

Tip Sheet For Growing Leadership, Succession Planning and Avoiding Burnout:

Develop a Leadership Plan:

Assemble a group to do this, in a congenial setting, and ponder the questions together. Revisit your reasons for doing this work, your methods and your current leaders. Consider options. Share responsibility for advancing proposed ideas.

- Identify strengths of the group and gaps where leadership contributions are needed. (see the Volunteer Recruitment Matrix on CD)
- Discuss barriers to engaging leadership and take proactive steps to overcome these barriers.
- Share what your organization can offer to volunteers who lead.
- Set leadership development goals for the group.
- Enhance diversity where needed to reflect the community and skills available.

Recruit internally and externally

- Look to youth for energy, enthusiasm and commitment. (see Volunteer Connections Resource on CD)
- Attract baby-boomers (50-60 year-olds) who have strong leadership skills and want to contribute in ways that fit their talents and lifestyle. (see Volunteer Connections Resource on Engaging Older Adults on CD)
- Provide opportunities for people to learn and grow as leaders; for example, by offering workshops, training, mentorship and coaching.
- Ask volunteers if they would like to try or learn something new, or if they have skills and contacts that they can share.
- Have a buddy system for new leaders.
- Institute the “Growing Volunteer Leadership” pyramid. (see article on CD)
- Ask people to get involved. (see “What to Say to a Potential Volunteer” on CD)
- Use people’s time and talents well, and be sensitive to their work and personal commitments. (see Top Ten Retention Strategies on CD)

Take steps to avoid burnout

- When needed, give people breaks, reassignments, or sabbaticals.
- Have a process in place to check in with people and see how they are doing. (see Volunteer Satisfaction Survey Sample Questions on CD)
- Design the work to share the load; for example, committee co-chairs, or task groups.
- Find out why people leave and make any necessary changes.
- Have specific time terms for volunteer assignments with the opportunity for renewal; stagger terms of office for board positions.
- Have good volunteer management supports in place. (see the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement)
- Recognize volunteer efforts so people see the value of their contributions.
- Take care of your own physical and emotional health.