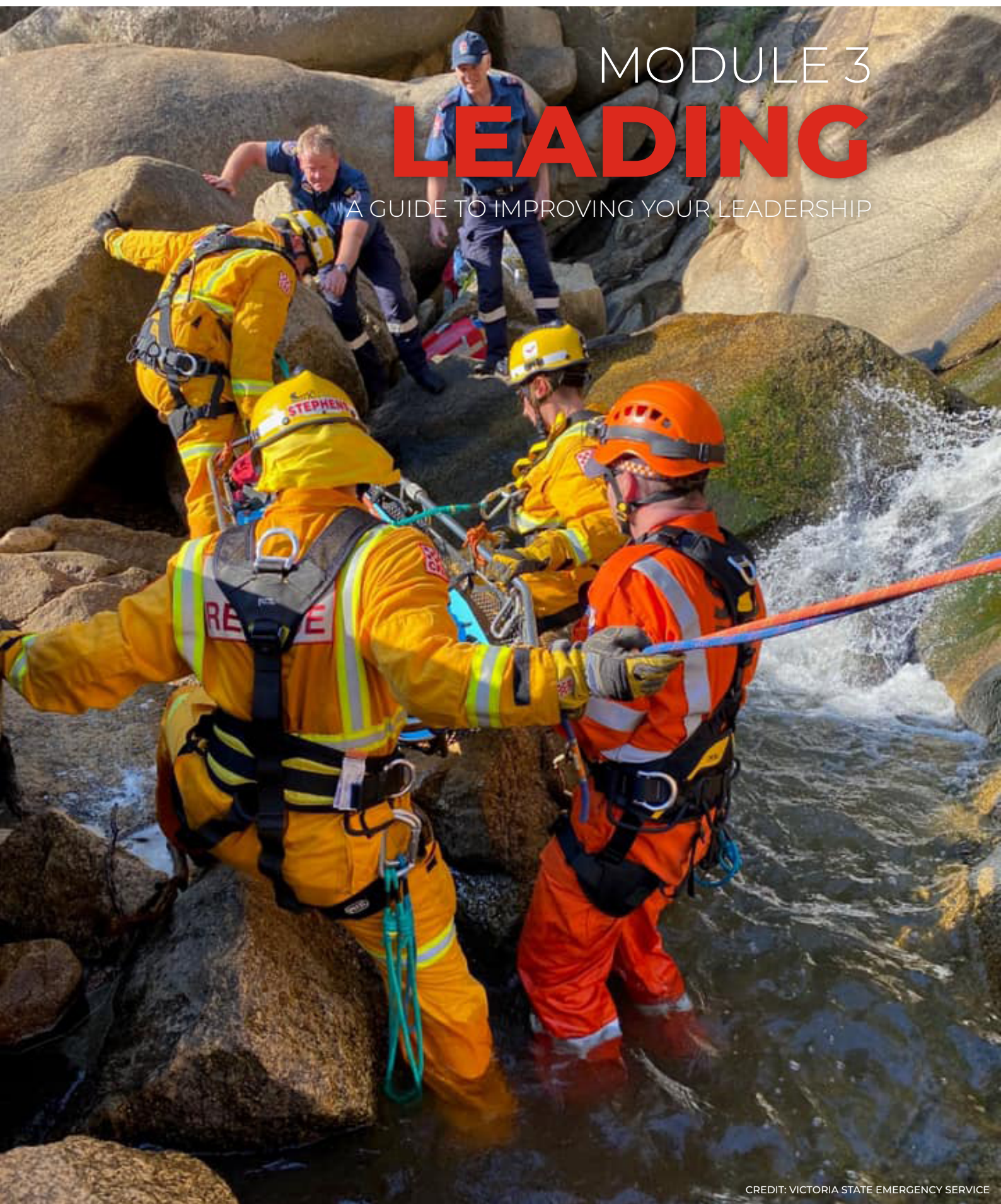




MODULE 3 **LEADING**

A GUIDE TO IMPROVING YOUR LEADERSHIP



CREDIT: VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE





CONTENTS

This document collects only the PDF pages from Module 3: Leading, and does not include videos or other elements of the module. The numbering system used in this document corresponds to the topic folders in the larger Module 3: Leading.

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE LEADERSHIP MODULE

REFLECTION EXERCISE

Take a moment to think about the **best** leader or manager you have ever known (i.e., fictional or in real-life).

1. What qualities do they have (e.g., are they very organised, approachable, or authoritative)?
2. What do they do that constitutes them being the best leader (for example, do they give clear instructions and guidance, or do they involve you in decision-making processes)?
3. How do they make you feel (for example, do you feel more competent, more autonomous, or like you are part of the team)?





