



Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity in Community Foundations

Personal Equity & Diversity Journey Map

Our personal values, beliefs, sensibilities, and capacities are shaped by our history and experiences with diversity and equity issues. Whether the settings for that development fall within our interpersonal relations or within our broader social and political context, it is helpful for change-makers to take time to recover, appreciate, and gather strength from that history. This personal mapping exercise gives community and civic leaders a chance to reflect on the events, experiences, and other influences that have shaped them in their own journeys.

On one level, reflecting on our journey over time can help deepen our awareness and appreciation for the circumstances, ideas, and individuals who have contributed to our development, as well as our own contributions to an on-going legacy of positive social change. An appreciative reflection of our development can also serve as a starting point for undertaking a more rigorous (strengths and gaps) assessment of our capacity to working with, and in, diverse communities.



On another level, the process of sharing our Journey Maps, especially with people of different backgrounds, offers an opportunity to dispel stereotypes, to deepen knowledge of the histories and experiences of others, and to identify commonalities. Typically, the journey that someone else has taken is not exactly what we might expect given our perceptions of their ethnicity, gender, or class background. The sharing of our maps allows us to hear the truth about each other's journeys, rather than project our assumptions on one another. Because the sharing of our insights and experiences facilitates a collective identification of commonalities and, hopefully, a fuller appreciation for the experiences behind our differences, the exercise can also be an excellent tool for building or strengthening personal relationships.

Overview of Exercise

In this activity each participant will have the opportunity to:

- ◆ Draw an personal Journey Map (30 Minutes); engage in personal reflection (10 Minutes)
- … Share their Journey Maps and insights in a small group (15 –30 Minutes)
- … Collectively debrief the experience (30 Minutes)

Facilitator's Directions for Drawing Journey Maps (20-30 minutes)

- 1) Give each participant a large sheet of chart paper, plenty of colored markers, and ask them to draw a Journey Map that depicts their personal journey around issues of diversity and equity (e.g., race, culture and language, class, etc.). Each person can create their map by emphasizing the use of drawn images or writing, or a combination of both, depending on their expertise and/or comfort level. However, our experience with this exercise indicates that encouraging folks to draw on the creative side of their brain will help them surface more of the affective energies behind the experiences they choose to depict and reflect on.
- 2) The Maps can be fairly open-ended, starting at whatever point a person feels is the beginning of their journey around equity and diversity. They can also add other forms of bias (such as gender, sexual orientation, age, etc.) that have been important to them in their lives. Some people start their maps with the day of their birth; others trace their beginnings to the historical events that happened to their ethnic group or a family member. Still others, trace their beginning to a more specific moment in their personal histories.
- 3) If you are using the exercise to help the members of a groups identify and appreciate the commonalities and differences in their development as change makers, you might consider framing the content directions more specifically. For example, in addition to anything else they may choose to include in their map, you might asks participants to note those moments and events when they first began to be aware of or recognized inequity as it relates to some aspect of diversity, when they saw or experienced an act of inequity that had a powerful impact on them (e.g., they felt a powerful emotion, like anger, fear, hope, celebration, etc.) , and when they witnessed or experienced something so powerful they were moved to respond personally. Or, if you want to insure each participant reflects on the various influences that contributed to their personal development in this area, you might suggest that each also include in their maps people who had a major influence on them or those whose shoulders they stand on in this work.

Reflection & Discussion (30-45 minutes):

(5 minutes) This exercise is designed to recover an array of memories and insights that may also surface a range of emotions. Therefore, before moving toward sharing in either small or large group settings, participants should be given a few moments to individually collect their thoughts about the themes, issues, and insights that drawing the map have surfaced for them. At that time, each participant should also take a moment to decide on what they want to share with others.

(10-20 minutes) Then, if the group is fairly large (i.e., bigger than 12 persons), you can break into small groups of (3-5 persons); give folks the opportunity to share their stories. After each member has had the opportunity to briefly share highlights of their Journey Map, the group can spend a few moments discussing any themes or insights that emerged for them about the group's maps.

(15-20 minutes) Finally, you should reconvene the entire group. Ask volunteers to share reflections and insights they gained.

