THE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEER FRAMEWORK: GUIDING GOOD MANAGEMENT IN BRIGADES, GROUPS AND UNITS

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A DEEP DIVE INTO BRIGADES, GROUPS, AND UNITS (BGUs)

VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES IN WA

THE CONTEXT

- Consultation with volunteers over past five years

- Departmental concerns regarding leadership capability

- Impacting volunteer satisfaction and retention

THE CONTEXT

- Partnership between Department of Fire & Emergency Services (DFES) and University of Western Australia (UWA)

- Project aim:

  - Identify leadership capability gaps

  - Design a framework for managing volunteers in the emergency services

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Desktop research
Survey data reviewed
Round 1 interviews
→
Potential target areas identified
→
Round 2 interviews
→
Diagnose problem & confirm target areas
→
Framework & resource development
→
Framework & resource review and finalisation

- 9 DFES staff
- 4 volunteer associations
- 11 volunteer leaders
- 25 volunteers

COMMON THEMES:
GREATEST CHALLENGES FOR VOLUNTEER LEADERS

Dealing with different personalities

Managing conflict

Giving feedback

Including & involving all volunteers

Succession planning

Delegation

Communicating effectively

Sharing information

Adjusting leadership styles and behaviours

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THE FRAMEWORK: OVERVIEW

Managing volunteers in the emergency services: a supporting resource for volunteer leaders in WA

- Based on Self-Determination Theory

THE FRAMEWORK: OVERVIEW

Managing volunteers in the emergency services: a supporting resource for volunteer leaders in WA

- User-friendly resources for volunteer leaders

- Guidelines on best practice for managing volunteers
  - Specifically in the emergency services
  - Relevant to all five emergency services

THE FRAMEWORK: OVERVIEW

- Focused on 10 areas of management and leadership:

1. Influence tactics
2. Knowledge sharing
3. Delegation
4. Including and involving
5. Recognition and reward
6. Feedback provision
7. Receiving upwards feedback
8. Conflict management
9. Succession planning
10. Adjusting leadership style

1. INFLUENCE TACTICS

- Main resource:
  - Effect on motivation, performance, and commitment
  - Tactics to **use** and tactics to **avoid**

- Supporting resource:
  - Different sources of power
  - Practical examples

2. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

- Main resource:
  - Reasons for sharing information
  - Deciding what and how to share
  - Fostering knowledge sharing between volunteers

- Supporting resource:
  - Discussing knowledge sharing with volunteers
  - Techniques for fostering a knowledge sharing culture

3. DELEGATION

- Main resource:
  - Deciding what to delegate
  - Three steps to delegation
  - Tips for effective delegation

- Supporting resource:
  - Detailed descriptions of the three steps & tips

4. INCLUDING & INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS

- Main resource:
  - What makes volunteers feel included?
  - Involving volunteers in decision-making
  - Giving volunteers the freedom to make decisions

5. RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENTS & CONTRIBUTIONS

- Main resource:
    - The effect on satisfaction and commitment
    - Recognising all contributions
    - Ideas for tangible and intangible recognition

6. PROVIDING FEEDBACK

- Main resource:
    - The importance of giving good feedback
    - Tips for providing constructive feedback

- Supporting resource:
    - Worked examples of each tip

7. RECEIVING AND USING FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS

- Main resource:
  - The importance of upwards feedback
  - Common channels for upwards feedback
  - Using open communication to encourage feedback

- Supporting resource:
  - Open communication techniques

8. DEALING WITH CONFLICT

- Main resource:
  - Common causes of conflict
  - Minimizing the impact of conflict
  - Addressing & resolving conflict
  - Recording everything

- Supporting resource:
  - Task vs relationship conflicts
  - Worked examples of conflict resolution strategies

9. SUCCESSION PLANNING

- Managing a volunteer's career
  - Transitioning volunteers from active to support roles

- Developing future leaders
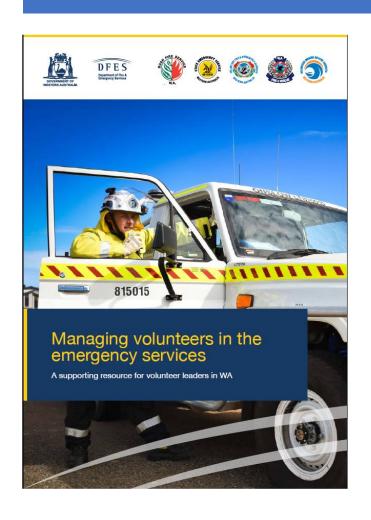 - Developing and mentoring future leaders for all roles

10. ADJUSTING LEADERSHIP STYLE

- Main resource:
  - The importance of adjusting leadership style
  - The differences between emergency and non-emergency situations
  - Two applicable leadership styles
  - Managing volunteer expectations

ROLLING IT OUT

Managing volunteers in the emergency services
A supporting resource for volunteer leaders in WA

- Currently available online to all volunteers

- Successful launch event with volunteer leaders

- Available to any other volunteer-based or emergency services organisations

  - Contact Jennifer Pidgeon at DFES

  - Hard copies available today

THANK YOU…