**Recognising Volunteers with Diversity in Mind**

Recognising volunteers is important to let them know that you value their contributions, as well as for improving your volunteers’ satisfaction and retention rates. Each volunteer may have different preferences which should influence how you go about recognising them. Some of these preferences may arise from cultural differences.

This document contains some information on what to keep in mind when recognising culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) volunteers, as well as a quiz to assess your own cultural awareness.

**Things to consider:**

* *Dates* – If you are planning an event for your volunteers, keep in mind that there may be special religious or cultural dates that would conflict with your event. For example, Ramadan would be a poor time to organise a luncheon if some of your volunteers are Islamic and observe Ramadan.
* *Food* – If you are organising a lunch, dinner or other event that involves food, make sure that all of your volunteers will be able to eat. This should take into consideration personal and religious dietary requirements. For example, at a sausage sizzle you should offer an alternative to pork sausages, as any vegetarian, Islamic, or Jewish volunteers may not eat pork.
* *Language* – For many CaLD volunteers English is not their first language and some of them may have difficulty with English. Take this into consideration when recognising these volunteers.
* *Gender* – Some women may not be comfortable in mixed-gender environments. If this is the case, try organising an event only for your female volunteers. This creates an inclusive environment that all your female volunteers can be a part of.
* *Financial Hardship* – Many refugees, and some Australians, face financial hardship. Keep this in mind if you are considering organising an event which volunteers may be required to pay for, even if it is a discounted rate. If you are aware of some volunteers who are facing financial hardship, consider covering the cost for them, or try to organise a free event.
* *Assumptions* – There are many misconceptions about CaLD volunteers, such as language barrier issues, problems with cultural differences, or problems managing CaLD volunteers. Unless you know specific details about your CaLD volunteers, don’t make assumptions based on their background. Make every effort to treat them the same as you treat all your volunteers.

Cultures can range so widely in their practices and traditions. This list only covers a few examples of what you should be aware of when recognising your CaLD volunteers. Talking, asking questions, and interacting with CaLD volunteers are the best ways to learn more about them. We also have [this document](https://volunteeringwa.s3.amazonaws.com/Assets/docs/A%20Common%20Purpose.pdf) which contains a lot of information on different cultures relevant to volunteering. If you aren’t sure about something related to CaLD volunteers or issues you can always get in touch with the [Office of Multicultural Interests](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/).

**Cultural Awareness Quiz**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **Strongly Agree** | **Agree** | **Neither** | **Disagree** | **Strongly disagree** |
| I can usually anticipate how one of my volunteers will react in a given situation | A | B | C | D | E |
| I generally feel comfortable telling one of my volunteers how I feel when the feeling has the potential to interfere with working together | A | B | C | D | E |
| I don’t usually find it difficult to talk to people who do not share my views | A | B | C | D | E |
| I try to consider the other person’s point of view before I give my opinion | A | B | C | D | E |
| I am good at getting people to open up and talk to me | A | B | C | D | E |
| I am good at figuring out what people really mean when they are talking to me | A | B | C | D | E |
| I have learnt a lot from recognizing my own feelings and emotions | A | B | C | D | E |
| I can usually tell when someone I know well is upset | A | B | C | D | E |
| I am generally conscious of what other people are feeling | A | B | C | D | E |
| Most of the time I am aware of my feelings | A | B | C | D | E |
| I can usually explain to others how I am feeling | A | B | C | D | E |
| I don’t usually find it difficult to ask volunteers for help | A | B | C | D | E |
| Usually I can use language that would not offend other people | A | B | C | D | E |
| I don’t usually get stressed when dealing with someone who develops strong emotions | A | B | C | D | E |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Statement** | **Strongly Agree** | **Agree** | **Neither** | **Disagree** | **Strongly disagree** |
| I am generally tolerant when a volunteer is argumentative | A | B | C | D | E |
| I encourage volunteers to give me feedback about my performance | A | B | C | D | E |
| I make sure I praise volunteers for a job well done | A | B | C | D | E |
| I am not concerned that my responses to potentially difficult situations could make me look ‘bad’ | A | B | C | D | E |
| I am generally receptive to requests for flexibility to deal with situations outside work | A | B | C | D | E |
| If a volunteer comes to me with a suggestion about how we can improve a work practice I generally give them a fair hearing | A | B | C | D | E |
| **TOTAL SCORES (number of A, B, C, D, E)** |  |  |  |  |  |

**Understanding your responses to this quiz**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Total** |
| Multiply the number of A’s you scored by 5 |  |
| Multiply the number of B’s you scored by 4 |  |
| Where you marked a C as your preferred answer there is no score |  |
| Multiply the number of D’s you scored by 2 |  |
| Multiply the number of E’s you scored by 1 |  |
| Add up your score |  |

There is no right or wrong answer in this quiz. It is an opportunity to identify where you might want to act differently or review some of your thoughts or ideas about your volunteers.

**If you scored 90 or over**

* Your responses suggest that you have an excellent understanding of many of the diverse issues within your club or association
* You also appear to be ‘tuned in’ to a lot of the people situations that you manage.

**If you scored over 70 but under 89**

* Your responses show that you have a good picture of what is happening within your club or association and generally respond to situations in a way that meets the needs of your volunteers and members.
* You could further develop your skills and understanding of diversity management by looking at the questions where you scored D’s or E’s. Was this response because your feel uncomfortable in these situations, or because you aren’t sure what else you can do?
* Be sure to ask questions about situations or information that needs to be clarified.

**If you scored less than 69**

Your results suggest there is an opportunity for you to find out more about diversity in your club or association, as well as exploring your own feelings and attitudes to people and situations that are different.