

Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice



Workbook

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Table of Contents

	Pages
Class #1: Overview of the Community Photovoice Program.	1-6
Class #2: Community Membership	7-11
Class #3: Learning About Photovoice	12-20
Class #4: Development of Photovoice Narratives	21-27
Class #5: Setting My Community Goal	28-34
Class #6: Community Asset Mapping	35-39
Class #7: Personal Asset Mapping	40-43
Class #8: Prejudice and Discrimination as a Barrier to Community Participation	44-48
Class #9: Other Barriers to Community Participation	49-52
Class #10: Developing My Community Action Toolbox	53-59
Class #11: My Community Action Plan	60-65
Class #12: The Importance of Community Participation	66-71
Booster	
Sessions #1-3: Continuing with My Community Action Plan	72-79
Appendix:	A1-A7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AT-A-GLANCE Summary Guide for Completing Your Community Action Plan Worksheet • Photography Release Form • Community Action Plan Worksheet • Worksheet: Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Class #5 • Worksheet: Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Class #12 • Worksheet: Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Booster #3 	

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Class #1: Overview of the Community Photovoice Program

Program Introduction

Welcome to Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice (BCGP). BCGP is a program that will help you explore and expand your relationships with various communities in your life. It uses Photovoice, an innovative photography-based practice, as a creative tool. We will discuss the different ways we define community, and we will identify the different communities we are involved with or would like to become involved with. We will focus on setting personal goals to broaden and deepen our community connections in ways that feel meaningful to us. We will use cameras to help us picture where we stand with our current communities, and to imagine other ways we could become involved in the communities around us. No prior photographic experience is necessary, so let's start by learning how this program is organized.

How the Community Photovoice Program is Organized

Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice (BCGP) is a six-month program that includes the following components:

- Twelve weekly two-hour class sessions.
- Three follow-up “Booster” sessions to help track your ongoing progress with your goals for community participation. Booster sessions are scheduled to meet a month apart, starting one month after the 12-week class ends.
- Individual support, called “Community Coaching,” is available on a weekly basis for the entire six months of the BCGP Program, i.e., during the twelve weeks when the classes meet and during the three months of Booster Sessions that follow. Community Coaching is available either in person or by phone, and meetings may be held in the office or in the community. During the individual meetings, the class leader assigned to be your Community Coach will provide you with additional support around achieving your goals for community involvement.

Goals of the Community Photovoice Program

Together in class, we will:

- Understand how we may define community and what community means to each of us.
- Learn about the Photovoice process and create Photovoice works combining pictures and text that describe our relation to our communities.
- Learn about the resources in our communities that can help us feel connected.
- Expand our understanding of the barriers that prevent us from fully engaging in our communities and become empowered to overcome those challenges.
- Set a goal to help us become more connected to our communities.
- Learn about some of the ways that being part of our communities could be important to us.

Here's How You Might Benefit from the Community Photovoice Program:

You may:

- Learn more about your communities in general, what's going on in them, and how you can be a part of them.
- Deepen your connections to your communities of choice.
- Achieve a better understanding of what it means to be a member of a community.
- Learn strategies that may help you use your personal and community resources.
- Learn strategies that may help you overcome barriers to community participation.
- Learn how to use photography and write narratives about things that matter to you.
- Connect with others and share your hopes and expectations about getting involved with your communities.

We hope your participation in this program will not only benefit you personally, but also may help you give back to the communities you feel a part of.

Suggestions for Participating in the Community Photovoice Program

Here are a few suggestions for getting the most out of your experience in the Community Photovoice Program:

- First of all, relax and enjoy the class.
- Take part in discussions and exercises. Share your thoughts and ideas. Ask questions.
- Write notes on these pages. There are many worksheets where you can jot down your thoughts and ideas. You also can write down some of the ideas of your fellow students.
- Let your self-expression flow. Photovoice is about finding your own voice. Others in the class also will share and you can learn from them.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Finally, support one another. The Photovoice experience is essentially a group experience. Your fellow students and the class leaders are here to support, encourage, and inspire you.

Expectations for Students in the Community Photovoice Program

Everyone is an important member of the class. Some of the ways we can contribute to creating a positive experience for each other is to:

- Try to attend all of the classes of the program.
- Connect with your Community Coach to get support with anything that gets in the way of your getting the most from the class.
- Complete all of the assignments given in the class.
- Add your voice and opinions to the classroom discussions.
- Treat others in the classroom with kindness and respect.
- Treat anything personal that someone shares in the class as confidential.
- Notify leaders if you will be unable to attend a class.

The Leaders' Commitments to You

The class leaders will:

- Treat you with kindness and respect.
- Assist you in completing any assignment given in the classes.
- Provide you with the support you need to attend and participate in the classes.

What is Photovoice?

Photovoice is a group process where you learn to share your viewpoints on a given topic through picture-taking and writing. The topic for this class is how to strengthen your ties to communities that are currently part of your life or to bring new communities into your life. You will have a digital camera to take pictures over the course of the program, and you will learn to write text to accompany these pictures. It doesn't matter if you never have taken a photograph because we will explain everything in much greater detail in Class #3.

Here is an example of Photovoice work created by a participant in a class at Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Notice that it is a combination of a picture and a text.



My life is centered around learning. This picture is representative of one library I use to connect with the resources I need to expand my knowledge and to learn about new subjects of interest to me. Libraries also connect me with many communities through the events that are available in each library in other locations, such as music concerts, current event discussions, classes, computer trainings, art shows, and lectures. I have attended libraries since I was four years old.

Discussion: What does this photo tell you about community involvement?

What Is “Community” and How Is It Defined?

There are several ways we can define what community means:

- A group of people living in the same neighborhood or under the same government.
- The physical district or location where a group of people live.
- A group of people having common interests, such as a religious community, a business community, or a biker community.
- A group representing a subpart of society, such as the gay community or a community of color.
- Society as a whole.

Characteristics of a Community

Members of a community always have something in common. It could be that you live in a particular place (i.e., a beach community) or share an interest or characteristic with other members of a community (i.e., the Latino community). You could do something together with a group of people, and this shared activity connects you with others (i.e., a bowling league). This shared quality, interest, or activity is what sets a community apart from the larger society.

Roles within a Community

People may have different functions or roles to play within a given community. This does not mean that some people are more important than others. They just contribute in different ways. Here are some examples of different roles in a community:

- Member
- Leader
- Citizen
- Organizer
- Official
- Facilitator
- Guide
- Contributor

Depending on the type of community, there may be other types of roles. The most basic role is to be a *member* of a community. Members are the “building blocks” of any community. Leadership roles usually involve some responsibility for others and for guiding the community.

Multiple Communities

Most people are involved in more than one community at any given time. Over time, people may live in different places, develop new interests or let go of activities that they were once connected to. Typically, we share characteristics with different types of people, and we may feel part of many different, overlapping communities throughout the course of our lives.

Possible examples of types of communities include:

- Family
- Neighborhood
- Workplace
- Spiritual
- Ethnic
- Cultural
- Sports
- Arts
- Political/Advocacy
- Other associations/communities

People often can belong to more than one community at any given time. For instance, it is possible to be part of a local citizen's advocacy group and participate in a monthly book club. It is not "one-or-the-other."

Exercise: Our Current Community Map

We are going to make a "map" of our communities.

Directions:

Step 1: Take the post-it notes we have provided you and write down the name of all the different communities you consider yourself to be a part of. Put each community on a separate post-it and put your initials on the bottom right-hand corner of each one.

Step 2: When everyone has finished, the class facilitator will ask people to come up to the front of the class, one by one, and paste their post-its on the large poster we have provided. When it's your turn, please share with the class what communities you've written down and why each one is important to you.

Discussion:

- Did your understanding or appreciation for your community involvement change as a result of this exercise?

Class #2: Community Membership

Last week, in Class #1, we discussed the communities that are part of our lives. Today, we are going to continue by talking about the *roles* you play in those communities and about your sense of membership in them.

Our Community Map

Let's look at the map we created last week. All the communities you identified as belonging to are listed there. Are there any other communities you thought of that you might like to add to our map? If you weren't in Class #1, you can add your communities now.

Questions: Last week, we briefly talked about how we may have different roles in different communities (you can go back to page 5 if you want a reminder). Consider the communities you identified while you answer each question below. Write your answers in the space provided.

- What is your role in each of these communities?
- What do you get from each community you are part of?
- Have you been able to contribute to your different communities?
- How satisfied are you with your involvement in your different communities?
- Are there ways you might want to increase or change your role or level of participation in any of those communities?

Community Participation and Sense of Identity

Community identity refers to ways we think about the roles and relationships we have in our communities. Your community identity may vary according to which community you are in relation to. For instance, you may have a strong sense of connection with a church or religious group you've belonged to for many years. At the same time, you might only slightly identify with your current neighborhood that you moved into six months ago. Your community identity is dependent on how you think of yourself, and how you feel, within each community.

A person's sense of community identity often is connected to feeling valued and empowered within those communities. The more a person feels valued and empowered within a community, the stronger their connection and sense of belonging will be.

What is Empowerment?

Empowerment is the belief that one has control over one's own life. Empowerment involves taking responsibility for oneself, including one's own health and wellness, and often includes speaking up or advocating for both oneself and other people. In the process of working on their recovery, many people with a mental illness gain a greater sense of empowerment in their lives.

Questions: Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided.

- What are some communities where you feel more empowered and valued?

- What is special about the communities that make you feel empowered and valued?

- Are there other communities you might want to connect to that could add to your sense of self-worth?

Benefits from Living in the Community

We can identify many ways that we benefit from our communities. They can be spaces where we feel “at home,” while also providing us with the opportunity to bring our talents and energy to add to or “give back” to those communities.

Residential communities provide a host of *material* benefits. The town or city where you live may provide:

- Electricity, sewage, and garbage collection.
- Phone, Internet, or television hook-ups so you can have access to these things in your home.
- A supermarket where you can buy groceries.
- A shopping area to get necessities of life, such as clothes and personal care items.
- A movie theater for entertainment.
- A school or school district for education.
- Religious or spiritual settings for congregating with like-minded seekers.
- Parks and athletic facilities for recreational activities.
- Roads and streets for travel or filling stations to gas up the car.
- A public library for reading, learning, or social gatherings.
- A Post Office for mailing and shipping things to far-away friends or family.

A community offers more than material things, institutions, or services for the benefit of its members. Family ties, friendships, business opportunities, chances to learn and grow are all the things a community can support and encourage. These are what we call “*intangible*” benefits, and they can be just as important, if not more important, than our material needs. Most people appreciate contact and communication with others as a vital part of life.

Discussion:

- What are the benefits you receive in the community where you live?

Community Participation and Recovery

Being active in the community is very important to the well-being and recovery of people living with mental health conditions. Here is a list of some ways people have benefitted from being involved in community activities:

- Helped them feel a part of things, like everybody else.
- Increased their opportunities for fun, recreation, and enjoyment of life.
- Increased their feelings of self-confidence and self-worth.
- Improved their sense of purpose and meaning in life.
- Helped them feel self-reliant or more independent.
- Improved their sense of belonging.
- Increased their feelings about being valued, accepted and appreciated by others.
- Helped them feel more like helpful or contributing members of society.
- Improved their confidence about being out in the world.

Question: Write your answer to the question below in the space provided.

- Which of these benefits do you value? What has contributed to your experiencing these benefits?

Enjoyment of Life

Membership in different communities provides opportunities to pursue and enjoy things that you like, which also may improve the quality of your life. Having a friend to lean on, a quiet park where you can still your thoughts, or a museum where you can see beautiful artwork are some of the things you can enjoy in your communities.

