

Volunteer management



Technique

Using the 'matching volunteer tool' in recruitment

An important aspect of a person-centred approach is supporting individuals to have positive control over their lives, the services they receive, and the people who provide their support. In order to achieve a good match between volunteers and individuals it is necessary to look beyond basic skills and experience. Be specific about who you need as volunteers and how they will be involved in the organisation. This will provide better outcomes for both the people you support and your organisation.

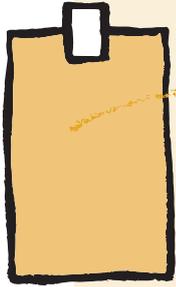
The 'matching volunteer' tool ensures a good match between individual and volunteer by; clarifying the supports the individual wants, the skills, experience, values, personality characteristics and interests required by the volunteer.

Information gathered through this process can also contribute to the development of a 'donut' or a position description for volunteers.

Where there is a good match between volunteers and individuals it is more likely that:

- * Individuals will have more of what's 'important to' them as the volunteer supporting them will possess characteristics in line with their requirements.
- * Volunteers will have the opportunity to work to their strengths and do the things they enjoy and to have greater satisfaction and feel appreciated for what they do.
- * Organisations will have an effective way of supporting informed decision-making when individuals are choosing their own volunteer.

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Tips

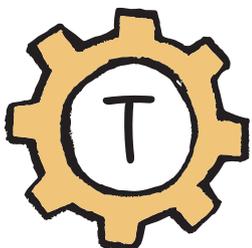
When matching volunteers with individuals, look at the skills, experience and strengths that are required to support the individual and what's reasonable to expect from a volunteer.

Think about why the individual wants a volunteer. What activities are they interested in doing with a volunteer and what are the skills specific to that area of their life or activity.

If you are looking for a volunteer for group support, consider the skills and interests required of the volunteer and the personality types of people who work well together as a group.

Ask the individual requiring support the following questions:

- * What are the personality characteristics of people who you get along well with? What does that tell us about who we are looking for?
- * What are the personality characteristics to avoid? Are there people or personalities you don't like?
- * What do you want the volunteers to be able to support you with? What are the skills and experience needed for this? e.g. Instead of "a volunteer" identify specifics such as "a person who has computer skills, is patient, and can come around to my place once a fortnight to help me develop these skills."
- * Is there anything that you are unable to do because you don't have the right staff to provide support? e.g. John enjoyed fishing but no paid staff were available who knew how to support him bait and gut the fish. Finding a volunteer who can support John bait and gut fish and enjoys fishing is a better outcome than looking for a paid staff member with those skills.



Tool

The 'matching volunteers tool' is broken into four main headings. These headings assist individuals to determine the supports wanted and needed, as well as the types of volunteers best suited to provide this support. This tool can be used to capture support needed within an individual's day or week.

1. Support wanted and needed

What will be required of the volunteers? How often and where? Be specific about the individual being supported and avoid using generic statements.

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Instead of writing 'supporting someone with high support needs and complex communication to implement their plan', think about the person as an individual and list what volunteers will be doing.

For example the volunteer will be required to:

- * Drive to and actively support the individual to participate in horse riding and be able to understand different communication methods.
- * Go fishing with a man in his early 40's and be able to help him cast out, and fillet any catches.

2. Skills and experience needed

In order to provide the right support, specific to the needs of the individual, what are the skills and experience that the volunteer will need? Often this will be supports directly related to the individual's disability. Determine which skills are 'important to' the individual.

This section can also help to define which skills you are willing to provide training in and which skills the volunteers would already need to possess.

3. Personality characteristics (including values and attitudes)

What are the personality characteristics of people who work well with the individual being supported?

What characteristics do they have in common? Identify paid staff that work well with the individual and think about what this tells you about characteristics the volunteer may need? Do the characteristics change with different support requirements?

4. Shared common interests

What are the shared interests between the individual and the volunteer that would be desirable?

While these interests may not directly relate to the supports provided, they will have topics of interest to discuss as they work together.