2. TIP SHEET 1: INFLUENCING VOLUNTEERS

WHERE DOES YOUR POWER COME FROM?

Power refers to your ability to get someone to do what you want them to do or to make sure things happen in a particular way. There are several different ways that you can establish power in your volunteering group, and each one has a different effect on compliance and commitment.

Position power comes from the things that you as a leader can offer to your volunteers, such as rewards or recognition. Solely relying on a position power leads to short-term compliance and makes it difficult to influence volunteers over a long period of time.

TYPES OF POSITION POWER	
REWARD	Rewarding people for doing what you want them to do.
COERCION	Punishing people for not doing what you ask.
LEGITIMACY	Influencing through a position of authority. "I'm the leader, therefore you must do as I say."

Personal power comes from your personal qualities and the way you are viewed by your volunteers. Using this type of power creates long-term influence and commitment from your volunteers.

TYPES OF PERSONAL POWER	
EXPERT	You are the source of specialist knowledge or information.
REFERENT	People admire you and want to identify with you.

INFLUENCE TACTICS

Influence tactics are strategies that volunteer leaders can use to change their volunteers' attitudes, values, or behaviours. Below is a list of the three most effective and least effective tactics for influencing volunteers. The effectiveness of these strategies are dependent somewhat on the basis of your power. Below are examples of each tactic in action and how they relate to the power bases outlined above.





THREE EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE TACTICS

Consultation

A leader wants to implement a change in the functioning of the volunteering group that will impact all volunteers. At a training night, they describe to the volunteers why a change is needed and some potential ideas for change. Afterwards, they ask for everyone's opinions about the proposed changes or alternative ideas they may have to tackle the problem. Volunteer feedback is taken onboard by the leadership team who decide on a final solution. The outcome is then shared with the volunteers.

*This tactic is more effective when you have **reward** power (when your volunteers view their contributions being used or implemented as a form of reward for their efforts).*

Rational persuasion

A leader notices that one of their volunteers is not using a piece of equipment properly. They clearly explain to the volunteer why it is important to use it a particular way and the safety implications of not doing so, making sure that the volunteer thoroughly understands why it is important to comply.

*This tactic is more effective when you have **expert** power (when your volunteers see you as a reliable information source).*

Inspirational appeal

A volunteer has been reluctant to take on a role that the leader believes they would be very good at. The leader tells them how valuable their contributions are, reminds them of all of the times they have performed aspects of the role well in the past, and makes sure they know that they will have all of the support they need in the role.

*This tactic is more effective when you have **referent** power (when your volunteers look up to you and want to identify with you).*

THREE INEFFECTIVE INFLUENCE TACTICS

Pressure

A leader is frustrated with a volunteer who has been taking too long to do some equipment maintenance. They keep asking every couple of minutes if the volunteer has finished yet and why it's taking so long, and they then threaten the volunteer with not being able to participate in an upcoming training exercise if they don't complete the maintenance in a given time frame.

*This tactic is used by leaders who rely on **coercion** as a base of power (when you punish your volunteers for not doing what you asked).*

Coalition

A volunteer insists on doing a task a particular way, despite the leader giving them clear instructions to do it differently. The leader pulls in other members of the leadership team to pass on their instructions to the volunteer in the hope that they will listen to someone else.

*Leaders who lack **expert** power sometimes find themselves using this tactic.*

Legitimizing

A volunteer disagrees with the way the rostering system is set up and wants changes to be made. The leader tells them that if they don't like it, that is too bad. That is what the leadership team have decided, and it is consistent with the policies and procedures of the volunteering group, so it will stay as is.

*Leaders who use this tactic rely on **legitimacy** as a power base (when you are influencing through your position of authority).*





2. INFLUENCING VOLUNTEERS

CASE STUDIES

Here are some examples based on our research:

