



# Social Justice & Community Engagement

A Practical Workbook for Planning, Reflecting, and Contextualizing Social Justice to Community Engagement in Professional Health Practice



JOHNS HOPKINS  
UNIVERSITY

**SOURCE**

The Community Engagement  
and Service-Learning Center

# Social Justice & Community Engagement

A practical workbook for planning, reflecting, and contextualizing social justice to community engagement in professional health practice



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# Introduction

## Executive Summary

The materials in workbook were created and developed by faculty, staff, students, and community partners at Johns Hopkins SOURCE. The purpose of this workbook is to encourage readers to consider and contextualize their roles in community engagement projects and partnerships. Reflecting upon one's position in the process of community engagement and upon the social justice implications of their actions can help to usher in more equitable and just practices in community work.

This workbook prompts the reader to reflect upon implications for social justice throughout their community partnership. As readers with this workbook, they can consider how to extend critical reflection into social justice action. We have included space for the reader to document their reflections and plans for action in their community engaged partnerships.

Through the critical reflection questions provided in the following workbook, SOURCE strives to help individuals understand how one's social locations (positionality) and experiences of advantage and disadvantage (intersecting identities) have shaped and continue to influence the way one understands and acts in the world. These critical questions may also be used as an outline for pursuing partner accountability and facilitating group reflection.

Reflexivity can be defined by the ability and commitment to examine one's own position within the context of an interaction or community. It is crucial because it informs and refines the ways groups and individuals sustain a purposeful commitment to addressing power imbalances in the diverse spaces that public health, nursing, and medical professionals will impact.

## Defining Social Justice

SOURCE commits to implementing and improving its social justice commitments in all its community engagement efforts. Further, the center invites and educates others in justice practices. Below is a framework that integrates Johns Hopkins' Baltimore Community Engagement Principles alongside SOURCE's Social Justice Commitments to guide partnerships through reflection and action towards justice.

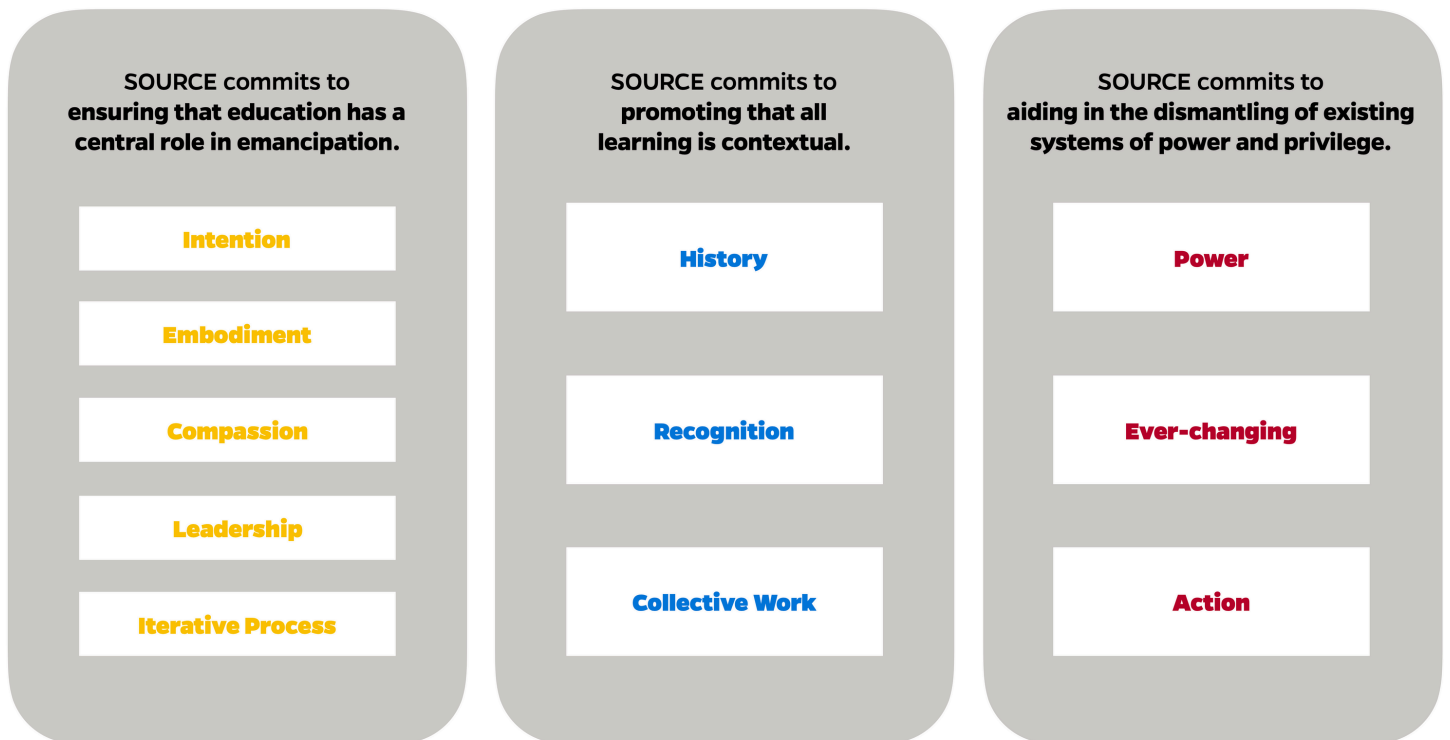
# Baltimore Community Engagement Guiding Principles

