

Just Health Action Advocacy Continuum

Area of JHA's Critical Health Literacy Framework: *Compass*

Goal: To reduce health inequities, take action upstream of service on the advocacy continuum.

Materials:

- White/chalk board to draw continuum below

Time: 20-30 min

Background:

This is a core part of JHA's critical health literacy approach – to take action on the societal determinants of health. It is our belief that we need participants and the organizations in which they work to move upstream beyond service.

Suggested preparation for facilitators:

- Gould L, Mogford E, DeVoght A. Successes and Challenges of Teaching the Social Determinants of Health in Secondary Schools: Case Examples in Seattle, Washington. *Health Promotion Practice*. 2010;11(3_suppl):26S-33.
- Mogford E, Gould L, DeVoght A. Teaching critical health literacy as a means to action on the social determinants of health. *Health Promotion International*. 2010;

Activity instructions:



Individual

Service
(Addresses people)

Activism
(Addresses structures)

1. Advocacy continuum is drawn on board and homeless example is used to describe the continuum. We are asking students to look beyond service to something farther "upstream."
2. Unpack the word activism (explore why this is a negative word to so many)
3. Who are your heroes? Were they activists? (Circles around to the fact that most people's heroes are activists)
4. What are some examples of advocacy that you have done and where would they fit on the continuum?
5. Follow up exercise is civic engagement (see notebook)

Notes:

- Activism consists of acts of dissent in which a person or people can engage in making social change.
- Activism can take a wide range of forms and can be thought of as taking place along a continuum.
- The activist framework asks different types of questions than the service framework. The service part of the continuum helps people. For example, those homeless people are hungry; I am going to help feed them. The activism framework asks, "What are the causes?" For example, why are so many people homeless? What can I do to change this?
- From an individual perspective, activism might be considered a process over your lifetime. It takes practice. And it is your choice where you might want to be along the continuum. Over your lifetime, different people will be in different places along the continuum depending on your passion (e.g. Feminism, religion, animals, war, etc)

Homework (Optional)

Bickford, D.M & N. Reynolds. Activism and Service Learning: Reframing Volunteerism as Acts of Dissent. *Pedagogy 2(2): 229-52*. Blau, Sheridan D.

After presenting the *JHA Advocacy Continuum*, we often have our "adult students" read this article and discuss and reflect how "service learning" has affected their lives. This article causes hot debate: Some are offended by the article. Many agree that service learning in both high school and college can be superficial and just a completion of a necessary course to graduate.