



COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION TRAINING

Workshop Descriptions

State of the Alternative Break Movement

For nearly 30 years Break Away has supported the development of alternative breaks - from humble beginnings to a national movement involving thousands of students and community organizations each year. For organizations looking to begin work with alternative breaks or deepen their connections with the model, this session will cover the scope of “the Movement,” support organizations in translating essential AB foundations to their organizational practices & priorities, and highlight recent innovations and trends as opportunities for growth.

- Break Away and alternative breaks: history to present-day
 - Highlights from the Movement: most popular focus areas and locations, statistics on long-term partnerships & information on compact work, and other relevant trends from our annual survey of campus AB programs
 - AB foundations in community-based work: community-centered service partnerships and approaching service through a lens of justice
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Alternative Break Basics

For organizations interested in beginning to work or who are wanting to improve current programming with alternative breaks, this session will provide a foundation of the core components that make alternative breaks unique *and* how to ensure they're a beneficial opportunity for your organization.

- Identifying both shared and separate responsibilities for academic institutions and community organizations in alternative breaks
 - Understanding alternative breaks as a year-long experience
 - Navigating complicated university leadership structures, jargon, and academic timelines for alternative breaks
 - Working within a student leadership model
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Active Citizenship

Alternative breaks, like other high-quality volunteer experiences - can both spark *and* support the development of Active Citizens, *people who put community as a priority in their values and life choices*. By using the *Active Citizen Continuum* as a developmental model, volunteer management staff and community leaders can apply Active Citizenship to their lives, organizations, communities, work with volunteers. In this workshop, participants will come to recognize their own Active Citizen story, and understand how to powerfully communicate it to others.

- Understanding multiple definitions of community: ideal, abundant, proximity, affinity, and associations
- Defining action: pillars of active citizenship
- Active citizenship in your own life: mapping individual development, working in community with others, and discussing questions to spark continued thought and action
- Identifying stages of active citizenship and recognizing how to support others in their movement along the continuum

Engaging Volunteers in Education, Orientation, and Training

For many volunteers (including students), the learning components - education, orientation, and training (EOT) - are the meaning makers of an alternative break experience. EOT provides context for the direct service and encourages meaningful reflection - with the goal of creating a quality experience that will sustain the volunteers' commitment long after they've gone. Organizations who host alternative break groups and other volunteers can help provide context for the service by incorporating EOT curriculum to best prepare volunteers to complete successful projects and become lifelong advocates.

- Learn how education, orientation, and training connect to direct service and how they benefit the volunteers, your organization, and the larger community
 - Understand some of the ways students are already developing learning outcomes and curriculum frameworks that drive the development of the entire year-long alternative break experience
 - Build techniques for increasing student engagement in training sessions - prioritizing experiential learning opportunities, strategies for all learning styles, and activities to increase content retention
 - Identify tools for supporting EOT before volunteers arrive on-site
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Supporting Volunteer-Led Reflection

Reflection is a core component within quality service-learning and community-based learning experiences. It is the process by which *participants mentally and emotionally synthesize direct service and the learning components (EOT)*. When implemented effectively, reflection helps volunteers critically examine their service work, social identity, and root causes of related social issues.

- What is reflection? What is the difference between reflection and group building? Between discussion and dialogue? Crucial differences, definitions, and overall importance will be established.
 - Introduce the *Triangle of Quality Community Service* model and the consequences of a weak or missing component.
 - Use the *What? So What? Now What?* model to provide the basic structure for reflection after all types of service experiences
 - Develop and share ideas for group and individual reflection that promote a deeper understanding of social justice issues
 - Increase understanding of important concepts within reflection such as multipartiality and dialogue
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Reorientation

If alternative breaks can be a catalyst to a life of active citizenship, students' work doesn't end upon return to campus. Rather, an enduring commitment to learning, acting, and reflecting has often just begun. In this workshop, community organizations will consider how to support the development of short-term volunteers into life-long active citizens.

- Understand the ideology of reorientation through action: join, lead, connect, and the pillars of active citizenship
 - Illuminate strategies used by alternative break programs and community organizations to support volunteers' reorganizing and reorientation efforts
 - Learn ideas and develop plans for encouraging volunteers' continued action
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Volunteer Recruitment

Intentional interviews or screening processes help ensure you're recruiting volunteers who are effectively matched with projects to support organizational growth. This workshop will work with volunteer management staff to thoughtfully address the following questions:

- What are the recruitment goals of our volunteer program and how do they fit into the larger organization's overall strategic plan?
 - How do we advertise our involvement opportunities in a way that most effectively communicates our core values?
 - How can your branding be best utilized to strategically target desired volunteer groups?
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Asset-Based Community Work

Strong asset-based work shifts the narrative of volunteer work as "helping" or "fixing" and centers individual gifts and relationships within communities. Building off the guiding principles of the *Asset-Based Community Development* model, how can we engage volunteers in skill-based, sustainable work that centers the assets of your organization and local community?

- Understand the definitions & principles within an asset-based approach
 - Learn tools for asset mapping and skills assessment
 - Develop strategies for identifying and incorporating volunteer skills into asset-based projects
 - Create program materials that center staff, volunteer, and community assets
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Branding and Social Media

A strong brand is grounded in values and tells a compelling story about your organization. From conceptualizing core principles, to centering your organization's vision and mission in each stage of brand development, to honing your brand's visual and voice elements- strategy is crucial to building a culture that recruits quality volunteers, garners widespread support, and successfully raises funds.

- Establish program and/or organizational values as a foundation for all elements of your brand
 - Assess and utilize the key components of your brand to tell the story of your program to the larger organization and community through promotional materials, website, social media platforms, in-person events, etc.
 - Develop methods for using your brand in consistent and compelling ways across the organization - examples include: volunteer orientation and training, fundraising, grant reporting, etc.
 - Adapt organizational branding to improve recruitment and increase volunteer retention
 - Learn how to utilize free online tools and platforms - examples include Canva, MailChimp, Taproot, and HootSuite.
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High-Impact Project Development

Seeking to better understand the impact of volunteerism on communities, organizations can adopt simple assessment strategies in their work with volunteers. By utilizing data to inform project development, organizations are able to create positive experiences for volunteers while centering positive outputs and outcomes for communities.

- Identify and understand three distinct types of community impact: unintended harm, no harm, and positive impact
 - Develop strategies for working toward positive community outcomes - including identifying high-impact and "right-size" projects for alternative break groups
 - Learn project development essentials - determining what kinds of projects are best suited for alternative break groups vs. long-term volunteers or organizational staff.
 - Gain customizable project development tools for group volunteer opportunities including skills assessments, site agreements, and workplans
 - Learn to adapt and utilize measurement tools - including assessment reports and surveys
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