Fun Things to Do

Directions: Here is a list of activities many people may find enjoyable. For each activity listed, check all the boxes that apply to you, whether it’s an activity you have enjoyed in the past, enjoy now, or hope to enjoy in the future. If there are any fun activities you’ve done or hope to do that are missing from the list, you can add them at the bottom. When you are finished, choose the “Top 5” most fun things you have checked and write each one on a separate post-it, with your initials on the bottom right corner. Each class member will stick their post-its on the “fun activities” poster and share with the class why these enjoyable activities are meaningful for them.

	I enjoy now	I have enjoyed in the past	I hope to enjoy in the future	Does not apply
Go shopping				
Go biking				
Go to a party				
Go to lunch or dinner with friends				
Go to a park				
Go on a date				
Making music				
Go to a movie, play or concert				
Go to the beach				
Explore a city or neighborhood				
Travel				
Go for a drive				
Go for a swim				
Jog/run				
Walk outdoors				
Go camping				
Go to church				
Meet new people				
Go hunting or fishing				
Visit a museum or library				
Play board games				
Play cards				
Hang out				
Go on a picnic				
Play sports				
Talk to my neighbors				
Watch a parade				
Other:				
Other:				

Adapted from the “Fun Things to Do” checklist developed by Steve Harrington, JD, MPA.

Class #3: Learning About Photovoice

In this class, we'll be learning about the history and process of Photovoice. Photovoice is the general name for a guided group experience or process, but it also is what we call the end product of such a process. The visual work generated by the group, consisting of pictures accompanied by text, also is known as "Photovoice," or alternately, Photovoice "works," or Photovoice "pieces." These works represent participants' unique views about a given subject. In this class, creating Photovoice works will enable you to express, in your own way, ideas about your current communities and any communities you may want to get involved with in the future.

What is Photovoice?

- Photovoice puts cameras into the hands of people living in the community to give them the opportunity to tell their story or share their concerns by combining visual images with words.
- Photovoice enables people to identify, represent, and enrich their experiences through the creation of Photovoice work that can "voice" their viewpoint or message about something that is important to them.
- Photovoice has been used to give communities that are often ignored a "voice" that might otherwise not be heard, to help identify issues as that community sees them, to create change, and to promote and support personal growth.

Background of Photovoice

- The Photovoice process was developed to give people a way to participate and have a voice in public health research related to their own communities. This is called "participatory research" because it includes input from everyday people who aren't usually involved in research.
- Photovoice has been very helpful when it reaches out to people or communities typically left out of public policy decisions. It is a way of ensuring these communities are "heard from" and not "spoken for."
- Some examples where Photovoice has been used in research to give people a voice include learning from women living in rural China about challenges related to health issues and learning about the impact of poverty from people living in homeless shelters in Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- Photovoice has been used for projects at Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation to promote the wellness and recovery of people with the lived experience of mental health challenges.

Steps and Process of Photovoice

Photovoice is a group process where the members of the group share a concern. This concern could be an issue, strength or problem that unites the members of the group. The group identifies and learns about that topic, and discusses how the issue, problem or strength affects their lives. Group members are given cameras and go out to take pictures that relate to the issue, then return to discuss how those pictures are relevant. Participants are guided to write narratives, or written text, to accompany their pictures and to create finished Photovoice “works.” Potential audiences who might benefit from seeing the group’s Photovoice work are identified. One or more exhibits of the group’s work may be organized and presented.

Photovoice usually follows these particular steps:

First, “Thinking” steps:

1. Identify and discuss the issue, idea, or problem that has brought the group together.
2. Learn about the techniques and ethical guidelines of Photovoice.
3. Learn about and understand the assigned “Photo Mission” — the theme related to the topic of the class you will explore with your camera as well as in later discussions about your pictures.
4. Brainstorm and discuss ideas for pictures that will fit the Photo Mission assignment.

Next, the “Action” steps:

5. Complete the Photo Mission assignment by taking pictures related to our communities, including our “Community Goal” that we’ll talk about in a later class.
6. Share our photographs with other members of the class and discuss how they relate to our communities and our community goals.
7. Choose your favorite photo (or several) from each of the Photo Mission assignments.
8. Write narratives (text) describing how the photographs you chose relate to the Photo Mission assignment.
9. Create finished Photovoice pieces by combining your photographs with what you wrote about them.

Finally, “Educating Others” steps:

10. Identify audiences who may benefit from viewing the group’s Photovoice works.
11. Display the works created by the class — organize an exhibit or presentation for one or more audiences that the class decides upon.

Ethical and Safety Issues While Taking Pictures

If you choose to take a picture of another person or another person's property, it's very important to ask permission. Some people are very uncomfortable having their pictures taken. Most of us dislike having an embarrassing moment caught on camera and prefer photos that are complimentary.

Think About the Comfort of the Person Being Photographed

Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided.

- What would you NOT want to be photographed doing?

- Where would you NOT want to be photographed?

Remember: Homeland Security

There are some public places where photography is prohibited or discouraged, especially in the United States since the terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001. Be careful taking pictures in public places. If possible, ask a person in authority for permission to take pictures.

Question: Write your answers to the question below in the space provided.

- What are some places where photography might not be allowed?

Ethical and Safety Guidelines for Photovoice

I agree to follow these guidelines as I take pictures for our Photovoice class:

1. **Always ask permission** if you are taking a photo of a person or something that is identifiable with them. It is **nice to introduce yourself by your first name**, if you are approaching a stranger to take a picture.
2. If you wish to use a photograph of a person in your Photovoice creation, it is important to get a release form signed in writing by that person. The class leader will provide extra copies of the form if you need them.
3. If you want to take a picture of a child who is under age 18, you need to obtain the **consent of the child's parent or legal guardian** to take or use the picture. Have the parent or guardian fill out the release form.
4. Be sensitive. Remember that most people would not want to be photographed in embarrassing situations, like when they are crying, losing their temper, eating, using drugs, panhandling, kissing, or in other intimate moments.
5. It's OK to use a "staged" shot to capture a scene, idea, or emotion if you think it would be difficult to obtain the shot "naturally." A staged shot is where you create the scene, setting, or environment for the photograph, including who or what is in it.
6. **Pay attention to your environment.** Don't sacrifice your safety for a picture. Make sure to pay attention to your footing when you are looking into the camera, so you don't accidentally step off a curb, into a hole, or into traffic. Consider taking someone with you when you are out taking pictures, particularly if you are taking pictures in places or neighborhoods where you could be vulnerable to crime.
7. There may be certain places that do not permit you to take photographs of them—for example, federal buildings, gyms, and certain stores. In these places, you will need to find a person who has the authority to give you permission to take a picture.
8. If someone asks you why you want to take their picture, you can explain about the Photovoice class and what you're hoping to say with the picture. Be sure to be courteous at all times and thank the person, whether or not he or she lets you take their picture.
9. Once you have taken your pictures, and created the accompanying narratives, be sensitive about sharing finished Photovoice works online or on social media. Be especially mindful when considering posting work with images of identifiable people.

I agree to follow the guidelines above as I take pictures for our Photovoice project.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Requesting Permission to Take Pictures

Sometimes, you'll get a great idea for a picture, but you're worried about having to ask for permission. Here are some examples of how to you might start the conversation.

Asking to take a picture of another person or a child, or their belongings

Sometimes a person, known or unknown to you, might seem like the perfect subject for your Photovoice picture. You will need to ask for permission to take the picture and have the person, or the child's parent or legal guardian, sign a release form for the photograph.

Here is an example of what you might say:

Hello. My name is _____, and I am taking a class called Photovoice. In this class, we take pictures that represent something important to us related to building communities. I'd like to take your/your child's picture (or something that belongs to them) because _____ (let the person know what he/she, their child, or that thing represents to you). We also do an exhibit of our pictures for the class, and this one could be included. Would it be OK to take your picture? (If the person says "yes," continue with...) "Would you be willing to sign a release form that just says I got your permission to take and maybe exhibit your photo?"

If the person says "no," then the answer is "no." Accept the answer and say, "Thank you anyway," rather than arguing with them about it. Move on because there will be other great pictures out there. If the person agrees and says, "yes," say "thank you," obtain their signature on the Photography Release Form, then go ahead with your photograph or photographs. When you are done, you can express your appreciation one last time before you move on.

Asking a security guard or someone else in authority

If you see a Federal Building or some other place that has a security guard by the door, you may want to ask about taking the photo in advance. This can help you avoid being approached by an authority once you've started taking photos.

Here is an example of what you might say:

Hello, my name is _____. I'm taking a class that requires me to take photos, and I'd love to take a photo of this (building/bridge/other). I just want to check with you and make sure it's OK to photograph this.

If the security guard says it's prohibited to take pictures in that location, accept the response and move on. If it's ok, say, "Thank you," and go ahead with your pictures.

Photography Release Form

I, (print name) _____ agree to have my photograph taken as part of a group photography project called “Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice.” People participating in this project take pictures and write descriptions about how the photographs represent their perspectives on important issues in their lives and communities.

I understand that this photograph will become the personal property of the photographer and will not be used for any financial gain. I understand that the photographer may share the photo with other members of the project as part of group discussions.

I understand that I can agree to the following additional uses of the photo by checking any or all of the boxes below:

- The photographer has my permission to include this photo in a public Photovoice exhibit and/or Internet exhibit meant to educate and raise awareness concerning issues related to building community. I understand my name/my child’s name will not be used (unless I specifically request that it be used) if the photo is included in a public and/or Internet exhibit. I understand I may withdraw my permission for this photo to be included in a public and/or Internet exhibit at any time prior to the opening of such exhibit.
- I would like to be notified of any exhibit that would include the photo of me/my child so that I may have the opportunity to view it.
- I would like a copy of this photo for myself.

In order to notify me about an exhibit and/or send me a copy of this photo, my contact information is below:

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Photo Mission #1

The theme for the first Photo Mission assignment in this class is *“Being a Member of My Community.”*

Use your camera to take photos that describe, in some way, what *“Being a Member of My Community”* means to you. This might be shown through photos of a place or places you feel most at home. It also could be about the people you spend valuable time with or a symbol of an organization or group that you feel connected to. It can be a photo that is literal – that is, an exact picture of a place, like your street. Or it can be something more symbolic that shows your thoughts or feelings about community connection.

Your photo can be as literal or symbolic as you would like. There are no right or wrong answers. A picture is an expression of how you think and feel.

This week take your camera and go places you usually go, or have never been, to capture your feelings about being a member of your community. You can take pictures of more than one community you identify with, if that is important to you.

We will come back next week, and the class leaders will upload the pictures from the cameras onto the computer so that the pictures you took can be projected for everyone to see. If you choose to use a cell phone or smart phone camera to take your pictures, you will need to email the pictures to one of the class leaders so they can have them on the computer. You’ll get a chance to tell others in the class about your pictures and what they mean to you.

It is important to be safe as you go out to take your pictures! It’s **not** worth getting hurt, or putting yourself at risk, for that “special shot.”

Ideas for Photo Mission #1

Based on our discussions and exercises in the class so far, you already may have some ideas that you might like to capture in photographs.

List any ideas you have about photographs that you might like to take that relate to the first Photo Mission assignment:

Learning to Use a Digital Camera

1. Turn the camera on. The on/off switch may be a small button on the top of the camera.
2. Make sure your camera is set to the setting for “taking pictures” and not “viewing pictures.”
3. Look at the screen on the back of the camera, if there is a screen, or look through the viewfinder. Take your time to frame the picture as you want it.
4. Use the zoom, if desired, to zoom in (looks closer up) or zoom out (looks farther away).
5. Set the flash to “on,” if you are in a low-light situation.
6. When you press the big button (usually on the top of the camera) gently down (about halfway), it will focus the picture in the frame. Then continue and push the big button all the way down to take the picture. You usually will hear a “click” when the picture is actually taken.
7. On a digital camera, there is no film to wind, so you can take another picture right away.

Remember, you are free to use the camera we are providing or your own camera (including the camera on your phone). All the same ethical and safety rules apply no matter which camera you use. If you use your phone camera, you will need to have a way to transfer the pictures you want to share to one of the class instructors. This usually is best done via email, and the class instructors will provide their email addresses in case you wish to do this.

