

Reflecting on Community Service

Reflection allows you to think more deeply about the service experience and to explore how it fits into the broader social picture. It's the time that gives meaning to service so that we can examine our values and how our outlook might have been changed by the experience.

Use any of the following questions to spark internal reflection or group dialogue.

1. The Mirror (A clear reflection of the Self)

- Who are you? How do you describe yourself?
- What are your values? What do you believe?
- What have you learned about yourself through this experience?
- Do you have more/less understanding or empathy than you did before volunteering?
- In what ways, if any, has your sense of self, your values, your sense of "community," your willingness to serve others, and your self-confidence/self-esteem been impacted or altered through this experience?
- Have your motivations for volunteering changed? In what ways?
- How has this experience challenged stereotypes or prejudices you have/had?
- Any realizations, insights, or especially strong lessons learned or half-glimpsed?
- Will these experiences change the way you act or think in the future?
- Have you given enough, opened up enough, cared enough?
- How have you challenged yourself, your ideals, your philosophies, your concept of life or of the way you live?

2. The Microscope (Makes the small experience large)

- What happened? Describe your experience as if you were talking to a close friend.
- What would you change about this situation if you were in charge?
- What have you learned about this agency, these people, or the community?
- Was there a moment of failure, success, indecision, doubt, humor, frustration, happiness, sadness?
- Did you make a difference? Do you feel your actions had any impact?
- What more needs to be done? What more can you do?
- Does this experience complement or contrast with what you're learning in class? How?
- Has learning through experience taught you more, less, or the same as in class? In what ways?

3. The Binoculars (Makes what appears distant, appear closer)

- From this service experience, can you identify any underlying or overarching issues that influence the problem?
- What could be done to change the situation?
- Will this alter your future behaviors/attitudes/and career? If so, how?
- How is this issue/agency you're serving impacted by what is going on in the larger political/social sphere?
- What does the future hold?
- What can be done?