

# Responsibility

## Responsibility

### **Personal & Social Responsibility**

*Creates understanding of the need for accountability in personal and social interactions*

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*Being responsible* refers to our ability to make decisions that serve our own interests and the interests of others. We first need to be responsible for ourselves before we can be responsible for others. In learning to be more responsible it is important that we know our limitations. It does not matter how smart we are, there is only so much responsibility that a person can handle. It is also important to remember that we are not responsible for things that are out of our control, for example, how other people feel or how they react to ourselves or others. Sharing responsibility for both success and failure can lead to increased trust in our working relationships.

### Words to Know

**responsible:** accountable for the care or welfare of another; capable of being trusted or depended upon; reliable

**responsibility:** something for which a person is responsible

**accountable:** responsible for something; answerable

**comrade:** a friend or colleague

## The Meaning of Being Responsible

If you think that being responsible at all times is too hard or too easy, think again; the truth falls somewhere in between. Being responsible involves having some skills, a caring and open attitude, and a good sense of what we can and cannot do. Below are some suggestions to help you know when you are acting responsibly.

### When We Are Responsible. . .

- We are capable of being trusted and depended upon.
- We have the skills required to work alone or with others.
- We are accountable for our decisions.
- We can explain our decisions.
- We see beyond our own individual needs to consider the needs of others.
- We share our successes with others who contributed to them.
- We know we cannot succeed if we avoid responsibility.
- We are aware of the limits of our responsibility.
- We take responsibility for our failures without blaming others.
- We know that it is difficult to take responsibility for others until we first take responsibility for ourselves.



# Ideas for individual, small group, or Center-wide projects

Choose one of the following projects to find out more about this topic, or create your own project based on your interests and abilities.

**Interview for Feedback:** Ask a family member who saw you grow up (your father, mother, other relatives) in what ways they think family members raised you to be responsible for yourself or others. Also, make a list of other lessons in your life that taught you



about being responsible for yourself and others. Share the list with other students in the class.

**Talk to the Workers:** Interview three or four people who work at the Job Corps who can tell you about ways they are responsible for others in their jobs (including nature or the environment). Write a one-page summary of what they tell you and present it to the class.

**Job Design:** Design an ideal job for yourself. Make a list of the ways in which you want to be responsible for yourself and others and the ways you want others to be responsible for you and others. Share the list with a friend or classmate.

**Something for Nothing:** Do “something for nothing” to benefit someone else or the environment. For example, be a friend to someone in need, help someone in Job Corps, volunteer to help at the Center or in the community, fix something, clean up the trash in the parking lot and put it in the proper container, etc. Keep a record of the things you do and your impressions of these experiences. Share your record with your SST instructor.

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# SERVICE LEARNING

## Giving Back

*Service Learning* is a powerful method for linking you to the community. It will allow you to discover the connections between what you are learning in academic and vocational classes with the needs of people in the real world. It can provide you with new learning experiences, opportunities to reflect on social concerns, and open windows to possible career options. It has the ability to connect you to others who value your contributions as you become a needed and respected member of your community. Service learning will allow you to take your knowledge and skills into the community and make a difference in your life and in the lives of others.

### Words to Know

**service learning:** a way to learn and apply knowledge, skills, and experience in real-world settings while providing service to others

**service placement:** a volunteer position to assist an agency or organization that serves to improve the quality of life for others

**collaboration:** to work jointly with others to accomplish a common goal

**service project:** involves identifying a need and making a plan to address it with the intent of improving the quality of life for people or other living things

*“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”*

—John Fitzgerald Kennedy(1917-1963), United States President.

*“I will get things done for America....Faced with apathy, I will take action. Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground....Faced with adversity, I will persevere.”*

—Americorps volunteer oath.

## the buzz corner

**Dear Buzz,**  
**My friend has been bugging me to volunteer with him, but I just don't know what I could do to help. Is it really worth the effort?**

Yes, definitely! You were not born knowing how to give and care for others, but you can learn. Through service learning you can learn to change the conditions of an individual, group, organization, or issue in a positive way. Empathy for others becomes a crucial part of a successful service learning project and helps to improve our emotional intelligence. In the process of serving others, don't be surprised if it is you, the volunteer, who is changed and touched the most. Many times, by giving, you will ultimately receive. As a result of caring about the quality of life and improving the world for the common welfare, diversity issues often come up and are addressed, leading to a more positive outlook. Also, by giving to others you gain experience in deciding, planning, implementing, reviewing, and celebrating a project that will add to your self-confidence and competence in the world of work.

### Think About It!

- What might be the benefit of service learning for you? For those you serve?
- Which is more appealing to you, a service placement or a service project?
- What social skills are needed to participate in service learning?
- How might service learning help prepare you for future employment?

