



# Learning Pathways

## Building Volunteer Relationships

### Part 2: Growing the Relationship

# Welcome!

This is a new format for learning at VolunteerMatch

- Designed for more participation.
- All resources and slides will be available afterwards.
- I want to hear your feedback!
- Please register for all Parts of a Learning Pathway – they build on each other.

# **Any Questions from Part 1:**

**0 questions**

**0 upvotes**

# Creating Two-Way Communications

Be prepared to have dynamic conversations.

- Can't assume or know what a volunteer is thinking.
- Work to ensure two way conversation.

Important to communicate out about goals and expectations and day-to-day happenings.

- Just as important to allow volunteers to contribute ideas, expertise, impact into the organization.

Keep things on track and break up the routine.

- Document activities, and reengage, retrain, recognize and/or remove. Don't let communication style become auto-pilot.

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

Via text

email. word of mouth.

Just added a book time with me on email signature

They stop in and ask for me, or email me

In person

Surveys, Facebook group, qr-feedback form, in person, email

Volunteer events with feedback bowl

email or text

Surveys

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

phone calls

Texting

Emails, Surveys

Email, text & phone.

on Slack

Via email

texting

End of tax season survey

I have a volunteer engagement survey

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

Via email. Via phone

Suggestion box

Direct communication

via email

Survey

emails

via text

Annual survey

They email, call or text me with any info

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

one on one meetings

email feedback after tasks

Feedback surveys after each event!

Email

we have monthly group meetings, email me,  
call me

In person, text, call, or email

Card in mail

Annual survey, emails, text, phone calls

We don't have a set system. We are lacking in  
this area. We are open to verbal  
communication!



# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

Emails, text, our FB page

Via phone calls, emails or in person

word of mouth

Feedback survey. Debrief meetings.

email

feedback surveys and reaching out directly via email and phone

Via emails and texts.

they email me, or talk to me face-to-face

In person

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

Anonymous feedback surveys. But most good conversations happen in person

In person, photos

Text email phone call book time

Volunteers usually share updates over email

Surveys

texts

Stop in my office

text/ calls

surveys

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

In person, via email, by phone and text.

over coffee

email, surveys

Email. Text. Word of Mouth.

Respond directly to volunteer newsletters; lots of emails

Text, email, & word of mouth.

Through email, through face-to-face meetings, writing things down in our volunteer room, sharing with other staff who then let me know.

in-person

We have an awesome Facebook group!

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

drop in. I have an open door

At volunteer days, & word of mouth

email, phone, text, in person

in-person

email, phone calls, survey responses

Email, texting, calling, I give access to my calendar so they can schedule any time to meet with me

calendly

Survey

Survey

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

Email, talk to me

through surveys. email of face-to-face.

Email, text, word of mouth.

One-on-one conversations after their volunteer time.

Phone calls

Social media, text, email, in person.

surveys

Quarterly feedback surveys

FB messenger

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

We don't have a formal way which may help

most of the time they don't lol

Surveys

phone calls - either on office lines or work cell

Email

Emails, texts, phone calls, and in person

Daily update

thinking of doing open houses

VOLUNTEERS ARE ENTERING WHAT I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEM WHILE LOGGING THEIR VOLUNTEER HOURS IN BI. I HAVE AN ADDTL FIELD ENTERED

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

In person or on phone

Feedback and questions at monthly meetings

email, surveys, call, pop-in

at events

Volunteers rarely communicate with me but calls or emails are typically how they communicate. One stops in.

Paper surveys

Surveys and in person

In office and texting, emailing

In Person, Phone, Email

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

Email

email, some by phone and some even by text

My office is in the volunteer lounge, so it puts me in a great position to chat with them.

I invite them into the office regularly for check ins

After a meeting - inperson

At lunch if I join them. In person, phone call, text, email.

