

Community Conversations Toolkit



What is the purpose of a community conversation?

- Someone has approached you for help-about what?
 - Look for the unexpected solutions-value different perspectives
 - Everyone needs an opportunity to speak
 - The spark of an idea taken forward by the community-‘small seeds’
 - To celebrate strengths and successes in communities
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Why should I have a community conversation?

Priorities

- Is there a need
- Understand your community
- Look for the unexpected
- Where is the need
- Community conversations are not a quick win
- Celebrate strengths in the community and as professionals

Pitfalls

- Starting a community conversation when there is already similar work occurring

I want to start a community conversation in my local area and don't know where to start and what to avoid?

Priorities

- Support people to have the confidence to speak and share their view/thoughts
- Ensure the environment for the conversations is welcoming-circle of chairs, food, the welcome you give people to your venue
- Develop a 'space' to help people articulate what they are thinking
- Ask 'what have you NOTICED in your community?'
- Prioritise when someone has a passion to do something, create a change in the community-harness people's passion/fire
- Assume a 'non-expert' position-everyone has the opportunity to speak
- Focus on relationships and building relationships-addressing power imbalance and pyramid conversations
- Avoid the word 'problem'/'issue' focus on strengths and solutions
- Consider different mechanisms for community conversations-web chats
- Widen the circle-increase attendance to a broader audience
- Use existing networks to develop community conversations-peer mentors, practice managers at GPs, PPGs etc
- Learn from others-Mortimer village partnership
- People are the experts in their situations
- Partnership between local people and professionals
- Children and young people have a voice
- Use websites, FB and social media

- Share a core set of values
- Position the conversations to work 'with' and not to or for
- Develop links with faith and voluntary sector
- Share the needs of the community with all partners and the faith/voluntary sector
- Develop trust in communities and within multi-agency relationships
- Involve vulnerable groups-AA, Loose ends etc. Face to face conversations, online opportunities, celebrating success, valuing others
- Focus on building solutions together
- Conversation based on trust
- Empower and work in partnership-people and communities design the 'curriculum'/ focus of the meetings
- They are organic
- Make sure it is not too big-not everyone needs to be involved
- Give space to come in and out
- It is not a destination, its a journey
- Communities win communities
- Inspire sustained change and empowering people to take responsibility

Pitfalls

- Avoid duplication with NAGs and neighbourhood forums-There can be a strength in joining forces
- Attempt to have a balanced attendance and not just those who are already active in their communities or professionals in those communities
- Community conversations do not require everyone who is active in the community to attend. People can dip in and out