#### Service Placement

This involves volunteering to work with a community organization such as a hospital, homeless shelter, or youth agency. As a volunteer, you complete specific tasks determined and supervised by the organization. To participate, you contact a specific organization and ask if there are volunteer service opportunities available. It is a way for you to meet, work, and form meaningful relationships with a variety of people. It can also act as a window into possible future careers.

#### Service Project

This involves identifying a need and initiating a project to find solutions that improve the lives of people or other living things. You must be able to draw together people and resources to accomplish your goal. This kind of service learning requires you to decide on a project, plan it, and overcome obstacles to carry it out. It also requires collaboration, discipline, courage, problem-solving skills, and a true desire to make a difference. It is a way for you to sharpen workplace skills.

# Plan It Out:

## Steps for Planning Service Projects



Use the steps below to plan a service project that would make a positive contribution to the community and improve the lives of others. Think about projects you could do at your Job Corps Center or in your home community. After you create your plan, consider carrying out the plan after receiving the proper permission from staff and/or local governments.

**1. Decide on a project.**  
What need or concern do you care about? Who is affected? What can you do? What is your goal?

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**2. Plan the project.**  
Who will be involved? What are the tasks and timelines? Who is responsible for each task? What resources will you need (time, money, equipment, etc.)? *This could easily require several other sheets of paper.*

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**3. Carry out the project.**  
How will you overcome any obstacles? How might you revise the plan? How will you involve allies?

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**4. Review the results.**  
What happened? What was accomplished? What would you do differently next time? What surprised you?

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**5. Celebrate all accomplishments.**  
How can you share what happened with others? How can you thank everyone involved?

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# Ideas for individual, small group, or Center-wide projects

Choose one of the following projects to find out more about this topic, or create your own project based on your interests and abilities.

## service placement

Investigate the service placement opportunities in your area.

- ◆ What are the names of agencies and organizations in the community that could benefit from interested volunteers?

Share this information with your SST class or make a flyer and post it around the Center. Be prepared to describe the purpose of the organization, the type of assistance needed, and the contact person for interested applicants.

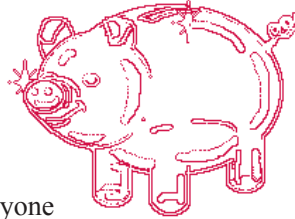


## service fair

Plan a Center-wide service fair. Work with colleagues and Center staff to plan and carry out a service fair for the Center and the community. A service fair is an invitation to nonprofit agencies and organizations to attend a gathering for the purpose of communicating to the public about their work. Each nonprofit agency, volunteer organization, or department at the Center sets up a table or booth that describes what it does and the kind of assistance it needs from volunteers. People attending the fair find out about the volunteer opportunities in the community that match their own concerns and interests. This is an excellent way to sign up volunteers who may not otherwise have expressed an interest in community service.

## time bank

Help set up a time bank at your Center. One way people can reach out to others is by offering to share a skill or talent through a time bank. This is how a time bank works:



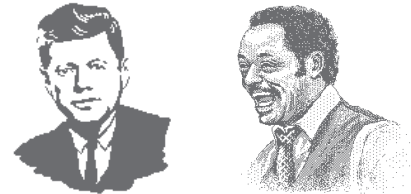
- ◆ Everyone interested in opening a bank account writes down a skill or talent they can give and the amount of time they can spend.
- ◆ The person agreeing to be the banker prepares a bank statement listing all the deposits. For example, someone could deposit 2 hours of math tutoring, or 1 hour of doing laundry.
- ◆ Anyone who has deposited a skill in the bank can make a withdrawal. For example, if you deposited an hour of tutoring, your dividend is the right to withdraw 1 hour of someone else's time, if there is a skill in the bank that you need.

A time bank is a great way to share talents and meet new people.



## local heroes

Find a way to celebrate your local heroes. Identify people at the Center or in the local community who have made significant contributions to others through service placement or service planning. Interview them and decide how you can tell others about their accomplishments (i.e., newsletters, local radio or television programs, posters, or recognition events). Discover a way to show these people how much they are appreciated, like bringing the heroes together for a Center celebration.



## service project

You can take action through providing a service to your community by planning a service project.

- ◆ What social issues do you care about?
- ◆ What are some needs of people around you?



Find friends and Center staff who share your concerns and work together to do something about it. Use the planning process you practiced in your SST class and the worksheet on the previous page to create a well-thought-out plan. Keep a record in your journal describing what happens. Share your story with your SST class.

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# Sharing

There are two different types of sharing. To give freely of one's goods, resources, or ideas with generosity and caring is called "sharing by choice." To equally distribute goods and resources held in common by a group is called "sharing by obligation." Both kinds of sharing involve a personal and social responsibility. Solving the problems that arise when sharing is a choice or an obligation is an important part of getting along with others.