Class #4: Development of Photovoice Narratives

Last week, we assigned Photo Mission #1 for this class. The theme was *“Being a Member of My Community.”* We hope you all were able to go out and take photographs in response to this assignment. We will have a chance to review everyone’s photos later in today’s class.

In today’s class, you will learn how to write narratives to accompany the pictures you took. A “narrative” is the text that describes a Photovoice picture. The narrative describes and explains, from your point of view, what’s going on in the picture, and how that may be significant.

You will start with “practice” pictures, learning step-by-step how to develop a narrative. Then, you will start writing narratives for your own pictures. Each student will have the opportunity to share their pictures with the rest of the class. Then, you will choose which picture to write your first narrative for. The narrative you write, combined with the picture you took, represents a completed Photovoice “piece.” This Photovoice piece will fulfill your assignment to complete the Photo Mission: *“Being a Member of My Community.”*

First, though, let’s have a brief check-in to see whether everyone had a chance to take pictures for the Photo Mission, how you felt about doing the Photo Mission, and whether there were any obstacles or challenges you encountered.

Discussion:

- Did you take pictures?

- How did taking pictures for the Photo Mission make you feel?

- Did you experience any obstacles or challenges taking pictures for the Photo Mission?

Learning about Photovoice Narratives

Last week, we had a chance to discuss what Photovoice is, and we reminded ourselves of the examples of Photovoice we saw in Class #1.

Here is another example of Photovoice work created by a participant in a class at Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Let's first cover the narrative and look at the picture. Next, read the narrative.



Maple Tree

The maple tree is located at the edge of a yard by Crystal Lake. Walkers and joggers admire it as they pass by on the street and sidewalk. Some admirers stop and take photographs.

What does the tree symbolize to those who view it? The tree is a metaphor for strength as it grows from the ground up to the sky. Its leaves change color in the seasons as people change in life. It has beauty and solidity, like members of a community of people.

The author of this piece uses a metaphor or symbol to describe her sense of community. What other images or metaphors could the tree symbolize? How could you relate these metaphors to community or to individuals who are part of the community?

Writing Photovoice Narratives: **SHOWED**

S-H-O-W-E-D is an acronym used in the Photovoice process. An acronym is a memory booster that creates an easy-to-remember word from the first letters of other words. That way a long title or list of things becomes easier to remember. For instance, “PAWS” is an acronym for “Progressive Animal Welfare Society.” “SHOWED” is a tool that can remind you of different things to think about when you look and discuss your photographs. It also can help you draw meaning and inspiration from your pictures as you begin to organize your thoughts on paper. In the end, though, it’s just a guide, and you should feel free to express your opinions and ideas in your own words and style. Your narrative can take any form you choose, including poetry.

1. What do you SEE here?

- What is this photo of?
- Where was this photo taken?

2. What’s really HAPPENING here?

- What is the photo about?
- What things are going on in the photo that the casual observer may not see?
- What does the photo *really* represent?

3. How does this relate to OUR lives?

- Why did you take this photo?
- Why did you pick this photo to discuss?
- How does this photo relate to you or your community’s perspectives or attitudes?

4. WHY does this problem, resource, or situation exist?

- If the photo is of something negative (such as, a “problem”), what will you say about what contributes to this problem?
- If the photo is of something positive (such as, a “strength” or “resource”), what will you say about the importance of this resource? Is it overlooked? Do you need more of this sort of resource?

5. How could this image EDUCATE others, the community, and policy makers?

- What would you like to tell people about this problem, resource, or situation?
- What would other people need to know or understand about this problem, resource, or situation?

6. What can we DO about the problem, resource, or situation?

- What can we do to strengthen this resource?
- What can we do to fix this problem?
- Who else can help fix this problem?
- What can we do to see that this situation changes?

SHOWED Example

Here is an example of how SHOWED can be used to help look at and make meaning of a photograph. This can be the first step in developing a narrative for the picture. The photograph below was taken by a participant in a class at Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.

What do you SEE here?

A large public building, well-lit, in the early morning or evening hours. There is a construction cone, a trash barrel, people outside the building, an access ramp, and a "Vote Here" sign.

What's really HAPPENING here?

At this time of day, things are quiet, but the signs, large trash can, and ramp suggest a place where people gather and one that serves the community in some way. Despite the hour, all the lights are on and things could be busy inside, despite the calm quiet outside.



How does this relate to OUR lives?

The "vote here" sign represents that we have a voice in our government. For everyone to have a voice, it's important that places, which provide community services, are accessible to people of different needs, abilities, and preferences. This building is well-maintained, spacious, and aesthetically pleasing, making participation in voting and accessing public services more likely.

WHY does this problem/condition/strength exist?

This community seems to have the resources to maintain its buildings or at least prioritizes the importance of having clean and accessible areas for voting and public services. It's a very approachable and inviting space, which helps it serve its role.

How could this image EDUCATE the community and policy makers?

Every community should strive to ensure that everyone in the community has equal access to its resources. If possible, the community should enhance its resources to make sure people can enjoy what that community has to offer in a pleasing manner.

What can we DO about it?

People can make sure their public spaces are clean, accessible to people with disabilities, accessible at different times of day and night, and as beautiful and functional as their community can afford.

Practice Writing a Photovoice Narrative #1

What do you **SEE** here?



What's really **HAPPENING** here?

How does this relate to **OUR** lives?

WHY does this problem/condition/strength exist?

How could this image **EDUCATE** the community and policy makers?

What can we **DO** about it?

Practice Writing a Photovoice Narrative #2

Now that you have had a chance to practice writing a Photovoice narrative using SHOWED as a framework or guide, the next step is to learn to develop a narrative for a picture in a more “free-style” manner. SHOWED is useful for brainstorming or organizing your thoughts about an image, but your finished narrative can be constructed any way you choose—it doesn’t have to follow the strict format of the SHOWED. You can focus on any element of the image and relate it to any aspect of the SHOWED or anything that relates to the theme of the class. Try to show the picture in a different “light” — one that inspires you, or others, to see the issue in a different way.

Look at the picture below and write a narrative that best reflects how you think this picture addresses the theme of community participation.



Review of Photo Mission #1

Last week, we assigned Photo Mission #1, entitled “*Being a Member of My Community.*” At the start of today’s class, we had a chance to share our feelings and experiences about what it was like to go out and complete the Photo Mission. Now, we will look at and discuss the pictures that we took. The instructors will project your pictures so everyone in the class can see them. Each student can introduce and share their work and then will select at least one picture they will develop a narrative for. The picture you choose should be the one that combines best with what you want to say in response to the theme of the Photo Mission, i.e., “*Being a Member of My Community.*” You will use the skills you have developed in this class to write the narrative for the picture you choose.

Discussion of New Pictures from Photo Mission #1

We will show the photos that each person has submitted. When we bring up your photo(s), describe it (or them) to your classmates, and discuss:

- What, if anything, motivated you to take the picture?
- How does the photo relate to being a member of your community?

Practice Writing a Photovoice Narrative #3

You have had the chance to look at and discuss your photos from Photo Mission #1. Please select one of these to write about as you now will write a narrative for a picture you took for Photo Mission #1. If you have time, you can select a second picture to work on as well. As always, SHOWED is meant to be a useful tool or guide, but ultimately you are free to write your narrative in any form you choose. You can focus on whatever is most meaningful to you in the picture and phrase your narrative as you see fit.

Use the space below or the extra paper the instructors will have. You do not need to have your narrative finished by the end of today's class. You will have plenty of time during later classes or while meeting with your community coach to continue writing, rewriting or editing what you get started today.

Class #5: Setting My Community Goal

Now that you have a good idea of the communities you are involved with; we are going to discuss a goal you may want to set within your community. It may be something as simple as going to the library more often, going to the movie theater or gym, or going out to coffee with friends. It could be deciding to get more involved in something that you do already, like volunteering to help serve the dinner at a monthly church or neighborhood supper. It could be taking on a new activity that you've thought about for a while, like joining the neighborhood theatre. It also could be something like connecting more with others on social media, organizing a trip to the local baseball stadium, or volunteering to help clean up a local park.

Many of us have had a lot of experience with creating goals involving our own selves, such as losing weight, stopping smoking, or engaging in treatment. These are goals that benefit us and enhance our lives, but they usually are done on our own, and they are done because we feel we "have to" or "need to" do these things. When we think about setting community goals, it's because we feel something may be "missing" from our lives, we want or desire connection to others, and we choose to go out and seek this.

There are different types of community goals that someone might want to set for themselves. Some goals focus on activities in the community that people like to do on their own, like fishing at the river or going to a concert in the park, while others focus on doing things that provide a long-term benefit, like taking a class at the civic center. People also may want to choose goals that focus on making connections with other people or on doing something that brings benefits to others. There are as many types of community goals as people looking to get involved.

Setting Goals

How have you brought about change in your life in the past? One common way people make changes is to set goals for themselves. You pick something you want to achieve, then you pursue the goal you set.

Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your future and for motivating yourself to turn your vision into reality.

Question: Write your answer to the question below in the space provided.

- What is your experience with setting goals?

Information about Goals

Many of us have great ideas about what we want in life, but without some sort of plan, it can be hard to do what's needed to actually achieve what we want. Setting goals helps us decide where we want to be and then to make a plan to get there.

Benefits of Setting Goals

- Gives you direction.
- Increases your confidence in moving toward something you want.
- Helps you stay on track.
- Gives you something to celebrate when the goals are achieved.

SMART Goals

The way a person sets a goal can make a difference in how successful we are at accomplishing it. Some goals are too vague or too big, and we might quickly get discouraged, like New Years' resolutions to lose weight or finish school. A more useful and powerful way to write goals is to make SMART goals. "SMART" is another acronym that stands for:

- **S** – Specific: The goal is clear and well defined. (Example: "I'm going to volunteer at the homeless shelter" rather than "I might do some volunteer work somewhere.")
- **M** – Measurable: The goal spells out how many times or how often you will do something, so you'll know if you have actually reached your goal. (Example: I'm going to volunteer at the homeless shelter **once a week.**)
- **A** – Attainable: The goal is within your reach, something you know you can accomplish. There's no such thing as "too small." You can always make it bigger later. (Example: I'm going to go to the gym at least twice a week for the next month.)
- **R** – Relevant: The goal indicates something you want. This shouldn't be about something others or you think you *need* if it's not also something you *want*.
- **T** – Time-bound goals have target dates for when you want to achieve them. (Example: I'm going to volunteer at the homeless shelter once a week **for the next three months.**)

SMART Goal Example

For her New Year's resolution, Jonie decided to set some goals for the coming year. Her life was in a pretty good place, so she decided she would try to meet some new friends and try out new things.

Jonie's Goal: "By the end of May of this year, I will join two new Meetup Groups with other people whose interests match mine."

For Jonie, this goal was specific and relevant. By selecting a number (two Meetup Groups) and a target date (the end of May), Jonie was able to make her goal both measurable and time-bound. Finally, she chose a goal that would require some effort, but she believed it would be attainable. Overall, her goal was SMART.

Taking Steps to Achieve Your Goals

Once we've decided on a goal, we may find ourselves feeling a bit overwhelmed. Breaking down the goal into smaller action steps can lessen some of the anxiety. Here's how to do it:

- Break down each goal into smaller, manageable steps. This might help you feel less overwhelmed than when you're looking at the big picture.
- Some steps may have to come before others, so put the steps in order if needed.
- Focus on one step at a time.
- Create timelines for yourself. Setting a target date to accomplish each step can help keep you on track, but remember that you can change the date if things move along slower than planned. Timelines are meant to support us in moving forward, not lead to greater anxiety and frustration.
- Add in small (healthy) rewards for every step you accomplish. This could be something like getting an ice cream or giving yourself an extra ½ hour doing something you love to do.
- If you start to feel discouraged, remember that goals take time and remind yourself of how much you've already accomplished!!
- Be persistent. It takes most people more than one attempt to achieve a goal.
- Try a variety of strategies until you find something that works.

