



ASSET-BASED FRAMEWORK

Personal And Professional Growth During The Service Year

ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED



90 minutes

OVERVIEW

This session highlights a process for your service year corps members' personal and professional development during the service year. In this session, you will introduce concepts like goal setting, feedback loops, and growth mindset to establish expectations for individual growth during the service year.

LEARNING OUTCOMES



By the end of this session, your corps members will be able to:

- Understand the value of personal and professional growth during the service year
- Create S.M.A.R.T goals and how to establish them relevant to their personal and professional growth
- Understand the role of reflection in the growth process Identify members of their current support network and consider how they will further develop their support network

TRAINING SESSION RESOURCES

Before getting started with this training session, you should review the Preparation section below as well as familiarize yourself with this guide's Session Script. This session should be presented directly to corps members using this downloadable presentation:

- [**Downloadable Presentation: A3: Training Session: Personal And Professional Growth During The Service Year**](#)

The downloadable presentation includes speaker notes for program staff who are facilitating this session directly to corps members, making it easy for staff to walk through the presentations efficiently and effectively.

PREPARATION

Trainer Expectations

Throughout this training session, trainers will be asked to facilitate the group through small group discussions and full group discussions. Some of the topics may feel challenging for your corps members to engage with, and they may not want to engage in conversations on these topics at first. Part of fostering a belonging environment is making the space equal with corps members and program staff. Therefore, we recommend you, as the facilitator, prepare responses to the questions posed to the corps members throughout the session as a strategy to help spark conversation if needed. Before beginning this session, review the Session Outline & Script below and ensure familiarity with the content to be prepared to facilitate activities and answer potential questions from corps members. You'll notice in the Session Outline there are resources linked to provide background on the subject matters included in this training.

	TIME ESTIMATE
	LEARNING OUTCOMES
	VIRTUAL MODIFICATION
	ACTIVITY
	HELPFUL TIP

HELPFUL TIP



For many younger populations, this may be their first experience assessing their existing strengths, skills, and talents. You will want to provide examples and discuss some of your personal strengths, skills, and talents to help them feel comfortable sharing their own assets.

Necessary Materials

- Paper and pens for "Support Networks" activity
- One printed copy for each corps member:
 - Each corps member should bring their [A2: Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool](#) with the Pre-Service portion filled out.
 - [A0: Resource: Glossary](#)



Virtual Modifications

If you plan to facilitate the training session in a virtual environment, we recommend the following modifications:

- Use a whiteboard that can be displayed on camera or share your screen and work in a word or google document
- Use virtual meeting breakout rooms to place corps members in groups of two for the "S.M.A.R.T. Goals" and "Support Network" activities
- Don't forget to send an email with any necessary handouts in advance of your remote session
- Your corps members should have an electronic version of the [A2: Asset-Based Growth Assessment](#).

HELPFUL TIP



Your service year corps members will use the Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool resource throughout the program year. Encourage them to keep it in a safe place or collect it each time they use it.

SESSION OUTLINE

The following outline walks you through what to expect throughout this session and how to prepare. Even if you are planning to utilize the recorded webinar version of this training, we recommend you still use this Session Outline to prepare for the session.

I. Activity

Icebreaker - small group discussion

II. Personal and Professional Growth during the Service Year - In this section you'll discuss the first step towards growth, developing a growth mindset, and setting a growth roadmap. You will introduce the growth cycle of learning, action, and reflection when setting goals.

III. Activity: SMART Goals

Journaling & small group discussion

Prep needed: when introducing SMART goals before this activity, you will need to share with your corps members how and when you will support them throughout their service year. For example: Are you available for impromptu meetings? Do you want corps members to share their personal challenges with you? When and how will you refer corps members to support services outside of your organization? Prepare your thoughts around the support you're able to offer them.

IV. Activity: Support Networks

Journaling & small groups

V. Next Steps

To close out the session, you'll ask corps members to identify an action step or steps that they can take to improve their support network

SESSION SCRIPT

The following script should be used for presenting this session directly to your corps members. It is recommended that you review this script before beginning the session. Italicized prompts are intended to be guidance for you as the trainer rather than part of the script you will communicate to your corps members.

Slide #1

Hello, and welcome!

Introduce yourself and ask your corps members to introduce themselves to the group.

Today we are going to discuss personal and professional growth during the service year.

Slide #2

Here is an agenda for today's session. We will begin with an icebreaker and then spend some time discussing what personal and professional growth during the service year may look like for you. Following that discussion, you will have an opportunity to evaluate your goals and reflect on the individuals and organizations that make up your support network. We will wrap up with a discussion about next steps. Let's get started!

To get us warmed up, take a few minutes and reflect on this question: What is one way you have grown or changed since the beginning of the service year? Share with the people sitting around you.

Slide #3

You may remember seeing this graphic in the training you participated in before completing your Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool. In this session, we'll go into more detail about what personal and professional growth means and how to achieve it.

Slide #4

So what motivated you to pursue a year of service?

