

Reflection ideas worth borrowing

Over the years, the Youth Volunteer Corps of America (YVCA) has developed a long list of member reflection activities. YVCA is a large National Direct Grantee located near Kansas City that supplies AmeriCorps members to more than two dozen affiliates. The sites range from small rural communities to large urban centers. Here are some activities that have worked in multiple settings:

Speaking

- Plan one-on-one talks
- Participate in small group discussions, both formal and informal (such as during break or in a van)
- Deliver oral reports to agency staff or community representatives
- Conduct interviews or oral histories of clients
- Give testimony before the board of directors
- Conduct a press conferences
- Record an oral account of the project

Writing

- Keep a daily individual journal (with assignments or free writes)
- Contribute to a team journal
- Share poems with other members and other teams
- Prepare a guide for future teams
- Draft a press release on your project
- Write an evaluation of the project
- Create information for the program's Web page
- Write an article for the newsletter
- Develop a final report on the project
- Write letters to the newspaper, elected representatives, other program sites, parents of youth clients, the host agency

Multimedia

- Keep a team scrapbook
- Do a photo essay
- Create a painting or drawing of your impressions of the project
- Make a collage or group sculpture
- Write a song about your experience
- Perform a skit about the project (for agency staff, board, clients or community groups; could be presented at a summer celebration)
- Develop a slide show, PowerPoint, or video

Other ideas

- Gather information about an issue
- Plan parts of the next week's project
- Role play how to respond to a client's situation
- Do simulation games
- Plan the best way to do the next year's project
- Problem solve for the agency
- Explore opportunities for community advocacy after service

Reflection Activity Examples

The links below describe three different group reflection activities used by YVCA:

The Council Process. Group members sit in a circle and pass around a "talking stick" or object which encourages deep listening.

Group Reading. Members read aloud journal entries, poems, and other short pieces to inspire reflection.

Youth Volunteer Resume. Program leaders and volunteers collaborate on a service resume.