

LIFE MAPS

Objectives:

- Develop empathy for yourself
- Tell your story and learn to let go
- Re-examine your narrative

Suggested Scheduling: Near the end of orientation

Time Required: Several hours

BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATIONAL INSIGHT

The Indicorps fellowship program orientation featured a number of “Know Yourself” activities, which included writing a cultural autobiography (telling your full family story), values-packet game (prioritizing your top 3 values from a list of 50+ values), Johari’s Window (figuring out blindspots), a locus of control exercise, pyramid of relationships, etc. All of us have different life experiences that shape the way we think, act, and see the world. Unraveling that story through various exercises and in a safe-space allows us to re-examine who we think we are; to recognize what events we have given power to shape our lives; how we show up; and what we need to do to be who we want to become. One such activity is Life Maps.

ACTIVITY

Life Maps is a safe space for people to tell their story through 4-6 character-shaping events and/or influential individuals in their lives. The goal is to give each person a chance to share without any interruption or judgment. Creating a safe space includes allocating enough time for the sharing, having necessary amenities (water, tissues, bug spray, fans, etc), minimizing distractions (phones, external visitors, etc), and setting boundaries (nothing shared here leaves this circle, ask permission to bring up shared story outside setting, etc). A fellow gets a chance to be seen and heard at the outset. And hopefully throughout the fellowship experience, s/he will have opportunities to re-examine who they believed they were and how they can progress to who they want to be. Learning not to get stuck in your story and/or to define certain elements as static or unmoveable is part of the internal/external change process.

ADAPT EXERCISE FOR A SOLO FELLOW OR VOLUNTEER:

While there is great value in telling your story out loud in a safe space to a supportive peer group that listens to you, and to whose stories you can listen, it is possible to record yourself and playback your story and/or to find a buddy, create a safe space, and craft your narrative.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are 4-6 character-shaping events and/or influential individuals in your life?
- What power have you granted those events/people to define you?
- How does that impact how you show up today?
- Is that who or how you want to be?
- What will it take to migrate your thoughts, words, actions to be who you want to be?