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
While attending to a critical incident, a volunteer decides to carry out an operational procedure differently from how they were trained. The volunteer leader tells them that they are wrong, and that operational procedures are written and set for a reason. That is the way it is, and they have no right to question it, and they should just follow the rules.	Recently, there has been a need to recruit more volunteers to fill vacant roles within the group. To help with that, the volunteer leader decides to host a brainstorming session with all volunteers within the group to discuss different platforms and strategies to promote volunteering roles and opportunities to the community. Volunteers were asked to share their ideas, and they had a say in the decision-making and action plan.
EXAMPLE 3	EXAMPLE 4
A volunteer who is responsible for the social media page of a volunteering group recently posted a picture of a car crash that the volunteers were attending to. This post was made with the intention of drawing people in to recruit them. However, posting pictures of an incident violates the social media policies and procedures as incidents are very sensitive and it could affect the wellbeing and confidentiality of the victims and their families. The volunteer leader asked that the volunteer take the post down and explained the reasoning as to why it was important to not post photos of incidents or call-outs online.	The volunteering group are expected to submit an inventory report to the emergency service organisation, so that any missing equipment or uniforms could be ordered for the volunteers. The secretary of the group is responsible for this report and the report is overdue by a week. The volunteer leader keeps asking them to complete the report and have told the secretary that they are not allowed to participate in any of the training or social volunteering events until the report has been completed and submitted.

1. What influence tactic was used in each of the examples above?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
EXAMPLE 3	EXAMPLE 4





2. Looking at the examples given, what would you do differently? Which influence tactics could have been more effective?

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2

EXAMPLE 3

EXAMPLE 4





3. TIP SHEET 2: SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

DECIDING WHAT INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Questions to ask your volunteers

Open up a discussion with your volunteers as a group, using the following questions as a starting point:

How do you feel about the amount and type of information I have been sharing with you?

What type of information do you want more of?

What information are you not interested in receiving or do you want less of?

How often should I give you information?

What is the best way to share information with you (e.g., email, in person, notice board)?

What not to share with everyone

There is some information that is not suitable for sharing with all volunteers at your group. For example:

- Operationally sensitive information
- Confidential information
- Personal issues or discipline issues
- Information that is not ready to be shared yet, for example:
 - Potential new equipment or training that has not yet been confirmed
 - Proposed upcoming changes to policies and procedures that have not been confirmed by your agency or emergency service organisation

In terms of information that is not ready to be shared, this is important for managing volunteer expectations. For example, volunteers may become disappointed or disenchanted if they are constantly hearing about exciting new equipment that never materialises.





PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG VOLUNTEERS: HOW TO USE EACH OF THE STRATEGIES

Have experienced volunteers train newer volunteers

Setting up a mentoring or buddy system is a great way of encouraging communication and knowledge sharing between newer and more experienced volunteers. This does not need to be a formal system – even informally partnering volunteers up for training or tasks around the group can facilitate sharing and collaboration.

Run training exercises that involve communication and collaboration

Work with your Training Officer to plan training activities and drills that require volunteers to communicate well and work together as a team to achieve a goal. In the debrief afterwards, focus on communication between volunteers during the exercise:

- What went well?
 - Provide examples of good communication that were observed
 - Discuss how this good communication helped performance
- Where did communication break down and why?
 - Work through specific examples as a group
- Identify areas needing improvement
- What do they need to do to make that improvement and what are you going to do to support them?

Create opportunities for volunteers to share their knowledge and skills

A “psychologically safe” climate describes a group atmosphere that allows and encourages open, supportive communication, and it allows individuals to speak up if and when issues arise.

To create a group environment that encourages knowledge-sharing behaviours, you need to create opportunities where your volunteers feel *comfortable*, *safe*, and *heard* to share their knowledge and skills. Ask your volunteers if they have any knowledge or skills (e.g., from other volunteering roles they have been in, skills they have developed from their jobs or workplace, or hobbies) that they could contribute to the group. You can create opportunities for volunteers to share any suggestions or ideas they have on the types of knowledge and skills they could contribute to the group:

At the start of a training exercise

When you are seeking input from the group around a decision

When partnering up volunteers for training or mentoring

If you suspect someone is keeping knowledge or information to themselves

Allowing your volunteers to share and provide their input can lead to innovation and creativity. Be open to listening to their suggestions and ideas. However, before implementing them, make sure that you check against your policies and procedures, as well as with your emergency service organisation, that it is safe and permissible for you to make these changes.





Acknowledge and reward collaborative and sharing behaviours

When you observe or hear about good knowledge-sharing between volunteers, make sure they know that you appreciate it. Thank them for sharing information and tell them how it is benefiting everyone. If a job or training exercise went well, point out how good communication and sharing helped this to happen.

If you have an end-of-year awards night, you could also include an award for the volunteer who has shown the best teamwork or collaboration throughout the year.

Act as a role model

One of the easiest ways to encourage your volunteers to share their knowledge is by sharing knowledge yourself. For example:

- If anyone asks for your advice or input, give it freely and fully
- If you see someone struggling, offer guidance
- When you are telling volunteers about a job, event, or training activity that is coming up, give them all necessary information about it. Explain why it is happening, how people have been chosen to participate, and what to expect





3. SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

THINKING EXERCISE

Think of your volunteers in your group and what knowledge, skills, or experiences they might have or could share.