Developed with the Johns Hopkins Baltimore Community Engagement Program Leaders, including SOURCE, and our community partners.

- **Shared Vision & Values:** Drawing together JHU and Baltimore community in unity of purpose to co-develop shared vision, purpose, mission, values and goals, actively co-designing projects that dismantle oppressive systems, confront divestment, and work toward justice.
- **Mutuality & Respect:** Partnership will reflect upon the importance of contributors for their unique expertise and experience, committing to building trust, exploring history, working for reconciliation and equity, and practicing humility. Partnership should co-design practices and policies that acknowledge and leverage power and privilege for the shared vision.
- **Transparency & Communication:** Communication and transparency guidelines will be co-developed, updated as needed, and include plans for how to share partnership outcomes. Participants will disclose relevant and accurate information with each other and communicate clearly, authentically, and regularly using different methods to optimize engagement.
- **Shared Decision Making:** Partners will co-develop processes for making decisions together by creating guidelines and structures for shared power and establish leadership structures with community partners. Participants will gather information to inform their decisions, incorporate the values and preferences of members in an inclusive manner, and share power, responsibility and accountability.
- **Commitment:** Partners will hold each other accountable to deliver on shared vision and expectations. Participants should remain faithful to partnership and vision in the face of opposition or challenges, and when relevant, build a sustainability plan to maintain and grow partnership outcomes.

# SOURCE's Social Justice Commitments

Developed with key terms by SOURCE Social Justice Taskforce, comprised of participating students, faculty, staff, and community partners



## Roles & Context

Community partnerships include different roles. To contextualize learning and reflect upon social justice in action, it is important to identify one's own role in community engagement. Roles can include students, faculty, staff, and community partners. While this workbook includes a broad set of questions, we encourage users to consider their own roles and personal experiences in community engagement when reflecting upon social justice, recognizing power, and engaging in contextual learning and introspective reflective practices.

## How to use this workbook

The remainder of this workbook is divided into four sections, chronicling the community engagement process and its core activities. In each chapter, background information provides context on each process of community engagement, reflection questions following the proposed framework, and a documentation section that allows users to apply reflection to social justice action in partnerships. In the conclusion, there is a final prompt for users and an accompanying resource guide, as well as a blank table for documentation, if extra space is needed. This workbook can be read consecutively, or individual chapters can be referenced, when necessary, throughout the community engagement experience.

# Chapter 1: Guiding Reflection Questions

## Mutuality & Respect

### Compassion:

- How have you assessed and reflected upon your own implicit biases in the context of the partnership?

### History:

- How do you define historic systems of privilege and oppression (e.g., sexism, racism, classism)?
  - How do you see these systems affecting health professions and local communities today?

### Recognition:

- What aspects of your positionality and intersecting identities are privileged in our society?
- How do you work toward dismantling unjust structures within yourself and our society?

## Transparency & Communication

### Ever-changing:

- What is your current understanding of systems of power and marginalization?
  - How has that understanding evolved over time?
  - How have power structures shifted in society or community and how do you foresee those shifts impacting the partnership?
- How do you reconcile that systems of power and oppression are rooted in history and are constantly evolving today?

## Commitment

### Iterative:

- How do you remain motivated as you engage in the perpetual pursuit of social justice?

