



Special Olympics

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SERIES

SUPERVISION

Facilitator's Guide



Special Olympics Volunteer Management Series

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Introduction:

The goal of supervising Special Olympics volunteers is to establish conditions that encourage and support others to get their jobs done. In the traditional supervisor/worker model, the supervisor alone made decisions and directed the work of those reporting to him/her. Today's effective supervisor encourages staff and volunteers to be increasingly involved in decisions that concern them and to take more responsibility for their actions.

When a staff member or key volunteer is asked to supervise volunteers in a Special Olympics Program, there is a need to clarify:

- (1) the role of supervisor;
- (2) the skills, qualities and tasks involved in supervision;
- (3) how supervising volunteers is similar and unique as compared to supervising staff; and
- (4) suggested procedures to carry out this function.

Even experienced supervisors find the transition to supervision of volunteers challenging if the task and expectations are not clear.

Supervising encompasses many skills and techniques such as delegation, motivation, evaluation, etc., each of which are covered in other modules. This session does not attempt to cover component skills in depth, but rather, to provide staff with a comprehensive overview of supervision. The facilitator will augment the workshop with specifics as they relate to your specific Special Olympics Programs.

This module can be used with paid staff and volunteers together, or separately. It is important to remember that a supervisor can be either a paid staff person or volunteer. Efficient supervision of volunteers plays an integral part in the success of your Special Olympics Program.



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The **Primary Purposes** of this workshop are:

- to identify the basic skills and characteristics of good volunteer supervision
- to clarify the supervisor's role in the Special Olympics Program
- to explore methods and systems for carrying out this role

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Gain/review an understanding of the role of supervisor.
2. Discover the similarities and uniqueness of supervising salaried versus non-paid staff..
3. Assess their competence in the supervision skills and qualities of effective supervisors.
4. Explore the various methods of supervising volunteers.

General Notes to Facilitator:



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1. This workshop is in a suggested format. Feel free to personalize it with your own stories about your experience working with Special Olympics.
2. Supervision of volunteers should have the same basic philosophy as staff supervision. Your focus in this workshop is to reinforce Special Olympics philosophy and style of supervision while addressing issues that make supervision of volunteers unique and often more challenging.
3. Because this topic is multifaceted, it is very important to stress that this is not a "how-to" workshop, nor is its intent to problem solve around difficult personal supervision problems. As needs and issues that cannot be dealt with during this session surface, it is important to keep a list of them in clear view of participants and determine how they will be dealt with in future workshops. For example, If participants continually wish to problem solve around difficult volunteer situations, it may be appropriate to request a future training on "Dealing with Problem Volunteers."
4. Good supervision saves time and enhances everyone's performance. If the executive level staff do not understand this they are unlikely to be supportive of the need to invest in establishing good supervision practices. Including them in the workshop may be a good start toward building buy-in and support for staff.
5. In this module, the facilitator can choose to present much of the information or have participants share their experience or observations in a brainstorming fashion. The choice will be dependent (a) on the time frame for delivering the information (brainstorming takes longer, but gets more buy-in and involvement), (b) on whether you as facilitator want an opportunity to share your expertise, and (3) on the maturity and experience level of participants.



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WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Corresponding Slide #	Corresponding Facilitator Guide Pages	SECTION	Total Estimated Time: 60 Minutes
D-1, 2, 3, 4	7, 8	Introduction Introductory activity Introduction Purpose Learning Objectives Four Key Concepts	7 minutes
D-5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	9, 10, 11, 12	Concept 1 Supervisory expectations	12 minutes
D-12, 13, 14, 15	12, 13, 14	Concept 2 Skills of supervision	12 minutes
D-16, 17, 18	14, 15	Concept 3 Uniqueness of volunteer supervision	12 minutes
D-19, 20	16	Concept 4 Methods of supervision	12 minutes
	17	Summary/Wrap-up/Evaluation	5 minutes



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INTRODUCTION

- **Show Slide #1**

Opening Exercise:

If participants have had some experience with supervision, ask them to write down one word beginning with the letter 'S' that best describes their previous experience with supervising volunteers. Show **Slide 2** with some suggestions but encourage them to use their own creativity to think of others:

Show Slide #2

- Successful
- Stressful
- So-So
- Super
- Smooth
- Satisfying
- Strenuous
- Stormy
- Scary
- Stimulating

Have several participants share their word.

