Leading Through Every Stage of the Volunteer Lifecycle Planning Guide

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Leading Through Every Stage of the Volunteer Lifecycle

When it comes to leading volunteers, you'll want to define important points on their personal volunteer journey + find creative ways to meet them where they're at and build community.

Use this guide to gain insights into your program.

- **Define volunteer lifecycle stages at your organization**

- **Evaluate your current communications + processes for each lifecycle stage**

- **Develop leadership communications + processes that speak to each volunteer stage**

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Define Volunteer Lifecycle Stages

Have you asked your volunteers what the process was like to sign up?

_____

Do you know how/where most volunteers learn about your organization?

_____

What are your most effective recruitment efforts? (events, email, social media, etc)

_____

Do you have an idea of how much time it takes for a prospective volunteer to move from awareness of your organization to signing up for their first shift?

_____

What programs have the highest volunteer retention rates at your organization? Can you identify what is unique about those programs that keeps volunteers coming back?

_____
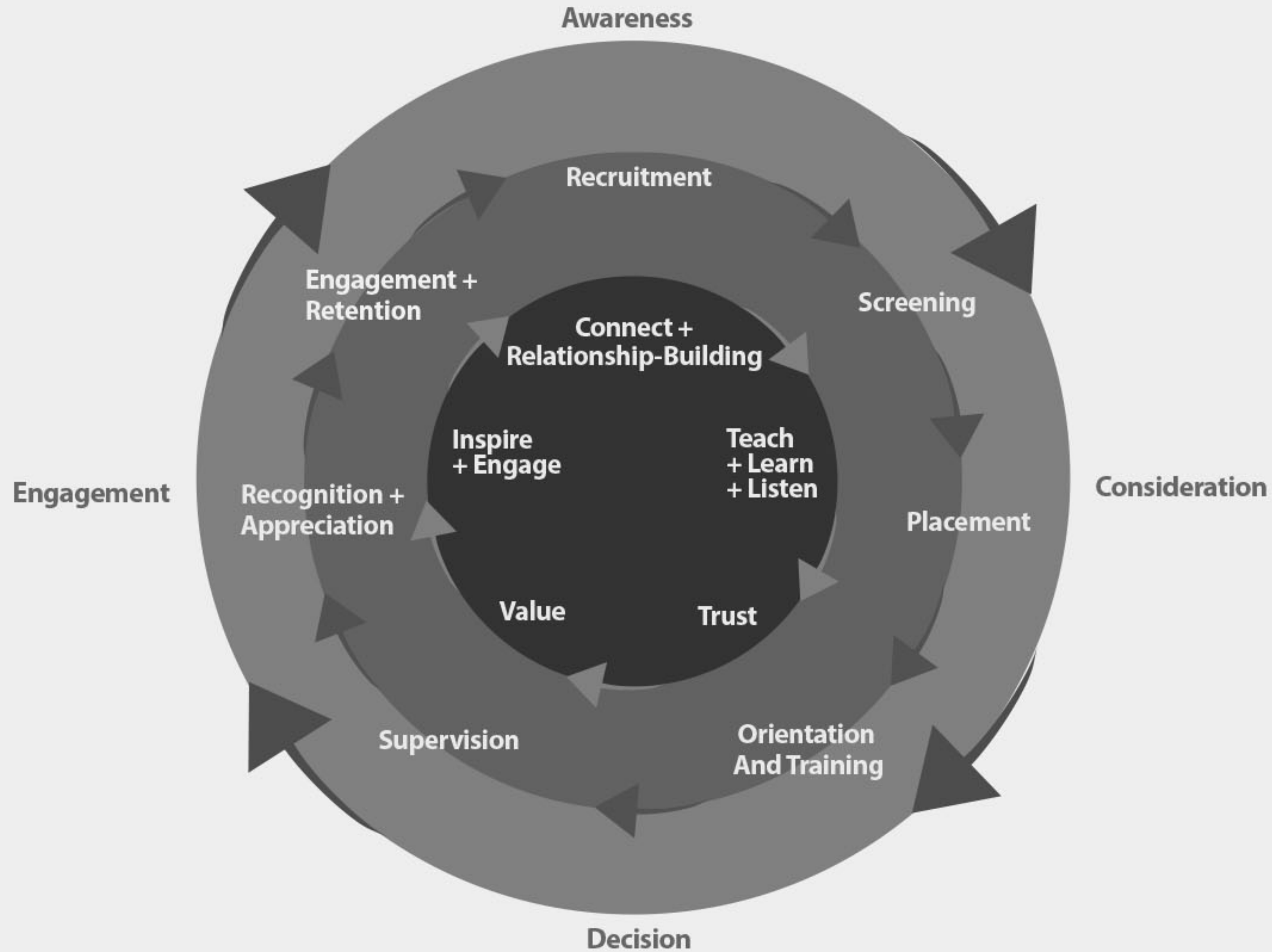
Use this diagram to fill in specific activities you're organization is doing at each point of the Volunteer Lifecycle. You can also write words, feelings, examples of where your volunteers are at during these stages.

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Evaluate your current communications + processes for each lifecycle stage

Do we know what volunteers think/feel about the recruitment process?

_____

Do we know how easy it is for volunteers to sign up with our programs?

_____

Do we have a volunteer onboarding, orientation, and training process that prepares volunteers for their roles + also builds community?

_____

Do volunteers feel confused or comfortable when showing up for their volunteer shifts? Do they know who they can go to with questions?

_____

Do volunteers feel appreciated? Do we have a process for volunteer appreciation that is easily repeatable?

_____

Do we currently have a plan for volunteer retention in place? Do we have a system for receiving volunteer feedback?

_____

Develop leadership communications + processes that speak to each volunteer stage

What are the different ways we connect + communicate with our volunteers? (email, text, mailers, in-person events)

_____

Of the above methods, what are the ways volunteers enjoy receiving communications? What ways do they perceive as more community building?

_____

What types of communication work best for each stage of our volunteer lifecycle?

_____

Which parts of the Volunteer Lifecycle can identify to boost our leadership efforts through connection + communication?

_____

Bring It All Together

Define Volunteer Lifecycle Stages

- Start observing and recording how volunteers behave in each lifecycle stage

- Learn what forms of communication + connection work best to meet volunteers at each stage

Evaluate your current communications + processes for each lifecycle stage

- Identify what is working in your communications + processes

- Identify gaps in your volunteer lifecycle that need additional leadership support

- Do you need new tools to help automate certain processes?
  (ie Volunteer Management Software that can centralize communications + recognition)

Develop leadership communications + processes that speak to each volunteer stage

- Make a plan for consistent volunteer connection through each lifecycle stage

- Create informational + inspiring connections with your volunteers