### Action:

- What does anti-oppressive action look like? What actions are you taking?
- How do you maintain your commitment to action?
- How do you encourage and support others in maintaining their commitments to action?
- What are the implications of your inaction?

## Legend: SOURCE's Social Justice Commitments

**Emancipation in education** ~ **Learning is contextual** ~ **Dismantling systems of power & privilege**

# Documentation: Turning Reflection into Action

## Chapter 1: Guiding Reflection Questions

After reflecting upon the previous questions, use the provided table to answer the reflection questions and consider how they relate to the Baltimore Community Engagement Guiding Principles. Keep SOURCE's Social Justice Commitments in mind and focus on transforming reflection into action to implement social justice in partnerships and generate measures of progress for partnerships. The first row is completed as an example.

<p><u>Principle</u></p> <p><i>CE Principle and SJ Commitment</i></p>	<p><u>Conceptualization</u></p> <p><i>Understanding the state of the partnership within the context</i></p>	<p><u>Activation</u></p> <p><i>Application to improve partnership and prompt action</i></p>
<p><i>Mutuality &amp; Respect: Compassion</i></p> <p><i>How have you assessed and reflected upon your own implicit biases in the partnership?</i></p>	<p><i>Partnering with Better Waverly's 901 Arts as a student intern allows me to leverage my background in arts while addressing specific needs of youth in Baltimore City. I am also realizing how new to this space I am, and that I really don't know much about the youth.</i></p>	<p><i>After reflecting on my own personal and professional background, I can approach my internship with the understanding of diverse experiences of Baltimore City youth, seeking opportunities to uplift their voices and stories through documentation and engage in continuous assessment of my own implicit biases.</i></p>

# Chapter 2: Research and Planning

At the start of community engagement, all partners familiarize themselves with the community and understanding potential issues to address. Working collaboratively to identify needs of the community requires reflection on social justice considerations from all partners. In addition to assessing assets and needs, identifying potential goals based on what work has already been done and what needs to be changed is a crucial step in community engaged partnerships. Reflection upon one's context and role in the initial planning provides opportunities to address social justice from the start.

## Shared Vision & Values

### Intention:

- What are your personal goals in undertaking the partnership, and do your efforts align with social justice commitments?
  - If not, how can you adjust to align with the social justice commitments?
- Do all partners have the same understanding of social justice?
  - Is this vision shared among all partners? If not, how do partners work together to establish shared goals?
- How can you contribute to undoing any power imbalances in the partnership?
- What are the expected outcomes of this partnership?
  - Do all partners share these expectations?
  - Do these expectations align with social justice and emancipation?

## Mutuality & Respect

### Compassion:

- How do you ensure that humanity and compassion for yourself and others remain central to your work?

### Recognition:

- How do your personal identities, perspectives, and history impact how you approach collaborative work?
- How can the personal identities, perspectives, and history of all partners be similarly welcomed to ensure that all work is contextual and oriented toward justice?

## Shared Decision-Making

### Collective Work:

- How do you ensure that you are co-designing and contributing to a supportive network to help individuals work through blind spots and offer group support to sustain the collaborative work?

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# Documentation: Turning Reflection into Action

## Chapter 2: Research & Planning

After reflecting upon the previous questions, use the provided table to answer the reflection questions and consider how they relate to the Baltimore Community Engagement Guiding Principles. Keep SOURCE's Social Justice Commitments in mind and focus on transforming reflection into action to implement social justice in partnerships and generate measures of progress for partnerships. The first row is completed as an example.

<p align="center"><u>Principle</u></p> <p align="center"><i>CE Principle and SJ Commitment</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>Conceptualization</u></p> <p align="center"><i>Understanding the current state of partnership, goals, and expectations</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>Activation</u></p> <p align="center"><i>Application to establish partnership, gather materials or plans, and prompt initial action</i></p>
<p><i>Shared Decision-Making: Collective Work</i></p> <p><i>How do you ensure that you are co-designing and contributing to a supportive network to help individuals work through blind spots and offer group support to sustain the collaborative work?</i></p>	<p><i>As a student intern at 901 Arts, I understand that my role in contributing to a supportive network will require close collaboration with my preceptor and organization. Together, we will build upon established group norms and continue to develop a supportive network.</i></p>	<p><i>I will work closely with my preceptor to familiarize myself with the existing support systems at 901 Arts, all the while considering potential opportunities for innovation of contribution and co-design of these spaces, all the while considering the context and implications for these opportunities.</i></p>

# Chapter 3: Implementation

After identifying goals, the community-based project can be implemented, which is heavily collaborative and requires regular reflection upon social justice implications.

