RELATIONSHIP-BASED TEAMBUILDING FOR VOLUNTEERS

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Agenda

● Introductions as Team Building
● Brief Overview of Commonwealth Corps and Massachusetts Promise Fellowship
● Key Elements of Teams

● Cycle of a Volunteer’s Experience
● Team Building as a Part of:
  ▪ Pre-Orientation
  ▪ Orientation
  ▪ Year Round Activities
  ▪ Closing Out

● Self Assessment
● Sharing of Promising Practices from Audience
● Questions and Answers
INTRODUCTIONS AS TEAM BUILDING:

- With a partner, introduce yourselves and find one thing you have in common.
- Debrief: Small gestures of welcome.
Commonwealth Corps

Mission:
To engage Massachusetts residents of all ages and backgrounds in direct service and capacity building to rebuild communities, address unmet community needs, and increase volunteerism.

- Dual focus on community/organizational impact & on member growth/development
- Direct service and capacity building (immediate impact & focus on sustainability)
- Focus Areas: Economic Opportunity, Education, Health/Nutrition, Veterans’ Support, Youth Development
- Engages diverse Corps (~50% above “typical” 18-24 age range, ~50% members identify as people of color)
- ~40 Members serving with 15-20 agencies across Massachusetts each year

History:
- Established in 2007 by Governor Patrick and his partners in the state legislature. Continued support under Governor Baker.
- Through 2016, over 950 individuals have:
  - Served over 600,000 hours,
  - Benefitted over 595,000 individuals, and
  - Leveraged over 28,000 additional volunteers to contribute an additional 657,000 hours of service.
- In 2015-16, members leveraged >$468,000 worth of cash or in-kind support for their host site organizations.
Massachusetts Promise Fellowship

Mission:
The Massachusetts Promise Fellowship at Northeastern University believes that all young people in the Commonwealth have a right to the resources they need to be successful in life, including a caring adult, a safe place, a healthy start, an effective education, and an opportunity to serve. We deliver these 5 promises to youth by training emerging leaders who commit one year of service to support and provide these needed resources to youth throughout the Commonwealth.

- 40 AmeriCorps Fellows are annually placed at non-profits, city agencies, and schools across
- AmeriCorps Fellows lead out-of-school time programs for youth in grades 6-12 focused on academic enrichment, college and career exploration, and mentoring

History:
- Established in 1999 following Gen. Colin Powell’s creation of the America’s Promise Alliance
- From 1999-2016, 470 AmeriCorps Fellows have:
  - Contributed 900,000 hours of volunteer service to communities across the state
  - Served over 5,000 young people on an annual basis
Team

- What does “team” mean to you?
- “A small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.”

(Jon Katzenbach, The Discipline of Teams)
Characteristics of Teams (1 of 2)

- Have specific team purpose—mission
- Establish mutual accountability
- Responsible for performance goals
- Have complementary skills (continues on next slide)

Characteristics of Teams (2 of 2)

- Perceive themselves as a social entity
- Interdependent—interact/influence each other
- Share leadership
- Meetings: open ended discussion & problem solving
- Measure own performance—collectively assess

(From Prof. Kristen J. McCormack, “Building High Performing Teams,” Nonprofit Management & Leadership Certificate Program at Boston University’s Questrom School of Business—summarizing Katzenbach and Smith “The Discipline of Teams”)
Key Relationship-Based Elements

Include

● Investing in first meetings
● Establishing norms of behavior
● Investing in time together; communicating
● Exploiting the power of positive feedback, recognition and reward

(Selected from Prof. Kristen J. McCormack, “Building High Performing Teams,” Nonprofit Management & Leadership Certificate Program at Boston University’s Questrom School of Business)
Inclusion and Awareness

- Focus on inclusion and cultural humility
- Recognizing the many different leadership, personality, and professional styles that individuals bring to a team
- Raising awareness of/appreciation for those differences.

→ Workplace Values and Norms Activity
Cycle of Volunteer’s Experience

- Pre-Orientaion
- Orientation
- Year Round
- Closing Out

Taking time to evaluate and reassess for next cycle
PRE-ORIENTATION

- Invite incoming Members to online community (listserv, LinkedIn Group, Facebook group, etc.)
- Outgoing volunteers outreach to new volunteers
PRE-ORIENTATION

● Volunteers submit photos and bios
● Provide Food & fun atmosphere at pre-orientation paperwork sessions
PRE-ORIENTATION

- Expectations of volunteer clearly communicated in service description
- Connection to organization/mission
RIVER STORIES
ORIENTATION

- Icebreakers
- Group Agreements
- Discussions on strengths/growth areas
- Defining “safe space” as a group
- Review of workplace/org culture
- Reserving time for fun/unstructured social time
ORIENTATION

- Discussions on strengths/growth areas
- Review of org culture/workplace values
- Working/serving with me 101
YEAR ROUND

● Revisiting orientation concepts
● Internal group newsletter
● Online discussion groups
● Member-led discussions/workshops
● Mandatory workshops
● Site shadows
YEAR ROUND

● Regional cohorts/meetups
● Hosting meetings at different sites
● Celebrations
● Volunteer-led social activities
YEAR ROUND

