

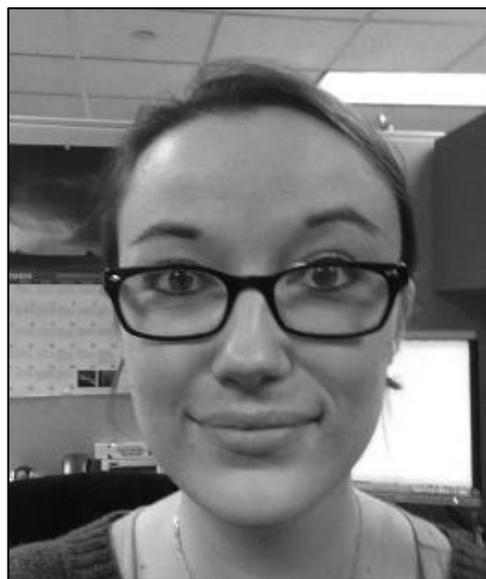


*Welcome to*

# Retaining VISTAs throughout the Project Lifecycle



# Today's Team



Jessica Burch  
Corporation For  
National &  
Community Service



Amy Cannata  
Education Northwest



Jess Knight  
Education Northwest

# Guest Speakers



Ellen Winiarczyk  
Win-ar-zic & Assoc.



Lani Gholston  
Louisiana  
State Office

# Session Goals

By the end of the webinar, you will be able to:

- Learn more about the reasons members leave service early
- Recognize key factors that impact VISTA retention
- Learn strategies for energizing your VISTAs, and help sustain them throughout their year of service
- Successfully troubleshoot problems that come up—as they occur, sooner rather than “later”

# VISTA Retention Facts

**83% of VISTAs served a full term in 2014**

17% left service early for:

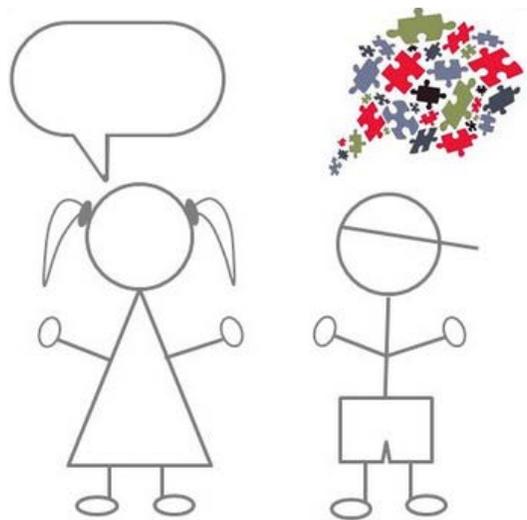
- 2% compelling reasons
- 15% non-compelling reasons



From: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ilike/>

# VISTA Retention Insight

Some things you **cannot** control, but some things are able to be controlled through prevention and positive actions after an intervention!



Let's explore....

