

Navigating Sticky Situations: Effective Solutions for Everyday Challenges

Society for Healthcare
Volunteer Leaders

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A close-up photograph of a rectangular wooden sign hanging from a metal chain. The sign is made of light-colored wood with visible grain and is painted with the word "WELCOME" in a thick, black, hand-painted font. The letters are slightly irregular and have a rustic feel. The sign is suspended by a silver metal chain with a hook at the top. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green trees and a light sky. The lighting is natural, suggesting daytime.

WELCOME



What are
you
seeing?

Today's Volunteers Want To...

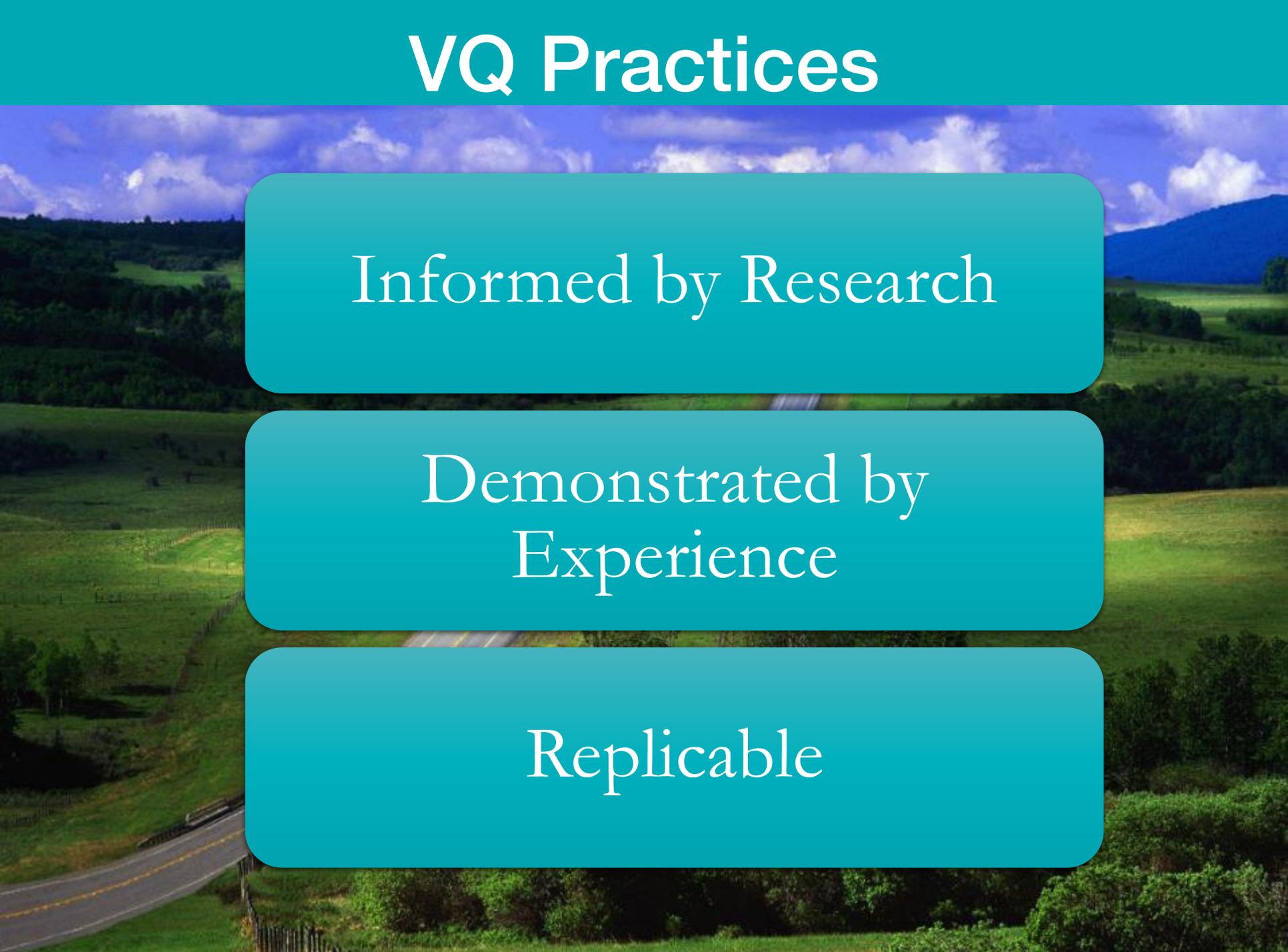
Have Flexibility

Work with Colleagues

Use Their Skills

Make an Impact

VQ Practices



Informed by Research

Demonstrated by
Experience

Replicable

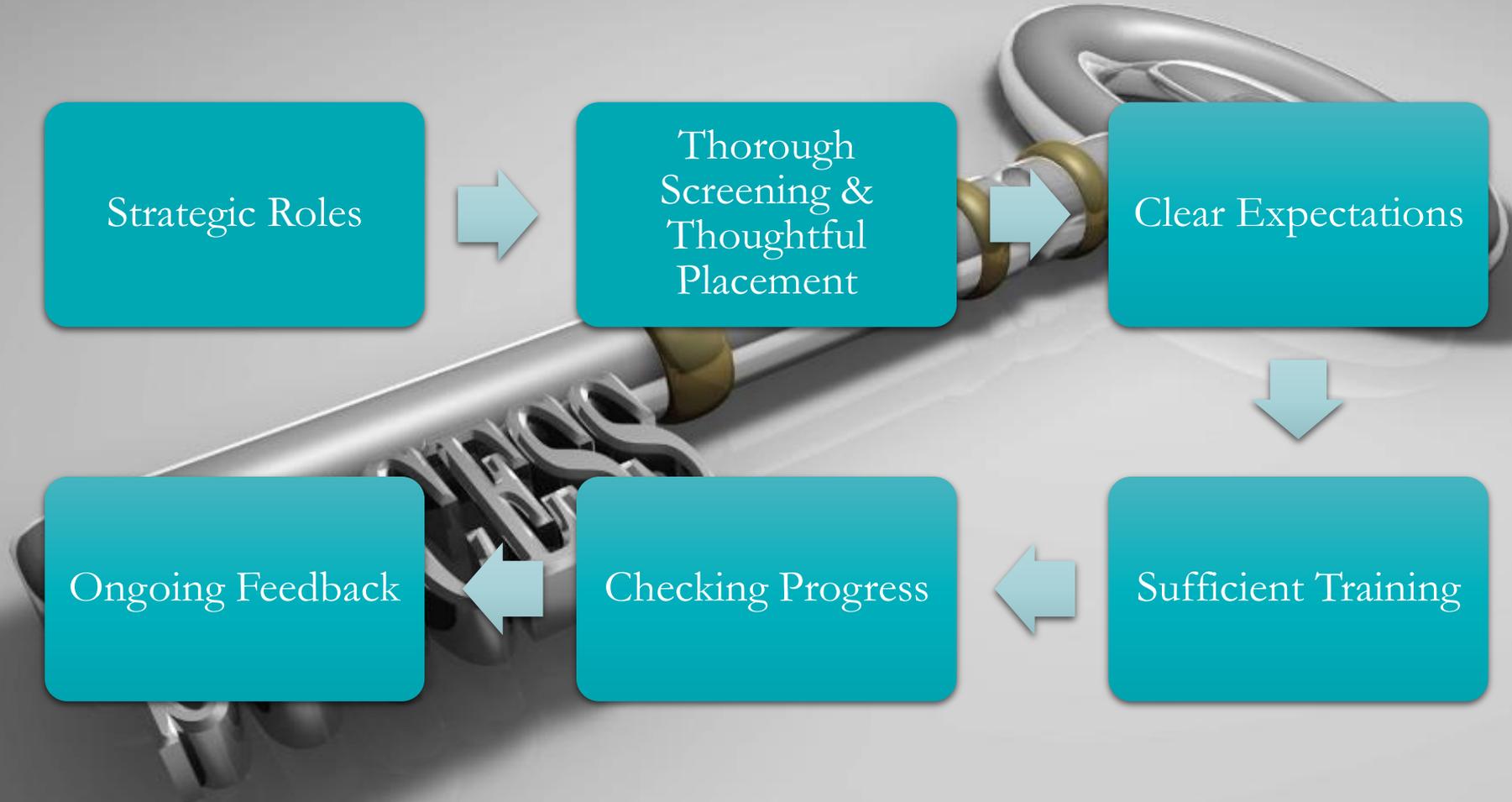
VQ Practices

1. Creating Strategic Volunteer Roles
2. Cultivating Volunteers
3. Screening and Placement
4. Support and Accountability
5. Evaluation, Recognition, and Acknowledgment
6. Ongoing Professional Development and Training
7. Policies, Infrastructure, and Technology
8. Organizational Commitment to Volunteer Engagement