"A soul that is reluctant to share does not as a rule have much of its own. Miserliness is here a symptom of meagerness."

—Eric Hoffer (1902-1983). U.S. philosopher. *The Passionate State of Mind*, aph. 132 (1955).

## Guidelines

To work out problems that may be caused by sharing, try to decide problems fairly and equitably. Three steps to take are:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Brainstorm possible solutions to the problem.
3. Decide on one solution you think is fair and equitable.

## Sharing by Choice

Write a short paragraph about how sharing by choice makes you feel.

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## Sharing by Obligation

Write a short paragraph about how sharing by obligation makes you feel.

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## Examples

Write a list of three examples of sharing that may occur at the workplace.

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# Think About It!

Think about what you have shared since coming to Job Corps. Make a list and identify the sharing as *sharing by choice* or *sharing by obligation*.

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“We confirm our reality by sharing.”  
—Barbara Grizzuti Harrison (1941). U.S. author, publicist. “Secrets Women Tell Each Other,” in *McCall’s* (New York, Aug. 1975).

## Write About It!

Write about things you have shared.

Things I have shared	Choice?	Obligation?

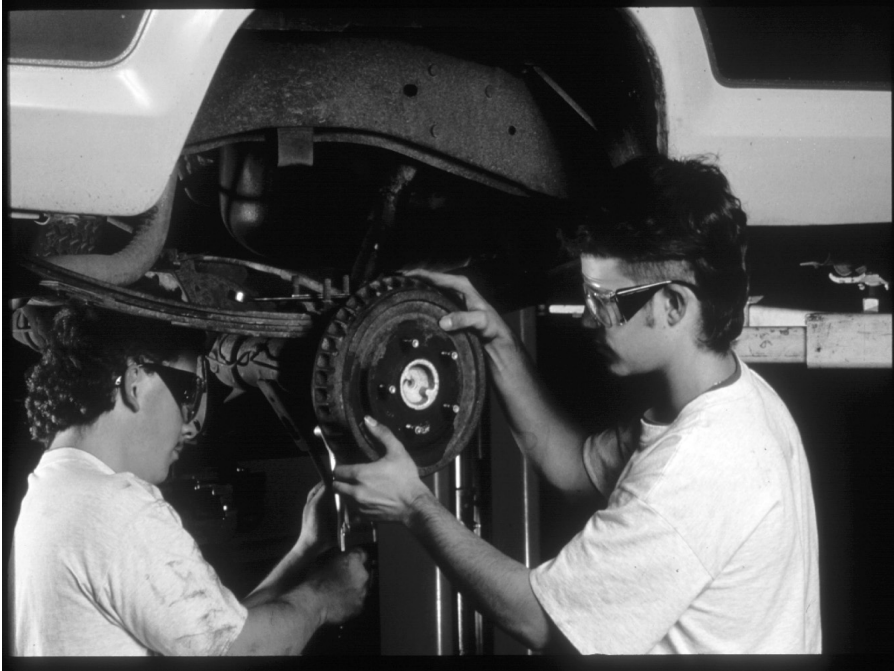
## Words to Know

**generosity:** being liberal and unrestricted in giving

**sharing by obligation:** fairly distributing or using goods and resources held in common by a group

**sharing by choice:** freely giving of one’s goods, resources, or ideas as an act of generosity and caring

# T A K E A C T I O N



## *Ideas for individual, small group, or Center-wide projects*

Choose one of the following projects to find out more about this topic, or create your own project based on your interests and abilities.

**To Share or Not to Share:** Conflicts over sharing personal items sometimes occur because we feel pressure to share things we don't really want to share. Think about the things you are willing to share. Make a list of the items you choose not to share. Let your friends know what's on your "No Sharing" list. Reevaluate this list from time to time to see if your priorities have changed. Make a list of what you are and are not willing to share at the workplace.

**Respectful Agreements:** The fair use of resources and items shared in common is often the source of disputes. Is there a common space or resource in your life that is the center of conflict over who uses it or how it is used? The space or resource may be shared by two people, or 200. Respectful agreements for the use of a common space can help resolve disputes. Work with the people who use the space or form a representative committee to draft agreements that all parties accept as fair and responsible. Review the agreements over time with all concerned parties to see if they are working the way everyone intended. Make adjustments, as necessary.

**Feelings and Habits About Sharing:** Take time to assess your own sharing behaviors. How often and willingly do you give to others of your time and resources? Are you considerate of others in sharing materials or space that is used in common? How do you feel about sharing? How do you feel when others share with you? Be on the lookout for opportunities to increase your sharing habits.