

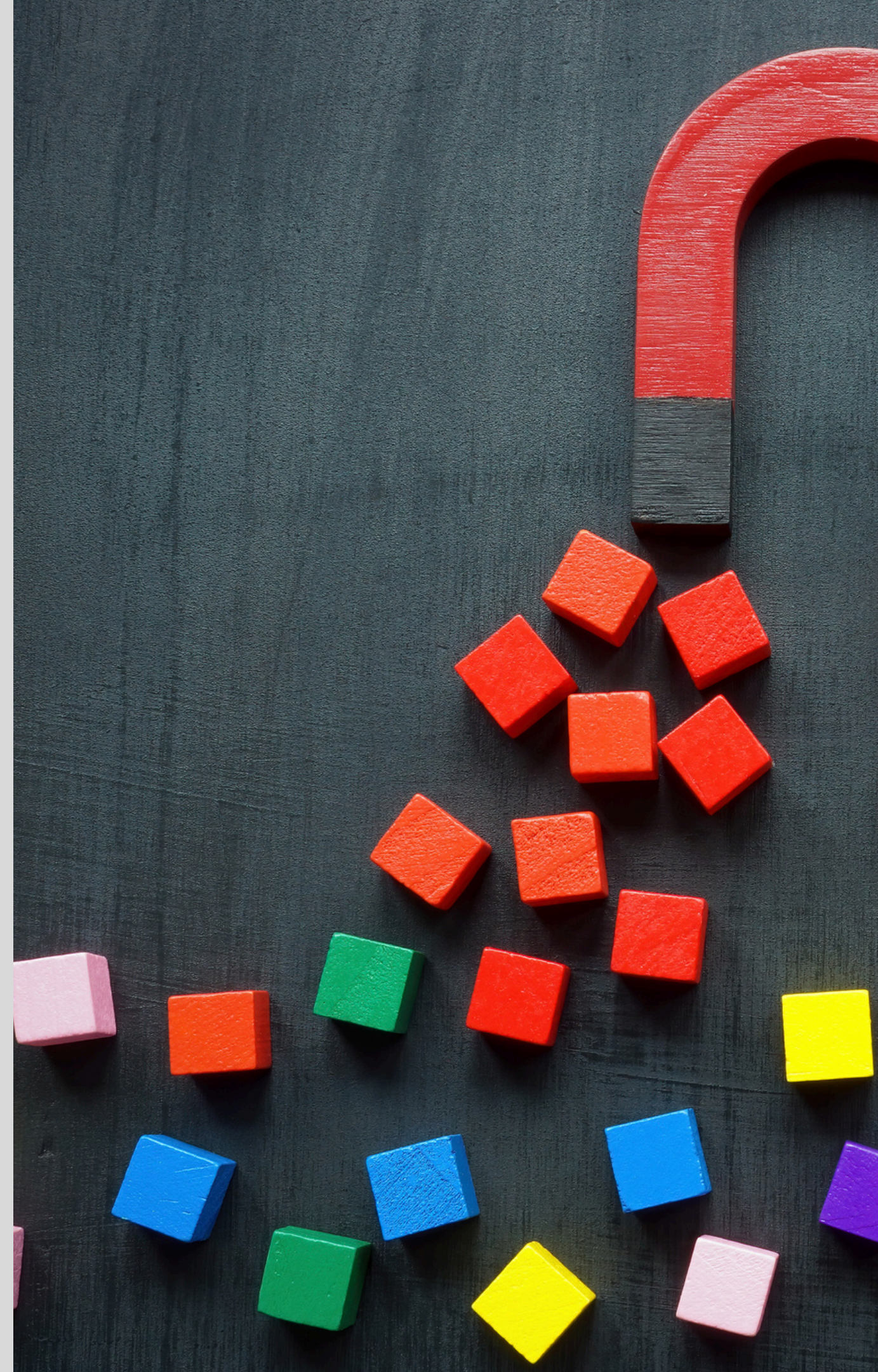
Beyond Orientation: Retaining Volunteers Through Recognition, Connection & Culture

Presented by:

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Hosted by:

BETTER IMPACT



Welcome



Karin Henderson CVA

Founder, J2k Consulting

Fractional Volunteer Engagement Executive



Angela Williamson CVA

Founder, Volunteer Engagement Accelerator
Consulting

Why Volunteers Stay

BUILDING ENGAGEMENT BEYOND
THE FIRST SHIFT

Poll

What is your biggest volunteer retention challenge?