More Examples of SMART Goals

Here are some examples of Community Goals and their action steps:

- A. **Janelle** wants to have a regular activity scheduled for her weekends. It will be an activity she is committed to and finds meaningful and enjoyable.

Janelle's Goal: "Over the next two months, I will schedule one activity that I'll take part in for at least two weekends on a Saturday or a Sunday."

Steps Janelle can take toward achieving her Goal:

1. I will check local papers, bulletin boards, and online for possible volunteer opportunities, free outings, or activity groups that meet on the weekend.
 2. I will learn what I can about each opportunity to decide which ones suit me the best.
 3. From the ones I like best, I'll find out where they're located to make sure I can do the transportation to get there.
 4. I'll decide on at least two activities and put them in my calendar for this month and next month.
- B. **Jim** wants to start reconnecting with old friends to see what's going on with them. He also is going to look around to see what's going on in his neighborhood and maybe join a club or group where he can meet new people.

Jim's 1st Goal: "By the 15th of next month, I will reconnect with two old friends."

Steps Jim can take toward achieving his 1st Goal:

1. I will look up phone numbers or email addresses for several of my old friends.
2. I will choose the top two of my old friends and reach out to them.
3. If I don't get a response from one or both of them, I'll go to the next person on my list until I've been able to reconnect with two people.

Jim's 2nd Goal: "By the end of the year, I will make two new friends."

Steps Jim can take toward achieving his 2nd Goal:

1. I will take part in some activities that interest me where I might meet new people.
2. When I'm involved in the activity, I will introduce myself to people that I think I might want to get to know and begin a casual conversation with them.

3. If I like the activity and the people involved, I'll continue to go several times so I can get connected to the people.
 4. I will check my Facebook friends list to see if there are any people in my area that I might want to meet.
 5. If there are people I want to meet, I'll message them through Facebook to see if they want to meet in a public place, like for coffee or a movie.
- C. Last summer, **Andy** felt that he was stuck in a rut. He lives on his own and knows a few people in his neighborhood, but he feels lonely in his apartment, especially on weekends. His friends sometimes come over to watch TV or chat, but he realized he wanted to try something new and exciting, outside of his house.

After thinking about the things he likes to do, Andy realized he could combine his interests in eating healthy food with an opportunity to meet new people. He knew that the local adult education center has a dedicated kitchen and offers classes where students can learn to cook different kinds of food. He also heard that the Center may offer tuition assistance.

Andy's SMART Goal: Next semester I will take a cooking class at my local Adult Education Center.

Steps Andy can take toward achieving his Goal

1. I will look up the number for the Adult Education Center.
2. I will ask about tuition assistance, find out if I qualify, and find out the deadlines for registration and filing for assistance.
3. I will save \$10 per week to cover registration or other fees not covered by tuition assistance.
4. I will get and complete any paperwork needed for tuition assistance and registration.
5. If I qualify for tuition assistance, I will register for the course for the next semester.
6. If I don't qualify for tuition assistance, I will ask the financial aid department about any other options they may know about.
7. If needed, I will pursue other ways of getting funding.

How will Andy evaluate his progress?

1. Andy will know if he's made the phone calls.
2. Andy will know if he's completed any needed paperwork.
3. Andy will be able to check his bank account to see his savings.

Setting Your Own Goals

Directions: Your community goal(s) can fall into three general categories: getting more involved in communities that you're already a part of; getting involved in a new community that interests you; or getting re-involved in a community that you were a part of in the past but aren't connected with right now. You can have more than one Community Goal, if you'd like, and you can change your Community Goal at any time.

In the space below, list the Community Goal(s) that are most meaningful to you at the present time.

Choose Your SMART Community Goal

For now, we're going to choose the most important or meaningful goal you have listed. When thinking about formulating your goal:

- Be specific and make it measurable, so you'll know when you've reached your goal. (SM)
- Choose something that's attainable and relevant to you. (AR)
- Name a target date or time frame by which you're going to do something. (T)

My SMART Community Goal is:

Directions: For your SMART Community Goal, write down the steps that you will need to take to accomplish that goal.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

If you have another goal, repeat the process above, writing out your goal and the steps for achieving your goal.

Measuring Progress toward Achieving Your Community Goal

It is important that we have a sense of how we're progressing toward our goals. To help with this, we're going to use a Worksheet where we can note where we stand right now and where we hope to be in three months' time. If you've already been thinking about or working on the Community Goal you set before today's class, you can note how far along you currently feel with this (that will be: "where you stand now"). Also indicate where you would like to be three months from today with your Goal.

Direction: Fill out the worksheet, entitled "*Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Class 5,*" on page A-5 in the Appendix at the end of this Workbook.

Review of Pictures and Narratives from Photo Mission #1

Let's take a moment to check in about your progress with the first Photo Mission, "*Being a Member of My Community.*" By now, you should have had a chance to take pictures related to this Photo Mission. We have discussed your pictures in class, and you have learned how to write a narrative for the picture or pictures you chose (remember the SHOWED technique we covered in Class #4). If you have not had a chance to develop a narrative, now is a time you can do that. The class leaders are here to help you select a picture to work with or help you with the writing of your narrative. Remember the Community Coaches are available to meet individually with you to help you with your narrative.

Class #6: Community Asset Mapping

Today, we will talk about the resources in our communities that can support us with achieving our Community Goal(s). Some of you still may be trying to come up with or finalize your Community Goal. You also may have questioned, since last week, if the Goal you chose is really the one you want to go after right now. Many of us experience this. We also may tend to put Goals that are more of what we need than what we want. Remember, goals can be based on fun things we like as well.

Let's go back and look at the Exercise you completed at the end of Class #2, the checklist of "Fun Things to Do." Look at the first and third columns, things you "enjoy now," or "hope to enjoy in the future." You also can look at the poster we created from this exercise, plus the Community Map from Class #1.

Questions: Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided.

- How does your Community Goal relate to any of the activities you enjoy doing or hope to enjoy in the future?

- Is there something from the list that you'd like to turn into a Community Goal?

- How is your Community Goal related to any community on our Community Map?

Let's review the Community Goals you formulated at the end of the last class. As a reminder, we will be working on goals related to community participation – connecting with a new community, deepening our connections with communities that we're currently involved in or reconnecting with an old community that we're not involved with anymore. Take a moment to write down your Community Goal. You can copy it from where you wrote it down in Class #5 on page 33. If you missed the last class, try to formulate a Community Goal now and write it in the space below. You may revise your Community Goal as well, if desired.

My Community Goal: _____

From now on, at the beginning of every class session, we're going to be checking in on your progress with your Community Goal. Since last week, what progress have you made thinking or working on your Community Goal? What new developments, opportunities or ideas do you have to share?

Community Resources

Every community has a set of resources that can help you achieve your goals. Sometimes, these resources can be **institutions** in a community, which are established organizations, such as businesses or government agencies. Sometimes, they can be neighborhood **associations**, where people can pursue common interests, purposes, and activities, or address problems in the community. There are **people** resources, too—individuals, who work in a formal role in the community, who can guide you and assist you in achieving your goals.

Examples of Community Resources:

- **Institutions**
 - Local library
 - Parks
 - Community colleges
 - Government housing or employment agency
 - Social Security office
 - Public transit system
 - Hospitals
 - Businesses
 - Post Office

- **Civic Associations**
 - Houses of Worship
 - Cultural Groups
 - Neighborhood Watch
 - Community Centers
 - Athletic Facilities

- **People**
 - Teachers
 - Librarians
 - Town officials
 - Lawyers
 - Store clerks

Community asset mapping is a way to discover the places in your community. It is a process of identifying resources that are relevant to your goals and where your interests, talents, and skills can grow. In this class, the terms “community assets” and “resources” mean the same thing. You are going to explore your communities, learn about the resources they offer, and how you can connect to those resources to realize your Community Goals.

Mapping the Resources of My Community

Let’s look at our large community map we created during our first class. There, you listed all the communities you are currently a member of. You are going to select one of your communities and write a list of the resources that particular community offers you.

Example: The community **Mark** chose is his church. Here is a list of some of the resources Mark identified as having available at his church community. For Mark, his church is a place to:

- Receive spiritual guidance
- Pray
- Study
- Meet other people
- Receive food from the Food Bank
- Receive support in times of need or crisis
- Sing
- Attend community meals

Directions: Choose one of your communities from our community map.

My Community: _____

Resources Provided by My Community: Make a list of the resources it offers.

Using Community Resources to Achieve Your Goals

It can be a lot easier to achieve our Community Goals when we know about and plan to use resources that are freely available to us within the community. In the previous exercise, we discussed communities that we’re involved with. There are often resources available from the “community at large” that we may or may not know about. Here is an example:

Example: Nancy’s goal: I will complete my first course for an associate degree at a community college by the end of the year.

Community resources Nancy might need to achieve her goal:

- Public transportation
- Federal Vocational Rehabilitation services that can offer some help with her books and other school needs
- Public library for a study space and computer station
- New Student Orientation offered by the school (to learn about other resources she might not know about at the school)
- Tutoring services
- Professional association for her desired major
- Associate degree program advisor
- Study group of classmates
- Disability Services office

Now that you know how to think about the resources in your communities, try to think about the resources you may need to realize your goals.

Directions: Write down the goal you choose to work on, any steps you are working on now toward achieving that goal, and list all the community resources you have or may need to complete each step.

My Community Goal: _____

Steps I am working on now or plan to work on toward achieving my Community Goal and community resources I have or may need to complete each step:

Step 1: _____

Resources: _____

Step 2: _____

Resources: _____

Step 3: _____

Resources: _____

Review of Pictures and Narratives from Photo Mission #1

Last week, you had a chance to work on finishing the narratives you were writing from the first Photo Mission, *“Being a Member of My Community.”* If you have not done so already, hand in your finished narrative from the first Photo Mission. If you still are working on the text, or have any other concerns, talk to your Community Coach or other Class Leaders for assistance.

Photo Mission #2

Your second Photo Mission assignment is called *“Picturing My Community Goal.”* In this Photo Mission, you’ll be taking pictures related to your Community Goal. Like you did in the first assignment, you’ll want to take pictures that either literally represent your Community Goal or ones that are more of a symbol about it. They also can be about how you feel about your goal or how you imagine you will feel once you achieve it. The pictures also could be about why this goal is meaningful to you, what things you might need to achieve it, or any of the specific steps you will need to make to get closer to it. If there is something standing in the way of achieving your goal, you might want to try describing that as well.

This week take your camera and make pictures of any or all of these possibilities.

Remember, if you take a picture of a person, you will need written permission. Use the release form for this. If you are using a cell phone camera, you will have to email your pictures to the class leaders so they can have it on the computer.

As always, be safe as you go out to take your pictures! It’s **not** worth getting hurt, or putting yourself at risk, for that “special shot.”

Photo Mission Ideas

List any ideas you have about the photographs that you might like to take for your second Photo Mission, *“Picturing My Community Goal.”*

Class #7: Personal Asset Mapping

Let's start by checking in about your Community Goals. What new developments, opportunities, or ideas do you have to report?

My Personal Resources

In the last class, we talked about community resources. This week, we'll be talking about the personal resources that can help you achieve your goals. Personal resources are people or things that you have a special or intimate relationship with. Community resources, like a library, are available to everyone, while personal resources are more unique or special to you. Let's take a look at the kind of personal resources you might have access to:

People who may be Personal Resources:

- Family
- Friends & neighbors
- Work or school colleagues
- Peer supporter
- Your counselor or therapist
- Pets (yes, pets are people too)

Things that may be Personal Resources:

- A computer that gives you access to information and enables you to communicate
- A vehicle or access to public transportation so you can get around
- Financial resources to help you meet your needs and obtain necessary products or services
- A cell phone
- A datebook
- Headphones

Personal Strengths/Qualities

Besides people and things you might have access to, every person is a unique blend of personal strengths, abilities, and talents. These also are resources that can be used and drawn upon to help with achieving ambitions you have in life, including goals for getting more involved in or connected to a community or communities. Here is a list of positive qualities or characteristics. These are internal strengths or assets that define who we are and help us get what we want.

