



# **GAL Connect! Webinar**

**May 2017**

**HANDOUTS**

**How Sturdy is Your Tree?**



## UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE CYCLE OF A VOLUNTEER

Stage 1 -- "AWAKEN"	Stage 2 -- "CHANNEL"	Stage 3 -- "REINFORCE"	Stage 4 -- "EMERGE"
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The New Seeker</i> Recruit and Engage</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Passionate Beginner</i> Train, Mentor &amp; Certify</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Inquiring Advocate</i> Motivate and Develop</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Empowered Volunteer</i> Build Commitment and Empower</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Common Volunteer Traits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivated</li> <li>• Reflective</li> <li>• Questioning</li> <li>• Eager to start; or</li> <li>• May be hesitant to commit</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Common Volunteer Traits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excited</li> <li>• Full of questions</li> <li>• Welcomes guidance</li> <li>• Some anxiety</li> <li>• Could feel overwhelmed</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Common Volunteer Traits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be disillusioned</li> <li>• Expressing frustrations</li> <li>• Dialed in or beginning to burn out</li> <li>• Challenging the status quo</li> <li>• Uncertain</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Common Volunteer Traits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Found a comfort zone</li> <li>• May be looking to extend their comfort zone with new roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Trusting</li> <li>• Motivated</li> <li>• Confident</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Typical Behaviors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes application process in a timely manner</li> <li>• Begins the Independent Study section of training</li> <li>• Reserves a seat for classroom training</li> <li>• Responsive to contact from Child Advocate Manager and Mentor</li> <li>• If indecisive, will be slow or difficult to engage</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Typical Behaviors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully completes training process</li> <li>• Interactive and attentive during training</li> <li>• Asks appropriate questions</li> <li>• Could express need for additional support from mentor</li> <li>• May express concern over ability to meet certain expectations</li> <li>• Has preferences for type of case assigned to them</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Typical Behaviors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If "dialed in" will be ready to accept another case</li> <li>• Frustrations could cause conflict with community provider and within the GAL team</li> <li>• Could consider taking a "leave of absence" or resigning</li> <li>• Not consistent in maintaining contact and meeting expectations</li> <li>• Seeks more guidance and interaction with Team</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Typical Behaviors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks for more challenging case</li> <li>• If assigned to multiple cases, may start saying "no" to additional cases</li> <li>• Expresses interest in assisting the Program in other role(s) (i.e. mentor, trainer, etc.)</li> <li>• Comfortable testifying in court and taking a lead and assertive role at staffings</li> </ul>

## UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE CYCLE OF A VOLUNTEER

Stage 1 -- "AWAKEN"	Stage 2 -- "CHANNEL"	Stage 3 -- "REINFORCE"	Stage 4 -- "EMERGE"
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The New Seeker</i> Recruit and Engage</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Passionate Beginner</i> Train, Mentor &amp; Certify</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Inquiring Advocate</i> Motivate and Develop</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Empowered Volunteer</i> Build Commitment and Empower</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Supervisor Focus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview Process (Using the Guide) – to help answer the questions: “Is this a good fit for me?” and “Are they a good fit for the Program?”</li> <li>• Excite the Volunteer about our Mission and Vision</li> <li>• Present and discuss the volunteer position description</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Supervisor Focus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a plan on warmly welcoming the volunteers to the Program</li> <li>• Make sure they have met other staff and continue to meet other volunteers</li> <li>• Employ excellent listening skills</li> <li>• Establish communication protocol with volunteer</li> <li>• Discuss clear expectations</li> <li>• Match the case with the volunteer</li> <li>• Share time management skills with the volunteer</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Supervisor Focus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help struggling volunteers</li> <li>• Effectively address Volunteer “Burn-out”</li> <li>• Provide fast and constructive feedback</li> <li>• Offer volunteers various opportunities to “refresh” and retrain</li> <li>• Make it a priority to show appreciation</li> <li>• Incorporate evaluations of and by the volunteer</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Supervisor Focus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower your volunteers – “Loosen the Reins”</li> <li>• Lead and influence your volunteers to take on new responsibilities within the Program</li> <li>• Expand their skill set &amp; contributions</li> <li>• Match new responsibilities with the volunteer’s Interests and skills</li> <li>• Ask their opinion and listen</li> <li>• Continue to be consistent with appreciation and recognition</li> </ul>

\*\*Information in this handout was adapted from following sources:

Thomas W. McKee, Volunteer Power News – Number 77, “Increasing the Volunteer Life Cycle, Is it possible in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?”

