

#### **Volunteer Conversation Scripts**

Below is a framework and examples for handling problem behaviors. Tailor them to best suit your situation.

#### **ABILITIES ROLES** Describe needed •What's the •How their role relates to org goals observable actions deadline? For satisfactory •When will you New goals check in? performance Unmet goals Define yours and Don't know theirs, how they For outstanding •Can't Do Timelines performance work ideally •Won't Do •Be honest about Set improvement your discomfort plan together **GOALS EXPECTATIONS** TIME •Behavior specific

**G-R-E-A-T Communication Model** 

## REQUESTING MORE ACCOUNTABILITY

OPENER Mrs. Vampire, have you got a minute for a guick chat? You know I enjoy working with you, but lately your work has had some major holes in it that others need to fill in. It really seems like the work is unbalanced between you and the other volunteers. It's negatively affecting the morale of the team. VOLUNTEER REACTION Accepts Criticism: I'm sorry. Denies Problem: What are you Gets Angry: You've got a lot of talking about? My work is fine, but I've got a lot on my mind nerve to criticize a volunteer and I've heard nothing from right now. I'm really doing the who works for free! other on the team. best I can. DEEPEN THE DISCUSSION Offer Evidence: I'm talking about Diffuse Anger: I'm not trying to Offer Support Options: I hear you. Life (give examples). If our team didn't put you on the spot, but it really can be complicated. But, I'd really like you to try your best. Is there anything we can depend on you, it wouldn't bother makes it harder for the entire me. But, we really need you to team. Think how you'd feel in your do to better support you in terms of training take this seriously. teammates's shoes. or reduced hours? VOLUNTEER REACTION Gets Over Anger: I know. Agrees to Try: Maybe there's Still Denies Problem: You're absolutely right. What something we can work out Are you threatening me? do you need me to do? that will work for both of us. Issue a Warning: No, but if we can't Reinforce Needs: I need you to REINFORCE Schedule a Check-in: Certainly! You come to agreement, I'm going to have to really own your assignment like know I'll help in any way I can. Let's re-assign you (or let you go). Why don't (describe tasks). Check in with set up an action plan for support. you think about it, and we'll talk again me if you think it's too much, and Also, let's check in in two weeks. tomorrow. we can go to Plan B.

# REQUESTING BETTER RELIABILITY

OPENER & PROBLEM	Mr. Ghost, Do you know what these time logs mean (holding up or gesturing to his volunteer hours or schedule)? [volunteer answers]. Those are all of the times you committed to a shift, and were either not here, arrived late, or left early. If you add them up, that's a lot of wasted time.				
VOILUNTEER REACTION	No Big Deal Excuse: I know I come late and leave early once in awhile, but I didn't think it was that big of a deal, since we're volunteers.  Rationalization: I'm not the only one. It seems like a lot of volunteers, and even some staff, come and go as they please.  Personal Excuse: I'm sorry I've had a lot on my mind that I didn't want to worry anyone with. My head just isn't here lately.				
RESTATE PROBLEM	Confirm Accusation: We would not be having this discussion if this weren't an issue. When you're not here it affects productivity and the morale of the other volunteers.  Reaffirm Problem: Yes, that may be true. In your case, it's more than once awhile, which is why I started looking at the time sheets. You need to understand that if this continues, we'll have to talk about ending your assignment.  Continued Focus: That's understandable. But, for your role it's critical that volunteers show up and leave on time. Do we need to discuss a re-assignment?				
RECOMMIT	Acknowledges Responsibility: I'm really sorry. It won't happen again.  Acceptance: I hear what you're saying. I'll take care of it.				
REINFORCE	Clarify Monitoring: I hope not. I'm going to check on you over the next few months. If there are no further problems, we won't chat again. If there are, I'll need to let you go.  Rebuild Rapport: I'm glad to hear that. If you're having personal problems, we can arrange a leave of absence, if that would help. Just let me know.				