# Retention Scenario



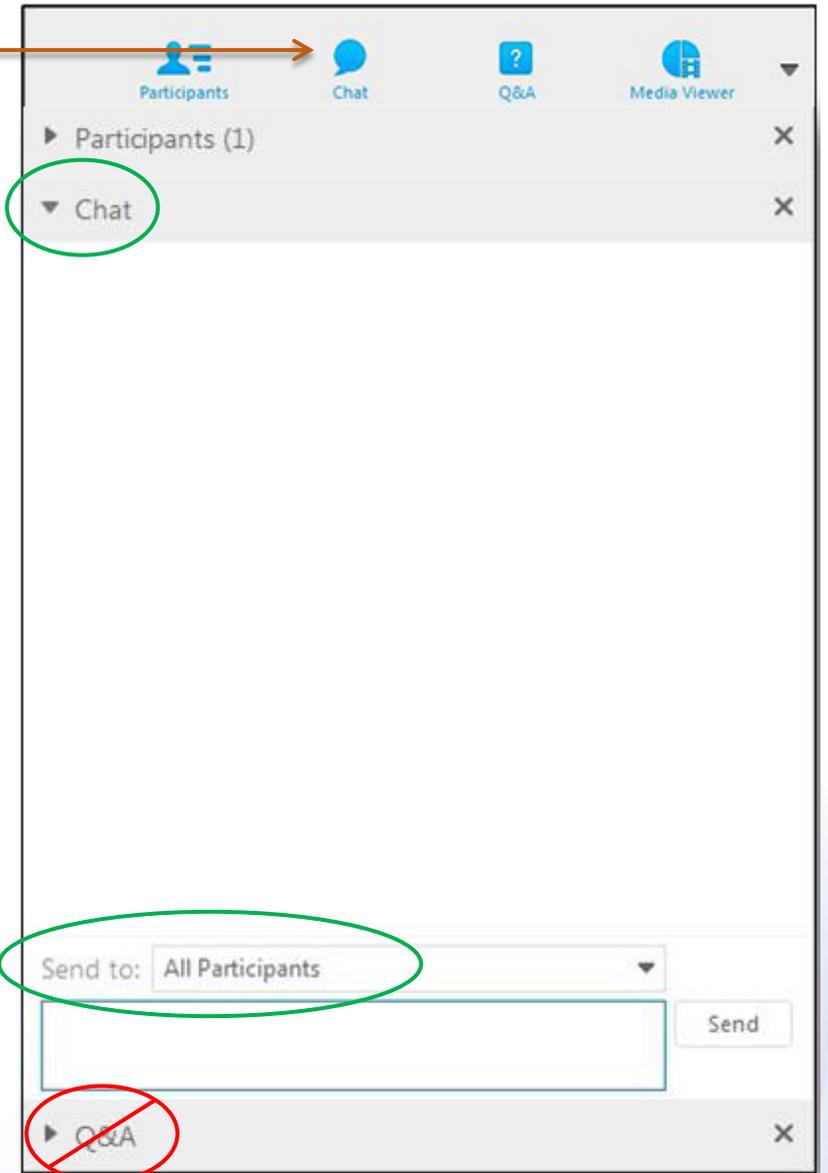
**“I am trapped and struggling”**

- Misled during the interview
- Less than ideal communication
- No feedback on written assignments
- Supervisor stopped assigning work

# Chat Questions

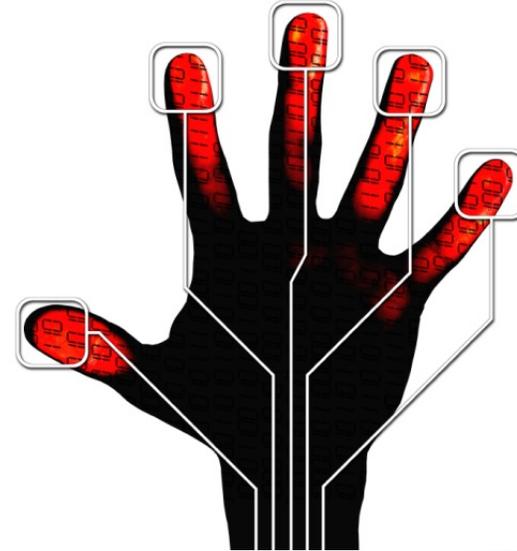
1. What **preventions** could have been used to avert this situation before it developed?
1. What **interventions** could you implement now that the situation has occurred?

Click this button if you don't see the chat panel.



# The Five Key Factors to Retaining A VISTA

1. Recruit the Right Person
2. Create a Solid Foundation
3. Inspire: Connect VAD with Larger Vision
4. Establish and Maintain Regular Communication Processes
5. Ask for Feedback to Troubleshoot Potential Problems



# 1. Recruit the Right Person

- Select right person vs. “warm body” approach
- Pay Attention to personal competencies
- Service outlook vs. “looking for a job”



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Louisiana  
State Office

## 2. Create a Solid Foundation Upfront

- Communicate expectations of VAD
- Orient to workplace environment & community culture(s)
- Maintain sponsor-sub-site communication



# 3. Inspire: Connect VAD to Larger Vision

- “Light a fire” under your VISTA and keep it there...
- Provide insights about pace of community change
- Together, Supervisor and VISTA do the “VAD and Vision Activity”



Ellen Winiarczyk  
Win-ar-zic & Assoc.

# 4. Establish and Maintain Communication



- Set up initial and ongoing meetings
- Provide personalized support and feedback
- Stick to commitment made on initial application

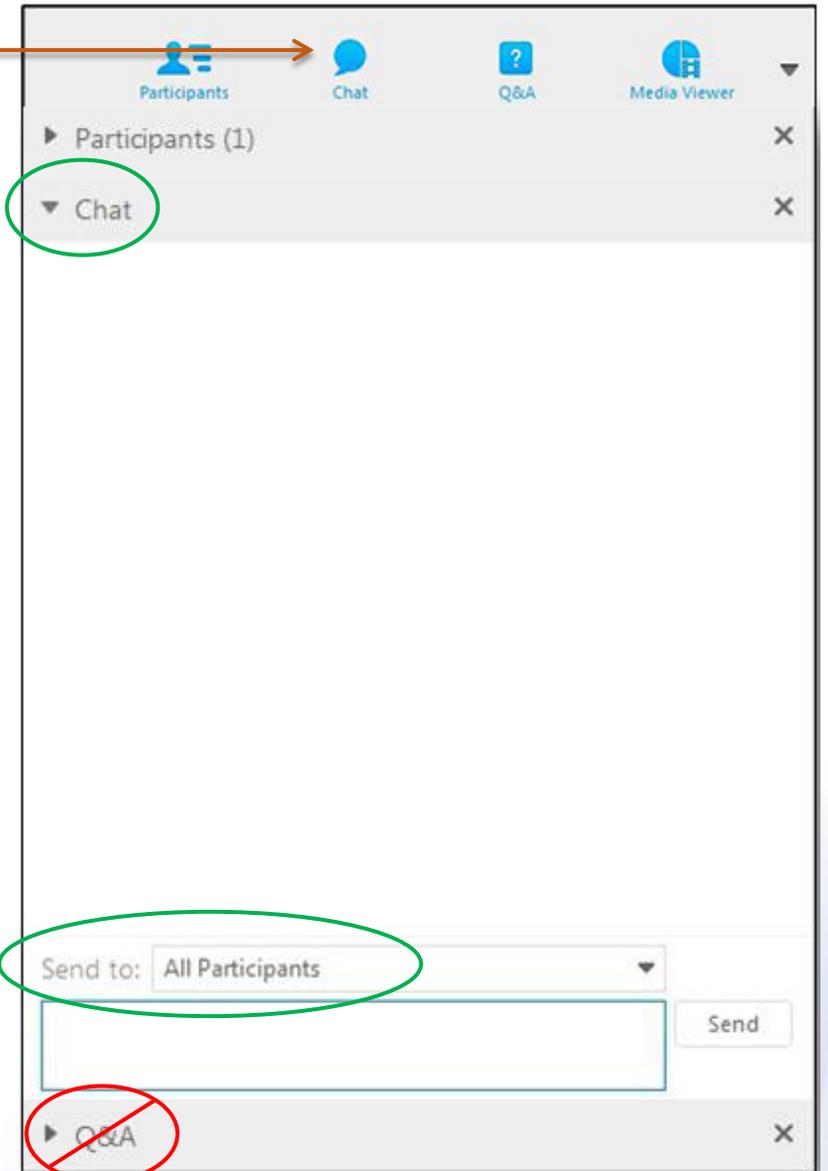


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# Chat Question

- What do regular communications and supervising maintenance activities look like?

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# Communication Facts

## 1-on-1 Meetings

- **88%** of VISTAs meet regularly with their supervisor; **64%** meet one or more times a week

## Group Meetings

- **78%** meet in a group with their supervisor; **55%** meet one or more times a week

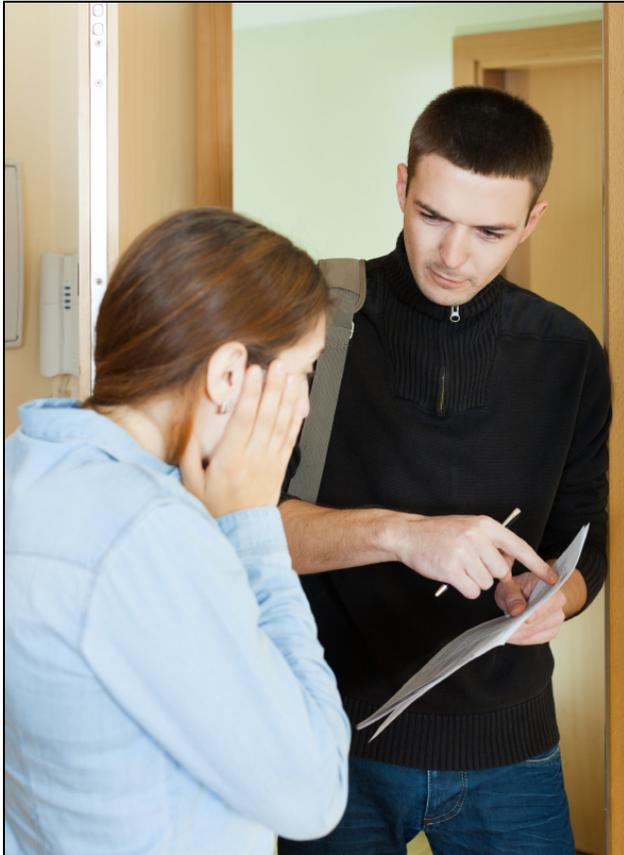
Source: Preliminary Findings from VISTA Member Survey, 9/25/2015, JBS International

# Regular Communications

- One-on-one meetings
- Phone calls
- Text updates
- Weekly reports with feedback



# 5. Troubleshoot Problems as they Arise



- **Conflict is difficult**, but getting through it builds stronger bonds.
- Talk about how to handle conflicts during On-Site Orientation – or do it now.
- Recognize your conflict responses and ask VISTA their conflict responses
- Prevent and plan ahead

# 5. Troubleshoot Problems as they Arise

- Lack of clarity is huge issue
- Don't let problems snowball out of control
- Provide a safe place for members to vent
- Follow your gut!
- After supervisory meetings, write up next steps



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# Resources

1. Managing Conflict: A Resource Guide for VISTAs and Leaders
  - What is conflict? Stages of conflict? Why is conflict so hard?
  - Common approaches for handling conflict; Emotional Intelligence and conflict
  - <http://www.vistacampus.gov/resources/action-learning-team-products>
2. Take the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Assessment (Google it!)
  - Competing, collaborating, compromising, accommodating or avoiding

# VISTA Connections



[www.vistacampus.gov](http://www.vistacampus.gov)

- Forums
- VISTA Map
- Events Calendar
- VISTA Meetups
- Member webinars
  - November 12<sup>th</sup> “Avoiding Burnout During Service”