- Volunteers stop showing up
- Staff engagement
- Volunteer recognition
- Communication
- Measuring engagement



The Myth of Retention

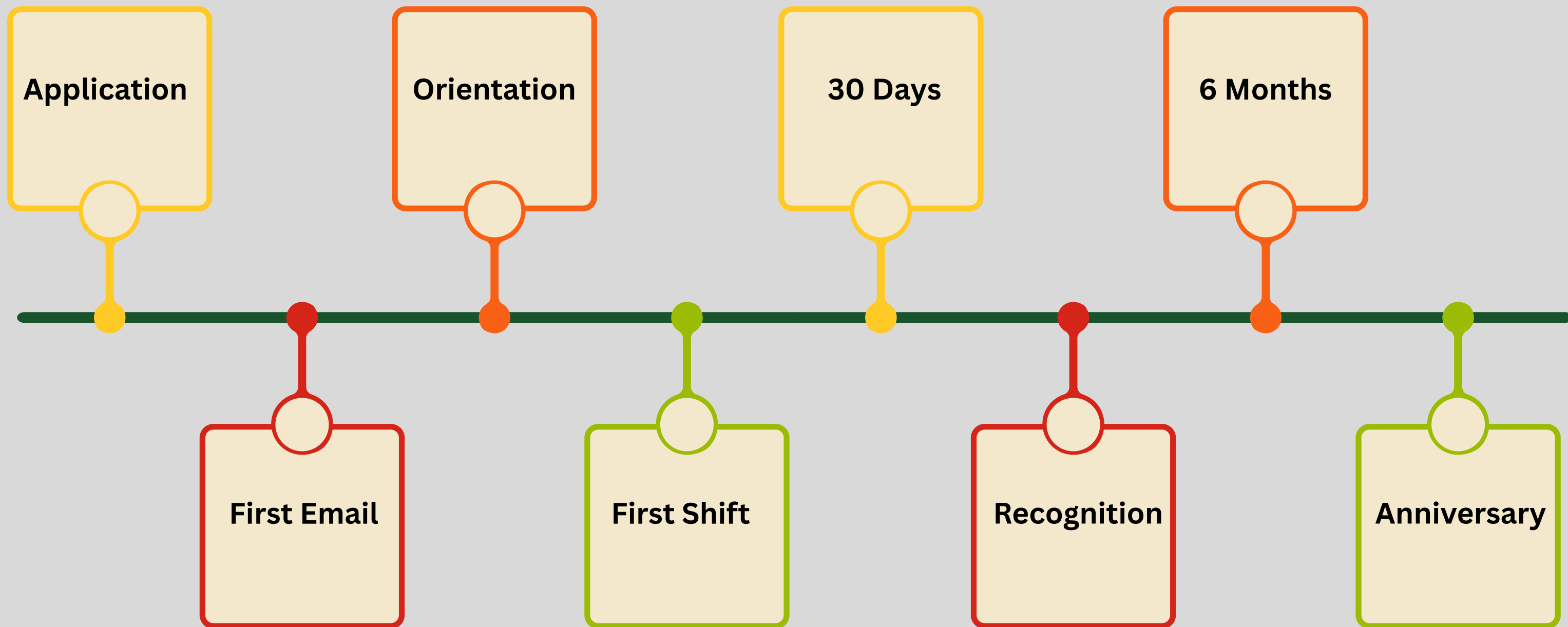
Retention doesn't start after onboarding

Retention starts before the first shift

Volunteer retention isn't a recognition problem.
It's an experience design problem.



Moments that Matter



Every moment answers one question: Do I belong here?

Every Interaction Leaves a Feeling

Volunteers remember how you made them feel

- Confident
- Connection
- Momentum
- Confusion
- Frustration
- Silence



Recognition vs Appreciation

Recognition

- Celebrates what someone did
- Achievement
- Hours
- Milestones

Appreciation

- Celebrates who someone is
- Relationship
- Humanity
- Meaning

Volunteers need both

People Return to Places Where They Feel Seen

thank you

tusind tak
謝謝 dakujem vám
ngiyabonga
dziękuję
merc
baie dankie
धन्यवाद molte grazie
gracias
obrigada
obrigado
teşekkür ederim
شكرا
tack så mycket
gràcies
tānan
dank u
teşekkür edire
mahalo

suksema
danke



The Retention Myth - Stickiness

Volunteers don't stay because of
pizza parties

They stay because they feel
connected, valued, and clear about
their impact



When do you want “STICKINESS”

