



# Preparation Action Reflection Evaluation

## Why Use PARE?

The PARE model is a simple way to plan community-responsive, effective and successful service projects for student groups. Using PARE to design and implement service projects will help the group learn from serving in the community. Preparing for and reflecting upon service helps breakdown stereotypes and place the service experience in a broader context. Evaluating action helps to improve the service the group is engaged in. While the PARE planning guide does not guarantee a successful service experience for both students and community members, it helps to maximize effectiveness and insures that all participants have the information and support they need to get the most from their service experience.

## Preparation

It is crucial to prepare your group for each service experience to increase the likelihood that there will be positive outcomes for both community members and student participants. Issues that arise during the preparation can set the tone for a service project and should be connected to issues discussed in reflection. Preparation should include information on the following:

1. Logisticalc

4. Explore expectations and assumptions of the participants.
  - ! Find out what participants hope to gain from the project.
  - ! Discuss stereotypes, impressions, assumptions and concerns before beginning the project.

## **A TIMELINE FOR PLANNING A SERVICE EXPERIENCE:**

1. **At least six weeks prior to your desired service date...**
  - ! Determine the issues, populations, and locations that are of interest to the group
  - ! Determine time investment of the group (on-going, one time, how many hours)
  - ! Consult Community Service Programs (web site or in-person)
  - ! Gather information about potential agencies and issues
  - ! Make preliminary phone calls to agencies; discuss service activities and potential dates
2. **At least four weeks prior to your desired service date...**
  - ! Solidify with the host agency the service location, date, time and activity
  - ! Inform your group of the details
  - ! Begin to think about preparation activities
  - ! Solidify transportation
3. **At least two weeks prior to your service date...**
  - ! Remind participants of the service activity
  - ! Provide written information about the agency or issue
4. **The week prior to your service date...**
  - ! Remind participants of your commitment to the agency or activity
  - ! Discuss the agency and issue; draw connections to other coursework
  - ! Facilitate a preparation activity
5. **After your service...**
  - ! Reflect and evaluate with your group
  - ! Thank host agency
  - ! Throughout the remainder of the semester continue to draw connections and learning from the service experience

## **IDEAS FOR PREPARATION EXERCISES**

**Guided Imagery:** Participants get comfortable, close their eyes and listen to a narration. This exercise can help participants get in touch with their assumptions, expectations and fears about the project. Be creative and write a narrative that leads participants through the day.

*Example:* Today you are going to spend time with children who are critically ill. Picture yourself arriving at the hospital/home. How do you feel? You enter the lobby of the hospital/home. What is the first thing you see? What do you smell?

**Sentence Stems:** These help participants begin thinking about their expectations for the experience. Have participants complete the statements aloud or by writing.

*Examples:* Today I hope . . .  
I am anxious about . . .  
I expect the children to . . .

**Articles/Photos:** Provide articles or photos about the issue the project addresses or the population with you will be working. Use these to stimulate discussion and learning.

**Encourage Creativity:** Some people connect to their ideas and feelings best through creative and artistic expression. Use crayons and drawing paper and ask participants to draw their expectations for the project.

**Role Play:** Act out situations that may arise during the project. Discuss what was learned.

**Quotes:** Give each participant a quote relating to service, ask them to read it quietly to themselves and then keep it in their pocket during the service. Afterwards during reflection, ask participants to take out the quote, reflect on it quietly to themselves, and then share it with either the larger group or in pairs. This is a good way to tie in preparation with reflection.

# Action

Action involves the service project itself. There are three primary ways your group can serve:

1. **Direct:** Providing service directly to individuals at the agency site or in the community. Examples include tutoring children, holding a party for residents of a nursing home, taking care of pets for people who are homebound and serving meals in a soup kitchen.
2. **Non-direct:** Serving at an agency doing behind-the-scenes assistance, not directly with individuals the agency serves. Examples include making presents for patients at Children's Hospital but not working with the children, sorting food in a food distribution center, painting the exterior of a homeless shelter and helping with a major mailing at a nonprofit organization.
3. **Indirect:** Serving on behalf of an issue, population or community of concern but removed from the actual site. Examples include raising money for the Make-a-Wish Foundation, doing a dance-a-thon and making care packages for residents of a nursing home.

An important factor to consider in deciding what action your group will take is the needs and voice of the community. One way to find out is to ask the agency you will be working with -- it sounds simple but many groups neglect to do this. You will maximize the effectiveness of your service if you are aware of the needs of the community. By recognizing community voice, you can begin to build bridges toward making change and solving problems. Never assume you know what a community's needs are!

## CHOOSING A SERVICE SITE

Keep in mind that everyone has a different comfort zone. While one person may be comfortable working one-on-one with children from Langley Park, someone else may feel quite uncomfortable with a service project that deals with children from 10.Cy



- ! Student groups involved in community service
- ! Community service sites that are accessible by the University of Maryland's Shuttle-UM service.
- ! Information on courses that are offering service-learning opportunities.

# Reflection

Reflection invites those participating in service to:

- ! Think critically about their experience.
- ! Understand the complexity of the service experience and put it in a larger context.
- ! Challenge, although not necessarily change, their own attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, privileges, prejudices and stereotypes.
- ! Transform a single project into further involvement and/or broader issue awareness
- ! Ask "Why?"

Through reflection we can increase our sensitivity to community issues thus increasing our capacity to more effectively serve. Reflection is also a way to monitor service experiences, because through the discussion and interaction participants can feel both challenged and supported. It is especially beneficial to bridge the reflection back to the preparation.

The Social Change Model of Leadership Model can be useful in reflection activities. The model views all students as potential leaders and holds that service is an effective way to develop leadership skills in students.

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- ! In what ways were your stereotypes or assumptions challenged?
- ! How has this service experience supported your values?
- ! Would you want to serve with this organization again?
- ! How responsive is this organization to community needs?

**What, So What, Now What:** Have everyone answer three questions (written and then shared, written only, or as a discussion): What? So What? and Now What?

- ! What did we do, see, hear, smell, touch, taste?
- !

Develop a brief set of questions and ask participants to respond in writing and then in small groups (time permitting). Example Questions:

- ! To what extent did the experience meet your expectations?
- ! What might have helped make your experience better?
- ! What community needs did your service fulfill?
- ! What community needs were not addressed?

To enhance the experience from the perspective of the community, project coordinators should ask the volunteer coordinator how successful s/he found the experience to be. Also, you may want to ask what people could do differently next time or how they could be better prepared for the involvement in the community in the future.

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Please Note: Inclusion in Community Service-Learning (CSL) resources is not to be interpreted as an endorsement for any agency or organization listed here. As with any off-campus opportunity, the University is not responsible for any personal injury or loss that might result from your participation. Participants are strongly encouraged to read and implement the **Good Questions to Ask** and **PARE** handouts available through CSL. Lastly, be aware of any special requirements or skills necessary to perform the service requested (i.e. construction, carpentry, landscaping) and do not feel compelled to execute tasks which are beyond your capabilities.

7/05