

Is Our Group Open, Welcoming and Volunteer-friendly?

John shows up at the park to help out with the annual Canada Day festivities. He arrives at the volunteer check-in only to find that the person on duty does not have his name on any list and has no knowledge of what John is to do. He's told to, "go check with the guy over there on the stage." The stage manager is frantically trying to repair signage and has no time to deal with a new volunteer. John feels completely frustrated and discouraged.

“You only have one chance to make a great first impression.” The kind of experience a new member has with your group is more important than you might realize. If people don’t feel welcome or needed, their interest and enthusiasm will disappear and your group has just lost a valuable resource!

To create a friendly, open and welcoming environment for all, take a snapshot of your group through the eyes of your members and volunteers. The following

questions will help you determine just how welcoming your group is and whether you need to re-think how you include and welcome new members.

GROUP ASSESSMENT

For each statement, circle the number that best describes your group.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
The atmosphere is friendly, open and cooperative.	4	3	2	1
Volunteers trust and support one another.	4	3	2	1
Volunteers can express what they feel, even when it is negative.	4	3	2	1
New volunteers easily fit into activities, programs and social times.	4	3	2	1
New volunteers feel welcomed and included: cliques and status-seekers don't exist in this group.	4	3	2	1
We keep everyone informed and ensure they understand what is happening.	4	3	2	1
The purpose of each activity is clearly defined.	4	3	2	1
We involve many volunteers and don't make a habit of relying on just a few people to help.	4	3	2	1
We rotate tasks so that everyone has a chance to do something fun.	4	3	2	1
We accept and respect that people are not always available to help.	4	3	2	1
Volunteers are productive and stay with tasks until the job is done.	4	3	2	1
Our group adjusts well to changes and unforeseen circumstances.	4	3	2	1
We are open to new ideas.	4	3	2	1
We recognize the individual and group efforts of our volunteers.	4	3	2	1

When people volunteer to help out they want to feel included and appreciated. Groups that pay attention to maintaining a positive, open and welcoming environment will attract and keep creative and dedicated people.

There is an approach to finding, involving and keeping dedicated volunteers. It's called **Volunteer Development** and it is made up of five stages. This **fact sheet** (no 4 of 14) addresses the importance of **planning for volunteer involvement**.

For more information on the Volunteer Development Cycle or Volunteer Involvement, contact your local Volunteer Centre (www.volunteer.ca/volunteercentres).

Volunteer Development Cycle



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