1. What important knowledge could be shared by your experienced and newer volunteers (e.g., operational and non-operational knowledge, stories, knowledge or skills from different volunteering roles, work roles, or hobbies)?
2. What processes or practices can you put in place to encourage knowledge-sharing between your volunteers (e.g., encouraging volunteers to schedule knowledge-sharing or training sessions, allowing volunteers to observe other volunteers performing different tasks)?





4. TIP SHEET 3: SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES

THREE STEPS TO DELEGATION

1. Assign responsibility

This step is about finding the right person for the task or role. Keep these questions in mind:

What skills does someone need to perform the task or role?	Does this person have the necessary skills or the potential to learn those skills?	If they don't already have the necessary skills, who is going to teach them?	Is the person willing, available, and interested to take on the task or role?
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One additional question to ask yourself is “What is in it for them?”. Is this a chance for the volunteer to learn or practice a new skill? Will it help them to move up in the hierarchy of the volunteering group? Is it a chance for them to connect more with other volunteers or the community? If a volunteer feels that they will get something out of the role or task, they will be more committed to doing it.

Once you have selected the appropriate person, communicate your expectations clearly:

- » What is the task or role they have been assigned?
- » What exactly do you expect of them?
- » Is there a particular way this needs to be done or can they take some initiative?
- » What standards have you set for the task or role?

2. Grant authority to act

When you grant someone the authority to act, you give them permission to do what they need to do to get the job done. This could mean giving them the authority to spend money, to use particular equipment, to contact people, to give instructions to others, or to access accounts (email, social media, financial etc.). Authority does not necessarily mean free rein: make sure you set boundaries around this authority.

For example, if a role involves dealing with confidential information, it is important that the person understands what they can and cannot do with that information and the importance of respecting confidentiality. It is important not to skip this step, because without sufficient authority to do what they need to do to get the job done, it will be difficult or impossible for someone to live up to the expectations you set in step one.

3. Create accountability

In this step, the person you are delegating to accepts responsibility and agrees to be accountable for the outcomes. Your role in this step is to make sure that you provide feedback to the person so that they know whether they are performing the task or role efficiently and if they need to do anything differently. When things are not going well, it is important to provide support and guidance to help them make necessary changes and improvements. Don't forget to let them know when they are improving or doing a good job!





EFFECTIVE DELEGATION: MORE INFORMATION ON THE TIPS PROVIDED

Print this checklist out as many times as you need for the different tasks you decide to delegate to your volunteers.

Choose the person carefully

Ensure they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and ability

If they don't have these already, ensure they have the capacity to learn and set them up with someone to teach them

Determine how much support they will need

Make sure they have the time to commit to the task or role

Make sure they are comfortable taking on the task or role

Define the task or role clearly

Tell the person exactly what the role or task entails

Communicate what outcomes are expected

Create boundaries around what they can/cannot do

Agree on standards and timeline

Communicate when you need things completed by

Explain how much flexibility the person has in terms of how they carry out the task or role

If there is a strict procedure to follow, make sure they know what this is

Agree on what standard of work is acceptable or expected

Provide support and feedback as needed

Let someone know if they are doing a job well so they know that they are doing the right thing and feel appreciated

If the task or role is new to the person, make sure they receive feedback as needed and know who to go to with questions

If they aren't doing something correctly, don't take the task/role away from them. Rather, teach them the correct way so they can learn and improve

Recognise progress

Acknowledge work that has been done and progress that has been made on a task

Verbally recognise improvements in performance

Show trust

Showing trust is one of the most important parts of effective delegation. The greatest way to show this is by leaving someone to do a task without micromanaging or continually looking over their shoulder

Trusting someone usually means you think that they have the skills, abilities, and the right intentions to undertake the responsibility effectively. Thus, it is important that you convey to them that you think they have the right skills, abilities, and intentions to do the task well





4. SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES

THINKING EXERCISE

1. As a volunteer leader, what activities and responsibilities do you currently have could you delegate to your volunteers (for example, could you get a volunteer to manage the social media page of the volunteering group, maintain the equipment and vehicles, or manage your administrative workload)?
2. Which of your volunteers would be best suited to complete the tasks that could be delegated? Why have you chosen that volunteer to complete the task?