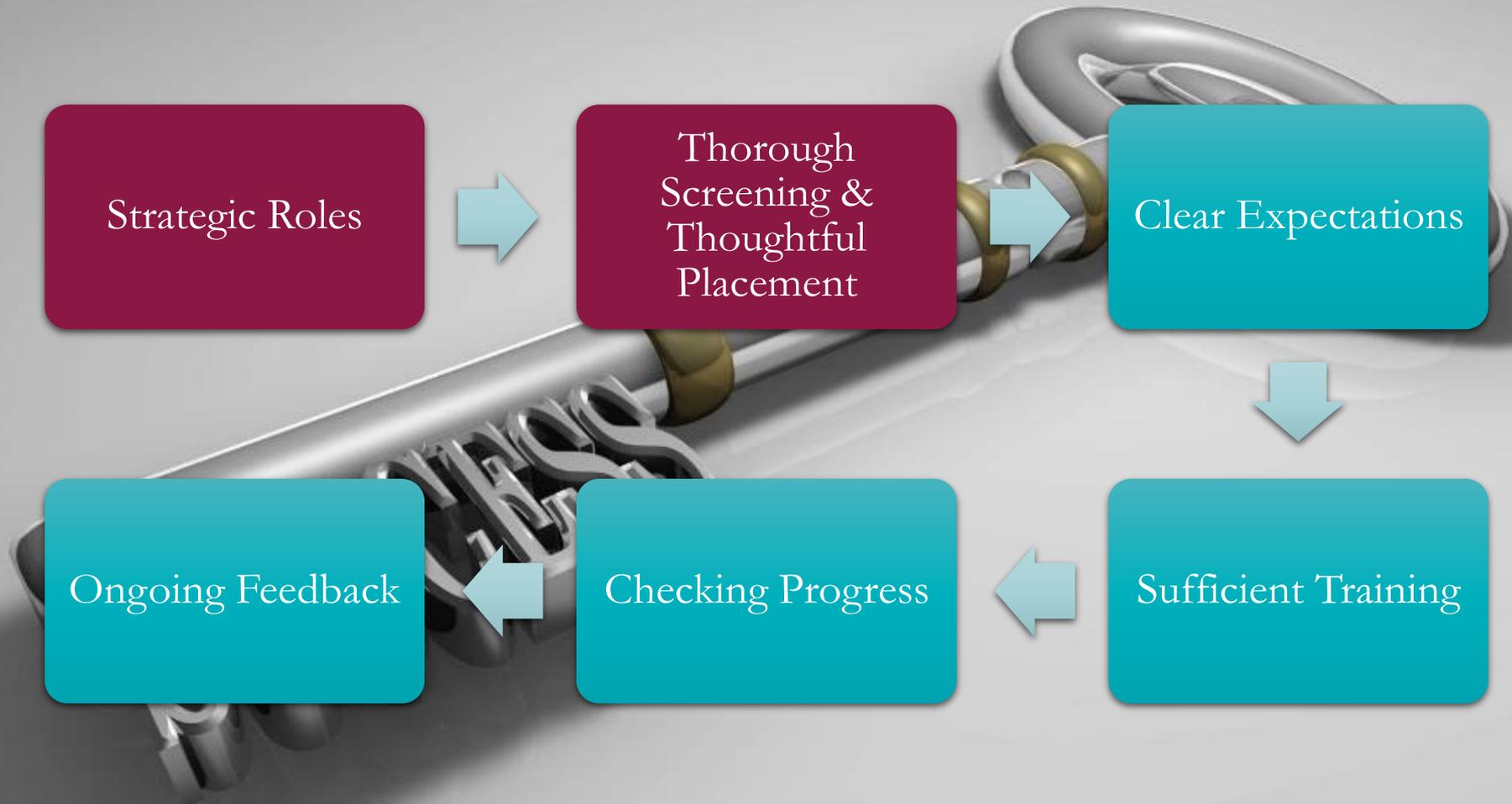
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Setting Yourself Up For Success



