Volunteers Are The Core

THE HEALINGCORPS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
AT THE CENTER FOR HOPE AND HEALING, INC. IN LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS

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• Try on
• It’s okay to disagree
• It’s NOT ok to blame, shame, or attack ourselves or others
• Practice self-focus
• Notice both process and content
• Practice both/and thinking
• Be aware of intent and impact of your actions
• Confidentiality
Objectives

• Successful strategies for volunteer engagement

• Getting aligned with agency mission

• Approaches to supporting volunteer retention
Why Diverse Volunteers?

• Likelihood that a person will experience sexual violence increases if they are Black, Brown, or Native (Black, et al., 2010).

• CHH provides services in a city where 50.6% are people of color, 43% speak languages other than English in their home, and 21.5% live below the poverty line (the national average is 14%) (Census, 2010)

• Diversity is more than just race

• It includes variables like age, gender, ability, language, education, and more

• We wanted to align with our agency mission and vision
A person who holds multiple identities faces multiple layers of marginalization as they face “double exclusion” and their compounded effects (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis 2010).

Combination of identity and structural barriers are real.

“Once a stereotype has been adopted [about a certain community], it becomes a filter through which [all information is] selectively [recalled] (Davis, 2016).

A survey administered by the Massachusetts Women of Color Network found that 65% of all volunteers in the Domestic and Sexual Violence field are White/Caucasian women (Fernandes Prabhu, 2017).

Women of color find themselves pushed to the margins of the very work they began and without a voice in the movements that impact them at disproportionately higher rates (Fernandes Prabhu, 2017).

Research suggest that while volunteer opportunities are virtually readily available to all candidates, it is simple economics that prohibits people of color from taking advantage of these opportunities (Fernandes Prabhu, 2017).
Organizational Change

Parallel processes:

Agency
- Individual readiness
- Staffing changes
- Affinity groups

Volunteer Program
- Intentional recruitment
- Recruitment
- Retention
Multiculturalism

Process of recognizing, understanding and appreciating differences and their impact on four levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PERSONAL</th>
<th>INTERPERSONAL</th>
<th>CULTURAL</th>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values and beliefs</td>
<td>Behavior based on beliefs</td>
<td>Beauty, right, unwritten rules</td>
<td>Rules and policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADAPTED FROM VISIONS, INC.
Communities "at the margins" is define through Center/Margin theory as conceived by bell hooks (2000).

- Our mission and vision are grounded in ending all forms of oppression by centering those communities at the margins.

- We prioritize services to those who historically have not been served (i.e. people of color, LGBQ and transgender people, refugees and immigrants, people with disabilities, and men of color).
Name Game

- Your full name
- Nick name
- Pronoun(s)
- Cultural greeting
- History of your name

ACTIVITY
Successful strategies for volunteer engagement

1. Begin with intentional outreach
   - Select events that are specific to the community you want to engage
   - Identify a person or leader in the community to begin a relationship with
   - Give it time
2. Low barriers interview process

- Web accessible
- Short/precise emails
- Provide a self-assessment
- Conduct a phone screen
- Conduct an in-person interview
- Host an Open House

- Know what answers you are looking for
3. Reciprocity

- Practical: Offer a new skill
- Emotional: Build confidence
- Social: Opportunity to make friends
- Professional: Networking

- Volunteers have skills **beyond** what we need. Leverage and value them
3. Appreciate and celebrate

• Build a culture of appreciation
• Thank you texts
• Reach out before and after shifts
• Schedule “Graduations”

• Develop loyalty among your team
Training

### Timing
- Changed time to meet the needs of POC participants
- Drastically changed the makeup of our team

### Content
- Anti oppression
- Values based
- Responding to survivors
- Cultivating empathy
Multicultural Process Tool

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Trust the process

Training: Process

ADAPTED FROM VISIONS, INC.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Oppression</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Non-Target Groups</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Race/Color</td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>People of Color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genderism</td>
<td>Gender Identity/Expression</td>
<td>Non-Transgender Gender Conforming</td>
<td>Transgender Gender Non-Conforming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classism</td>
<td>Socio-Economic Class</td>
<td>Middle, Upper Class</td>
<td>Poor, Working Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elitism</td>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>Formally Educated Managers, Exempt, Faculty</td>
<td>Informally Educated Clerical, Non-Exempt, Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Oppression</td>
<td>Place in the Hierarchy</td>
<td>Christians, Protestants</td>
<td>Muslims, Catholics, Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Semitism</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militarism</td>
<td>Military Status</td>
<td>WW I &amp; II, Korean, Gulf, Iraq, Afghanistan Vets</td>
<td>Vietnam War Vets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageism</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Young Adults (25-39 yrs.)</td>
<td>Elders (40+ by law)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adultism</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Children &amp; Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexism</td>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Heterosexuals</td>
<td>Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ableism</td>
<td>Physical or Mental Ability</td>
<td>Person without Physical or Mental Disability</td>
<td>Person with Physical or Mental Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobia</td>
<td>Immigrant Status</td>
<td>US Born</td>
<td>Immigrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Oppression</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English as Second Language Non-English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Target/
Non-Target Activity

THE CENTER FOR HOPE AND HEALING, INC.
Consider your target groups:

Which **target groups** are you or have you been a member of? Circle all that apply.

- People of color
- Support staff/supervisees
- Poor/working class
- Informally or less formally educated
- Women
- Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming
- Jews/Muslims/Catholics/Jehovah’s Witness, Atheist, Wiccan, etc.
- Elders (40+)
- Children
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
- Person with Physical or Mental Disability
- Vietnam vets
- Immigrant
- English as a second language, deaf people

What are some strengths that come from your experiences as a member of **one of the groups** you circled? Write down the words that come to mind to describe those strengths.

What are some of the ways that you experience inequality and exclusion as a member of that **same target group**?
Consider your non-target groups:

- Which **non-target** groups are you or have you been a member of? Circle all those that apply.
  - White/Caucasian
  - Management/Supervisors
  - Formally or “more” educated
  - Men
  - Non-Transgender/Gender Conforming
  - Protestants
  - Young persons/children
  - Adults/Middle-aged persons
  - Heterosexual
  - Person without Physical or Mental Disability
  - English as a first language
  - Middle/Owning Class
  - US passport/born
  - WWI, Korean, Gulf War vets

- What are some strengths that come from your experiences as a member of one of the non-target groups you circled?

- Now, describe a time you were treated “better than” because of your membership in that same non-target group. (privilege)

- Now, describe time when you found yourself treating a person in the corresponding target group as “less than” (may have been intentional or unintentional, conscious or unconscious or as bystander).

- Describe one painful cost or negative consequence of being in that non-target group.
HealingCorps 2013

2012
• Majority UML Sociology and CJ students
• 83% White/Caucasian

2014
• Students would leave after 1-2 semesters
• Challenging to retain POC

2017
• Shift in training sessions

2018
• Added communication and increased social capacity

2019
• Move to 30-day hotline
• Increased capacity to support diverse survivors
HealingCorps 2019

- 47% of our team are people of color
- 47% are multilingual
- 42% are immigrants
- 18% are LGBQ, transgender, or non-binary
- 11% are male or masculine
- The age range is 19 - 75

Of note:
- 62% of our staff first began as volunteers in the field
- 75% of these individuals are now coordinators and managers
Create a culture of appreciation, learning, un-learning, and re-learning
Q & A

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References