Directions: Place a checkmark beside each quality that you possess. You may write additional qualities at the bottom of the table. After you’ve checked all of the qualities that describe you as a person, put a star next to the top 5 that you want to share with the class.

My Personal Strengths/Qualities

Accepting	Energetic	Joyful	Religious
Adventurous	Enthusiastic	Kind	Resilient
Affectionate	Fair	Loving	Respectful
Ambitious	Faithful	Loyal	Responsive
Appreciative	Firm	Mature	Responsible
Balanced	Forgiving	Modest	Self-confident
Caring	Friendly	Nurturing	Self-directed
Cheerful	Funny	Open-minded	Self-disciplined
Compassionate	Generous	Optimistic	Self-reliant
Confident	Good judgment	Perceptive	Selfless
Considerate	Gracious	Persistent	Sensitive
Cooperative	Grateful	Playful	Serious
Courageous	Hard working	Polite	Sincere
Courteous	Honest	Practical	Spiritual
Creative	Hopeful	Protective	Strong
Curious	Humble	Prudent	Thoughtful
Decisive	Generous	Punctual	Trusting
Determined	Idealistic	Purposeful	Trustworthy
Devoted	Independent	Realistic	Understanding
Empathetic	Intelligent	Reliable	Unpretentious
Others:			
Others:			

My Personal Assets in Service of My Community Goal

Directions: In the space below, write down your Community Goal. It can be the same Community Goal you listed in earlier classes (see page 38) or an updated goal. Write down the steps you are working on now, or planning on taking, to help you achieving that goal. After each step, list all the personal resources you may need to complete that step. Think about both the qualities we discussed in the “My Personal Strengths” checklist exercise on the previous page and the more material personal resources we discussed on page 40.

My Community Goal: _____

Steps I am working on now or plan to work on toward achieving my Community Goal and personal resources I have or may need to complete each step:

Step 1: _____

Resources: _____

Step 2: _____

Resources: _____

Step 3: _____

Resources: _____

Review of Photo Mission #2:

Last week, we assigned Photo Mission #2, entitled “*Picturing My Community Goal.*” Today, people will share and discuss any pictures that were taken in response to Photo Mission #2, and each person will develop a narrative for at least one picture they took. We will follow the same narrative-writing process as was done with Photo Mission #1. Don’t forget you always can refer to the SHOWED acronym, if you need to remind yourself how to look at a picture.

Discussion of New Pictures from Photo Mission #2

We will show the photos that each person has submitted. When we bring up your photo(s), describe it (or them) to your classmates, and, if applicable, discuss:

- What, if anything, motivated you to take the picture?
- How does the photo relate to your Community Goal?

Write a Photovoice Narrative for a Picture from Photo Mission #2

You now have had the chance to look at and discuss your photos from Photo Mission #2. Please select one of these pictures to write your narrative about. Remember, the theme of Photo Mission #2 was “*Picturing My Community Goal.*” The picture you select should be the one that best represents your ideas about the theme of the Photo Mission. You can refer to the SHOWED acronym that was introduced in Class #4 (page 23) to help guide your thinking about your picture and how to relate it to the theme of the Photo Mission. Your narrative can be phrased in any way you choose, including poetry. Focus on whatever is most meaningful to you in the picture and use your narrative to best express your thoughts and feelings about the how the picture represents your community goal.

Your instructors will have extra paper you can use to write on. You do not need to have your narrative finished by the end of today’s class. You will have plenty of time during later classes or while meeting with your community coach to continue writing, rewriting, or editing what you get started today. If there are other pictures you want to write from this Photo Mission, you can do that at a later time. Your Community Coach can continue to give you advice and guidance about this.

Class #8: Prejudice and Discrimination as a Barrier to Community Participation

Let's start by checking in about your Community Goals. What new developments, opportunities, or ideas do you have to report on?

Barriers to Community Participation

This week and next, we are going to discuss some possible barriers to community involvement. During the following week, we'll explore strategies to overcome these barriers, as well as how those strategies can help us access the resources we discussed during the past two classes.

People who experience mental health challenges often face barriers to participating in the community. Some of these barriers are experienced by many people in the community, such as financial limitations, difficulties getting around (lack of transportation), or lack of a stable, safe home. Others are more connected to having mental health challenges, especially negative views held by the public about mental illness that can lead to prejudice and discrimination.

We are going to look at how these barriers can create challenges to achieving community goals. Let's look at how we are defining the words stigma, prejudice, and discrimination.

Stigma: Public Prejudice and Discrimination

Stigma is a "catch-all" phrase that usually refers to:

- Negative attitudes about people with mental health diagnoses (*For example: "There's a lot of stigma about mental illness."*); or
- Actual behaviors against people with mental health diagnoses that limit their opportunities to get a job, a place to live, or take part in activities. (*For example: Joe didn't get that job because he was stigmatized.*)

The word, "stigma," is a word from olden days that referred to the presence of a mark on someone who was disgraced in the community. Since this word is vague and outdated, we've chosen to use some terms in this class that are more accurate and relevant to our experiences:

- **Ignorance:** refers to lack of knowledge or misinformation.
- **Prejudice:** refers to negative attitudes (pre-judgment).

- **Discrimination:** taking specific actions against someone or failing to take needed actions to support someone simply based on their mental health diagnosis.

Characteristics of Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice

Prejudice usually has these three parts:

1. **Labeling:** Singling out a characteristic of a person and identifying them by that characteristic. For example: “mentally ill,” “gay,” “blond,” “skinny,” or “poor.” The person then tends to be seen only by this characteristic to the exclusion of everything else that person is.
Remember—Whether or not a label is seen as negative is subjective, and not all labels lead to prejudice and discrimination.
2. **Stereotype:** To “stereotype” means to generalize a set of beliefs to an entire group who share a “label” or trait. For example: “Blonds are stupid,” “people with mental illnesses are dangerous,” or “Asian people are smart.”
Remember—Not all stereotypes lead to prejudice and discrimination.
3. **Negative Stereotyping:** Negative stereotyping means connecting negative associations to a characteristic or label. For example: “People with disabilities cannot work and are a drain on our society.”

When people are judged automatically as part of a group, rather than on their own merits, it always results in unfairness and inequality. Prejudices can be hurtful on an individual level, such as when someone is seen as “less than” by others they interact with. On a larger scale, prejudices create roots of division between groups of people that can be hurtful to society at large.

Discrimination

Discrimination happens when a set of beliefs, based in prejudice, are translated into actions that violate the legal or civil rights of a person or group of people. These could take the form of unfair housing or employment practices, unequal treatment in medical settings, or refusal to do business with certain groups of people.

Discrimination is not directed only against people with mental health conditions. Discrimination also has been directed against people with different sexual orientations and practices, different sets of religious beliefs, races, ethnicities, age, and appearance, to name a few.

Questions: Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided.

- What are some ways that people who are diagnosed with mental health challenges might experience prejudice and/or discrimination in the community?

- How have you personally experienced negative attitudes and behaviors as a result of having a mental health diagnosis?

Self-Stigma

Definition: When we hear the same negative messages over and over; it affects us, and we may begin to believe them, even if there is no real reason to. We take in or “internalize” those messages and begin to apply those messages to ourselves and the world around us. For example, messages in the media and the things people say might influence some people with mental health challenges to believe that they are “less than,” are “crazy,” are unpredictable, can’t work and/or can’t contribute. We start to believe the messages are true and over time, these beliefs can affect our self-esteem, confidence, motivation, and sense of self.

Internalized negative messages or stereotypes vs. personal limitations or vulnerabilities

Everyone has personal limitations — we’re all human. We may not do some things as well as others, we may have areas we really struggle with, and there may be other areas where we are inexperienced simply because we haven’t had the time to learn the ropes. We also may have personal habits that are a bit challenging or other areas that we’d like to do better in, but we’re not there yet. Recognizing limitations or vulnerabilities for what they are is a strength because we can only make desired changes when we have the courage to see the need and possibility for self-improvement.

Negative messages that we have taken in or absorbed related to a single characteristic we possess is very different. These internalized messages are not based on anything that we have

done or said, but are just attributed to us based on our connection to some group. The characteristics of this group are applied automatically to us whether there is evidence for that or not. Knowing how to separate these is important. It helps to ask, “where’s the evidence” whenever we’re judging ourselves to determine if it’s a shortcoming that we’d like to change or a negative message that has no truth. Self-kindness and compassion is essential, all while recognizing personal limitations.

Questions: Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided.

- What negative comments, if any, have you heard about yourself related to being a person with mental health challenges?

- What beliefs about yourself have you internalized or taken in from your experiences of prejudice and discrimination, if any?

- Do these beliefs affect your ability or willingness to take part in community activities?

Stigma as a Barrier to Achieving My Community Goal

Prejudice, discrimination, and self-stigma can affect the way people pursue their interests in life, including community participation.

Directions: Copy your Community Goal from page 42 in the space below and list any steps you are working on now toward achieving that goal. After each step, identify any ways that prejudice or discrimination might be a barrier towards achieving your Community Goal.

My Community Goal: _____

Steps I am working on now or plan to work on toward achieving my Community Goal and barriers related to self-stigma, prejudice, and discrimination that may stand in my way:

Step 1: _____

Barriers: _____

Step 2: _____

Barriers: _____

Step 3: _____

Barriers: _____

Discussion:

- What are some ways you might overcome prejudice or discrimination, if you encountered these?
- What are some ways you can combat any negative messages within yourself that are impacting your confidence or self-esteem?

Class #9: Other Barriers to Community Participation

Let's start by checking in about your Community Goals. What new developments, opportunities, or ideas do you have to report on?

Other Barriers to Community Participation

During the previous class, we discussed how societal prejudice and discrimination as well as internalized negative messages can be significant barriers to full participation in the community. However, there are other barriers that make it difficult for people with mental health challenges to participate fully in their communities. For instance, not having money, transportation, adequate health insurance, or housing may make it harder to have a fulfilling community life. In addition, emotional distress, such as anxiety or depression, or a lack of knowledge or skills may make it harder to take advantage of what communities have to offer.

Below is a list of some barriers to community participation that people with mental health challenges may face. Some of these concern issues outside of ourselves or "objective" barriers, while others are more internally based or "personal" barriers. Let's review both lists and discuss how these barriers may have affected you.

Objective Barriers:

- Lack of money
- Lack of stable and safe housing
- Lack of adequate health insurance
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of family support, encouragement, or guidance
- Lack of a phone or computer to communicate or look things up

Personal Barriers:

- Mental health challenges, such as anxiety or depression
- History of trauma and safety concerns in public
- Lack of knowledge or confidence about using community resources
- Effects of medications or having to take medications at certain times
- Physical health challenges
- Substance use issues

Barriers to Achieving My Community Goal

The barriers we just talked about can get in the way of achieving community goals. Some of the barriers might be internal while others might be the result of circumstances beyond our control. Today, we will identify these barriers, and in a later class, we will explore different strategies that can help us overcome these barriers.

Directions: Write your Community Goal from page 48 in the space below, along with the steps you've identified to achieve your goal. For each step, list any objective barriers (such as lack of money or housing) or personal barriers (such as lack of confidence or skills) that might affect your ability to achieve your Community Goal.