Setting Yourself Up For Success

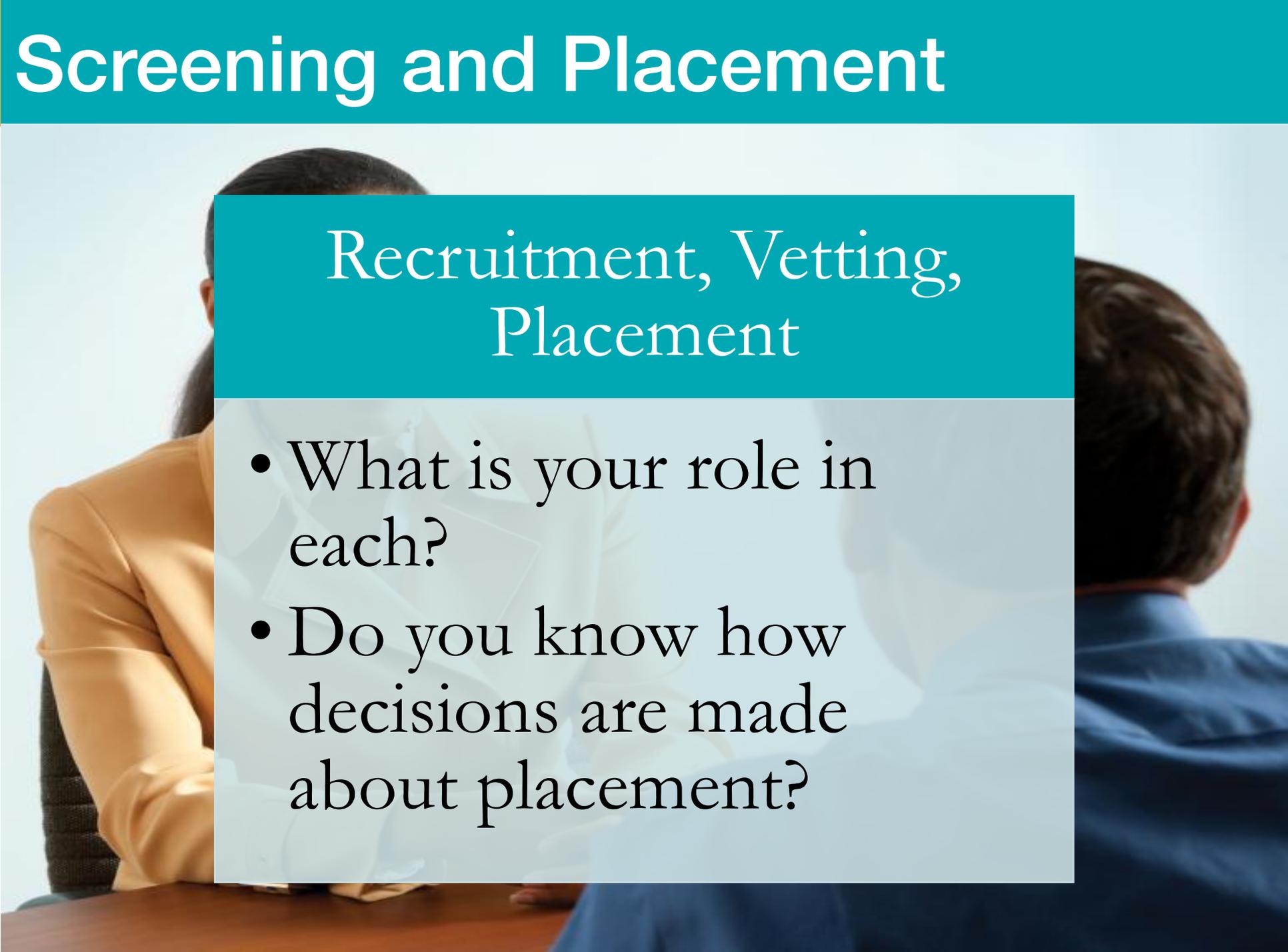


Strategic Volunteer Roles

Position Descriptions

- Are you familiar with them?
- Who is responsible for ensuring volunteers are familiar with them?

