

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

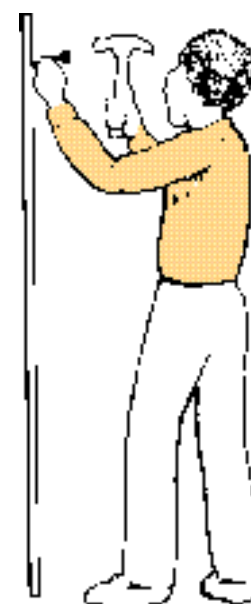
It is probably safe to say that you'll never run out of problems to solve in National Service (or in life)! Members/volunteers turn to their supervisors for help with social, family, health, transportation, and emotional problems. Some members/volunteers have only their stipend as a means of support 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.

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?

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....

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.

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.

- 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.)

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

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.	
<u>POSITIVE FORCES</u>	<u>NEGATIVE FORCES</u>
Strong local government support	No money available from local government
Complaints about trash all over town	Bad history due to last year's problems (lack of planning, no media attention, lack of organization, and coordination)
Top priority from members/volunteers	Apathetic general community
New member/volunteer with successful prior experience with cleanup days	Lack of media interest last year
Project commitment to conduct cleanup	Activity not exciting to potential corporate sponsors
Research showing cleanup discourages rodents	Concern over possible low turnout based on last year's experience
School in the area looking for community activity for its students	

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.]

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.]

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.

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

