



DECISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Needs and expectations change over time, from both the perspective of the individual and the organisation. One of the prerequisites for a healthy life cycle is change. For the individual this can bring a new challenge; for the organisation, it is an opportunity to welcome new people with new ideas.

At different stages of life, people can experience a lack of momentum. Creating space to achieve new goals or find a new direction at that moment can make the difference, and keep the volunteer engaged and committed to Scouting. Many aspects of life can contribute to this. Through a supported relationship like coaching or mentoring it is possible to recognize the early signs and symptoms and facilitate a process of reflection to help the volunteer make the right decisions for their future in Scouting. Early intervention is key.

As an individual, you should know what motivates you to function well in your role. What excites you about it? What competencies can you put into practice? What opportunities are there for you to grow? What connects you to the purpose of the role? What impact can you have? And finally, do you still have the time, drive, and capacity needed to do a good job in the role you are in?

As an organisation, you should have a clear understanding of the performance of individual volunteers and teams. Recognize when new competencies are needed to achieve the ideal results and identify the training to support this. Be aware when someone is ready for a new challenge and propose some rewarding opportunities for a new role. Notice when it is time to thank a volunteer for the work they have done and help them to retire from Scouting.

At least once a year, it is necessary for each Adult in Scouting to reflect, within a formal supported process, on 'decisions for the future'. This can result in the renewal of their existing engagement, a change to another role, or the end of their active contribution in a certain role, or to the organisation as a whole.

When renewing a commitment, it is good to reflect on what has been accomplished, the lessons learned, and the opportunities for improvement identified. It is an opportunity to celebrate success. This also applies when changing to a new role and can provide some direction for the role being undertaken. The same steps apply, i.e., assess the skills needed, update them, undergo an induction or training, and get some in-service support. When the commitment to Scouting is coming to an end, take the time to have a positive final reflection. There may well be opportunities for a renewed collaboration in the future, but even if this is not so we would like our adult volunteers to have profound and happy memories of their contribution to the Movement. It is appropriate to thank our volunteers and ensure they feel their contribution to the Movement is valued.



When it comes to supporting adults, consider that they may take on different roles at the same time. It is not unusual for a volunteer who is experienced in one role, to undertake a new role or function where they have little or no experience. It can be a challenge to track concurrent responsibilities and evaluate whether the time needed for these commitments is acceptable and healthy. The passion and enthusiasm of the adult are a well-known pitfall in these circumstances, if they are given a task or assign a role that go against their interests and expectations.

Teams are constantly going through change. Adults leave a position in a team after an agreed term, or even earlier, and new adults join. The process of building a team is a challenging task, well described by Bruce Tuckman's stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Bruce W Tuckman and Mary Ann C Jensen. Group & Organization Studies, December 1977, 2(4),419-427). In most cases, this is not a simple serial process, considering all the likely personalities or traits of the adults.

Reflection on the performance of a team and its role and tasks should also be part of the annual discussion. What made the team perform well? What is still missing? How can the necessary qualification or action be integrated so the team can reach its established targets? Is there still a need for the team to exist? Has it completed its task? Is the purpose no longer valid? It takes courage to disband a well-established team when the strategy of operation changes, or to reassign a strong team that has performed well and set them a new target or responsibility. But it is worth considering as links with 'governance and organisational development' can be made, stressing the human side against the technical or organisational perspective. A change in strategy can shift the focus. You may already have the adults you need; perhaps they just need to be reassigned. In general, team reflections are enriched by regular feedback from all team members.

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