Though the reasons for joining service year programs are varied, most corps members are at least partly motivated by a desire to serve others and make an impact in their communities. However, service year programs offer much more than an opportunity to serve.

During your service year, you will also have the chance to gain valuable work experience, develop new skills, build your network, and grow personally and professionally. Spend a minute or two considering your own motivations.

Pause & prompt: Is anyone willing to share your motivations for pursuing a service year?

HELPFUL TIP

While some corps members are motivated by a desire to serve or shape their communities, others may be motivated by less altruistic factors (e.g., they need money or a job in a particular location). Ask corps members to consider their motivations privately and invite – but don't force – sharing. Giving corps members space to choose what they share is an important part of building a culture of belonging at your organization.

Slide #5

Service years have a “triple bottom line” – or a 3-part purpose:

1. To transform lives
2. To strengthen communities
3. To fuel civic renewal – which basically means increasing and enhancing community engagement

When we talk about transforming lives, we don't just mean the lives of people you are serving. The service year experience also has the potential to transform your life if you choose to use the time you have to learn and grow as much as possible.

Slide #6

Here are some of the ways that you may grow during your service year:

- Improved self-awareness, meaning a deeper understanding of who you are – your strengths, challenges, beliefs, values, and motivations
- Leadership capacity, or the ability to lead others towards a goal
- Knowledge about community issues
- Technical skills development, meaning the development of specific skills that you need to excel in your particular organization. This could be computer skills, grant writing, or trail building, depending on where you are serving.
- Ability to work with others on a team
- Cultural competence, which involves learning about different cultures, appreciating differences, and overcoming biases
- Career development, or figuring out what you want to do with your life and taking steps to move in that direction.

These are all examples of personal and professional growth.

Slide #7

Although making an investment in yourself may seem at odds with your desire to serve others, it is actually one of the most important things you can do to increase your community impact. Social change begins with individuals – and self-aware, culturally competent leaders – are better equipped to change the world than those who haven't done any personal growth work.

Other reasons for investing in your growth include:

- Increased professional success and satisfaction. When you know who you are, what you care about, and what strengths you have to offer, you're more likely to choose a career that is a good fit and remain committed to it.
- More meaningful relationships. As you develop a deeper understanding of yourself, you will likely also develop a greater capacity for understanding and working with others. Interpersonal skills are important in all facets of life – from work to home to community involvement.

Slide #8

The first step toward growth is developing a growth mindset. In a growth mindset, individuals understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, active learning and engagement, and persistence.

Individuals who have a growth mindset are interested in learning new things and they view challenges as opportunities to develop new skills and abilities. When things don't come easily or don't go as planned, they adapt and keep going. They welcome feedback as an opportunity for new insight and growth.

In contrast, those with a fixed mindset believe their potential is fixed – either they can do something or they can't, and no amount of effort makes a difference. Therefore, they stick with what they know and avoid challenges and things that don't come easily. Since they believe they can't improve, they avoid or ignore feedback from others.

Take a moment to assess your own mindset. Perhaps you have a growth mindset in some areas but a fixed mindset in others. How can you foster a growth mindset in yourself this year?

HELPFUL TIP

We do not want to imply that all challenges can be overcome by shifting one's thinking. The message that, "you can overcome anything and if you don't, it's because you don't have a growth mindset," can be harmful and can further disadvantage individuals who experience challenges like systemic oppression.

Slide #9

Next, you need to create a roadmap for your growth. Where do you want to go and how are you going to get there? Stephen Covey, who wrote *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, explains the importance of "beginning with the end in mind." Trying to make progress without specific goals is like leaving for a trip without knowing where you're going. Only once you have decided on a clear destination can you figure out the best way to get there.

The Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool includes space for you to set goals for personal and professional growth. As you are setting goals, remember that growth is not a one-size-fits-all process. Because people have different stories, experiences, and goals, growth looks different for different people. We cannot assess our own growth based on how it stacks up against another person's growth.

Slide #10

Another thing to keep in mind as you are setting goals is the difference between organizational goals and your personal and professional goals. As a corps member, your primary responsibility is to complete your job duties and achieve the objectives established by your organization. Goals that are associated with your job duties are considered organizational goals. They are created externally by the organization as a means to achieve its mission – these goals are the same, regardless of who is responsible for them. For example, an organization may set a goal for its corps members to provide 500 meals for individuals who are experiencing food insecurity.

These goals are different from personal and professional goals, which are created by individuals to help them learn, grow, and reach their potential. As we mentioned before, growth is not a one-size-fits-all process, so goals vary widely by the individual. One person may be interested in improving their time management skills while another is interested in becoming a better listener.

As you set personal and professional goals for the year, remember that you are responsible for the goals that you set. Program staff and others in your network can support you, but ultimately the goals belong to you!

Slide #11

Here is a quick reminder about S.M.A.R.T. goals, which was covered in the session you viewed before completing the Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool.

