

Jigsaw Protocol

The Jigsaw is a cooperative learning technique created by Elliot Aronson that allows participants to become experts in a specific area and then to share that expertise with each other so that all participants understand the entire lesson. The protocol is as follows:

- 1** Divide participants into four to six jigsaw groups. The exact number of groups will depend upon the number of parts into which you divide the lesson. The groups should be diverse in terms of gender, ability, race, and ethnicity.
- 2** Give each participant within each group one part of the lesson, usually a text. It is this one part of the lesson on which he/she will become an expert. For example, if you are planning a service project with your advisory at a food bank, one text may be on the causes of hunger, a second on the extent of hunger in this country and your community, a third on the food bank you will be partnering with, and a fourth on the types of projects groups have done previously to help end hunger.
- 3** Allow time for participants to read and become familiar with that text on their own.
- 4** Create “expert groups” by having all participants who are reading the same text meet for a focused discussion.
- 5** During this meeting, participants raise any questions they have, highlight the key findings in their text, and discuss what they will share when they return to their original jigsaw group.
- 6** Have participants return to their jigsaw groups. Each group should choose a facilitator and a timekeeper.
- 7** Have the facilitator ask each participant to share his/her expertise with the group, allowing time for clarifying questions. Participants should be taking notes on each other’s presentations. The timekeeper should ensure that no one person dominates the group.
- 8** Once the groups are finished sharing, participants may be held accountable for understanding all parts of the lesson through various assessment tools.

Adapted from the Jigsaw Protocol at <http://www.jigsaw.org>. Reprinted with permission.