Survey included with a thank you email.

check ins quarterly with certain programs

Call or text



# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

emails, phone calls, stop and chat

Phone calls, in person

Monthly meetings

survey, emails, in person conversations

90 Day Check Ins!

Surveys at the end of each semester

one-on-one biweekly Team meetings/  
texts/email/monthly group meetings

Survey ability within newsletter

our Chinese volunteers use WeChat!

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

Mon Ami Task

Whatsapp

Email

Annual supervisor visit

Having "office hours" over zoom

I do 1-1's after the first 3 months then annually

Whatsapp

text messages

Annual review with feedback area

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

volunteer roundtables

phone calls, emails.we just did our first survey

They leave notes on their sign in sheet

Text, Email, phone call, setting up meetings, sharing with staff,

Anniversary check ins

Email,tc.C Email, tc, text, in person, training surveys on site, regular surveys have very low response rate

Email,tc.C Email, tc, text, in person, training surveys on site, regular surveys have very low response rate

Yes

No

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

no

yes

Yes

Expectation management

How do you communicate when most of your volunteers are remote?

Management vol & staff

Surveys

Conflict management

Challenge - how to steward

# How do volunteers share with you?

145 Responses

battling "confidentiality issues" - staff not wanting to work with volunteers

# Building the Relationships

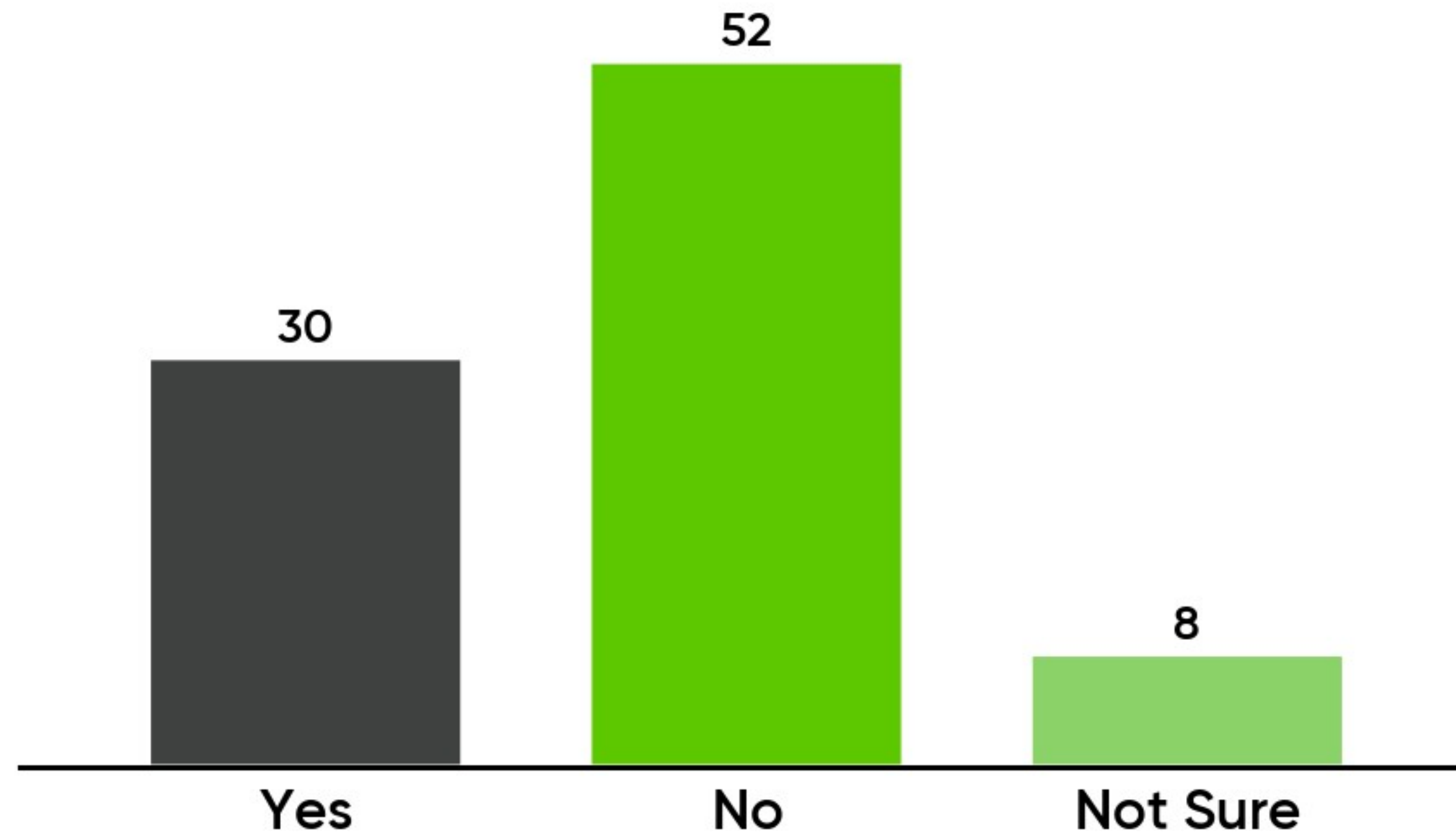
A little preparation can create big impacts