Summarize the essence of what you hear. Generally you will have a mixture of responses about the experience of supervising volunteers. The negative responses may be due to one of the following factors:



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1. Lack of clarity of what was expected of them when supervising
What will you be measured upon? What is responsibility and authority?
2. Lack of feeling competent about the skill of supervision
Thinking it is so different from paid staff when it really is not.
3. Lack of time to effectively follow good principles of supervision
This is common with "day of" volunteers at events.
4. Experience with supervising difficult volunteers
Not being firm enough with the person. Afraid of offending the volunteer because "they are giving their time."
5. Lack of awareness about the scope of authority.
"What authority do I have?"

- **Show Slide #3: Learning Objectives**

Summarize objectives of this module and offer some introductory comments on recognition. Employ personal experiences and anecdotes. Indicate that it is not an in-depth "how-to" session but rather a general view of the role and skills needed to be effective at supervising volunteers.

- **Show Slide # 4: Key Concepts of Supervision**

This workshop is built on 4 Key Concepts. Indicate that during the workshop each concept will be examined more closely.



- **Show Slide #5: Key Concept 1**

KEY CONCEPT #1:

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE ASKED TO SUPERVISE VOLUNTEERS MUST CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE PROGRAM'S EXPECTATION OF THEM IN THIS ROLE AND SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH THOSE THEY SUPERVISE.

Presentation:

- ❖ Supervision is an all-encompassing activity which involves the process of motivating others and overseeing their work. This is the key to success. By taking the time up front, you will be rewarded later. Enhancing skills and techniques to support others achieving their goals should be your aim.

- **Show Slide #6: Supervisory Skills**

⇒ Remind participants...

Excellent supervisory skills are not measured by your personal accomplishments but by the success of those who report to you.

- ❖ It is imperative that staff and key volunteers with supervisory positions feel a sense of clarity surrounding their roles and responsibilities.
 - Provide job descriptions which defined boundaries and authority.
 - Establish a process for input from volunteers, such as an evaluation after the event.

- **Show Slide #7: Categories of Supervisory Tasks**



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Supervising tasks can be identified under 4 major categories. Discuss the activities that are expected of your staff and key volunteers who supervise volunteers.

Supervisor is responsible for the following:

1. Preparation/Orientation of volunteer to job
2. Ongoing support and resources
3. Reporting requirements
4. Evaluation

• Show Slide #8: Preparation/Orientation of Volunteer to Job

1. **Orientation of Special Olympics Volunteer to job.** Orientation is relative to the complexity of the job, and may include some or all of the following.

- Staff write the job description
- Job description shared with volunteer.
- Introduce volunteers and staff with whom they interface
Orientation through an organizational flow chart of structure and also introductions to the people the volunteer will be working with.
- Orientation to the work area
Guided tour of venue. Explain risk management issue.
- Supervision and evaluation system explained
Clarify the chain of authority.



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- Risk management issues handled

Review Volunteer Screening Policy, protocol for athlete injury, etc.

- Relevant policies and procedures shared

Fundraising Chairperson should be aware of tobacco and alcohol regulations. Public Relations policies on language guidelines and style guides. Reporting and safety procedures should also be reviewed.

2. Ongoing support and resources:

- **Show Slide #9: Ongoing Support and Resources**

- Training

Explain how the specific committees should be run.

- Mentoring (on-the-job)

Be available as a resource to the volunteer. Get specific feedback after their assignment has begun - positive and negative – and advice for change.

- Ongoing informal appreciation of volunteer

This is critical. "Thank yous" are a must. Phone calls or handwritten notes complimenting the volunteer for the work they have done.

- Materials, information to support volunteer in his/her job

If the volunteer is long term, it is helpful to send relevant Special Olympics publications and other non-profit newsletters etc.

3. Evaluation

- **Show Slide #10: Evaluation**

- Annual performance review of volunteers in your Special Olympics Program

Must review as a group and as an individual.