My Community Goal: _____

Steps I am working on now or plan to work on toward achieving my Community Goal and objective or personal barriers that may stand in my way:

Step 1: _____

Barriers: _____

Step 2: _____

Barriers: _____

Step 3: _____

Barriers: _____

Summary

In the last two classes, we identified possible barriers that can challenge us as we work towards achieving our community goals. To review, we discussed:

- Societal prejudice and discrimination
- Internalized stigma (self-stigma)
- Objective barriers
- Personal barriers

Target Audiences for Our Photovoice Exhibit

At the beginning of the class, we discussed how Photovoice began as a tool to give people a “voice” in public policy and decision-making. Photovoice work, combining pictures and narratives, were exhibited to educate others in the community about the views and opinions of the people who would be most impacted by the policies being considered.

Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice, as we discussed, is more about personal growth and development than influencing public policy. Even with this difference, exhibiting our work can have value to others.

Questions: Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided.

- How could exhibiting the Photovoice works done by our class benefit others?

- What people or organizations might want to see an exhibit of the Photovoice works done by the class?

- Where would you want to see an exhibit of our Photovoice work?

- How can we get our work into those places?

Working with Your Narratives

Photo Mission #2, assigned at the end of Class #6, was entitled “*Picturing My Community Goal.*” In that Photo Mission, we asked you to take pictures related to your specific Community Goal.

We began writing narratives for our pictures from Photo Mission #2 at the end of Class #7. You may already have been able to complete the narrative you started at that time, or you still may be working on it. Let’s take a moment to complete our narratives for Photo Mission #2, if you have not already done so. If you are finished with your Photovoice narrative, you can choose another picture to write about. Remember, it should be connected to the theme of the Photo Mission. You can refer to the SHOWED acronym we discussed in Class #4 (page 23), if you want to remind yourself of how we learned to look at and make sense of a photograph. The class leaders are available to help you with any writing concerns you have. You also can work with your Community Coach outside of class to complete your narrative.

Class #10: Developing My Community Action Toolbox

Let's start by checking in about your Community Goals. What new developments, opportunities, or ideas do you have to report on?

Strategies to Overcome Challenges and Utilize our Resources and Strengths

Several weeks ago, we discussed resources that can support us in achieving our Community Goals. Over the past two weeks, we also have discussed the challenges that can deter us from achieving our goal. Today, we are going to talk about different strategies that can be used to overcome the barriers and help access the resources that were identified in earlier classes. These strategies can begin to "fill" a toolbox that can support you as you journey towards your Community Goal. These tools have helped people boost motivation, confidence, and drive, work through challenges, and reach success. These strategies, or tools, may inspire you, if you feel discouraged, and give you ideas about how to build on past successes.

Here is a list of **strategies** that may help with overcoming barriers, accessing resources, keeping focused on your goals, and maintaining momentum:

1. Seek out information
2. Practice proper self-care
3. Surround yourself with supportive people
4. Develop and maintain positive attitude and motivation
5. Overcome self-stigma
6. Join an advocacy or support group
7. Practice good time management

Strategy #2. Practice Self-Care

People usually function better when they feel well physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Taking good care of our health and our well-being often supports our ability to think through our choices, cope with our challenges, and deal with barriers we encounter.

Question: Write your answer to the questions below in the space provided.

- What are some of the ways that you practice self-care?

- What additional self-care practices could you use to help you achieve your Community Goal(s)?

Strategy #3. Surround Yourself with Supportive People

Supportive people are individuals who encourage you and cheer you on; but at the same time, are honest and helpful about situations you face. They help you be realistic about your challenges and provide encouragement and resources to help you succeed. Supportive people may be friends, family, peer supporters, or other people who care about you.

Question: Write your answer to the question below in the space provided.

- Who are some of the supportive people in your life?

- In what ways do these people support you? (materially, emotionally, etc.)

- What other types of support will be helpful to you in achieving your Community Goal(s)?

Strategy #5. *Overcome Self-Stigma*

Self-stigma arises when we adopt and believe the negative “myths” about mental illness or what it means to be a person living with mental health challenges. There are several ways to challenge these myths and how they impact a person’s self-image:

1. Learn about recovery as it relates to mental health challenges. Understanding that recovery is not only possible but probable can make a big difference in how we view ourselves. It is good to remind ourselves that recovery is not necessarily about a “cure,” but means a better quality of life for ourselves.
2. Recognize that our diagnoses are only a very small part of who we are. In addition to whatever mental health diagnoses we carry, we also are friends, neighbors, and family to others. We each have our own unique worth that can be expressed in many ways.
3. Learn about ways we can feel more empowered to face any symptoms or emotional distress we experience.
4. Talk to other people in recovery who can share their stories of where they have been, where they are now, and how they got there.

Question: Write your answers to the question below in the space provided:

- How can you minimize the impact of self-stigma as you pursue your Community Goal(s)?

Strategy #6. *Join an Advocacy or Support Group*

Connecting with others who share similar experiences can feel helpful and empowering for some people. There are two major types of groups or organizations: those from which we get support and those in which we can be active in providing support for others.

Support groups are focused on offering help and understanding to members. Often, members have the opportunity to both get support and offer support.

Advocacy groups tend to focus on doing work to make changes around specific issues. Many local and national groups are organized to advocate for the rights of people who have experienced mental health challenges and to address ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination. Connecting to groups that focus on issues that are important to us can be very meaningful to some people.

Question: Write your answer to the question below in the space provided.

- What support or advocacy groups might support you in achieving your Community Goal(s)?

Strategy #7. Practice Good Time Management

Having tentative deadlines or time frames for the action steps related to our Community Goals can help keep us moving forward. The time frames help us maintain and measure progress as we move toward our goals. At the same time, being flexible with these tentative deadlines is critical for success. Things don't always work out as planned and being able to shift or readjust our time targets will help keep us focused on our goals. Try to find the balance between sticking to the plan and making adjustments when needed. Built-in time flexibility lets us anticipate unforeseen challenges so our overall progress toward our goals will not be affected. Effective use of time can be a very helpful strategy as we advance towards achieving our goals. In addition, planning the time to work on our action steps can help us overcome procrastination.

Questions: Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided.

- What has helped you manage your time in the past?
- How might practicing good time management help you achieve your Community Goal(s)?

We have just discussed a variety of strategies that people use to be more successful in achieving their goals. There may be other strategies you know about or have used in the past that were not listed here. Any and all strategies are valuable.

Question:

- What other strategies can you think of that you may draw upon as you are working toward your Community Goal(s)?

Your Community Action Toolbox

Over the past few weeks, we have talked about a few different things that can impact our progress toward our Community Goals, such as our resources, the barriers we face, and the strategies we can employ to help us. The **Community Action Toolbox** contains all the strategies we just discussed that can help us access our resources and deal with our challenges. Like a carpenter who chooses the best tools for the job he is doing, we also have a variety of tools or strategies we can employ to achieve our objectives. Our Community Action Toolboxes contains those tools, and we can draw on them whenever needed.

Below is a diagram that will help you understand how these strategies fit in with the resources and barriers you have identified as you make progress on your Community Goal(s). The diagram pictures how the strategies in your toolbox can help you gain access to the resources you need while helping you overcome the barriers or challenges you encounter. As you do that, you will continue to advance step-by-step toward achieving your Community Goal.

Mechanism for Goal Attainment



Next week, we are going to bring all these pieces together in a concrete **Community Action Plan** that includes your Community Goal, the resources you identified in classes #6 and #7, the barriers you outlined in classes #8 and #9, and the individual strategies you have discovered today. This will be your “roadmap” for achieving your Community Goal.

Class #11: My Community Action Plan

Let's start by checking in about your Community Goals. What new developments, opportunities, or ideas do you have to report on?

Community Action Plan

Today, we are going to take all the separate elements you have been working on for the past several weeks and combine them into a master action plan, or roadmap, for realizing your Community Goals. Let's review the key elements that will be part of your **Community Action Plan**.

- **Your Community Goal**

You first formulated your Community Goal in Class #5 and have written it down repeatedly since then. This will be the first element you list on your Community Action Plan.

As part of setting your Community Goal(s), you also identified the **steps** you will need to take, one at a time, to reach your goal(s). You will list each step separately, as steps #1, 2, 3, 4, etc., on your Community Action Plan. Remember, each step may build on a previous step you needed to take. You also will list your **target date** for each step. A target date is the date you expect to have completed that step toward your overall goal. As we discussed last week, time frames are only meant to support and guide you. Sometimes, being flexible is as important as meeting your target dates.

- **Resources**

In Classes #6 and #7, we identified resources that can be helpful to us as we strive to reach our goals. These can include community resources, such as institutions, civic associations, and personal resources, such individual strengths and qualities or any personal possessions you own. You also can have "people resources," people who are in the community at large or in your own life, who can offer you support, access to opportunities, encouragement, and help. You will list those resources you can draw on you take each step toward achieving your Community Goal(s).

- **Barriers**

In Classes #8 and #9, we discussed types of barriers or challenges that may make it more difficult for you to achieve your Community Goal(s). These could be external barriers, such as prejudice and discrimination from society; or internal challenges, such as internalized stigma. They also could be material barriers, such as lack of money, computer, transportation, or safe housing; or other personal barriers, such as dealing with emotional distress and working towards wellness. You will list the challenges you anticipate as you take each step toward achieving your Community Goal(s).

- **Strategies**

In Class #10, we learned about different strategies that might help you achieve your Community Goal(s). These strategies, which are part of your Community Action Toolbox, enable you to access the resources you identified, and overcome the challenges you encounter, as you work toward your Community Goal(s). Some of the strategies we identified include practicing self-care, maintaining a positive attitude, managing time effectively, and surrounding yourself with people who can support you in both emotional and concrete ways. There may be other strategies you identified that can be of personal use to you. All these strategies will be listed on your Community Action Plan.

The AT-A-GLANCE Summary Guide

On the next page, you will find a copy of the AT-A-GLANCE Summary Guide, which may help you complete your Community Action Plan Worksheet. It lists, on one page, all the elements that appear on your Community Action Plan Worksheet. It also lists examples of each of these elements. The AT-A-GLANCE Summary Guide contains a listing of:

1. Resources you have or may need to achieve your Community Goal(s).
2. Challenges or barriers you might encounter as you pursue your Community Goal(s).
3. Strategies you can employ to overcome those barriers and utilize your resources.

You can use this summary guide if you want to find a quick reminder about all the things we discussed that will go into creating your Community Action Plan Worksheet. Remember, your Community Action Plan Worksheet is your “one-stop” roadmap that will guide you and measure your progress toward your Community Goal.

AT-A-GLANCE Summary Guide for Completing Your Community Action Plan Worksheet

My Community Goal: This is the Community Goal you have set for yourself during the course of the class, starting in Class #5: “Setting Community Goals.” You also have identified steps toward achieving your goal, as well as a general time frame for achieving your goal and target dates for completing each step.

Resources: These are the community and individual resources you have at your disposal as you work on each step you take toward achieving your Community Goal. These were covered in Classes #6 and #7, “Community Asset Mapping” and “Personal Asset Mapping.” Here are some examples:

Community Resources:

- Institutions: local libraries, parks, community colleges, government housing or employment agency, Social Security office, the public transit system, hospitals, neighborhood shops and offices
- Civic Associations: local businesses, Houses of Worship, cultural groups, neighborhood watch, community centers, athletic facilities
- People Resources: teachers, librarians, town officials, lawyers, store clerks

Individual Resources:

- Strengths or qualities you possess: gratitude, perseverance, courage, humility, optimism
- People who may be resources: family, friends, counselor or therapist
- Material resources: a computer, a car, financial resources, a cell phone, a datebook

Challenges (or Barriers): These are challenges or barriers you may encounter as you pursue your Community Goal. In Class #8, we identified the potential barriers of public stigma and self-stigma. In Class #9, we identified other potential barriers. These can be either “objective” or personal in nature. Here are some examples of objective and personal barriers:

- Objective Barriers: lack of money, lack of stable and safe housing, lack of adequate health insurance, lack of transportation, lack of family support, lack of a phone or computer to communicate or look things up
- Personal barriers: mental health challenges, like anxiety or depression, safety concerns in public, limited knowledge or confidence about using community resources

Strategies: These are tools you may use to overcome the barriers and utilize the resources listed above. In Class #10, we discussed the seven strategies listed below. There may be others you can identify that will also work for you and help you as you progress toward achieving your Community Goal.