It is not always possible to find the perfect person with all the qualities the individual may be seeking. So it may be helpful to support the individual prioritise the qualities into two categories: the non-negotiable or "essential" and the added extras or "desirable".

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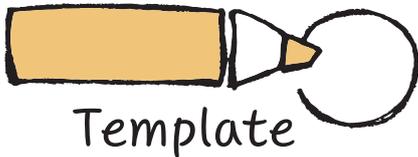
Essential

In order to have a good balance of 'important to and for' what is absolutely needed?

These are often the elements that you can't train someone in and/or without them being present it is unlikely to be a successful match.

Desirable

These are the areas that would be 'nice to have.' Remember, a candidate who has all the essential elements and not these could still be a good match.

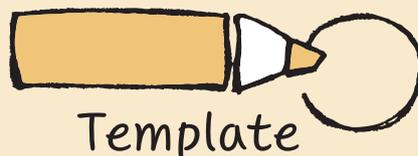
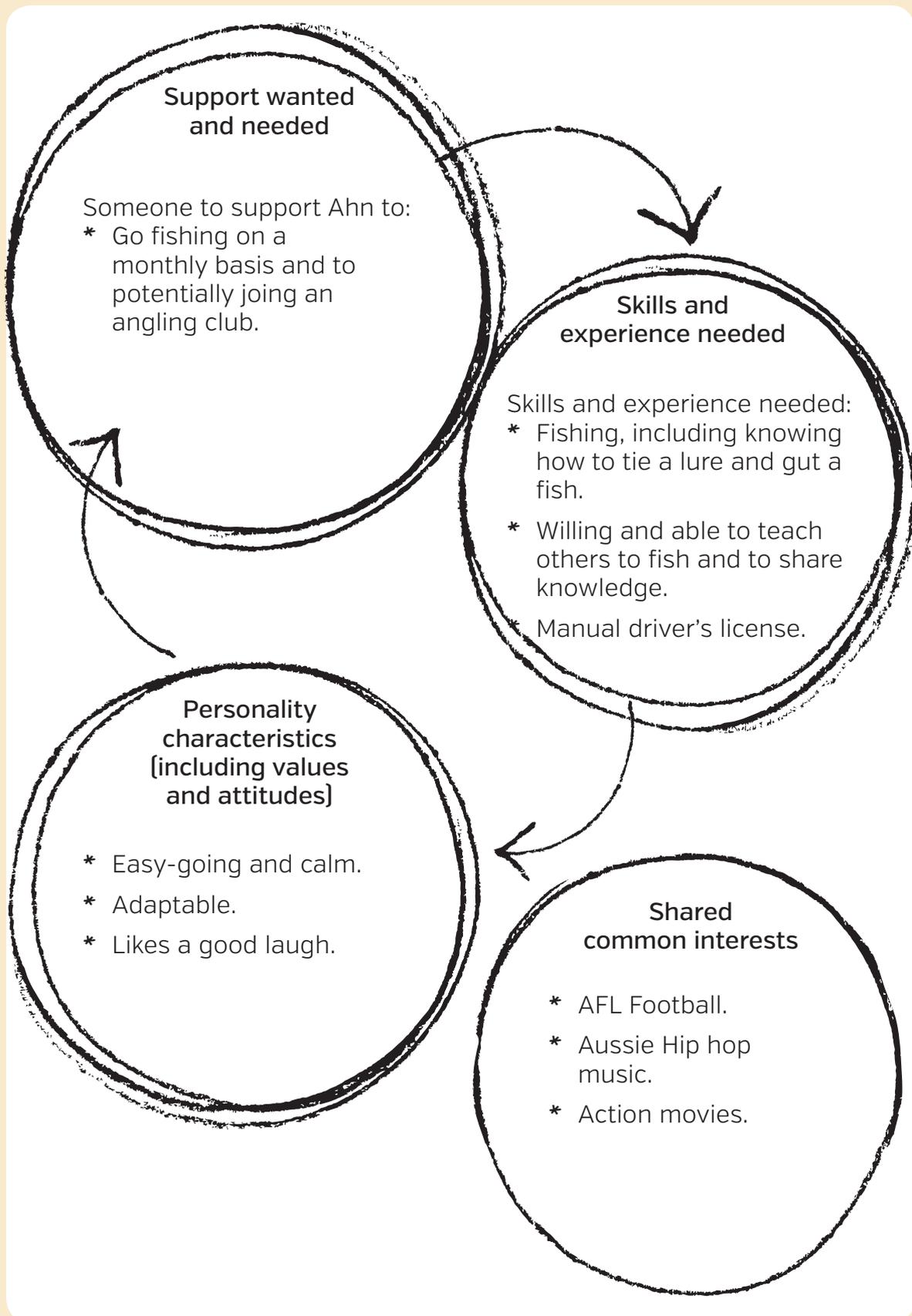