- Annual written evaluation of volunteers' work within the Special Olympics Program, your department, etc.



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This should be based solely on the volunteer's performance, not their personality. The evaluation system gives the volunteer a chance to speak up about any questions or concerns they may have.

- Team evaluations are also necessary
When evaluation a team of volunteers, individual evaluations may be desired to commend effort or confront issues.

4. Reporting Requirements

- **Show Slide #11: Reporting Requirements**

- Individual and overall volunteer hours
An ongoing verbal type of reporting to supervisor
- Impact of volunteer work
Explain why it is so important to have volunteers in Special Olympics.
- Reports to Director of Volunteers (and others)
- Periodic written volunteer reviews
Feedback from other volunteers and evaluation teams.

- **Show Slide #12: Key Concept 2**

KEY CONCEPT #2:
**PEOPLE WHO ARE COMPETENT SUPERVISORS OF SALARIED OR
NON-SALARIED STAFF SHARE KEY SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

Presentation:

You must be a superb supervisor when working with volunteers because they can readily leave Special Olympics if they are discontent with the job, the supervision, etc. It is important to be reminded of some of the key skills and characteristics of good supervision.

Activity



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Ask participants to identify the following:

- (1) the key skills required in a good supervisor
- (2) the key qualities that are important to supervising volunteers in Special Olympics.

Record answers on a flip-chart.

Answers can include these and others...

- Athlete Focus
- Delegation
- Planning (goals and direction)
- Listening
- Coaching
- Evaluation/Review
- Climate setting
- Conflict resolution
- Recognition
- Facilitator/teacher
- Team builder
- Clear communications
- Confrontation
- Problem solving
- Sharing knowledge
- Setting standards

- **Show Slide #13 &14: Skills of a good supervisor**

What skills/qualities are *most* important? Ask participants to reflect on the skills and qualities of someone who has been a particularly good supervisor to them.

- **Show Slide #15: Personal Qualities of a Good Supervisor**



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Personal Qualities of a Good Supervisor:

- Trustworthy
- Consistent
- Models good behavior
- Positive attitude, sense of humor
- Empowering
- Supportive
- Adaptability/Flexibility
- Committed to Special Olympics

Optional Activity: Ask participants to add any additional personal qualities that they believe contribute to being a good supervisor. Have each individual evaluate themselves and asterisk any skills they wish to improve. Have them briefly share one area they would like to work toward improving. Have participants develop on a plan to enhance their skills.

- **Show Slide #16: Key Concept 3**

KEY CONCEPT #3:

ALTHOUGH PRINCIPLES OF SUPERVISION FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF ARE VERY SIMILAR, THERE ARE SOME UNIQUE ASPECTS OF VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION.

Activity:

Show Slide #17: Supervision Activity

Ask participants to divide into groups of two and identify any differences they experience between supervision of staff and volunteers.

Ask the groups to briefly share some ideas. You may wish to record the responses on a flip chart or on a transparency. These and other ideas will most likely surface in the response:

Show Slide #18: Uniqueness/Differences in Volunteer Supervision



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- (1) Supervising Special Olympics volunteers is harder because they are frequently only available on a very part-time basis.
"Day-of" volunteers require building a first name relationship with their co-workers as soon as possible.
- (2) If volunteers don't like their supervisor, they can more readily leave. Salaried staff generally need to stick it out.
Volunteers in Special Olympics have more options to be reassigned to another position or leave the organization altogether.
- (3) It is particularly important to explain the supervision and evaluation system to volunteers before they start to work as they might not have had this experience with volunteering in the past. Salaried staff are more accustomed to supervision and evaluations.
Maintain a sensitivity to the review process for volunteers verses paid staff.
- (4) Volunteer supervision may take more time due to socialization needs that many volunteers wish to meet in their volunteer experience.
You must play as hard as you work, and that requires work on the part of the staff member.
- (5) It is frequently more difficult to confront volunteers in problematic situations because they are "giving" their time.
This could vary depending on the volunteer and paid staff.
- (6) Supervisors may need to be more flexible in working with volunteers since other activities may take priority in their lives.
On-going assignment, like committees require adapting to the volunteer's most convenient times of availability.