- Understand your management style and share that with remote volunteers.
- Meet volunteers where they want to be met.
- Clear conversations around how much management they need/want. Be open to feedback.

Be aware of patterns that create unsustainable expectations.

- High-touch relationships with volunteers? Volunteers over extending themselves – too much on their plate, Out of sight, out of mind. Slipping through the cracks?

# Have you done a management style assessment?



# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

Time management

handling conflict

Difficult conversations

Time management

Having difficult conversations with volunteers  
AND staff

Proving actionable feedback

how to delegate tasks

conflict mitigation

Time Management



# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

Help other staff manage volunteers

facilitating tough conversations

Time management

De-escalation skills

being comfortable delegating tasks

Learning how to say "no" to requests that are not possible

Delegation

Conflict

Time management & delegation

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

How to manage volunteers who work with other staff.

Difficult conversations

setting boundaries

Time management difficult conversation

Difficult conversations

Asserting myself as the authority

Time management and difficult conversations

difficult conversations

Conflict resolution specifically with volunteers

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

emails

Connecting with volunteers fully remote

managing expectations of volunteers

managing up

Conflict mitigation

Discipline

Delegating Tasks

connecting to people that don't want to connect so much

Engage other staff

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

all of the above.

Having clear, defined answers for volunteers

Time management

Tough convos

Feedback, esp for reviews

get other staff involved with volunteers.

Pre conversations so work flows well.

Managing and recognizing burnout in  
volunteers

managing staff

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

interviewing new vols

Actionable feedback

teaching others how to manage volunteers

Providing feedback, having difficult conversations (especially related to performance). connecting other staff and volunteers

Time management, keeping track of hours

Engagement with volunteer coordinators

How to organize the staff's volunteer management

Setting boundaries with staff and volunteers

Advocating for the volunteer program within the larger organization

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

Being a friend vs the manager

How to build connection and what small talk should look like as a manager of volunteers

difficult conversations

Understating how to work with different personalities

Setting boundaries

Setting appropriate boundaries

Increase the collaboration with others staff

How to get more tasks from Co-workers

Keeping boundaries

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

Developing leadership skills

Long-term engagement, volunteer retention

"firing" volunteers

Knowing what to prioritize when developing volunteers

managing staff expectations of volunteers and how to effectively work with volunteers

Managing volunteer expectations and boundaries re: our clients

all of the above

Designing More efficient sign ups- ours have to be so customized; Having full staff buy in on value and stewardship of volunteers

Managing expectations of volunteers, how to manage volunteers of different generations

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

Managing all the small details.

Providing negative feedback.