This example was developed with input from Ahn - the individual, his support staff and service coordinator. Ahn was looking for a volunteer to spend time with him once a month to go fishing for the afternoon. This was something he enjoyed but rarely got to do because of staffing hours and not having staff who had the skills or interest.

Using the matching staff tool enabled everyone involved to reflect on the type of person required to provide the support Ahn wanted and needed.

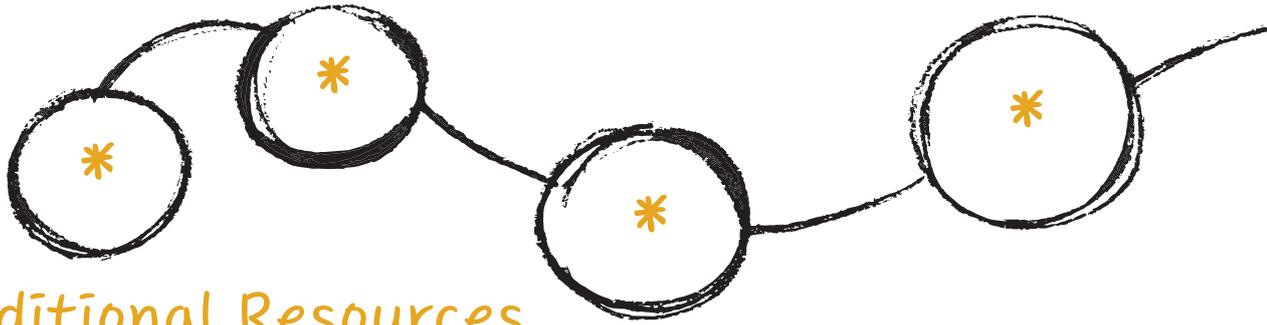
The organisation agreed that they would support any new volunteer with other training related to Ahn's disability if they had the other skills required.

Matching volunteers tool



Template

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Additional Resources

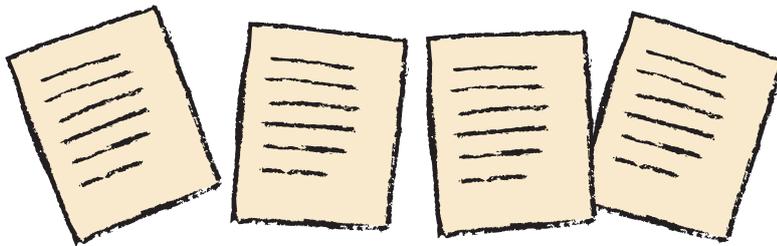
- * Tool, tips and template -using the donut tool with volunteers.
- * Technique, tips and template – using reverse one-page profiles when advertising positions.

Definitions

The term **individual(s)** refers to an individual with a disability and their family and/or circle of support.

The term **staff/employees(s)** refer to paid members of the organisations workforce. Employment relationships with the organisation may be permanent, casual, full-time, part-time, etc.

The term **volunteer(s)** refers to an unpaid individual willingly giving their time to provide a service or support.



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