## Shared Vision & Values

### Embodiment:

- How are you practicing on-going reflection in the partnership?
- How are you using the results of your reflection to continue to move toward shared vision and values?
- How does your reflection ensure the service endeavors are meaningful and reciprocal rather than performative and transactional?

## Mutuality & Respect

### Compassion:

- In what ways does your work reflect compassion and recognize the value of all partners and the community?

### History:

- How do you see the history of JHU/Baltimore relationships impacting the work?
  - How are you contributing to the ongoing repair of this relationship?

### Recognition:

- What ways can your role and positionality perpetuate and/or challenge oppressive systems?

## Transparency & Communication

### Ever-changing:

- How are you communicating needed changes to your collaborative work?

## Shared Decision-Making

### Leadership:

- How do you define your role in shared leadership practices?
  - How are you reflecting on your role to ensure that social justice and anti-oppression are reflected in your leadership?
- Can you identify ways in which your leadership practice and positionality may perpetuate oppressive systems? What are you doing to remedy this?

### Collective Work:

- How can you ensure that you both intentionally contribute to the collective network and graciously receive needed support?

## Commitment

### Iterative:

- How are you consistently seeking revision and remaining open to transformation?
  - In this process, how can you ask for and provide support?

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# Documentation: Turning Reflection into Action

## Chapter 3: Implementation

After reflecting upon the previous questions, use the provided table to answer the reflection questions and consider how they relate to the Baltimore Community Engagement Guiding Principles. Keep SOURCE's Social Justice Commitments in mind and focus on transforming reflection into action to implement social justice in partnerships and generate measures of progress for partnerships. The first row is completed as an example.

<p><u>Principle</u></p> <p><i>CE Principle and SJ Commitment</i></p>	<p><u>Conceptualization</u></p> <p><i>Evidence-based observations to assess implementation and partnerships</i></p>	<p><u>Activation</u></p> <p><i>Immediate actions to improve implementation and partnerships</i></p>
<p><i>Commitment: Iterative</i></p> <p><i>How are you consistently seeking revision and remaining open to transformation?</i></p>	<p><i>Throughout my internship at 901 Arts, I maintain close communication with my preceptor and project team, who often provide feedback. While I receive regular feedback on progress updates, there are opportunities for me to grow in the initiation of the revision-seeking process.</i></p>	<p><i>Beginning now, I will reach out to my preceptor and progress team for revision between progress reports and engage in stimulating conversations with others at the organization that encourage continuous conceptualization, contributing to an open and productive partnership that allows for creativity and consistent feedback.</i></p>

# Chapter 4: Evaluation

Along with implementation, a crucial element of community engagement is evaluation of the project and process. This involves a continuation of the critical reflection that started with implementation to assess the impact of community work and accountability for actions and roles within community partnerships. It is essential to work collaboratively with partners to identify areas to continue to revise and consider for future implementation, returning to the research & planning stage, if needed. Reflecting upon actions of community engaged partnerships allows for ongoing evaluation of social justice impacts in the immediate, short-, and long-term.

## Shared Vision & Values

### Embodiment:

- How are you using the results of your reflection to continue to move toward shared vision and values?

## Mutuality & Respect

### Compassion:

- How have you assessed and reflected upon your own implicit biases?

### History:

- How do you see the history of JHU/Baltimore relationships impacting the work? How are you contributing to the ongoing repair of this relationship?

## Transparency & Communication

### Power:

- How are you revealing and disrupting existing power structures and concepts of (in)justice in the context of Baltimore, health professional education, and in society at large?
- How do you unmask and end facilitation of unjust structures, particularly if you are privileged and currently benefit from the existing systems?

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# Documentation: Turning Reflection into Action

## Chapter 4: Evaluation

After reflecting upon the previous questions, use the provided table to answer the reflection questions and consider how they relate to the Baltimore Community Engagement Guiding Principles. Keep SOURCE's Social Justice Commitments in mind and focus on transforming reflection into action to implement social justice in partnerships and generate measures of progress for partnerships. The first row is completed as an example.