- Revisiting expectations
- Supervision & team meetings
- Discussing professional/leadership styles
- Individual recognition
- Structured evaluation
CLOSING OUT

- Maintaining personal and professional relationships
- Providing info on alumni opportunities
- Setting up alumni engagement events
CLOSING OUT

- Exit interview
- Serving as a reference/professional mentor
Self Assessment

- Teambuilding at your program:
  - Strength
  - Growth area
  - New ideas from today
  - Action steps
Promising Practices To Share

- Additional ideas and practices from across today’s audience
Questions

- Group Q & A
- Please feel free to contact us at:
  - Susie (sflugsilva@mass-service.org)
  - Colleen (c.holohan@northeastern.edu)
  - Amy (amulvena@mass-service.org)
Relationship-Based Teambuilding for Volunteers
MSA Conference—June 12, 2017

Presenters:
- Susanna Flug-Silva, Commonwealth Corps Program Manager, Massachusetts Service Alliance (sflugsilva@mass-service.org)
- Colleen Holohan, Director, Massachusetts Promise Fellowship (c.holohan@northeastern.edu)
- Amy Mulvena, Commonwealth Corps Program Assistant, Massachusetts Service Alliance (amulvena@mass-service.org)

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Overview:
This session will provide examples of how the Commonwealth Corps and Massachusetts Promise Fellowship build a sense of team across two levels: 1) among supervisors and volunteers/service members within sites and 2) across multi-location/statewide teams. Both programs use a variety of tools to structure and support relationship building in scattered-site programs. Whether you’re looking to improve supervisor/supervisee relationships within one site, strengthen group dynamics across sites, or think broadly about fostering a sense of team, come hear our promising practices and share yours. Participants will assess their areas of strength, opportunities for growth, and how they can apply these resources to their work.
1. What are your/your program’s current areas of strength/promising practices around relationship-based team building?

2. What are your/your program’s current areas for growth on this topic?

3. What are 1-2 specific ideas you are taking away from today?

4. What concrete action steps will you take to better foster relationship-based team building within my program/agency:
   - Within the next 1-2 weeks
   - Within the next 2-3 months
   - Within the next year
Serving with Me 101 - Preparing for Team Success

Name:
Date:

**How I perform best:**
(For example: by listening first, by taking immediate action, alone, as a team, in quiet, with music, etc.)

**How I deal with stress and/or interpersonal challenges:**
(For example: email, face-to-face conversation, right away, processing it alone first, wanting an outsider to help facilitate, not wanting outsiders involved if possible, with music, with exercise, with food, etc.)

**The best thing about serving with me:**

**The most challenging part about serving with me:**

**Some main strengths I bring to the team and want to leverage:**

Adapted for the Commonwealth Corps from “Working With Me 101” from mytown, inc.
What I’m most hoping for from my peers in terms of teamwork and support:

What I’m most hoping for from my supervisor in terms of guidance and support:

I am most receptive to feedback:
(For example: discussed face-to-face, over the phone, by email, that includes specific suggestions for improvement, etc.)

The best piece of advice I would give to someone who will be serving/partnering closely with me is:
(Try to state these positively, rather than with a “don’t;” for example “Provide clear objectives and guidelines.”)

After the Commonwealth Corps this year, I am hoping to:
(For example- Members: have a better understanding of my professional path, get a job in human services, go back for my BA/an MSW, etc. Supervisors: gain new ideas about what the agency can do, have expanded our programming, have helped you prepare for your next school/career steps, etc.)
River Story Guide

A Resource Shared by The Commonwealth Corps & MSA

**Brief Description:**
River Story is a visual narrative technique that helps individuals share their rich life stories. Each story has ebbs and flows with celebrations and hard challenges. Taking the time to hear these stories can help a group to increase their appreciation for what others have been through and how those experiences have shaped their responses to different situations.

**When to use:**
- Introductions.
- Project review and reflection.
- Planning for the future.
- Reconciling different opinions of a project, situation or issue.

**Purpose:**
- To build trust in a group
- To increase the knowledge of different experiences that inform perspectives

**Directions:**
- Before disseminating supplies, have participants take 2–3 minutes to reflect upon how they ended up in this service position, volunteer opportunity, point in their life, etc.
- Pass out the paper and art supplies and let participants know that their river story will be private to them and they will only be required to share information that they feel comfortable with.
- Ask participants to create a picture that reflects their journey to service, this should be in the form of a river. Some of the questions to consider include:
  - What has brought you to this point in your life?
  - Where do you want your “river” to go in future?
  - Include key events, people, experiences, and challenges
    - Feeders/“tributaries”
    - Swirls/“drains”
- Once participants have completed their rivers, ask them to share part or all of their river journey with a partner or small group
- Debrief experience
  - What was it like to think about your journey to this service position in terms of a river?
  - What surprised you?
  - What insights have you gained about the group?

**Tips and Lessons Learned**
- It is best to have already developed group agreements and completed team-building icebreaker activities, to build trust, in advance to completing this activity.
- If participants have given permission, take a picture of the images to share afterwards
- Think creatively - this method can be used anytime throughout the service or volunteer experience.

**Materials Needed:**
- Paper size 11x17 (or bigger)
- Markers

**Optional Supplies:**
- Colored Pencils
- Paint
- Crayons