Starts from the beginning

- Recruitment
- Onboarding
- Training
- Appreciation
- Communication



The 4 “STICKY” Things Volunteers Need

In all processes

- Purpose
- Connection
- Clarity
- Consistency



Purpose

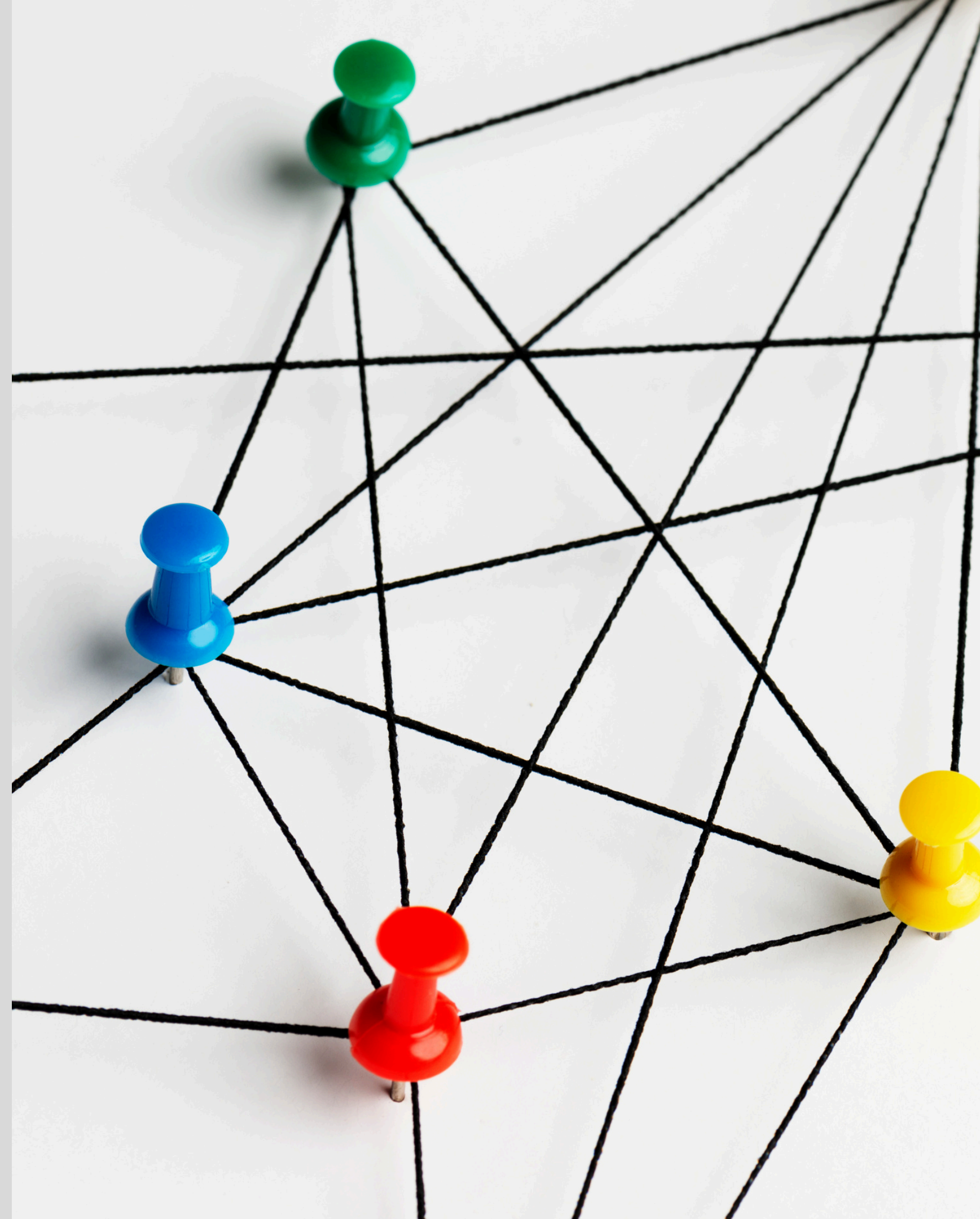
- Why do this?
- What challenge are you addressing?
- What is your mission?
- Why bother?
- What is the missions purpose?
- Why does this matter to me, you, anyone else?