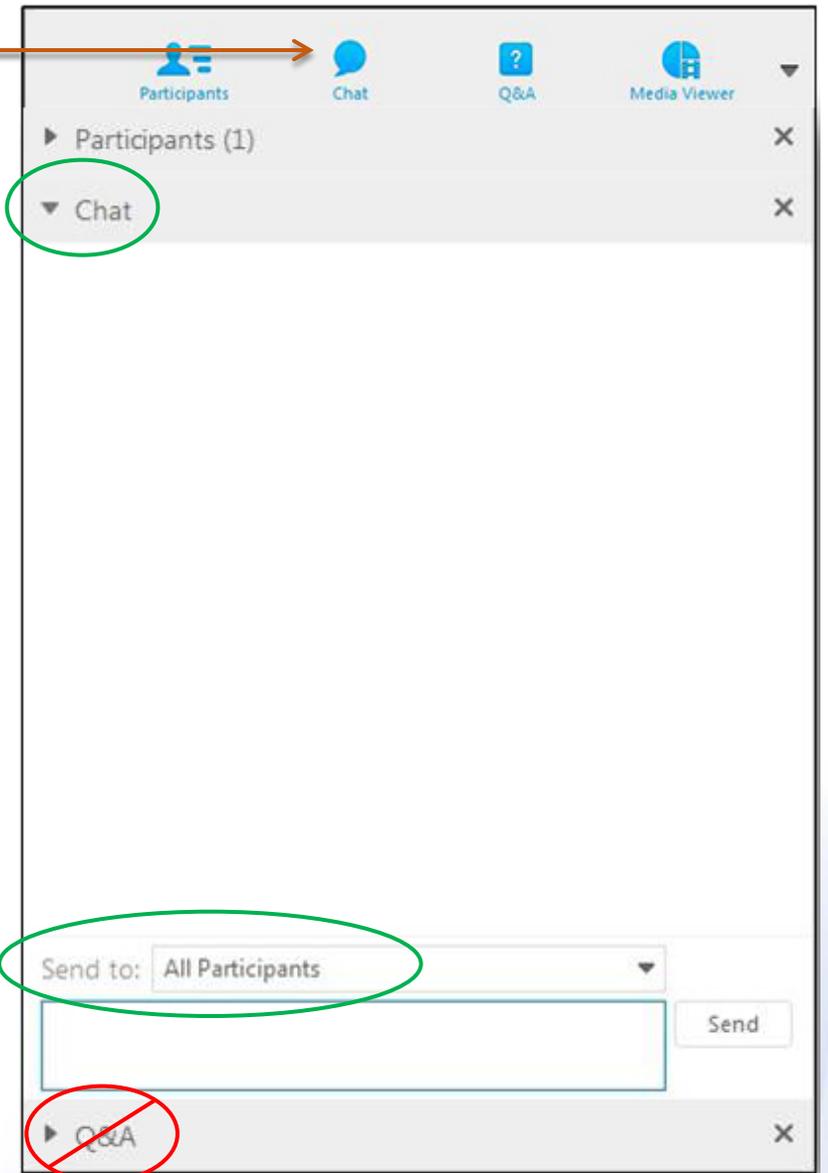
# Next steps: Taking Action NOW!

- ✓ Reconnect members with the VISTA mission
- ✓ Discuss conflict styles with your member/team
- ✓ Regularly communicate via text, email, phone call, or meetings
- ✓ Have that difficult conversation you put off
- ✓ Offer specific praise to a member on a task they did well

# Chat

- Please list one thing you plan to try or implement based on what you learned today

Click this button if you don't see the chat panel.



# Evaluation

- Please take a few moments to share your feedback through the quick poll on the right side of the screen.
- How can we improve these sessions? What topics should we include in future webinars?
- Thank you very much for your time and participation!

# Questions ?

- To ask a question verbally, call in using the number on this slide and press \*1
- To ask a question electronically, use the Q&A feature located in the bottom right corner of the screen. Please ask “All Panelists”

The screenshot shows a user interface with a sidebar on the left containing three items: 'Participants (2)', 'Chat', and 'Q&A'. The 'Q&A' item is circled in red. Below it is a dropdown menu showing 'All (0)'. The main area is mostly blank. At the bottom, there is a text input field with a dropdown menu set to 'All Panelists', which is also circled in red. To the right of the input field is a 'Send' button.

# Thank You for Your Participation!

If you have further questions or for more information, contact us:  
[VISTAwebinars@cns.gov](mailto:VISTAwebinars@cns.gov)

## Future webinars:

### Sub-site Supervisor Orientation

November 17, 2015

### Strategies for Connecting with Sites & VISTAs at a Distance

December 15, 2015

*Visit the Supervisor Webinars page on the VISTA Campus  
for a schedule of upcoming webinars and recordings of past webinars*