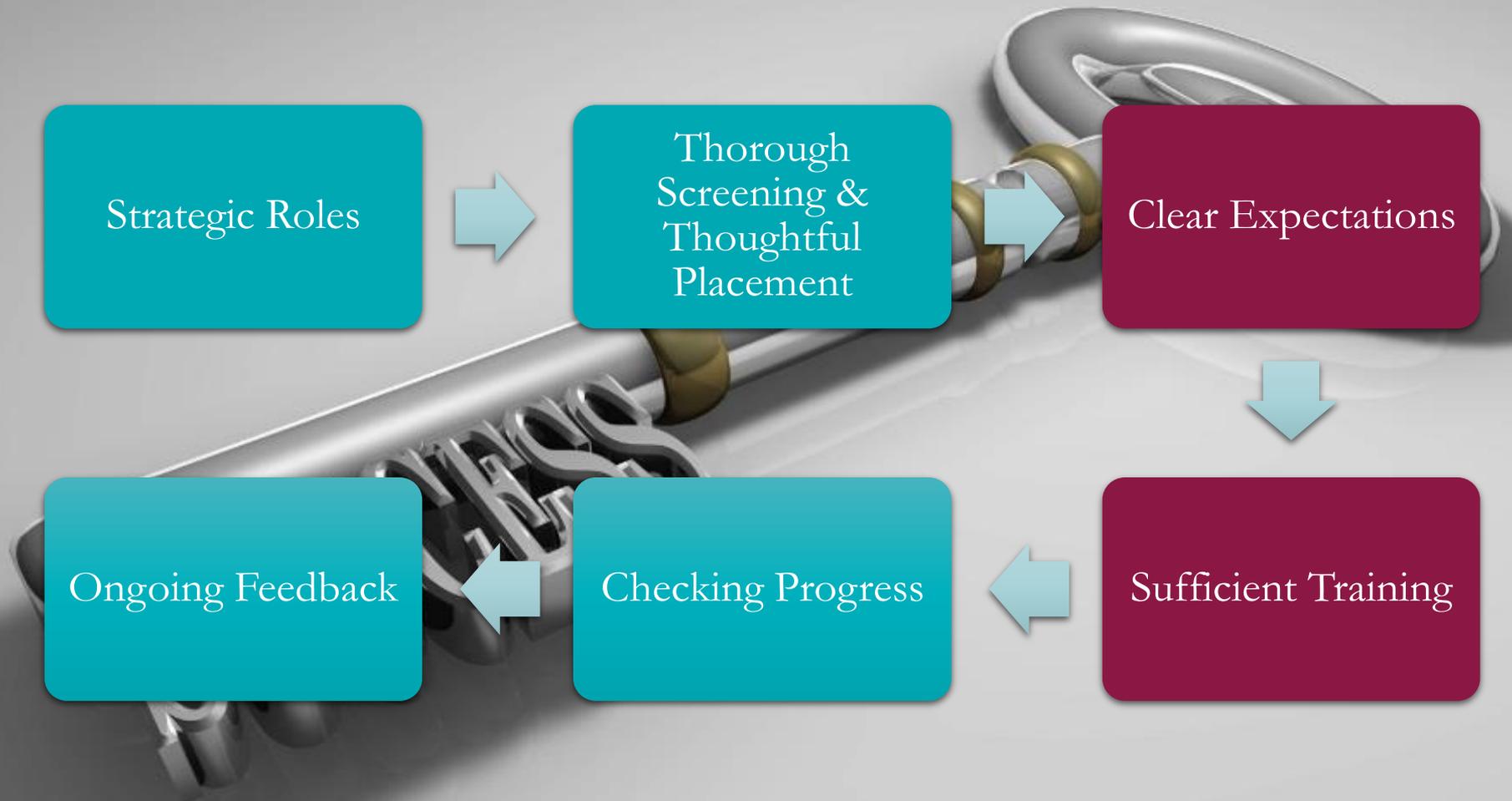
Screening and Placement

The background of the slide shows two people from behind, sitting at a table. On the left, a woman with dark hair is wearing a light-colored blazer. On the right, a man with dark hair is wearing a blue shirt. They appear to be in a professional meeting or interview setting.

Recruitment, Vetting, Placement

- What is your role in each?
- Do you know how decisions are made about placement?

Setting Yourself Up For Success



Where does conflict originate?



Conflict occurs when we demand and expect others to behave in a way that is not natural or known.

—Monica Wofford

Onboarding is Expectation Setting



**Without expectations,
there can be no
accountability.**

Onboarding is Expectation Setting



What comprises an onboarding process?

- Organizational information
 - Context for the work
 - Meeting the team
- Expectations (of and by the volunteers)
 - Policies
 - Scheduling and processes
- What else?
 - Handbook?
 - Other materials?