TASK	VOLUNTEER	REASON FOR CHOICE
(E.g., administration, marketing, gardening, IT)	(Name the volunteer chosen)	(State reasons for choosing that specific volunteer – for example, they have the right skills, motivation, integrity)





5. INCLUDING AND INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS

CASE STUDIES

Here are some examples based on our research:

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
Recently, you have identified the need to fill vacant operational and non-operational roles within your group. To get an idea of when, where, and how to recruit your volunteers, you open up a discussion at the next training night, where you ask your volunteers if they have any ideas on how you could plan your recruitment strategy and where you would advertise your volunteering opportunities.	At a recent formal training course, your volunteers were taught a new method of performing an operational procedure. This new method was tried, tested, and approved to be used as it is designed to make the task more efficient and effective. However, the next time you were out at an incident, and you are deciding which operational procedure to perform, a volunteer comes up to you and suggests an untested method they think to be more effective and efficient.

1. What are the potential benefits and limitations in involving your volunteers in these scenarios?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
Benefits:	Benefits:

Limitations:	Limitations:
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2. Looking at the examples given above, what would you do differently?

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2





6. TIP SHEET 4: PROVIDING FEEDBACK

EXAMPLES OF EACH OF THE GUIDELINES

1. Focus on specific behaviours that can be changed

Positive feedback



"The financial spreadsheets look really organised. By separating the different outgoing finances into separate columns, it was clear to me where our money is being spent. It would be even better if you organised the spending categories in alphabetical order as well."



"Good job on the finance spreadsheets!"

Negative feedback



"I noticed that some corners were being cut at this point in the exercise. Make sure that when we do x, we are following procedure xyz"



"The whole exercise was really messy. You need to make sure you're doing things the right way"

2. Keep feedback impersonal



"This is not exactly how we do this. You just need to practice it a bit more. Here is how you did it (demonstrate how they did it), but here is a better way to do it (demonstrate using the correct method)."



"You're not really good at this, are you?"

3. Focus on what to improve and how to improve it



"I noticed that x took us 30 minutes to complete when it should only be taking 15 minutes. It seems that y was slowing us down. Next time, let's put these changes into place to make sure we do x faster."



"Your work on this was really sloppy. It needs to be better."
"You did it all wrong, do it again."



4. Turn feedback into a conversation



"I noticed that you did x differently. Could you explain to me why you chose that particular way of doing it?"



"You did x the wrong way. You should have done it this way"

5. Don't discipline an individual in front of others



Take the individual aside (into an office or away from the rest of the volunteering group). When you do, be sure to speak quietly so that other volunteers don't hear the feedback.



Criticise them in front of a group of volunteers.

6. Talk about the specific impact of their behaviours

Positive feedback



"When you do x, it really helps the team be more collaborative, thank you!"
"When you did y, I felt supported."



"What you did was really helpful."
"I felt good when you did z."

Negative feedback



"When you do x, it really affects the team's morale, so maybe try doing y next time instead."
"When you did y, I felt unsupported."



"What you did was really unhelpful."
"I felt bad when you did z."

7. Feedback should be timely



- At training, give feedback immediately after an exercise
- After an incident, use the debrief or discuss it at the next training night



- Weeks after the exercise or incident
- Negative feedback immediately after a job when everyone is exhausted





6. PROVIDING FEEDBACK

CASE STUDIES

Read the examples given below.

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
<p>One of your volunteers, John, is typically quite diligent and conscientious with his tasks. However, recently, you have noticed that he has become quite forgetful and irritable in his actions. When you initially spoke to John about his behaviour, John brushed it off and told you that he was just tired.</p> <p>At the latest call-out, John performed an operational procedure quite recklessly, in a way that could have potential dire consequences, had you not stepped in. The other volunteers have now picked up on John's behaviour and have asked you to speak with him.</p>	<p>Aman is a new volunteer. He has recently taken up the role of Social Media Officer within your group. On top of updating the community, Aman has also been helping to advertise available volunteering roles on the Facebook page of the group to help recruit new volunteers.</p> <p>Recently, Aman came to you with an idea to raise funds for the volunteering group. His ideas consisted of having a bake sale or a quiz night. Collectively, you discussed these ideas with the group, and the quiz night was chosen. As a result of the quiz night, Aman helped to raise \$700 for the group.</p>

1. Looking at the examples given above, what behaviours would you specifically address with each volunteer?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
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2. What feedback would you give (e.g., improvements to make, recognition)?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
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Referring to Tip Sheet 4 on how to provide feedback...

