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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

REFLECTION GUIDE

Reflection is a key component of closing a service project. Reflection provides volunteers with an opportunity to:

- reinforce a sense of accomplishment
- foster a sense of community among each other
- discover deeper meaning and impact of a project
- guard against inaccurate perceptions and biases
- consider longer-term ways to address community needs

WHAT TO REFLECT ON:

A sequence of three types of questions move from simple to complex topics and comprise a successful reflection. Questions can be posed in small or large groups to conclude a project, making sure to prompt responses from as many people as possible. Sample questions for each question type are provided below.

1) **WHAT: *WHAT DID WE DO?***

- What tasks did you do today?
- What issue did we address? What population(s) did we serve?
- What did you see happen today?
- What were the results of our project?

2) **SO WHAT: *WHAT DID WE LEARN?***

- What new skills or interests did you discover?
- Who did you meet today?
- How did our group come together? In what ways did we struggle?
- How did this experience influence you?
- How did this project address a pressing need in our community?
- How might this project have empowered a recipient?

3) **NOW WHAT: *HOW DO WE APPLY THIS EXPERIENCE?***

- What are the root causes of the issue that we addressed?
- What would you like to learn more about related to this issue?
- How did this experience change your perception of our community?
- How did this experience help you understand (population served)?
- What biases might you have had prior to this project? Was that bias challenged? If so, how?
- What might you do differently as a result of this project?

ACTIVITIES TO REFLECT:

The following activities provide experiential ways to think and reflect, which may draw deeper responses from participants.

1) 1 TO 5 MINUTE ACTIVITIES

- **Silent Reflection:** Pose a reflection question to the group and allow for a minute of silent reflection on the topic. Invite people to share if willing.
- **Strike a pose:** Ask participants to strike a pose, position, or facial expression that expresses how they feel. Invite people to explain their pose.
- **Three words:** Take turns sharing three words that describe how you feel about the project, yourself, and the group.
- **Living poem:** On a sheet of paper, invite participants to add one line to create a group poem to reflect on the experience.

2) 15 to 30 MINUTE ACTIVITIES

- **Yarn web:** Beginning with one person holding the end of a ball of yarn, pass the ball until each person is holding a piece of the string. While holding the ball, each person shares a response to a posed question.
- **Interview:** Form pairs. Each person interviews each other about what they did, what they learned, and how they will apply it. Participants share the responses of the person they interviewed with the group.
- **Confronting bias:** On a note card, each person anonymously writes down a bias they challenged with the experience, a lesson they learned, or something that moved them. Gather the cards in a basket. Then, each person draws one card and reads it to the group. Invite people to share their reflections of the activity.

Service without reflection is like eating without swallowing. –Author Unknown

This guide was adapted from the Northwest Service Academy's Service Reflection Toolkit, downloaded from http://www.dartmouth.edu/~tucker/docs/service/reflection_tools.pdf.