1. Seek out information
2. Practice self-care
3. Surround yourself with supportive people
4. Develop and maintain positive attitude and motivation
5. Overcome self-stigma
6. Join an advocacy or support group
7. Practice good time management

Completing Your Community Action Plan Worksheet

The Community Action Plan Worksheet combines:

- Your Community Goal
- Specific steps you have taken, or plan on taking, toward your goal
- Resources you need
- Challenges you might face
- Strategies you can use to achieve your goal

Take some time and complete your Community Action Worksheet below. List your Community Goal at the top and then identify any steps you have planned so far to reach it. Once you have listed the steps, list the target date for completing each step, along with the resources, barriers, and strategies you can think of that will be involved in that step. You can flip back to the pages between Classes #6 and #10 in this workbook if you want to remind yourself of ideas you had earlier. If you have a second, or even a third goal, we will provide you with additional blank worksheets.

Your Community Action Plan is your roadmap to your Community Goal. Keep it handy as you work toward your goal. It's yours to use in whatever ways are helpful as you work towards your goal. You can modify it by adding more steps if you think of them, checking off steps that you have completed, adjusting your time frames, or noting your progress toward your Community Goal. If you achieve your Community Goal, you can identify a new goal and create another Community Action Plan to help you pursue it. You can refer to your Community Action Plan whenever you want to refresh your memory about where you are on your path toward your goal or want to see what you have accomplished already. The Plan outlines everything in a way that allows you to see and mark off the progress you are making.

The Community Action Plan also has a place for listing any new Photovoice ideas you might think of as you work toward your Community Goal. These photographs could relate to your Community Goal or to any aspect of the Bridging Community Gaps Program we have discussed. If you do take any new photographs, you are encouraged to write narratives for those pictures and share them at future meetings of the class.

Discussion:

- What are some ways you might want to use your Community Action Plan on a regular basis to help you achieve your Community Goal(s)?

Community Action Plan Worksheet

Community Goal: _____

Step 1: _____

Step 1 Target Date: _____

Step 1 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 2 Target Date: _____

Step 2 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Step 3: _____

Step 3 Target Date: _____

Step 3 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Step 4: _____

Step 4 Target Date: _____

Step 4 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Step 5: _____

Step 5 Target Date: _____

Step 5 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Photovoice ideas related to my Community Goal:

Notes on progress toward achieving my Community Goal:

Class #12: The Importance of Community Participation

Let's start by checking in about your Community Goals. What new developments, opportunities, or ideas do you have to report on?

Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal

During Class #5, when you set your Community Goal for the first time, we asked you to measure your progress toward your Community Goal, where you stood then, and where you anticipated being three months from that date. Let's take a moment now and repeat that exercise, using the worksheet, "*Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Class 12,*" on page A-6 in the Appendix at the end of this Workbook. Mark off on the sheet where you stand today in relation to achieving your Community Goal and where you hope to be three months from today. If your Community Goal has changed from the one you first set for yourself, please use different worksheets to evaluate your progress on each of your goals.

The Importance of Community Participation

For the past 11 classes, we have expanded our understandings of community. We have explored how we can define community, identified the communities we are currently involved with, and formulated Community Goals to expand or deepen our participation in the communities we chose. We also used photography and wrote narratives to describe how our pictures relate to those communities and our place in them.

Thinking back on some of the topics we have discussed during this class, please answer the questions below.

Questions: Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided (*continued on next page*):

- Did you learn anything more about the communities you are or hope to be a part of?

- What benefits can community participation bring to your recovery process?

Hallmarks of Community Membership

Even though we are all different, and may belong to many different communities, there are certain qualities, values, and characteristics that are shared by members of any community. These are the “hallmarks,” or essential traits, of what it means to be part of a community. They may represent the values or benefits we get from being a part of a community. They also may be the things that make community participation meaningful or enjoyable for us.

Self-Determination and Satisfaction

For some people, it is very important to be involved in a number of different social groups and identify with a number of different communities. Other people might be very satisfied with one or two communities they feel especially connected with.

Some communities are part of person’s heritage or birthright. We are “born into them,” and these affiliations can last a lifetime. Examples of this might be a person’s race or religion. On the other hand, we can develop ties to communities out of interest, preferences, or choice. The communities we associate with may change over the course of our lifetimes as we ourselves change and grow.

Questions: Write your answers to the questions below in the space provided (*continued on next page*):

- To what degree are you free to choose which communities you are part of?

- How satisfied are you with the communities you have chosen to be part of?

- Are there any communities you wish to be a part of but are unable to? If yes, what do you think might be preventing you from becoming part of these communities?

Belonging

Just being a part of a community often is not enough to satisfy our needs. We all want to feel welcomed, accepted, and valued by other members of our communities. This can contribute to our *sense* of belonging, meaning the feeling that we have a place in our communities, and our contributions to those communities are respected by others. It is difficult to feel part of a community when you feel that you are not welcomed or valued by others in the community.

Question: Write your answer to the questions below in the space provided.

- What are some of the ways you feel welcomed or accepted by members of your communities?

Citizenship

Citizenship, at its core, refers to the right to equal participation in society. It implies equal standing with others in society and enjoyment of the same rights, protections, and opportunities every other citizen is entitled to. People experience a sense of citizenship when they can take part in how their communities are run or governed. They also experience citizenship when they partake of the benefits that society offers, and when they feel protected by the laws governing their communities.

People can experience a diminished sense of citizenship when they are deprived of the same political, legal, social, or economic protections and opportunities everyone else is entitled to. People with mental health challenges may be discriminated against and feel their rights are violated. Having a say in how things are run, being able to advocate for ourselves and others, and getting involved in issues that affect our communities can increase our sense of citizenship and make us feel more empowered.

- Does your Community Goal involve “giving back” to any of your communities?

- What other ways would you like to contribute to your communities?

A Look Ahead to the Booster Sessions

Our class will meet once a month for the next three months. These three monthly classes are called “Booster Sessions.” During the Booster Sessions, you will be able to touch base and update the class about the progress you have made toward your Community Goal(s). The progress you make, including challenges you encounter, can be noted on your Community Action Plans. Please try to bring Community Action Plans to the Booster Sessions. You can report your progress to the class, and you will be able to discuss any new challenges or opportunities with the class.

During the Booster Session period, you may continue to meet individually, on a weekly basis, with your Community Coach. He or she will continue to support you to access and identify community resources and address any challenges or obstacles you may encounter.

You can keep your camera for the next three months of the class. You can continue to take pictures representing your progress with your Community Goal(s), or any broader issues about your communities you wish to depict. You may write narratives for any new pictures you take and continue to create Photovoice work. Your Community Coach will be available to help you with any concerns or ideas you might have about pictures or narratives. You will be able to share new photographs you have taken or Photovoice works you have created with the rest of the class during the Booster Sessions.

Our In-House Photovoice Exhibit and Celebration

Today, we are taking the opportunity to display the Photovoice works created thus far. It is a testimony to the work each of you has done over the course of the class. As you walk around and look at all the Photovoice works, take a moment to appreciate each person’s individual contribution to the class. Think about how each student has enriched our discussions and how their Photovoice represents their point of view.

A Big Thank You

We hope this class has given you information, tools, and ideas about how you can more fully participate in the communities you choose, in the ways you desire. We hope that participating in this class has inspired you to have greater confidence in your ability to realize your Community Goals and has enhanced your determination to do so.

We, the Class Leaders and your Community Coaches, are grateful for your participation in this program and for the many contributions each of you have made to our classroom community. We look forward to seeing you in about a month for our first scheduled Booster Session and wish you success as you continue to pursue your Community Goals!

Booster Session #1: Continuing with My Community Action Plan

Today is our first meeting since we finished up the weekly classes about a month ago. In this Booster Session, you will have the opportunity to share the progress you have made toward achieving your Community Goal(s). We will look at our Community Action Plans to see if things are going as anticipated. You also can modify your Community Action Plan, if you need to reflect any adjustments you have made. You can share what has been successful for you thus far and any challenges you may have encountered. If any new opportunities have come your way, we would like to hear about those, too. We also will look at any new photos you have taken or any new Photovoice work you have done since our last class.

Progress on Our Community Goals:

At the end of Class #11, about a month ago, you completed your Community Action Plans, which listed your Community Goal(s) and the steps you planned to take to achieve that goal. Let's look at your Community Action Plan. If you do not have it with you, the class facilitators have a copy.

As a reminder, the Community Action Plan lists the following:

- Your Community Goal
- A set of steps you need to take to achieve your Community Goal
- The community and individual resources you have to draw on to complete each step
- Any potential challenges that might come up at each step
- Strategies that might support you to overcome those barriers
- Strategies that can improve access and use of your resources
- Time frames for completing each step toward your Community Goal(s)

Refer to your Community Action Plan Worksheet as we discuss the following:

1. What progress have you made with your Community Goal(s)?
 - Have you developed any new resources to assist you in achieving your Community Goal?
 - Have you identified any new challenges around your Community Goal?
 - Have you expanded or changed your Community Goal?
2. What updates have you made, or would you like to make to your Community Action Plan Worksheet to reflect any progress you have made toward achieving your goal?
3. Have you developed any new Community Goals?

Development of New Photovoice Work

Have you taken any new photographs or made any new Photovoice work since the class last met? You can share the photographs or Photovoice work with the class today if you wish. Remember, you can continue to take photographs and create new Photovoice work during the Booster Session period. Here are some prompts to help you think about how you can continue moving forward with picture-taking and narrative writing.

- Have you used the camera since our last class?
- Did you write a narrative for any pictures you took?
- How was the narrative and/or picture related to your Community Goal(s)?
- Did you share new Photovoice work with your Community Coach?
- How did your Community Coach help you with your new Photovoice work?
- Are there any ideas for further exhibit or display of the work?

Our Next Booster Sessions:

Over the next two months, we will have two more Booster Sessions: Booster Session #2 will be about one month from today, and Booster Session #3 will be about a month after that. Booster Session #3 will be the last time this program meets, and that also will be the date you will stop working individually with your Community Coaches. Until that time, you will be able to meet with your Community Coaches on the same regular basis you are used to. Your Community Coaches are there to help you with any questions or concerns you have as you work toward your Community Goal(s), including development of new resources and coping with challenges as they arise. You also can discuss new ideas for photographs or Photovoice work with them. When we meet again as a class during the remaining Booster Sessions, you may report on progress you have made toward achieving your Community Goal(s) and modify your Community Action Plans just as you did today. You also will be able to share new photography or Photovoice work with the class.

You may keep the camera we lent you up to Booster Session #3. You can continue to take pictures related to your Community Goal(s) or the process of working towards your Community Goal. Your Community Coach is there to help you with fresh ideas for photos or to help you develop narratives for the pictures you have taken. You also can work on the pictures or narratives on your own, if you want.

We look forward to seeing any new Photovoice work you may have created at the remaining Booster Sessions. We wish you continued success as you work towards your Community Goals and hope to see you all in a month or so!

Booster Session #2: Continuing with My Community Action Plan

It has been a month since our previous Booster Session. Today, we will review our progress toward our Community Goal(s), just as we did at the previous Booster Session. You will have a chance to report on your progress, and we will be looking at our Community Action Plans to see if any adjustments need to be made to them. You can discuss successes or setbacks you have had, and any new opportunities that have arisen. We also will look at any new photos you have taken or any new Photovoice work you have done.