Optional Activity (time permitting)

After participants have identified some unique aspects of supervising Special Olympics volunteers, ask which ones may be causing problems to them and do some problem solving. If problems cannot be resolved in this session, add these issues to the "unfinished business" list previously started and refer to list for planning purposes at the close of this workshop



Show Slide #19: Key Concept 4

KEY CONCEPT # 4:
**DEPENDING ON FORMALITY, SIZE AND STYLE OF THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROGRAM,
TYPE OF JOB, ETC., SUPERVISION SYSTEMS AND METHODS CAN BE VARIED.**

Presentation:

The key point is that an appropriate system of supervision be established, shared with the volunteer and then followed through. Share examples of various methods of giving supervision:

• Show Slide #20: Supervision Methods

Examples of Supervision Methods:

- ❖ Seek assistance from the immediate supervisor first.
Show a flow chart which illustrates the chain of command.
- ❖ Specific appointments at designated times
For orientation and on-going meetings.
- ❖ Open time when volunteers can schedule appointments
Keep some standard office hours or days when the volunteer knows they can reach you in the office.
- ❖ Monthly group of individual meetings
Area Committees, Games Management Teams, Board meetings etc.
- ❖ Supervision by "walking around" (informal, as needed)
Only appropriate at "day-of" type assignments.
- ❖ Regular reports or phone calls from volunteers who work off site
Use e-mail and the Internet for similar groups such as all Public Relations Chairpersons, Games Management Team members, etc.



Summary/Wrap-Up/Evaluation

In closing, offer the group some reminders of principles for successful volunteer supervision.

⇒ Supervision is a complex activity which involves a number of skills and qualities to effectively empower others to do the work, especially when you are working with volunteers. Review the "unfinished business" list and discuss options for ways to address the unresolved issues and problems which continue as barriers to effective supervision of volunteers in this Special Olympics Program.

Close with a review of the 4 Key Concepts.

Refer participants to the *Evaluation Form* located at the end of their Participant Guide. Collect the completed evaluations before participants leave.

END VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION MODULE



Suggestions for expanded activities for sessions over 55 minutes

1. This workshop could be the first segment of a half or full day workshop on supervision. Other topics that might be included are: motivation, delegation, workshop, managing problem volunteers, etc.
2. For participants who are not trained in the skills and techniques of supervision and coaching, there should be some introductory workshop on the basics of supervision. If a number of staff and volunteers need this workshop, it may be more cost effective to bring in a facilitator who specializes in supervision. Anyone in the Special Olympics who does any supervision of staff or volunteers could benefit.
3. Develop a written handout which would include your Special Olympics Program expectations of those entrusted with the supervision of volunteers. Distribute during the discussion of Concept 2.
4. Concept 3, covering the uniqueness of supervising volunteers, could be the focus of a 45 minute discussion. It would be particularly useful to discuss problems your Special Olympics is having due to these differences and would afford you an opportunity to look at options for new approaches to dealing with these realities. (i.e., If you realize that volunteers will need some flexibility in a regular assignment, you might develop a list of trained substitutes that they can call when they are unable to fulfill their commitment.)
5. As participants and facilitator uncover the varied skills and characteristics of effective supervisors, it would be a good time to discover which of these areas (coaching, listening, etc.) they would like more in-depth workshop or resources to enhance their skills.
6. To expand the discussion of supervision methods (Concept #4), discuss the pros and cons of the various methods and appropriate situations for each system to be used.
7. Topics such as situational leadership, leadership styles could help participants see the need for possessing a variety of techniques to effectively supervise a diverse group of volunteers.



Suggested Resources on Supervising Volunteers

On-Line Resources:

<http://energizeinc.com> Energize, Inc. is an international training, consulting and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism. Their goal is "to connect leaders of volunteers with resources, information and ideas generated from around the world."

<http://www.iave.org>. IAVE is "the only international organization with the mission to promote, celebrate, and strengthen volunteerism worldwide." The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) worked in close cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers and was a major contributor in establishing the International Year of the Volunteer.

<http://e-volunteerism.com/> The "Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community," e-Volunteerism is a quarterly online publication that caters to volunteer leaders and managers.

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