Survey building

Dealing with entitlement

Training others to effectively work with volunteers

asking for help when workload too much

Training managers to work with their volunteers

Asserting authority over my assigned domains/tasks

Managing up, engaging staff in supporting volunteers and valuing the relationship.



# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

Building Volunteer Leaders within Volunteer Ranks

How to help a volunteer when they are struggling to learn a concept

Dealing with lateness, tardiness, no shows.

Staff vs volunteers

Getting more tasks from co-workers

when other staff drop the ball on a volunteer and the volunteer becomes upset

Gaining compliance

Clear expectations, goals and tasks for the volunteers from managers

inspiring other staff to take a larger role in managing their own volunteers

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

getting more feedback and leadership from current volunteers, and volunteers who have been around for many years- longer than i've been on staff

feeling less like a cat herder aka Vol scheduling

training staff who supervise or work with volunteers

Staff buy in for volunteer ENGAGEMENT not another warm body to assist them

approaching management about increasing the budget

not sure

changing staff attitudes towards volunteers

approaching management about increasing the budget

Time

# Where could you use support building management skills?

106 Responses

NA

Most volunteer needs are for one-time events,  
how to engage volunteers in between

Consistency throughout

While our organization is training a bunch of  
new staff I am taking the opportunity to create  
written best practices for all daily operations

Onboarding and getting volunteers to trngs

coming up with enough volunteer opportunities  
and staff buy-in

Engaging volunteers when there aren't  
volunteer opportunities

## Building Ongoing Relationships with Volunteers

| Activity                 | Successes | Opportunities | Challenges |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Recruitment              |           |               |            |
| Onboarding               |           |               |            |
| Training                 |           |               |            |
| Supervision              |           |               |            |
| Communication & Feedback |           |               |            |
| Impact & Celebration     |           |               |            |
| Other                    |           |               |            |

# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

Oboarding/training and celebration

Really getting back to traditions after covid to honor vols

gathering volunteer feedback and providing them recognition

Getting volunteers to attend training sessions

Introducing new volunteer code of conduct (mandated by our parent org)

once volunteers are assigned, the managers don't take responsibility to manage them

Supervision (training staff to do so), Communication & Feedback

Opportunities- former volunteers to try and get back involved

I struggle with annual volunteer recognition

# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

offering trainings

I'd like to provide more opportunities for volunteer leadership, but our staff disagrees

ongoing training and constant feedback

Opportunities for new methods of communication and feedback

Recruiting is a challenge

Defining Roles

Supervision - who volunteers go to when they have questions. Especially when their role manager is not at their desk

Retaining volunteers beyond 3 months (or one session)

onboarding/training volunteer appreciation

# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

Returning volunteer incentives and comraderie

Capacity to implement feedback

Getting volunteers back to doing more regular commitments

Opportunities: making recruitment & onboarding more proactive and engaging! Providing more ongoing trainings for volunteers

Introducing tools when my manager drags her feet and changes her mind.

Having staff member show up to greet volunteers regularly

Challenge: recruitment

Training staff to create roles and supervise volunteers

Opportunities: More volunteer appreciation, through tangible things or also recognition. Volunteer highlights in our newsletter to all. Challenges: Going on maternity leave and will lost some momentum

# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

Volunteer appreciation, communication flows, reengaging volunteers who have interacted with previous staff

Challenge Supervision: coworkers feeling like they have to report back to me on every little thing

challenge: maintaining volunteer interest after initial application

Staying connected with volunteers who do not go through the office at any time--out at schools.

Volunteer recognition - what they want to do, what is possible, when staff can also be involved

Starting from a near-blank slate

Finding new volunteers

Budget for non-tools/materials items for running program.

Training new staff



# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

How do we get teachers to work better with their volunteers?

I'm looking forward to writing my own Ambassador job description, to provide detail that isn't in our national job description; and looking into creating a Slack for our advocacy volunteers

Keeping the right balance of volunteers and jobs to do.