Susan J. Ellis, Energize, August 2013 Volunteer Management Update, Tip of the Month

## **Activity #1: Questions to Consider**

Complete this activity either individually or in a group setting by answering the questions in the box below.

The objective is to answer the questions from the perspective of either a new GAL staff member or a new volunteer — someone that has been with the Program for a period of one year or less. The purpose for these questions is to help you identify what, if anything, you may need to do to improve the level of support provided to your team.

### ***QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER***

***(Especially during the Volunteer Life Cycle AWAKEN & CHANNEL stages)***

1. Has the communication between us met your needs?
2. Have you had any questions about your case that have gone unanswered? If so, what are they?
3. At any time during these last few months, did you feel it would be helpful to still have an assigned Mentor?
4. Is there anything at this point in time that is causing you to question continuing in your role?
5. Can you share an experience with one of your cases that touches on your motivation to continue your advocacy?

## A Few Responses to Questions from Florida GAL Volunteers

### WHAT SUGGESTIONS WOULD YOU MAKE TO NEW STAFF WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS?

“Establish a standard time to meet or at least talk with each other. Time goes so quickly with other obligations and we often don’t remain committed to the process but not because of the lack of caring.”

“Create an environment of trust and personal relationship but also set boundaries of availability.”

“Keep volunteers informed and give them the same respect as colleagues.”

“Make sure volunteers take ownership in the case. Be a helper but have them do all, if not most, of the work. Some may need coaching.”

“I would say communication is key! Everything regarding the volunteer’s case needs to be passed on to the volunteer so they are always in the loop.”

“Be patient and LISTEN. Don’t jump to conclusions. Ask lots of questions. For many volunteers, being a GAL is a new experience and even shocking at times. What may be important may not be expressed in visit reports, but the occasional conversations with CAMs can help the volunteer focus on things forgotten or just overlooked due to shock, high drama, or other distracting factors.”

### **WHAT KEEPS YOU MOTIVATED TO CONTINUE YOUR COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEER AS A GAL?**

“It’s an opportunity to give back and pay it forward at the same time. Children don’t ask to be born and they don’t get to choose their parents. It breaks my heart to know that children are being neglected/abused. Someone has to speak on their behalf to help protect them.”

---

“I know what it means to be well loved and encouraged. I know how that made a difference in every major decision I ever made. I want to share that with those who haven’t experienced that yet.”

### **WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO RECEIVE FROM YOUR CAM AND THE CBI ATTORNEY AS YOU WORK YOUR CASES?**

Top responses: **FEEDBACK & KEEPING GAL INFORMED**

“The two most important things we need is a listening ear and guidance to make sure we do not do or say anything to hinder the process of helping the child to the best of our abilities.”

### WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP?

Top response: **COMMUNICATION**

“It’s important that volunteers feel like they are part of the team. ...If they have chosen your organization they need to be made to feel appreciated.”

“Timely sharing of information. *Please and thank you.*  
Common courtesy. Information, repeated for emphasis.  
Occasional affirmations that we are making a difference.”

“With the CAM or CBI Attorney — open communications. With the child — trust and honesty.”

Use this template as a guide to:

1. Determine the current life cycle stage of a volunteer.
2. Identify actions to assist the volunteer to progress to the next stage.
3. Reflect for future adjustments.

## The Life Cycle of a Volunteer

- Stage 1: Awaken
- Stage 2: Channel
- Stage 3: Reinforce
- Stage 4: Emerge



**#1**

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Stage: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples of behaviors and traits that were used to identify the current stage: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Actions the program will take to assist the volunteer to progress to the next stage:

**#2**

- WHO: \_\_\_\_\_ WHAT: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- WHO: \_\_\_\_\_ WHAT: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- WHO: \_\_\_\_\_ WHAT: \_\_\_\_\_

---




**How Sturdy is Your Tree?**



# The Life Cycle of a Volunteer

- Stage 1: Awaken
- Stage 2: Channel
- Stage 3: Reinforce
- Stage 4: Emerge



**#3**

Reflect on a former volunteer/advocate who resigned for a reason that could not be prevented —such as illness, moving out of the area, or something similar.

A. Identify the Life Cycle stage this person reached prior to leaving.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STAGE when they left:** \_\_\_\_\_

B. Using the Life Cycle approach, describe what you could have possibly done differently to attempt to “retain” this person.

**OPTIONS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**How Sturdy is Your Tree?**