3. How would you give this feedback (e.g., what would you say, how would you say it)?

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2

4. When and where would you give this feedback?

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2





7. TIP SHEET 5: RECEIVING AND USING FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS

USING COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES TO ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS

Using communication techniques such as open-ended questions, active listening, and appropriate non-verbal signals, will make your volunteers feel comfortable providing feedback to you.

Here is how you can do this.

OPEN QUESTIONS

Open questions don't have a straight 'yes' or 'no' answer. Using open questions is an effective way of encouraging someone to open up and provide more information.

Here are some examples:

CLOSED QUESTION	OPEN QUESTION
Did you enjoy that training exercise?	What did you enjoy about that training exercise?
Are you able to handle that task?	What support or help do you need to get that task done?
Didn't you understand the instructions?	Which part of the instruction was unclear?

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening means showing the person you are talking to that you understand what they are trying to communicate. According to best practice, there are five rules for active listening:

RULE	DESCRIPTION
Listen to the content of the message	What are they trying to say?
Listen for feelings	How do they feel about what they are saying?
Respond to feelings	Let them know you understand how they feel about the issue
Note all of the cues	Look for non-verbal signals. Do these conflict with what the person is saying?
Restate and rephrase what they have said	Summarise what you think the message content was





USING NON-VERBAL SIGNALS

Keep the following body language in mind when seeking or receiving upward feedback from volunteers:

HAND MOVEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep your hands open and relaxed, and keep arm movements calm and slow.• Avoid closed fists or hiding your hands, and abrupt movements with your arms.
FACIAL EXPRESSIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn your head towards the volunteer and match your facial expressions to what your volunteer is saying - this is a good way to show empathy.• Nodding and smiling can also help the volunteer feel heard and that it is safe for them to speak up.
EYE CONTACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain a good amount of eye contact. Not so much that you make the volunteers feel uncomfortable, but enough to let them know that you are interested in what they have to say.
USE OF INTERPERSONAL SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lean your body slightly towards the volunteer, rather than away from them.• Keep your arms and legs uncrossed.• At the same time, keep an appropriate amount of interpersonal space between you and the volunteer - enough that they feel like they have your attention, but not close enough that they feel uncomfortable.

All of these will have an effect on how comfortable a volunteer feels coming to you with any issues or ideas. Thus, it is important to remember to keep your body language open (e.g., relaxed posture, uncrossed arms, maintained eye contact), as opposed to closed (e.g., tense posture, crossed arms, little eye contact), to signal your willingness to get elaborate and honest feedback from your volunteers.





7. RECEIVING AND USING FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS

REFLECTION EXERCISE

Think about the climate of your volunteering group, and whether or not volunteers feel *comfortable*, *safe*, and *supported* to speak up and provide feedback on what is going well and what needs improving within your group.

1. What could be preventing volunteers from speaking up (e.g., are they given opportunities to share their thoughts, are other volunteers open to people sharing their ideas)?

Now, think about your own actions...

2. What do you do to encourage volunteers to provide their feedback (e.g., do you provide opportunities for feedback, do you actively listen to their feedback and ask open questions, what body language do you use)?



3. How can you encourage volunteers to provide feedback within your group (e.g., asking at the end of a training night if anyone had any feedback or suggestions for improvement on how activities were run, providing a suggestion box for volunteers to provide anonymous feedback)?

4. What could you do to make sure that the volunteers' feedback is considered or used?
Examples include:
 - » Informing volunteers that their ideas and suggestions will be considered,
 - » Discussing their ideas or suggestions with the leadership team or Area/District Officers,
 - » Consulting the group with how best to implement their feedback and suggestions for improvement, and then
 - » Informing the volunteers whether their feedback was used, and if so, how it was used, or if not, why it was not used.





8. TIP SHEET 6: RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Most volunteers don't join the emergency services for any reward, but acknowledgment and recognition are important tools for enhancing commitment and satisfaction and ensuring that volunteers feel appreciated.

Some ideas are provided below:

INFORMAL AND VERBAL RECOGNITION	TANGIBLE RECOGNITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say "thank you" regularly• Mention achievements and contributions at monthly meetings• Give constructive praise regularly• Shout-outs on social media• Recognition in emails and newsletters• Share positive feedback from the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awards night• Novelty awards• Certificates• Provide refreshments at or after training and emergencies• Follow up on the formal reward and recognition program at your emergency service organisation• Contact local news agencies to promote volunteer achievements• Provide references if requested

Volunteers want to feel like they are making a difference!

Therefore, it is important that you are **specific** with your volunteers' contributions when you are recognising or rewarding them. It will help them feel like they are making an impact.

