

The Purpose of Reflection:

“Reflection is a crucial part of community service, which allows volunteers to look back on, think critically about, and learn from their service experience. Reflection may include acknowledging and/or sharing of reactions, feelings, observations, and ideas about anything regarding the activity. Reflection can happen through writing speaking, listening, drawing, acting, and any other way you can imagine.” (from Service Reflection Toolkit of northwest Service Academy, www.nwrel.org/ecc/ameriacorps/rescoucres/reflect_toolfit/).

Questions to Ponder

Reflection should ask the questions What? So What? and Now What?

- a. **What?** *Objectively describing what happened without judgment or interpretation*

What kind of service did you do? **What did you observe?** WHAT ISSUE IS BEING ADDRESSED OR POPULATION BEING SERVED? What were the results of the project? **What events or ‘critical incidents’ occurred?** Who did you meet? **What did you see, smell, hear, taste?**

- b. **So What?** *Discussing feelings, ideas, and analysis of service experience*

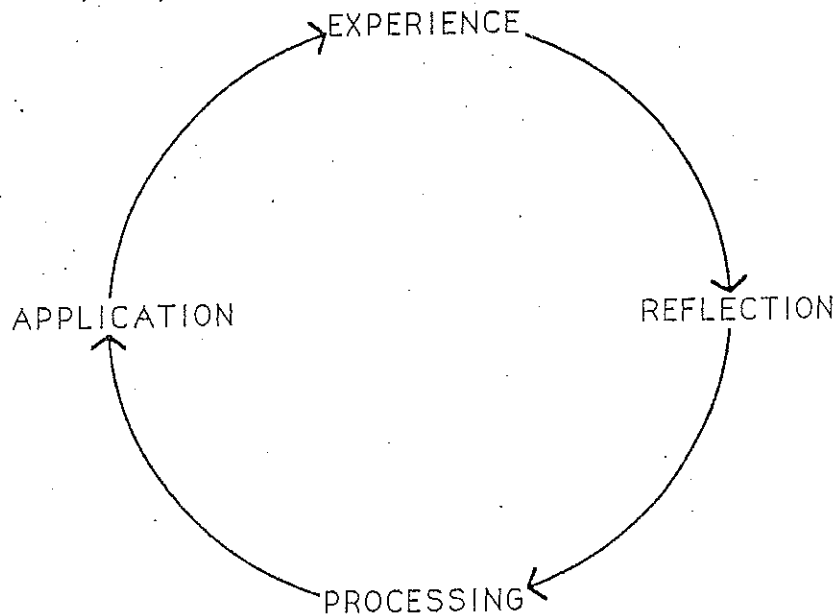
What did you learn? What difference did the event make? **What feelings or thoughts seem strong today?** *How is your experience different from what you expected?* How did you respond to critical incidents? What impacts the way you view this experience? **Did the ‘service’ empower the recipient to become more self-sufficient?** *What are some pressing needs/issues in the community?* **HOW does this project address those needs?** In what ways did the group work well together? **HOW MIGHT THE GROUP HAVE ACCOMPLISHED ITS TASK MORE EFFECTIVELY?**

- c. **Now What?** *Discussing how we will think or act as a result of this experience. Considering broader implications of the service experience.*

What seem to be the root causes of the issue/problem addressed? What causes injustice in our political, economic, social, and religious structures? **What can you do to create social change?** In what ways is the community addressing social problems? *What learning occurred for you in this experience?* **How will you integrate this into your life?**

Processing

Processing is an activity that is used to encourage *individuals* to reflect, describe, analyze, and communicate what they have recently experienced (Quinsland & Van Ginkel, 1984)



Learning/Processing Styles

Oral learners, visual learners, learning by doing, greens (learn through organization), blues (learn through numbers and logical steps), reds (learn through interactions with people), yellow (creative learners), quiet processors, verbal processors.

The Rules of Reflection

- a. Challenge by Choice: You are not required to do anything that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- b. Anything that is shared during reflection must remain confidential. We have to respect one another enough to not share anyone's reflections with any person outside the group.
- c. We are not here to give advice to one another nor should we attempt to evaluate another's experience for them or for the group. In reflection we simply share OUR own insights about OUR learning. We are not here to prove one another wrong.
- d. There shouldn't be any 'cross-talking' or side conversations
- e. Make "I" statements rather than "We" statements
- f. Reflection is not simply a recollection of the day's events, but involves drawing meaning and learning from our experiences. (adapted from "What is Theological Reflection and Why do we use it" from Capuchin Youth and Family Ministries, Capuchin Outreach Program.)