New and more trainings

Retention is a constant challenge  
New volunteers overstating or overestimating their skills/experience.. and subsequently managing their expectations/disappointments

I'm challenged by volunteers who feel they are being overlooked, when in reality, I don't have a placement for them.

How to get unpaid interns to complete hours and show up for events/orientations, when there's no consequences.

keeping harmony amongst staff

Recruiting volunteers beyond word of mouth

# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

Staff doesn't engage with or embrace the volunteer opportunities

Challenges growing volunteers at the same rate as program growth

Connecting with volunteers that are not as easy to connect with

Training staff on how important it is to build relationships, not just volunteer services department but the program staff needs to build these too

Challenge - staff not treating volunteers with respect for their time spent helping

Targeted recruitment for difficult to fill positions (golf cart drivers in Texas' over 100 degree summers).

us vs. them

Challenges: the org. I work in is physically HUGE with many departments—hard to stay connected/connect volunteers to different departments

increase sense of community amongst volunteers in different areas

# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

Keeping volunteers engaged when it is quiet or slower paced

Communication challenge - not everyone reads the emails or pays attention to announcements

recruiting

Possible conflict of interest for vols during recruitment

Appreciating volunteers more effective 10% show up to annual appreciation

Fitting everything in that I need to do

opportunity: make onboarding less isolated

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# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

opportunity: make onboarding less isolated

It's always a challenge to manage vols who are working independently.

Getting volunteers to work a full shift

My biggest challenge is training up volunteer leaders who will manage and supervise their own teams so I don't have to.

Getting managers to see the benefit of volunteer in their areas; recognition for many sites and shifts.

Prospects disappear after filling out app and background check, cost

making the volunteer feel welcomed when they walk through our door. people forget they are not required to do this. This is kindness out of their heart.

slower times- keeping volunteers engaged

Additional staff to allow adding more volunteer capacity and not having to say no.

# Where do you have opportunities or challenges?

78 Responses

filling holiday event shifts

filling holiday event shifts

challenge: reducing volunteer burn out, especially emotional burnout

Team effort among our department and the department we place vols in

How long it takes to onboard, all of the people involved

How long it takes to onboard, all of the people involved

# Help Others Build Relationships

Managing people is difficult, managing volunteers can be even harder

- Many staff members may have never managed anyone before!
- Start with the basics – what are the expectations?
- Don't assume that rudimentary skills exist. Role play and situational training.

Include information on theory and philosophy

- Your philosophy, the organization's philosophy, books, articles, blogs on volunteer management and engagement

# Help Others Build Relationships

What do you know but take for granted?

- How do you communicate goals and expectations to a volunteer?
- Can you tell a volunteer that the work isn't right or up to your standards? How?
- Create in-house trainings for staff. Informal support groups.

# Help Others Build Relationships

Staff new to working with volunteers and those that are working with volunteers

- I know you know this, but I wanted to include you in this refresher.
- Model the type of interactions you want others to engage in with volunteers.

