



NEXT STEPS

The following is a list of next steps that can be taken to further explore and engage in holistic poverty alleviation in your community.

1

GO + LISTEN

Take time to explore different parts of your community. If you've been isolated from poverty, there are many places that you can go to connect with people who are willing to share their story. Listen and learn.

- Visit a food pantry or soup kitchen. Serve. Talk to the volunteers and families who frequent there to secure food for their families.
- Commit to volunteering at your local elementary schools- choose a couple from different parts of your town/ city.
- Use a different mode of transportation than what you are used to. Maybe for you this means walking or riding public transportation to work or to shop.
- Go grocery shopping in a different part of town than where you normally frequent. Choose a location that caters to a different economic or ethnic group than your own.
- Visit various churches representing a variety of ethnic/ economic groups. Listen to the themes of their messages comparing the similarities and differences.
- Set up appointments with various change agents in your community who are working to transform their communities (ie: grassroots leaders, Non-Profits).

2

STUDY + REFLECT

Read and study various publications that can offer new information, challenge my bias and expand my understanding of the scope and impact of poverty in North America. Some people find that blogging or journaling about their experiences can be a helpful way to reflect and deepen their own understanding. We have included a short list of recommended reading to get started. These publications reflect perspectives on both the structural and individual forces that have shaped poverty and prosperity in America.

- *More Than Just Race* by William Julius Wilson
- *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander
- *The Abundant Community* by John McKnight and Peter Block
- *The Careless Society* by John McKnight
- *Bridges to Sustainable Communities* by Philip DeVol and Dan Shenk
- *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
- *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means so Much* by Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir
- *Why the Garden Club Couldn't Save Youngstown* by Sean Safford



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3

DISCUSS

Be intentional about your conversation with family, friends and co-workers. Share your experience and participate in dialogue that challenges the status quo and spurs an urgency to get involved. Ask the host site if they would be willing to start a social media page for COPE participants to connect to discuss issues or post opportunities for involvement.

Questions:

- What stands out to you as the key factors that contribute to poverty? Have you ever tested these assumptions?
- What is your immediate reaction to the word poverty?
- What mental image does your mind conjure up? If you were really honest with yourself, do you play into the social stereotypes associated with poverty in North America?
- Are we now or have we been isolated from families in poverty?
- Is this isolation a problem? If so, how?
- What more can we do to help alleviate poverty in our community?

4

PARTNER

There are many ways to partner with individuals, neighborhoods, associations and businesses and organizations in the community. No one entity, group or individual can sufficiently address poverty. Each has a role to play. Additionally, if we play our roles independent of one another, as if each was inconsequential to the other, damaging results can occur for families and communities. If you are connected with an organization that is attempting to alleviate poverty, ask yourself the following questions:

- What role do we have to play in poverty alleviation?
- Where are we getting out of our role? Should we be partnering with others in specific ways?
- How have we isolated ourselves?
- Do we need to work towards repairing relationships in any way (with people, neighborhoods or organizations)?
- How do we go about poverty alleviation more holistically through partnerships?



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