Theory of Change/Theory of Social Change
Facilitation Guide

Introduce the Exercise
- Many service agencies use some sort of "Theory of Change" to articulate their service provision goals.
- This exercise applies an adapted version of this familiar framework to a fictional organization in order to help participants consider how service work differs when it incorporates social change goals.
- Note that the goal is not to show that one approach is more important than the other but to determine how to balance the two

Exercise:
Set-up
- Break into small groups of about 3 or 4 people per group
- Share handout with sample mission and Theory of Change vs. Theory of Social Change grid
- Explain that the mission statement of most service agencies reflects the agency's Theory of Change – its plan for how to go about addressing a community need or problem.
- Let the group know that we will begin this process by first trying to identify this organization's Theory of Change based on their mission.

Theory of Change
- Have a volunteer in each small group read the Youthville mission out loud to the rest of the group
- Participants in the group should then take about 15 minutes to respond to the following questions:
  o What **Assumptions** does the mission reflect about the problem, the population served, and how that problem should be addressed?
  o What are the **Service Goals** outlined in the mission?
  o What **Resources** would be needed in order to meet those service goals?
  o What are examples of **Activities** would the agency need to undertake in order to meet those service goals?
- The group should record their ideas in the "Theory of Change" column of the worksheet

Theory of Social Change
- After 15 minutes, have the group shift their focus to thinking about what the work of the organization would look like, if it was also focused on addressing the root causes of the problems its mission addresses
- Participants in the group should then take another 15 minutes to discuss the following:

- **Analysis**: What are the root causes of the condition that the mission addresses?

- **Social Change Goals**: What might be the systemic changes that the agency might want to work toward? (This could be written as an outcomes statement.)

- **Resources You Have**: What are examples of resources accessible to the agency for social/systemic change (i.e. community relationships and coalitions, constituent leaders, space, staff energy)

- **Strategies:** Give an example of one strategy that might be used in working for systemic change
- The group should record their ideas in the "Theory of Social Change" column of the worksheet

Examine the responses
- Have one or two groups present their comparison to the larger group
- As they present have each presenter highlight:
  - Any 'A-ha!' moments from the group discussion
  - Where the group struggled
- After each presentation, have members of the wider group offer feedback, observations and comparisons to their own findings during the exercise
- Have the group discuss:
  - The differences in the approaches and what they mean
  - The pros and cons of the two approaches
  - Any common themes or recommendations they would make about incorporating social change work into social services

Mission of Youthville:

The mission of Youthville is to reduce the rate of incarceration among at-risk males ages 14-18 by providing entrepreneur training, academic enrichment, and mentoring services.

Theory of Change	Theory of Social Change
Assumptions:	Analysis:
Service Goals:	Social Change Goals:
Resources You Need:	Resources You Have:
Activities:	Strategies: