

Deepen Community Action Through Reflection

What? Reflection offers a chance to ponder the project, to consider how we impacted the community, the agency, and ourselves. Consider what you are learning and how you are feeling, and evaluate the process you are walking through.

Why? Reflection is the transformational part of volunteerism and community action. We move from 'doing something nice' to being an 'integral part of community.' We move from being a face in the crowd to having an important place in society. Reflection is the key to going deeper into community change. Encourage people to reflect and you will see positive change reflected in the community.

When? You can engage in reflection before, during and after your work.

- The reflection before the project helps participants see the bigger picture of how their volunteer work will affect the agency and the community-at-large.
- During: whenever possible, ignite conversations about the impact of your work.
- After: this is the most challenging part—getting people to sit still for 5 or 10 minutes to talk about the project—what you did and how you made a difference. No matter if your project is successful or if it failed to meet your expectations, you can always grow from the experience!

How? It can be a simple conversation or a work of art. The easiest reflection activity is a simple discussion. Don't ask too many questions; just open discussions that flow naturally in response to the project you just completed. Here are some sample questions:

- What was your role in the project? What were you responsible for?
- Did the project go as planned?
- How does your team deal with the strengths and weaknesses of the team players?
- How did you utilize your skills in the project?
- What did you learn about your community that you did not know before?
- How do you feel this project contributed to developing a positive community?
- How did you feel when you helped someone?
- How can you apply what you learned to your daily life?
- What obstacles did your team encounter?
- How has the community been supportive?
- How could your group have improved the project?
- What have you learned about yourself?
- What is your next plan of action?

Be creative and have fun with reflection! Can you think of other forms of reflection that might work well for you? Brainstorm together. Here are some examples:

Play dough sculptures
Drama
Skits
Community presentation

Display Boards
Group Pictures
Community Murals
Videotapes

Poetry
Letters to the editor
Collage or scrapbooks
Media Coverage