### **ENCOURAGING A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE** OPENER Mr. Zombie, I need to ask you a question and I want you to answer honestly. Are you planning to resign as a volunteer? [volunteer answers] PROBLEM STATEMENT Describe the Problem: You've been displaying a very negative attitude around here to almost everything. It's really having an affect on the morale of your fellow volunteers. I'm assuming that because you are so unhappy you're planning to leave. VOLUNTEER REACT Voices Complaint: It's just that we volunteers work so hard, and it does't feel like staff really understand or respect what we do. To top it off, the materials we have to work with are sub-par and our office furniture is old and run down. Also, I don't think were doing enough for the community and we should expand our mission. RESTATE PROBLEM Point it Out: This is exactly the negativity I'm referring to. Certainly, our nonprofit isn't perfect. But, if there are so many things wrong, then perhaps its not a good fit. I'm happy to work with you, if you have some proactive suggestions for change (that you are also willing to take an active role in supporting). There are also things that probably won't change because we simply don't have the budget or the authority to tackle. REINFORCE Accept & Reinforce: I'm glad to hear that. I don't Volunteer Apologizes: I'm sorry. It's just expect you to be a cheerleader all the time, but you my grumpy personality. I didn't realize it don't need to find the cloud behind every silver lining. was affecting the other volunteers. Let's try to have some fun volunteering, OK?

### GIVING A NEGATIVE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

OPENER	Mr. Frankenstein, I've generally been happy with your work, especially with (insert example). But, lately I've been concerned. I seem to have to explain things a number of times. You either don't follow though or make mistakes. I'm wondering if you're struggling with your volunteer assignment.					
VOLUNTEER	Accepts Criticism: I'm really sorry. I didn't realize I'd messed up so badly.	Denies Problem: I'm not sure what you're talking about. I check and recheck my work, and I don't make mistakes		complaining about the quality of my work. After all, I'm a volunteer not paid staff!  Diffuse Anger: I'm surprised you're angry. I thought you'd want to do your best work here. Is something else bothering you?		
DEEPEN THE	Offer Support Options: There are a few ways we might better support you - you could get more training, work with a coach, or try a different job. What do you think?  Offer Evidence: Let you what I mean. Here examples of mistake made and things you assigned.		Here are some stakes you've s you've been			
VOLUNTEER	I guess you're right. I didn't realize I needed mean. May	t. I I really don't see what you		gry: I really fair. My work I. I think you o much!	sorry I got so defensive. I	
REINFORCE	Issue a Warning: If we can't see a I'm going to have to re-assign you Why don't you take a few days to t we'll get back together (on a	u (or let you go). think about it, and	in any way support. Also	/ I can. Let's s o, let set a date	ou know I'm here to help et up an action plan for e for a month from now to how it's going.	

# PUTTING AN END TO GOSSIP

OPENER	Ms. Witch, we have a serious problem on our team. It's becoming hurtful and personal.				
PROBLEM	Some Evidence: I overheard you speaking with others about a volunteer on our team. I'm not saying you're at fault for the hurtful rumors, but I was troubled by what I heard.  No Evidence: I've received reports from a number of people that someone is spreading hurtful rumors about the personal life of one of our volunteers. Have your heard anything?				
VOLUNTEER	Denies Responsibility: I'm sorry. I really didn't mean anything by it. I don't think I'm the gossip you're looking for. For the most part, I keep to myself.  Stonewalls: It's not surprising that there's a little gossip here and there. It's only natural. But, I haven't heard anything out of order lately.				
ENLIST	I'm glad to hear that. I know that you're very well connected with the rest of the volunteers.  Because of that, I'd really like your help solving this problem. Could you help spread the word that I consider gossip to be unacceptable? Regardless of the intent, it hurts our team and our mission. Can I count on your help?				
REINFORCE	Great! Together we can put a stop to this problem. I'd hate to have to start digging deeper and have to make some serious changes. Let me know how it goes.				