Connection

Connected to

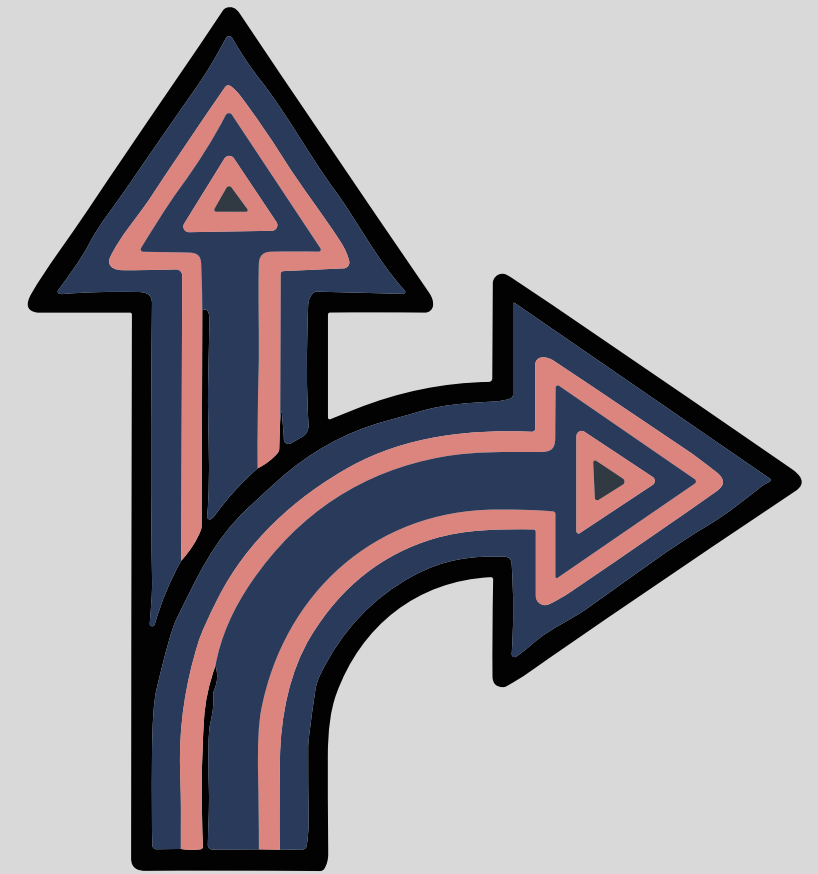
- mission
- those served
- local community
- staff
- other volunteers
- tasks they enjoy

What else do you see volunteers connecting to in your organization?



Clarity

- What is the expectation of the organization
- Role description
- How does the staff support (training)
- How do volunteers interact with the clients
- You need to make the roles extremely specific and clear to all learners and processors
- Who is in charge? Cancelations, who do I talk to , where to find things



Consistency

- Handbook
- Policies
- Expectations
- Communication
- How treat all volunteers
- How trained (give similar results)
- No gaps

Staff Matter More Than We Think

Do staff:

- say hello to any volunteer or just “their” volunteer
- give compliments to you about volunteers
- include volunteers in what they are doing
- know what volunteers should/should not be doing
- feel comfortable letting you know if volunteer not doing role well

