**Building Authentic Relationships with Underserved Communities**

**Learner Guide**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/building-authentic-relationships.html>

You know your library could do more to connect with and respond to the systematically excluded communities you serve. But if you're starting with little or no existing connection, how do you build authentic, trust-based relationships? How do you go beyond transactional interactions and guessing at services to effective engagement and participation? This webinar will help you develop a plan for identifying, reaching, and building relationships with communities experiencing oppression.

Presented by: Dr. Audrey Barbakoff, Amita Lonial, and Mia Henry

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** | |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Why Relationship Building Matters** | |
| With a focus on building relationships with communities experiencing oppression, consider or discuss why this work matters in these areas highlighted by Dr. Barbakoff.   * EDISJ (equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice) * Building community knowledge * Reaching new users * Relevance and accountability | |

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| **Building Authentic Relationships** |
| Dr. Barbakoff emphasized for facets for building authentic relationships. Reflect or discuss how you can personally, and as a library, can build an understanding and grow your practice of building authentic relationships.     1. Start with respect. 2. Engagement, not outreach. Listen instead of promoting - learn about strengths, gifts, and aspirations. 3. Transformational, not transactional. It’s about people and process, not product. 4. Commit to sustaining the relationship. |
| **Applying the Principles of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)** |
| ABCD begins with the recognition that all people and communities have strengths, gifts, and capacities. Aspirations-focused discussions allow you approach people with questions rather than answers. This method helps you identify and truly understand the communities you serve to build alignment and develop and implement meaningful services together.   1. Everyone has gifts. What strengths, partners, and work are they already engaging to achieve goals? 2. Everyone cares about something. Find out their hopes and goals for their community over the next few years. 3. Asking and listening are more powerful than telling. Focus on their aspirations rather than on your library. After all, projects come and go, but relationships based on trust can endure indefinitely. Westernized social services and helping professions are often structured around a deficit mindset—the idea that communities that have experienced oppression have needs and problems, and today’s institutions have resources and solutions. This approach doesn’t build authentic relationships. 4. Everyone has agency and shares ownership. No giver/taker divide. Everyone contributes to advocate for the solutions they already know are needed. |
| **Try Asset Mapping** |
| Identify a specific underserved community where you want to start building relationships. Try to consider at least 2-3 items for each circle (gifts of individuals, community groups, formal organizations, and narratives). Plan to reach out and have aspirations-focused conversations, so you can start building relationships that support relational knowledge and power-sharing  partnerships.  Specific underserved community:  Gifts of individuals  Community groups  Formal institutions  Narratives  Tip: You may not be able to fill out all the levels at once. If you are starting from scratch, you may find it easiest to begin with formal organizations. After you reach out to them, ask your contacts there to help you identify informal groups and individual people. For more detail on asset mapping, check [The Community Tool Box](https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/identify-community-assets/main) from the University of Kansas.  To learn about developing and implementing services together with your community, check out Dr. Barbakoff’s [Co-create authentically with your community](https://blog.oclc.org/next/co-create-with-your-community/) blog for a variety of helpful resources. |