<p><u>Principle</u></p> <p><i>CE Principle and SJ Commitment</i></p>	<p><u>Conceptualization</u></p> <p><i>Evaluating the current state of the partnership following implementation</i></p>	<p><u>Activation</u></p> <p><i>Applications for future directions and prompts for long-term action</i></p>
<p><i>Shared Vision &amp; Values: Embodiment</i></p> <p><i>How are you using the results of your reflection to continue to move toward shared vision and values?</i></p>	<p><i>Throughout my internship at 901 Arts, I have contributed to the implementation of several projects, resulting in the completion of several deliverables. While implementing, I have reflected upon my own role as a student intern at 901 Arts, as well as the role of 901 Arts in the Waverly community and Baltimore's youth.</i></p>	<p><i>My reflective report will be one of my final deliverables, with the intention that my internship-specific reflection offers areas for improvement and of accomplishment at 901 Arts. My report will bridge reflection, conceptualization, and applications that may be helpful for future interns at 901 Arts, prompting reflection and social justice action.</i></p>

# Conclusion

## Key Takeaways

Throughout all aspects of community engagement, it is crucial for everyone involved to engage in critical reflection specific to the community, the community engagement activities, and personal contexts.

This workbook provides critical reflection questions specific to particular activities of community engagement and guides users through a documentation process that transforms reflection into social justice action.

Finally, a resource guide is located at the end of this workbook to provide further materials on social justice reflection in community engagement and partnerships.

## Reflection to Social Justice Action

This workbook is intended to engage partners in introspective reflective practices that contextualize the state and direction of the partnership throughout the community engagement process. With this workbook as a guide, readers can critically consider how to contribute to more just and equitable practices in community engagement.

## Resource Guide

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# Glossary

Below is an alignment of each of the five [Baltimore Community Engagement Principles](#) alongside specific elements of our three core Social Justice Commitments that SOURCE has integrated within each principle.

- **Shared Vision & Values:**
  - **Intention:** Define and align intention toward the shared vision and values and expectations for the outcomes of the partnership and its impact.
  - **Embodiment:** Embrace repeated self-reflection to move service away from performance and toward meaningful change and justice.
- **Mutuality & Respect:**
  - **Compassion:** Recognize and value the humanity of all involved caring directly and indirectly for both the collective group and individual participants.
  - **History:** Understand historic systems of oppression and power, how they impact community partners, and the larger context they bring to these relationships.
  - **Recognition:** Acknowledge, welcome, and honor the diverse identities and histories of all partners and community members so that differing perspectives are valued, recognized, and can inform all aspects of the collaborative work.
- **Transparency & Communication:**
  - **Power:** Acknowledge current systems of power between partners, and across society to clearly identify the role that these structures play in creating and maintaining unjust systems.
  - **Ever-changing:** Acknowledge that systems of power and marginalization continue to shift, and that such changes will transform how partners value outcomes and how communication strategies must adapt to strengthen collaborative work.
- **Shared Decision Making:**
  - **Leadership:** All partners should understand their leadership roles and responsibilities, and continuously question whether their roles reflect and actively work toward the ideals of social justice and anti-oppression.
  - **Collective Work:** Recognize that solutions do not lie with any single entity, and a culture of collaboration is needed to both strengthen individual assets and uncover potential biases in partnership practices.
- **Commitment:**
  - **Iterative Process:** All participants should strive toward justice rather than only meeting a firm goal; and therefore, partners will practice compassion, remain reflective, and be open to collaborative revision.
  - **Action:** Accept that anti-oppression work is continuous, requires ongoing motivation, and acts to aid in dismantling injustice.

# Documentation: Turning Reflection into Action

After reflecting upon the previous questions, use the provided table to answer the reflection questions and consider how they relate to the Baltimore Community Engagement Guiding Principles. Keep SOURCE's Social Justice Commitments in mind and focus on transforming reflection into action to implement social justice in partnerships and generate measures of progress for partnerships.

<u>Principle</u> <i>CE Principle and SJ Commitment</i>	<u>Conceptualization</u> <i>Evaluating the current state of the partnership</i>	<u>Activation</u> <i>Applications for future directions and prompts for action</i>



**JOHNS HOPKINS**  
UNIVERSITY

**SOURCE**

The Community Engagement  
and Service-Learning Center

2002 McElderry Street, Baltimore, MD 21205  
(410) 955-3880 | [SOURCE@jhu.edu](mailto:SOURCE@jhu.edu) | [SOURCE.jhu.edu](http://SOURCE.jhu.edu)