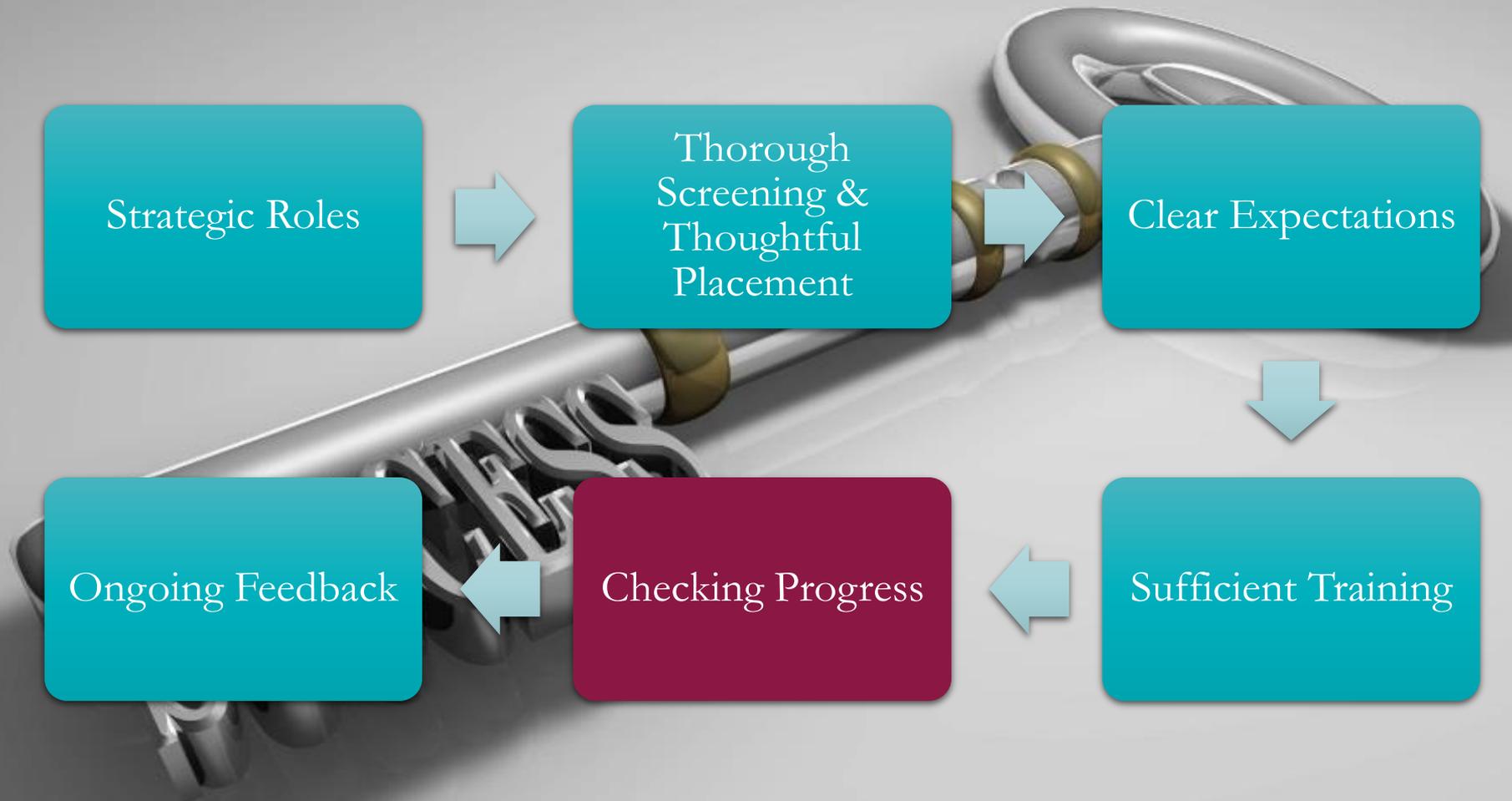
Training: Knowledge for Success



What is included in Training?

- What role-specific information is included?
- What skills are trained?
- What is communicated in formal training vs. on-the-job training?
- How is knowledge tested and confirmed before moving on?

Setting Yourself Up For Success



Checking Progress



- ✓ When do you meet?
- ✓ About what?
- ✓ What to do if agreements aren't met.

Checking Evaluation



Does the volunteer leader:

- ✓ Know what s/he is supposed to accomplish?
- ✓ Have sufficient authority to accomplish it?
- ✓ Know how we have agreed to measure success?
- ✓ Know whether s/he is succeeding?

Checking Evaluation



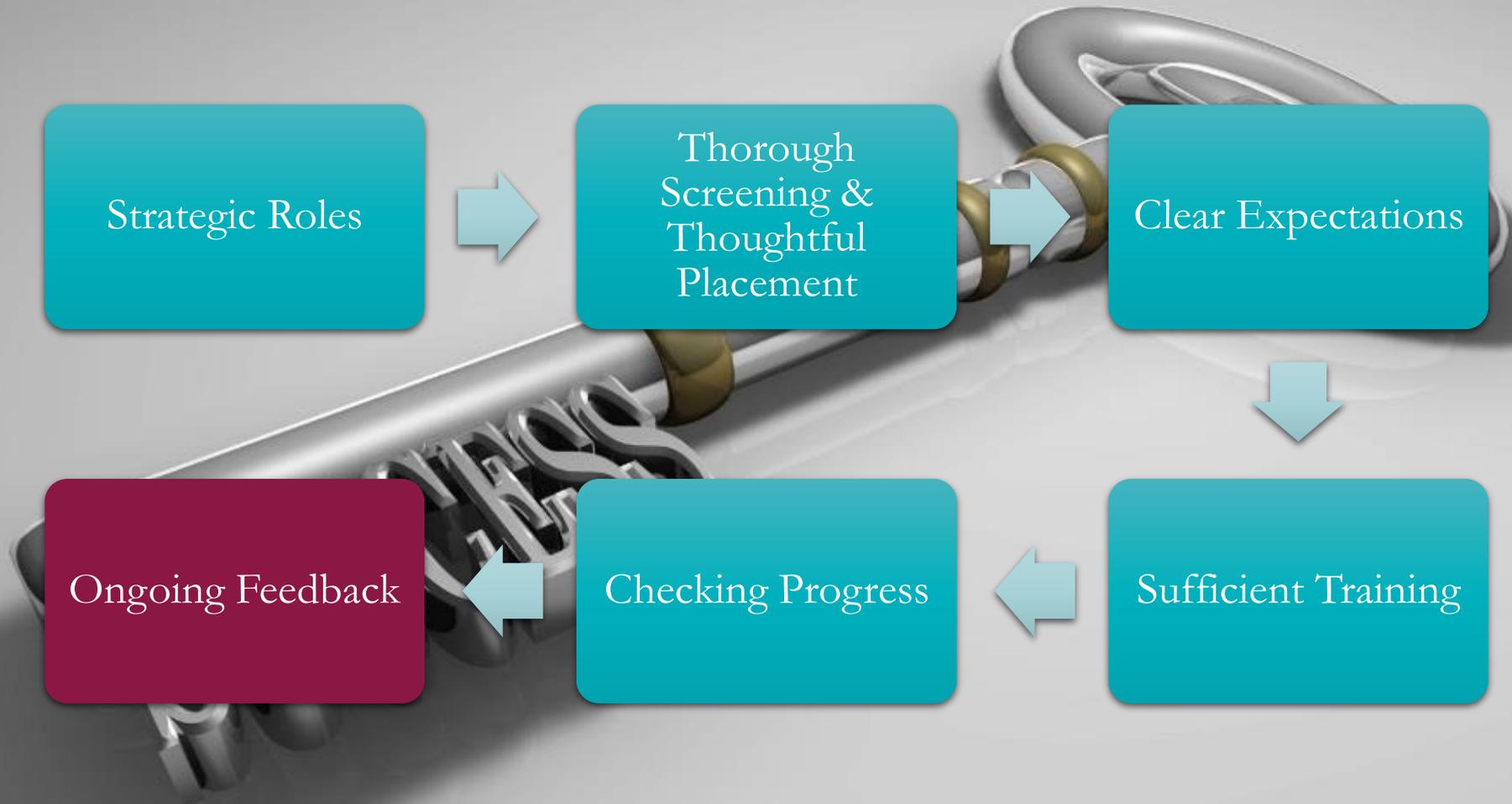
Does the volunteer leader:

- ✓ Have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed?
- ✓ Understand his/her responsibility? Have I organized and communicated that clearly?
- ✓ Feel recognized for his/her contribution to the negotiation, project, team, etc.? Have I created that recognition?

Support Plan

Volunteer Position Description	Staff Partner/ Supervisor/ Volunteer Leader	Date of first meeting to define expectations	Checkpoint plan (How will you communicate and how often?)	Checkpoint dates and milestones

Setting Yourself Up For Success



Feedback

Feedback provides information about how an individual is doing in the efforts towards achieving a goal.

Feedback Goals



Why provide feedback?

- To provide information and tools to help reach a goal
- Get an individual back on track, or keep that individual on track
- To maintain or fuel motivation
- To nurture a team spirit
- Other?

Feedback Goals



Positive and Negative Feedback



Feedback should be specific.

Specific Positive Feedback



- *Great job* describing that lunar landing.
- *Thank you* for noticing that Marco needed help.
- *I loved how* you answered those visitors' questions so thoroughly.
- *Great work* focusing on information to be presented at the event without getting distracted by that group of people in the back.

12 Clues It's Time to Give a Volunteer Feedback



Someone asks for feedback

A problem is persisting

A volunteer, staff member, or other stakeholder complains OR compliments

Anticipating that a volunteer, staff member, or other stakeholder may complain OR compliment

Errors occur repeatedly

Performance doesn't meet expectations

12 Clues It's Time to Give a Volunteer Feedback



The volunteer's behaviors or work habits bother you or others

You notice a volunteer doing something well

A volunteer has made a change based on prior feedback

A volunteer hasn't made a change based on prior feedback

You think to yourself, "I really don't want to have to deal with this."

You think to yourself, "I can't believe I'm still dealing with this!".

Common warning signs of impending problems



- Quality/quantity of work declines
- Volunteer is often late or no show
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Sudden silence or lack of response
- Avoidance of certain elements of job

Why leaders of volunteers become *part* of the problem by avoiding problem volunteers

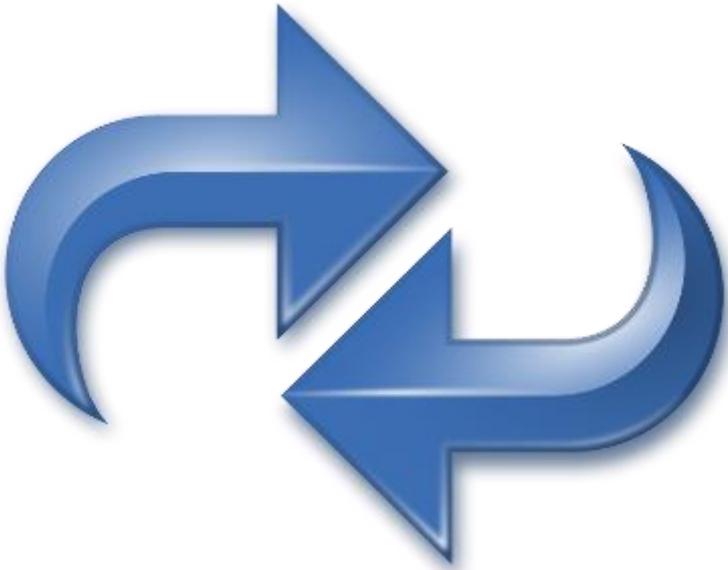


- *Having a problem volunteer may reflect badly on me.*
- *I want to be nice and give the volunteer a chance (I don't like confrontation).*
- *I don't want to criticize the volunteer.*
- *I have enough problems to deal with already.*
- *I don't really think it's the volunteer's fault.*