Be sure to highlight how exactly your volunteer contributed to your group. For example, you can highlight when a volunteer helped to:

- » Lift team spirit
- » Make new volunteers feel welcome
- » Hand out sandwiches to operational volunteers while out on a call-out
- » Encourage high community engagement on a social media post
- » Clean and maintain the operational vehicles and equipment

Every contribution makes a difference, so make sure that your volunteers know how they are contributing to your group.



8. RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

REFLECTION EXERCISE

Reflect on a time that you received recognition for a contribution you made to your volunteering group.

1. How did you receive the recognition for your contributions (e.g., was it mentioned in a meeting, or did you receive a reward or certificate)?
2. How did receiving recognition for your contributions make you feel? (e.g., you felt like you were put on the spot in the moment, you felt like you belonged in the team, you felt like you made a difference)?



Take a moment now to reflect on your volunteering group and the practices you have in place for recognising and acknowledging volunteer contributions.

3. What do you currently do to recognise the achievements and contributions of your volunteers (e.g., do your volunteers receive special mentions in meetings, or receive certificates or formal awards from your emergency service organisation for their efforts)?
4. What improvements could you make in how you recognise your volunteers' achievements and contributions (e.g., give constructive praise or feedback on a regular basis, post volunteers' achievements on social media)?
5. How could you ensure that the improvements you will make will stay in place (e.g., organising an annual awards ceremony within your group, including shout-outs for volunteer contributions in the monthly meeting agendas)?





9. TIP SHEET 7: DEALING WITH CONFLICT

TASK VERSUS INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

Before deciding whether to intervene and how to approach conflict, it is important to identify what type of conflict is occurring.

Task conflict occurs when people have different ideas about the work itself. This type of conflict can be beneficial during decision-making (as long as the team has very low relationship conflict) as it leads to productive discussions and new ideas.

Interpersonal conflict occurs when there is tension, resentment, or friction between team members that is unrelated to their tasks. This type of conflict tends to have negative effects on team performance.

COMMON CAUSES OF CONFLICT

CONFLICT	DESCRIPTION
PERSONALITY CLASHES	Personality clashes occur when two people have fundamentally incompatible personalities or work styles.
COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES	This occurs when there are not enough resources (equipment, money) to go around, making it difficult for the volunteers to do their jobs.
FEELINGS OF JEALOUSY OR INJUSTICE	When one volunteer feels that they are contributing more than another or that a particular volunteer is not pulling their weight, it can often lead to feelings of inequity, jealousy, or injustice when the volunteer that is not contributing as much gets more recognition.
STRESS	Stress could be caused by the pressure of an emergency situation, someone taking on too much work or too many responsibilities, being ill-equipped to handle a task, or something going on outside of the volunteering group.
POWER PUSH	A volunteer (or group of volunteers) trying to gain power within the volunteering group. This could mean winning leadership positions or simply influencing volunteers behind the leader's back.
DISAGREEMENTS OVER METHODS, PROCEDURES, AND ROLE ASSIGNMENTS	When people disagree about how something should be done, and when it is unclear what is expected of someone.
CONFLICTING GOALS	Two volunteers in a team or working on the same task or job have different and conflicting end-goals and motivations in mind.





CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES IN PRACTICE

The first thing to do is to **prevent conflict** within your group. Specifically, conflict that can be disruptive to the functioning of your team. You can do this by becoming aware of the potential causes of conflict in your group, and by trying to address them before they cause problems.

If conflict does arise, the first thing to do is to **identify the root cause**. This takes time and requires that you remain as objective and as neutral as possible. Furthermore, you should provide each conflicting party equal attention and consideration. Once you have identified the root cause of a conflict in your group, below are suitable strategies that you can apply in practice to help you deal with it. Be aware that you may need to try a few different things before you find something that works for the volunteers involved.

If it is a procedural or **task conflict (e.g., disagreements over methods, procedures, or role assignments)**:

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
CLARIFY ROLES AND PROCEDURES	It is important that volunteers have a clear understanding of their roles and what you expect them to do. Conflict can arise if, for example, two volunteers each believe that they are supposed to do a task and argue over whose responsibility it is or if one believes that another has not done something that they should have. Clarifying these roles and expected outcomes to the volunteers involved or to the whole volunteering group can help to resolve these conflicts.
MAKE MORE RESOURCES AVAILABLE	When conflict is caused by competition for resources, it can help to make more resources available or to redistribute resources if at all possible. This may mean getting creative in finding alternative resources or prioritising resource allocation.
ALTER THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Simple changes in the physical environment around your brigade, group, or unit that affect workflow, equipment storage, and facilities can have an impact on the way that volunteers work together.
CHANGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	It may be necessary to implement changes in the policies or procedures within a volunteering group in order to clarify expectations around processes, performance, contributions, or training and attendance requirements. When these are vague, inconsistent, or open to interpretation, there is more likely to be misunderstandings that lead to conflict.