When setting goals, it is important to make them as “SMART” as possible. SMART goals are specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timed.

- Specific means the goal should be as detailed as possible. We’re going to use this goal as an example: “I want to enroll in a 4-year college when I finish my service year.” If this person knew where they wanted to go to college, they could add those details here.
- Measurable means that you are able to evaluate your progress and you have some way to assess whether you have met the goal. In this example, the person will know they have reached their goal when they are accepted and enrolled in a 4-year college.
- Actionable means there are clear action steps you can take towards accomplishing the goal. For example, if someone wants to enroll in college, they will need to take the ACT, complete the FAFSA, and apply to colleges.
- Realistic means that it is possible to achieve the goal. This goal seems realistic, but it might not be if the person did not have a GED or high school diploma.
- Timed means that the goal has an end date or deadline. You need to set a date for achieving the goal so you don’t keep putting it off. Without an end date, this person might say, “I’ll just wait and apply next year.” Of course, you can always adjust the timeline you set for your goals if circumstances change and your original deadline no longer works.

When setting goals, also think about what additional training, support, or guidance you may need to reach your goals. You should never feel embarrassed about asking for support. In fact, asking for help when it’s needed can be considered an asset!

It is important to clearly explain the role you, as a service year program staff member, play in terms of providing guidance and support. Share how you plan to support your corps members throughout their service year. Are you available for impromptu meetings? Do you want corps members to share their personal challenges with you? When and how will you refer corps members to support services outside of your organization?

Slide #12

Now let's practice making a "SMART" goal together.

If the goal is "to improve time management," how can we make this goal specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timed?

Time management is a vague concept, so first we need to clarify what we mean by that. In this case, time management means how one organizes their time. This goal is measurable because we can assess whether we have done what we said we would do – "post all meetings, events, deadlines, and important dates on an online calendar." And it is timed because we gave ourselves a deadline of "the end of this week."

Slide #13

As you begin to work towards your goals, remember that growth occurs in a never-ending cycle of learning, action, and reflection. The goal is not to achieve perfection, but to keep moving, making adjustments to how you do things as you gain new insights and learn new skills.

It can be easy to skip over the "reflection" part – just focusing on learning and doing – but reflection is a critical part of the learning process. Reflection involves thinking about what you're doing, evaluating your performance, solving problems, and planning next steps. Journaling is a great reflection activity and I encourage you to use the journaling prompts that we have provided in the curriculum guide to reflect on your growth throughout the service year.

Slide #14

The Growth Progress Tracking Chart that is included in the Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool is also a great way to reflect on your growth throughout the year. Use it to assess your progress and challenges, and make revisions as necessary. It's always okay to adjust your goals as new circumstances and opportunities arise.

Slide #15

Even though your goals belong to you, you are not alone on this journey. Your peers and supervisors are there to support you, offer feedback, and provide accountability.

Slide #16

Now, you will have an opportunity to review and revise the goals that you created prior to this session. If you have not set goals yet, you can create some now!

HELPFUL TIP



Corps members should have brought their goals from their Asset-Based Growth Assessment Tool with them to the session. If they did not, ask them to create at least 1 goal in the session.

Slide #17



As we discussed previously, SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timed. Take some time now to revise your goals to make them as "SMART" as possible. Once you are finished revising, share your goals with a partner and ask for feedback about how you can make them even "SMARTer."

Pause to give corps members time to review and revise their goals. After they are finished, ask them to share with a partner. Ask partners to give feedback about goals and suggestions for making them "SMARTer".

Slide #18

Remember, you are not alone in your journey towards personal and professional growth. Your support network is made up of the people and organizations that support you as you work towards your goals. It may include close friends and family, co-workers and social acquaintances, and organizations. Organizations may include religious institutions, government assistance programs, community organizations, and more.

Slide #19



Who are the people and organizations that currently support you? Take a few minutes to make a list of everyone in your support network. Make sure you consider the 3 categories shown on the graphic: closest friends and family, co-workers and social acquaintances, and organizations. Once you have finished creating your list, share it with a partner.

Give corps members a few minutes to create lists of everyone in their support networks. Once individuals have made their lists, ask corps members to share with a partner. This activity should take approximately 10 minutes.

Slide #20

Now think about who you would like to add to your support network. Would you like to make friends in a new city? Find a therapist or mental health counselor? Participate in a religious organization? Connect with a mentor?

Give corps members time to create lists of individuals and organizations they would like to add to their support networks. Once individuals have made their lists, ask corps members to share with a partner. This activity should take approximately 10 minutes.

Slide #21

To wrap up this session, take a few minutes to identify an action step or steps that you can take to improve your support network. If you want to make new friends, how will you do that? Is there an event that you can attend or a person that you can reach out to? If you want to find a mentor, what will you do to connect with potential mentors? Clear action steps make it more likely that we will move towards our goals.

Give corps members time to discuss their action steps. Remind them that they are responsible for their own personal and professional growth and it's up to them whether they choose to take the action steps that they have identified.