



Corporation for
NATIONAL &
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SERVICE



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Dear Jennifer,

Welcome to **eVOLve: technical assistance for leveraging volunteers**. In this electronic technical assistance (eTA) brief, you will find tips and tools to help you leverage volunteers in your community. It is sponsored by HandsOn Network, a training and technical assistance provider for the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Quick Links

The Resource Center
CNCS
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This Month's Quote

"In order to move forward in life, you must learn from your past experiences."

Author Unknown

Ask Us

Do you have a question about working with volunteers or a suggestion for a future issue of eVOLve? Send it to HandsOn Network:

training@handsonnetwork.org

Dear HandsOn,

How do I make reflection the cornerstone of volunteerism in my organization?

The Answer Corner

Reflection can be a very powerful component in service-learning. Its amazing impact is determined by how and when it is delivered with meaningful thought and insight. Reflection is an inquiry of what was experienced and learned. It involves observation, asking questions, and putting facts, ideas and experiences together to add new meaning to them all. Engage volunteers in reflection **before**, **during** and **after** the service experience.

Reflection gives us the opportunities to learn additional education experiences, discuss difficult or challenging circumstances, and examine our purpose. Reflection is a way for us to bring a new lens to the way we look at the world and question the assumptions and ideas we bring with us and connect them to deeper issues. Here are five effective ways to make reflection the cornerstone of volunteerism in your organization:

Journaling

Journaling allows volunteers to reflect with their hearts and think about the information they are putting on paper. Journaling is a great tool to help one ponder the root causes of the issues address through service work. Journaling gives opportunity for great confidentiality knowing that no one in the group will have to share unless they really want. Journaling methods include free writing, writing letters and guided imagery. Spoken words are soon forgotten but written words transcend time. Create a written exercise for your group and set a time limit. Allow opportunity for people to share.

Acting

Volunteer managers should create reflection that appeal to the different ways people learn. Some people express themselves through dramatic performances. Select a group of three to four people. Ask volunteers to create a scenario from their project that describes their learning experience. Ask volunteers to prepare a three to five minute scene and present it to the group. Acting provides an opportunity to look at a project using a unique perspective. Remember, there are many benefits to reflection including creating a sense of accomplishment, improving service, closure, and personal and team development.

Interviewing

Interviewing is a great way for one to reflect their thoughts to another person without the presence of a large group. Interviewing gives the opportunity for two individuals to dialogue . Remember, participants will excel when allowed to choose a form of reflection that builds strengths and communication styles.

Create questions that reflect what you did, what you learned, and what will happen as a result of your service-learning experience.

Group Discussion

Group discussions are the best way to involve the entire group when using speaking as a tool for reflection. Group discussions give participants a chance to interact with other people that they may not have met during the project. Here is a great exercise for group discussion: Design a question that demonstrates that reflection is a way to bring a new awareness to how we look at the world. Ask the group to form in a large circle. If the group is larger than 30 people, form two circles. Using a ball, start the exercise by asking the question and kicking the ball to any participant. The participant receiving the ball must answer the question, he/she will kick the ball to the next participant asking the same question and so on.

Art

Some people express themselves best and learn best through writing, others through speaking and others through art. There is great power in the creation of symbols to represent feelings and experiences. Reflection tools using art activities can be a rich, reflective process for students. The learners end up with a tangible reminder of the learning. When a symbol is used or created for reflection, it leaves the opportunity for meaningful interpretation of an experience wide open. It is a great example of a participant-directed processing activity.

Use the What? So What? Now What? Model in Your Reflection Exercises

What? (Reporting what happened, objectively) Without judgment or interpretation, participants describe in detail the facts and event(s) of the service experience.

So What? Participants discuss their feelings, ideas, and analysis of the service experience.

Now What? Participants consider broader implications of the service experience and apply learning. Be aware to strike a balance between realistic, reachable goals and openness to spontaneity and change.

As volunteer leaders, you have a tremendous amount of influence on how and what volunteers "see" during their service experience. Structure and guidance helps volunteers extract lessons from their community experience. A primary way to create a guided service experience is through reflection. Unguided experiences may allow volunteers to gather information that reinforces stereotypes and negative attitudes about groups, cultures and issues. Reflection can be as creative and fun as you make it.

Resources

The Resource Center offers tools and resources such as the resources listed below. Go directly to the [Resource Center](#), click on the search icon, and enter reflection in the search box. You will find information such as service reflection tool kit and best practices.

[Reflection ToolKit](#)

[Reflection Resources from EnCorps](#)

[Artwork In Reflection](#)

[Reflection: a Tool in your Toolbox](#)

[Effective Best Practices - Leveraging Volunteers](#)

Visit the the Resource Center to review [archive eVOLve briefs](#).

HandsOn Network Training Opportunities

Please join us for our webinar session on The Many Faces of Reflection facilitated by Ann Saylor and Susan Ragsdale. HON will conduct the webinar on **Thursday, July 30, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. Eastern**. During this session, participants will explore the creative facets of reflection and why it should be a cornerstone of your volunteer program. You will experience reflection activities that will interest multiple learning styles and give you options beyond the norm of journaling and conversation starters. Don't expect to sit quietly during this webinar. You're guaranteed to stay active AND leave the workshop with new ideas to energize your reflection time.

Click [here](#) to register for this free webinar. You will enter the Points of Light Web Ex website. To go the calendar for the month of July, click monthly. Then, click on the 30th date which will allow you to view the webinar list. Then register for the webinar. You do not need a password to register. After registering, you will receive an e-mail with log-in information for the session. Please contact us if you have any questions.

If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).



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