On the other hand, if it is an **interpersonal conflict** (e.g., personality clashes, conflicting goals):

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
APPEAL TO A COMMON GOAL	When volunteer personalities are clashing or conflicting goals seem to be causing trouble, it may be useful to remind volunteers why they are volunteering in the first place. Remind them why they are there and why they joined to start with, whether that was to help the community, learn new skills, or to protect their local area. Find something that resonates with both people and help them to see that they have a common goal to work towards.
CHANGE THE REWARD SYSTEM	<p>Sometimes the reward system that is in place at a volunteering group can inadvertently reward behaviour that causes problems or conflict. For example, rewarding best performance (doing the most of something or working the fastest) can sometimes create a competitive environment between volunteers, which may lead to conflict.</p> <p>On the other hand, you can use your reward system to minimise conflict by rewarding and reinforcing positive, collaborative, and sharing behaviours.</p>
RESTRUCTURE TEAMS	If there is a serious personality clash between two volunteers that cannot be solved through other means, it may be necessary to do some restructuring. For larger volunteering groups with multiple teams, this could mean putting the volunteers on completely separate teams. Other options include changing their roles or making a conscious effort to avoid having both out together in the same vehicle.
MEDIATION	In some cases, you may need to mediate a conflict between volunteers. This involves acting as a neutral party and facilitating a discussion around the conflict that is occurring. You can help them to clarify what they are trying to say, highlight common ground, steer the conversation in a problem-solving direction, or help to find a solution to satisfy everyone.





9. DEALING WITH CONFLICT

CASE STUDIES

Read the examples given below.

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
<p>Kevin and Elijah are two volunteers within your volunteering group, who are also close friends outside of the volunteering group. Recently, you have noticed that they are no longer speaking to each other. When they are out on a call-out together, they will go through lengths to avoid each other when performing a task. This has made it quite difficult for the other team members to work with them while out at an incident as they refuse to work together.</p> <p>You have tried speaking to them both together to figure out what is going on between them, but both Kevin and Elijah were hesitant to speak up on what was going on with the other person in the room. Over time, you can see how this conflict will affect the team functioning and you realise that you need to manage it before it further impacts the team.</p>	<p>Bella has recently taken over the role of Training Officer within your group. Raynee, the previous Training Officer, is still volunteering with the group as an ordinary member. Previously, Raynee took on a more theoretical training approach, with some practical exercises and demonstrations to further capture the learning the volunteers were doing during the operational training sessions.</p> <p>Since taking over, Bella decided that she wanted to take on a more collaborative approach, whereby the volunteers are able to collectively suggest different ways of improving on the operational methods that are different from what is being taught in the formalised training sessions.</p> <p>Raynee believes that it is important to perform operational tasks according to procedure and will often disagree openly with Bella in the training sessions. As these disagreements have become quite disruptive to the training for all volunteers, you decide to have a chat with Bella and Raynee about their behaviours.</p>

1. Looking at the examples given above, what type of conflict would you say is present in each scenario (i.e., task vs. relationship)?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
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2. What behaviours would you specifically address with each volunteer?

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2

3. Referring to the conflict resolution strategies identified in **Tip Sheet 7: Dealing with Conflict**, how would you approach the situation to manage the conflict in each scenario?

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2





11. ADJUSTING YOUR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STYLE

CASE STUDIES

Read the examples given below.

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
In the last month, you have noticed that one of your volunteers, Amin, has been quite withdrawn and he has not been participating in any training nights or social volunteering events. It was then brought to your attention that Amin has recently experienced a loss in his family. To help him feel more comfortable and at ease within the volunteering group, you decide to speak with him.	One of your newest volunteers, Riley, has recently completed his basic training and is now able to volunteer and participate in call-outs and incidents. During a call-out, Riley tells you that he is planning to perform an operational task independently from his team, without consulting any of his team members first. To prevent him from doing this, you decide to respond to him immediately.

1. Looking at the examples given above, what behaviours would you specifically address with each volunteer?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
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2. What leadership or management style do you believe to be the most appropriate to use in this scenario?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
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3. What would be the potential benefits and limitations of using this specific leadership style?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
Benefits:	Benefits:

Limitations:	Limitations:
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4. How would you approach the situation?

EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
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