Retention Isn't Always the Goal

Volunteers Stay For Their Season

- Reason
- Season
- Life

They can stay weeks or months or years



Great Experiences Need Great Systems

Know

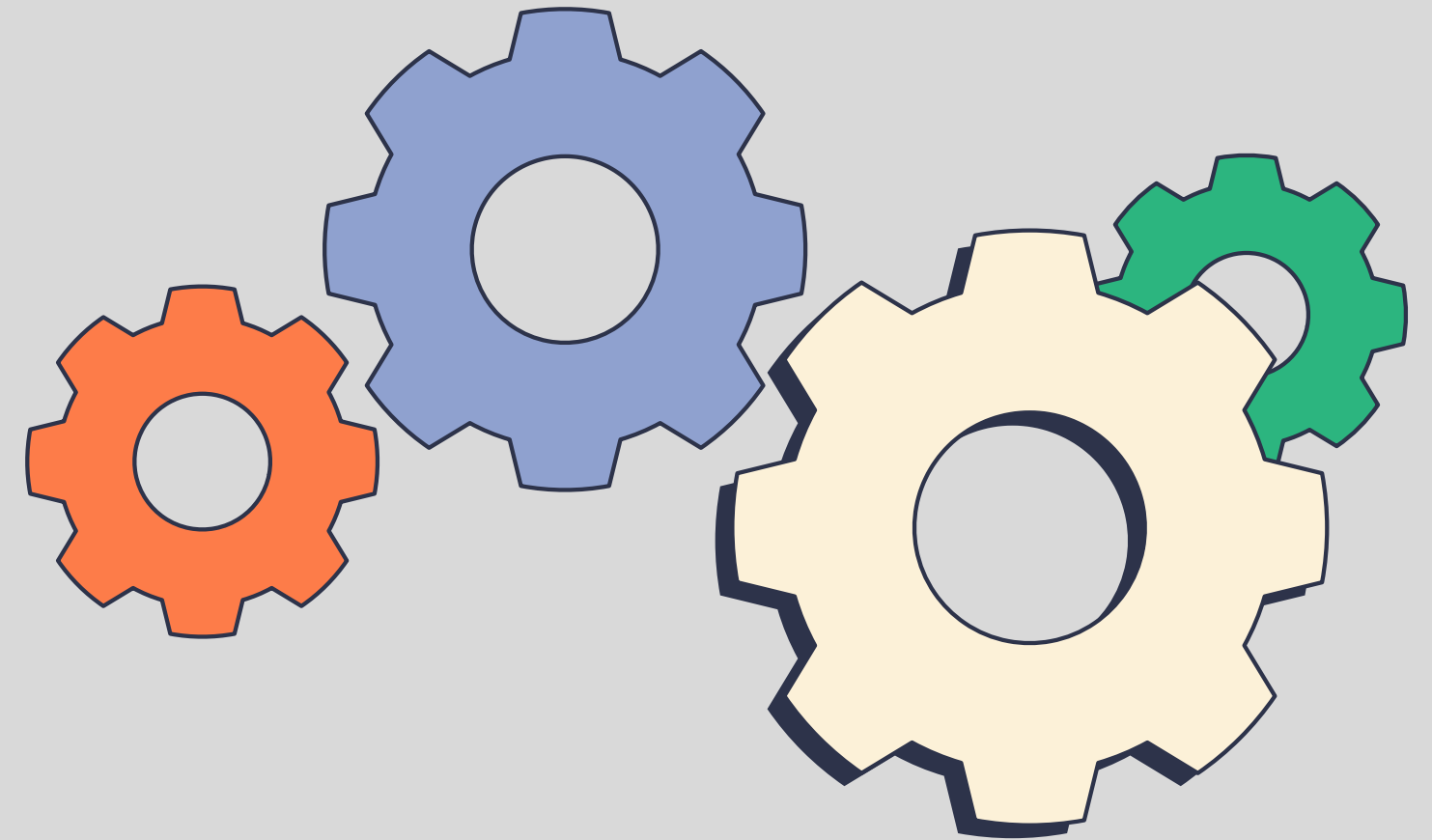
- Tracking
- Reporting
- Connect

Communication

- Surveys
- Recognition

Organize

- Scheduling
- Roles
- Milestones



Tracking volunteer engagement

- How can you track or pull reports of who comes
- Anyone pulling away
- Not signing up
- Grumbling/Dissatisfied
- Signing up for more?
- Recruiting friends



Scheduling consistency

- Volunteers appreciate knowing what to expect.
- Keep scheduling predictable, consistent, and easy.
- The easier it is to sign up, the easier it is to stay engaged.

Communication touchpoints

- In person
- Email
- Text
- Phone
- Notes in central location
- Online



Automation



Let your software remember birthdays,
anniversaries, hours and reminders.

That frees you to remember people.

Surveys and Check-ins

Survey

- can you send via database system

Check-ins

- ask a small group or individually how they are doing, get feedback what working what not, how things can be better

Reporting participation trends

Have purpose for reports

- Is one department or role now not as popular? Why?
- Are staff not asking for volunteers when they used to?
- What are trends in volunteers being involved?



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Let's Connect!

If you're wondering how these ideas apply in your organization, we are always happy to talk through it.

Connect with us!



Angela Williamson, CVA

Volunteer Engagement Assessment



Karin Henderson, CVA

Book a Call



Stay Tuned

Next Session

Save the date: **Oct. 1, 2026**

Save
the
date

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT HYBRID CONFERENCE

Main website: betterimpact.com/vmhc

Contact: VMHC@betterimpact.com



Embracing the Future of Volunteer Engagement

Building for Resilience and Sustainability



**Tuesday
October 20th
2026**



Volunteer Management
PROFESSIONALS OF CANADA

