rewards are intangible (e.g., a sense of self-worth, satisfaction). External rewards come from only four sources: the work itself, the community, fellow members, and you.

Deliver rewards (tangible and intangible) for the performance you expect. The only rewards you control absolutely are your specific, verbal compliments about performance. Deliver compliments frequently and immediately following effective performance, citing specifically what has been done right.

6.

They think they are doing it. Members/volunteers don't know they're failing. They are getting inadequate feedback about the quality of their work. If they think they are doing the job; there is no reason to change.

Provide timely feedback, both negative and positive. The timing of feedback is crucial. Many organizations provide feedback only a few times a year during formal performance reviews. To improve performance, feedback, whether it is negative, positive, or neutral, should be immediate. As a supervisor, you should give verbal, positive, specific feedback regularly. When you give a member/volunteer feedback about poor performance, talk about the performance, not the person.

7.

They are rewarded for not doing it. Performance that is rewarded will increase in frequency. This holds true whether or not the behavior is desirable. Supervisors may intervene in ways that encourage members/volunteers to perform poorly. For example, members/volunteers who do difficult tasks poorly are given only easy tasks to perform.

Give members/volunteers attention for doing things you want them to do. Ignore repeated complaints, require errors to be corrected, and verbally reward improvement. Manage

Why Members/Volunteers Do Not Do What They Are Supposed To Do

CONTINUED 3 OF 4

closely to eliminate other possible reasons for nonperformance and follow through on negative consequences, such as progressive discipline for continued poor performance until it improves. Hold your discussions about work performance in the work area, and don't buy the members/volunteers lunch or coffee during these discussions.

8.

They are punished for doing what they are supposed to do. When the things people do are followed by punishment, they tend to do those things less frequently. Assigning all the difficult work to a member/volunteer who does difficult work well or requiring a member/volunteer who makes suggestions at meetings to do extra projects to carry out those suggestions are examples of punishment for appropriate performance. Members/volunteers can avoid punishment by not doing some of the things you want them to do: For example, being ridiculed by the boss when you point out problems can be avoided by not pointing out problems. Some punishment is intrinsic to the job, such as failing at something after repeated attempts or working below one's capacity or ability.

Remove the punishment by changing your behavior. Avoid sarcasm, ridicule, and negativism. Reward appropriate behavior. Where work is inherently punishing, balance a negative consequence with a positive one such as extra compliments, extra time off, or easy work following a difficult assignment.

9.

There is no negative consequence for poor performance. Verbal and written reprimands, unless followed by increasingly severe action, appear to have little effect on members/volunteers who purposely perform poorly. Supervisors are often reluctant to put a "negative notation" on the member's/volunteer's record, or they believe rewards will motivate better performance.

Take appropriate corrective action. Members/volunteers must be held accountable. When it seems clear that a person is willfully not improving performance, and your coaching discussion fails, terminate the relationship, following the appropriate guidelines.

10.

Obstacles beyond their control prevent them from doing what they are supposed to do. Real barriers may prevent members/volunteers from performing their tasks—e.g., unavailable or poor-quality resources or conflicting instructions. Some obstacles are conditions that prevent the member/volunteer from performing the task appropriately; some are conditions that prevent the member/volunteer from performing the task because he or she does not know how to overcome them or does not have the skill to use available alternatives.

Remove the obstacle or give the member/volunteer the strategy or skill to overcome it. When members/volunteers tell you they are

Why Members/Volunteers Do Not Do What They Are Supposed To Do

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unable to perform tasks because of an obstacle beyond their control, don't tell them to work it out themselves. Get involved in the situation. Collect facts. It may be necessary to involve supervisors of other teams or to change procedures or methods. Prepare your members/volunteers to deal with common obstacles, anticipate ones they may face in the future, and give them the strategies and skills they will need in advance.

11.

They have personal problems. The member/volunteer may be preoccupied with something in his or her private life that is interfering with job performance. Sometimes performance problems on the job occur only because the supervisor permits them to occur: Sympathetic supervisors may permit a member/volunteer not to perform because that member/volunteer has personal problems. Organizations usually have specific guidelines for common situations where nonperformance is justified (e.g., funeral leave, time off for personal business), but they rarely specify, and supervisors often do not know, when it's okay for the member/volunteer to feel bad but not okay for the member/volunteer to "work bad." Or supervisors may not know how to talk about a member's/volunteer's personal problems or how deeply to get involved.

Realistically identify which personal problems your organization will accept as reasons for nonperformance. Make provision for people to handle or respond to those personal problems in planned ways. Be available to discuss personal problems, but don't play psychologist or marriage counselor. Acknowledge the personal difficulty, but also ask for the member's/volunteer's cooperation in eliminating the work problem. Permit members/volunteers to take time off with advance notice to handle personal business.

[Adapted from: *Why Employees Don't Do What They're Supposed to Do and What to Do About It*, by Ferdinand F. Fournies, Liberty Hall Press, 1988.]