Don't abandon them after initial trainings

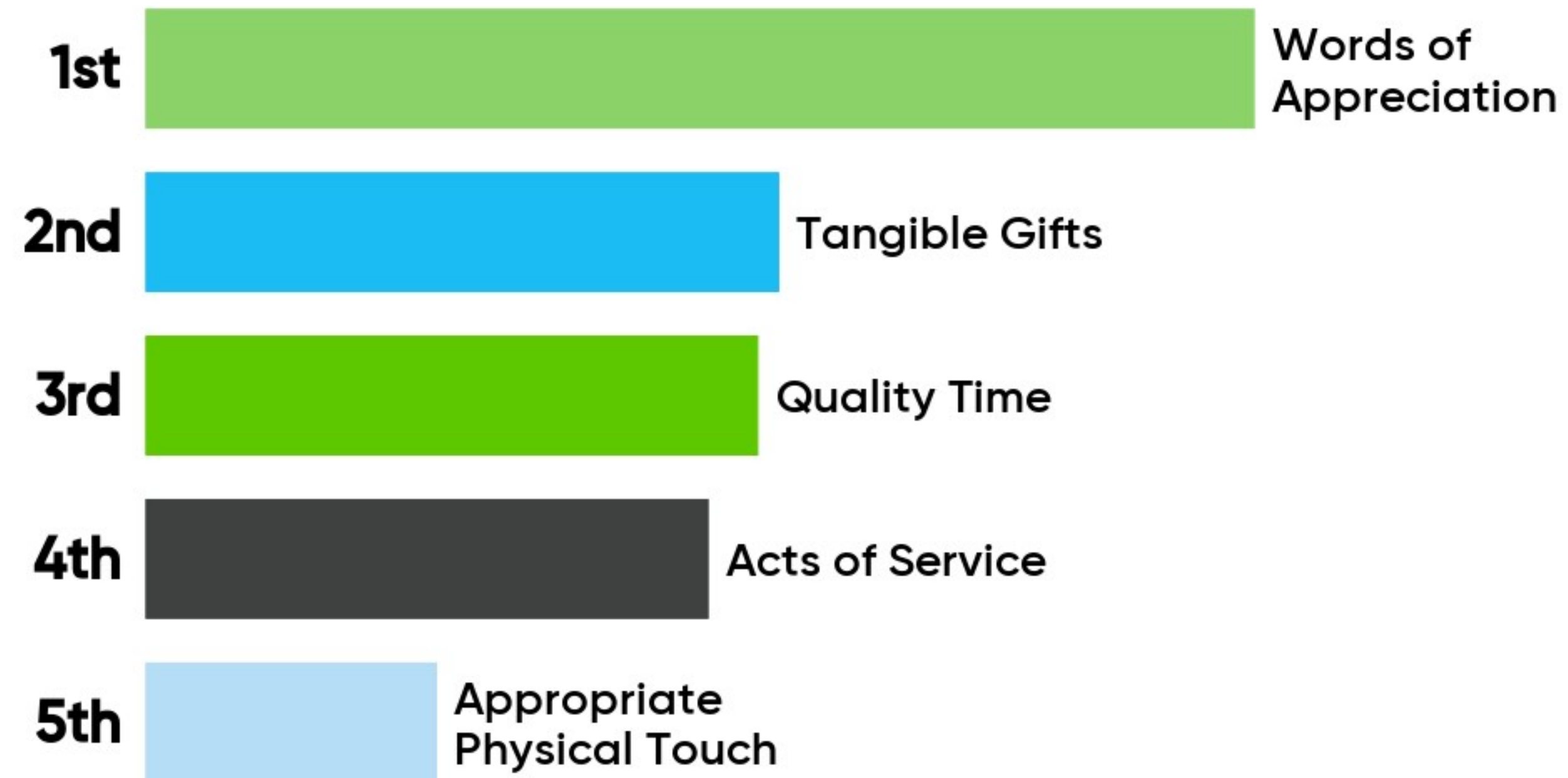
- Daily interactions can cause confusion or conflicts.
- Ongoing check-ins with staff or meetings with staff and individual volunteers. Ensure that the process is smooth.



# The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace

- Acts of Service
- Quality Time
- Words of Appreciation
- Tangible Gifts
- Appropriate Physical Touch

# How often do you use each language of appreciation?



# A Note About Language

You have control over how you talk about your work and the work of volunteers!

Remember caring work and soft skills can be undervalued:

- If you don't advocate and promote your work and the work of volunteers who will?
- Are you using empowering language?
- Are you centering and elevating the work of volunteers?

Don't be your own roadblock:

- Be thoughtful and careful of language that is paternalistic or based in other characteristics of white supremacy.

# For Next Time:

Explore the Resource Packet:

- Can the worksheets help you start conversations?
- What additional resources do you need, what resources do you have to share?
- Fill out the Feedback Form!
- Join the LinkedIn Group to share ideas, ask questions, get support.

# Thank You!

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