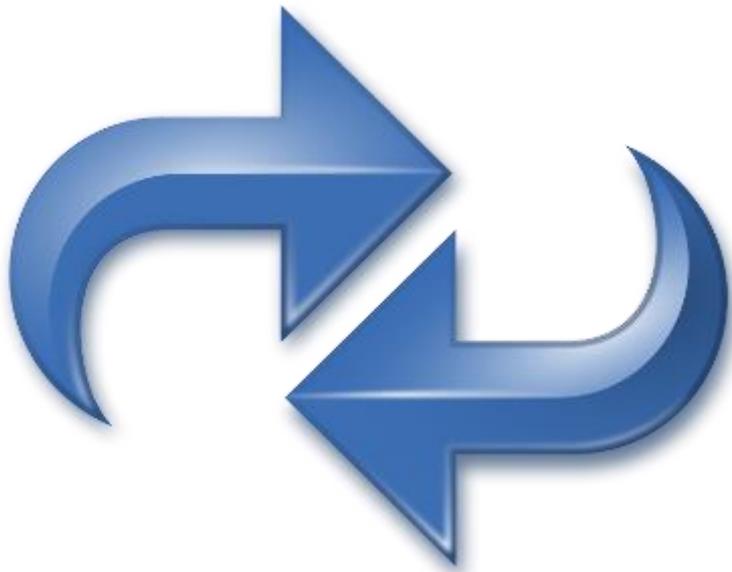
“Redirecting” or Negative Feedback

There’s a time and place for everything:

- **Timing:** Feedback is most effective when given soon after the event.
- **Objectivity:** Avoid moments of high emotion (yours or the volunteer’s).
- **Place:** Usually, having this conversation in private is better.



“Redirecting” or Negative Feedback



Tips

- Limit your focus
- Be specific
- Be aware of your body language
- Position yourself in a supporting role

Sticky Situations



Sticky Situations

- What's really happening?
(especially in regard to your desired outcomes)
- Am I contributing to the problem?
- What steps can be taken to improve the situation and ensure success?

Sticky Situations

- A volunteer is not following protocol despite the fact that protocols are clearly defined.
- A volunteer repeatedly offers to take on certain tasks then doesn't follow through.

Sticky Situations

**First, as a group,
discuss the following:**

1. What is the problem behavior?
2. How does the behavior conflict with expectations?
3. What is the desired change in behavior?

**Second, make a plan for RAP
– Review, Analyze, Plan**

Review the past – What points could you make about the expectations that have been previously communicated (and agreed upon)?

Analyze the present – What are the behaviors you have seen or heard about? How are those behaviors putting someone or something at risk or counter to our culture?

Plan the future – What expectations do you have for the future? How and when will you check in on the matter?



AHA Moments

Conversation Starters



I know you want to do what's best for our patients, so

I know you want to learn as much as you can about how we do things here, so

I've noticed that....

I have something I'd like to discuss with you that I think will help to

*I'd like to talk about _____
today or within the next 2 days, can we chat now?*

I would love to talk to you because I think there may be a misunderstanding that may be very easy to clear up.

Takeaways



The “Resistor”

- “Veteran volunteer” who is reluctant to change
- Challenges new processes
- Rallies others against the change
- Pulls rank

Strategies for “Resistors”

- Invite to be part of a team providing input into the new policies
- Frame new policies/ procedures around safety and efficiency
- Frame training on new procedures as professional development
- Offer to transition to “emeritus” role

Takeaways



The “Overloader”

- Volunteer who takes on too much
- Doesn't leave room for others to step in
- May or may not actually complete the work

Strategies for “Overloaders”

- Discuss importance of creating space for others
- Ensure position is time-limited (if appropriate)
- Revise position descriptions so that volunteer is responsible for training up a successor
- Implement screening processes for all positions

Takeaways



The “Jekyll/Hyde”

- Volunteer who acts out behind your back (but never in front of you)
- Staff, other volunteers, or clients complain but you never witness it

Strategies for “Jekyll/Hydes”

- Honor both the volunteer in question and those reporting complaints by taking both seriously
- Gather details (including observing the volunteer)
- Share feedback and gather their perspective
- Establish a plan of action and deadline
- Follow up (whether positively or negatively)

Sticky Situations... Avoid the Muck!

Give clear expectations

Provide effective training

Check in regularly

Support through job aids (including mentor volunteers)

Communicate important information

Explain the “chain of command”

Provide and ask for feedback

VQ Resources

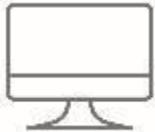
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