Progress on Our Community Goals:

At the end of Class #11, about two months ago, you completed your Community Action Plans, which listed your Community Goal(s) and the steps you planned to take to achieve that goal. During the first Booster Session, changes or updates were made to the plan to reflect the work you had done up to that point. Let's look at that revised Community Action Plan from Booster Session #1. If you do not have it with you, the class facilitators have a copy.

As a reminder, the Community Action Plan lists the following:

- Your Community Goal
- A set of steps you need to take to achieve your Community Goal
- The community and individual resources you have to draw on to complete each step
- Any potential challenges that might come up at each step
- Strategies that might support you to overcome those barriers
- Strategies that can improve access and use of your resources
- Time frames for completing each step toward your Community Goal(s)

Refer to your Community Action Plan Worksheet as we discuss the following:

1. What progress have you made with your Community Goal(s)?
 - Have you developed any new resources to assist you in achieving your Community Goal?
 - Have you identified any new challenges around your Community Goal?
 - Have you expanded or changed your Community Goal?
2. What updates have you made, or would you like to make to your Community Action Plan Worksheet to reflect any progress you have made toward achieving your goal?
3. Have you developed any new Community Goals?

Development of New Photovoice Work

Have you taken any new photographs or made any new Photovoice work since the class last met? You can share the photographs or Photovoice work with the class today if you wish. Remember, you can continue to take photographs and create new Photovoice work during the Booster Session period. Here are some prompts to help you think about how you can continue moving forward with picture-taking and narrative writing.

- Have you used the camera since our last class?
- Did you write a narrative for any pictures you took?
- How was the narrative and/or picture related to your Community Goal(s)?
- Did you share new Photovoice work with your Community Coach?
- How did your Community Coach help you with your new Photovoice work?
- Are there any ideas for further exhibit or display of the work?

Our Next Booster Session:

One month from now, we will have our final Booster Session. As we have done in these first two Booster Sessions, we will discuss any progress you have made toward achieving your Community Goal(s). We also will modify our Community Action Plans again as necessary. Your Community Coach is still available to meet with you as usual for the next month. You can continue to work with them around your Community Goal(s) and discuss new opportunities you have or challenges you face. You also can discuss new ideas for photographs or Photovoice work with them.

You can use the camera we have lent you up to the final Booster Session next month. You can continue to take pictures related to your Community Goal(s) or the process of working towards it. Your Community Coach is still available to help you with fresh ideas for photos or with developing narratives for pictures you have taken. Please remember to bring the cameras to Booster Session #3 as we would appreciate their return.

We look forward to seeing any new Photovoice work you may have at the final Booster Session. We wish you all continued success as you work towards your Community Goals and look forward to seeing you all in a month or so!

Booster Session #3: Continuing with My Community Action Plan

Today, we will conclude our Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice Program. First, let's complete the exercise where you measure the progress you have made toward achieving your Community Goal.

Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal

During Class #5, when you set your Community Goals for the first time, we asked you to measure your progress toward your Community Goal(s), where you stood then, and where you anticipated being three months from that date. During Class #12, we also asked you to measure your progress toward your Community Goal(s). Let's take a moment now and repeat that exercise one final time, using the worksheet, "*Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Booster Session #3,*" on page A-7 in the Appendix at the end of this Workbook.

Mark off where you stand today in relation to achieving your Community Goal(s) and where you hope to be three months from today. If your Community Goal has changed from the one you first set for yourself, please use different worksheets to evaluate your progress on each one of your goals.

Progress on Our Community Goals:

At the end of Class #11, about three months ago, you completed your Community Action Plans, which listed your Community Goal(s) and the steps you planned to take to achieve that goal. The plan included different considerations that were discussed over several earlier classes, such as:

- The community and individual resources you have to draw on to complete each step
- Any potential challenges that might come up at each step
- Strategies that might support you to overcome those barriers
- Strategies that can improve access and use of your resources
- Time frames for completing each step toward your Community Goal(s)

Since that time, we have had two Booster Sessions and the Community Coaching continued for people who chose to use that. When we met for Booster Sessions #1 and #2, we made changes to our Community Action Plans as to reflect progress we had made up to that point. You also may have worked individually with your Community Coaches to modify your Community Action Plans as you learned more about what you want or need to be successful with your Community Goal(s).

The Community Action Plan is our roadmap to get to our Community Goal. As we discussed, our plans need to be flexible. Plans provide us direction, but we also make changes to our plans along the way as we encounter new information, gather more resources, or learn more about what we want. In the same way that we find an alternative route if we come into a detour or construction on the road, we brainstorm alternative steps or time frames for our plans when needed.

Refer to your Community Action Plan Worksheet as we discuss the following:

1. What progress have you made with your Community Goal(s)?
 - Have you developed any new resources to assist you in achieving your Community Goal?
 - Have you identified any new challenges around your Community Goal?
 - Have you expanded or changed your Community Goal?
2. What updates have you made, or would you like to make, to your Community Action Plan Worksheet to reflect any progress you have made toward achieving your goal?
3. Have you developed any new Community Goals?

Development of New Photovoice Work:

What new Photovoice work have you completed? Have you taken any new pictures or completed any new narratives?

Discussion:

- How did Photovoice contribute toward the development and achievement of your Community Goal(s)?

- How did Photovoice contribute toward your understanding of community and your place in it?

Collecting the Cameras:

You now may return the camera we lent you during Class #3. If you have enjoyed taking pictures, we hope you will find another way to continue, such as using your camera on your phone.

Concluding our Class

Over the past six months, we have had the chance to talk about and explore a wide variety of topics about community and about our own place within our own communities. We have learned about the personal strengths and resources we possess, and about barriers and challenges that stand in the way of our community participation. We discussed strategies to access the resources and respond to the challenges we identified. We learned about effective goal setting and each student has set at least one Community Goal to work on for the duration for the program. We learned to use cameras and write narratives, and to create Photovoice work that represents our place in our communities and how we wish that to be. And we learned about the importance of community participation and the meaning, value, and enjoyment it can bring to our lives.

Review of Resources Developed in the Class

Below is a list of topics we discussed during class. Let's review the list and discuss how we gained new knowledge or understanding about these topics. For each item on the list, think about what you learned and what you would like to take with you from this program:

- The communities you are a part of and how they interconnect and overlap
- What "membership" in a community consists of
- How to use cameras and Photovoice as a tool for enhancing community participation
- Effective goal setting
- The resources that exist in your communities
- Your own personal strengths and resources
- Societal barriers, such as public stigma and self-stigma
- Personal and material barriers that might deter you from achieving your goals
- Strategies to help you actualize your strengths and overcome barriers
- Why community participation is important
- How to develop Community Action Plans to help you achieve your Community Goal(s)

As we conclude this program, our hope is that you are motivated and equipped to lead full and meaningful lives in the communities you choose to be part of. Since you no longer will have this class to check in with or your Community Coaches to meet with, let's discuss how you can bring what you have developed here into the future.

Concluding Question:

- How can you continue to use your classmates as a source of support as you move forward?

Saying Farewell

We hope you will continue to use your Community Action Plans to involve yourselves in your communities and join new ones as the opportunities arise. We hope this class has helped you understand what it means to be a member of a community, and why we feel that is so important for everyone. We hope you can maintain your positive momentum toward fuller and deeper community participation.

We wish you success as you pursue your Community Goals!

Appendix

AT-A-GLANCE Summary Guide for Completing Your Community Action Plan Worksheet

My Community Goal: This is the Community Goal you have set for yourself during the course of the class, starting in Class #5: “Setting Community Goals.” You also have identified steps toward achieving your goal, as well as a general time frame for achieving your goal and target dates for completing each step.

Resources: These are the community and individual resources you have at your disposal as you work on each step you take toward achieving your Community Goal. These were covered in Classes #6 and #7, “Community Asset Mapping” and “Personal Asset Mapping.” Here are some examples:

Community Resources:

- Institutions: local libraries, parks, community colleges, government housing or employment agency, Social Security office, the public transit system, hospitals, neighborhood shops and offices
- Civic Associations: local businesses, Houses of Worship, cultural groups, neighborhood watch, community centers, athletic facilities
- People Resources: teachers, librarians, town officials, lawyers, store clerks

Individual Resources:

- Strengths or qualities you possess: gratitude, perseverance, courage, humility, optimism
- People who may be resources: family, friends, counselor or therapist
- Material resources: a computer, a car, financial resources, a cell phone, a datebook

Challenges (or Barriers): These are challenges or barriers you may encounter as you pursue your Community Goal. In Class #8 we identified the potential barriers of public stigma and self-stigma. In Class #9, we identified other potential barriers. These can be either “objective” or personal in nature. Here are some examples of objective and personal barriers:

- Objective Barriers: lack of money, lack of stable and safe housing, lack of adequate health insurance, lack of transportation, lack of family support, lack of a phone or computer to communicate or look things up
- Personal barriers: mental health challenges, like anxiety or depression, safety concerns in public, limited knowledge or confidence about using community resources

Strategies: These are tools you may use to overcome the barriers and utilize the resources listed above. In Class #10, we discussed the seven strategies listed below. There may be others you can identify that also will work for you and help you as you progress toward achieving your Community Goal.

1. Seek out information
2. Practice self-care
3. Surround yourself with supportive people
4. Develop and maintain positive attitude and motivation
5. Overcome self-stigma
6. Join an advocacy or support group
7. Practice good time management

Photography Release Form

I, (print name) _____ agree to have my photograph taken as part of a group photography project called “Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice.” People participating in this project take pictures and write descriptions about how the photographs represent their perspectives on important issues in their lives and communities.

I understand that this photograph will become the personal property of the photographer and will not be used for any financial gain. I understand that the photographer may share the photo with other members of the project as part of group discussions.

I understand that I can agree to the following additional uses of the photo by checking any or all of the boxes below:

The photographer has my permission to include this photo in a public Photovoice exhibit and/or Internet exhibit meant to educate and raise awareness concerning issues related to building community. I understand my name/my child’s name will not be used (unless I specifically request that it be used) if the photo is included in a public and/or Internet exhibit. I understand I may withdraw my permission for this photo to be included in a public and/or Internet exhibit at any time prior to the opening of such exhibit.

I would like to be notified of any exhibit that would include the photo of me/my child so that I may have the opportunity to view it.

I would like a copy of this photo for myself.

In order to notify me about an exhibit and/or send me a copy of this photo, my contact information is below:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Signature:

Date:

Community Action Plan Worksheet

Community Goal: _____

Step 1: _____

Step 1 Target Date: _____

Step 1 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 2 Target Date: _____

Step 2 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Step 3: _____

Step 3 Target Date: _____

Step 3 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Step 4: _____

Step 4 Target Date: _____

Step 4 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Step 5: _____

Step 5 Target Date: _____

Step 5 completed

Resources: _____

Barriers: _____

Strategies: _____

Photovoice ideas related to this Community Goal:

Progress toward achieving my Community Goal:

Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Class #5

SETTING MY COMMUNITY GOAL

ACHIEVING MY COMMUNITY GOAL

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My Community Goal:

Questions:

- On a scale of 1-10 (10 being farthest), where do you feel you stand now in terms of your progress toward your community goal? _____
- On a scale of 1-10, where would you like to stand in terms of your progress toward your community goal three months from now? _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Class #12

SETTING MY COMMUNITY GOAL

ACHIEVING MY COMMUNITY GOAL

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My Community Goal:

Questions:

- On a scale of 1-10 (10 being farthest), where do you feel you stand now in terms of your progress toward your community goal? _____
- On a scale of 1-10, where would you like to stand in terms of your progress toward your community goal three months from now? _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Measuring Progress toward My Community Goal – Booster #3

SETTING MY COMMUNITY GOAL

ACHIEVING MY COMMUNITY GOAL

My Community Goal:

Questions:

- On a scale of 1-10 (10 being farthest), where do you feel you stand now in terms of your progress toward your community goal? _____
- On a scale of 1-10, where would you like to stand in terms of your progress toward your community goal three months from now? _____

Name: _____

Date: _____