



Hosting Tips for Your Consideration

1. What if people need conversation the way fish need water?
 - Ensure you have at least 90 minutes for a café
 - Enlist others in your planning
 - Limit table conversations to three or four people
 - Have opportunities for small group, large group and paired conversations
 - Invite diverse perspectives into the conversation

2. What if conversation is how positive change happens for families?
 - Relate questions to the Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework (www.cssp.org)
 - Allow ample time for people to get to know each other
 - Allow people to talk about what is working well now or what has worked in the past; the strengths and gifts they bring to the group and in their lives
 - Craft café questions that allow people to share stories
 - Encourage participants to speak from personal experience-discourage giving advice

3. What are ways hosts keep conversations focused?
 - Be clear about the purpose of the café-questions help learn more about that topic
 - Announce the purpose at the start of each Café
 - Set a context for each question
 - Have table hosts recap prior conversations
 - Monitor the energy level people have during their table conversations and adjust your agenda accordingly
 - Make “butterfly” visits to tables as needed

4. How do we create a space that nurtures meaningful conversation?
 - Discuss with your team how to ensure a safe, welcoming, relaxed, fun environment
 - Care for yourself as lovingly as you treat others
 - Check in: How is your breathing? Are you relaxed? Are you having fun? Are you learning?
 - Plan culturally relevant activities during the café-food, art, music, poetry, cultural celebrations
 - Greet each person at the door with a welcoming smile

5. What if the gold lies in discovering the big questions?
 - Remind participants that their contributions benefit the whole group
 - Let go of needing to come up with the right answers
 - Use the Appreciative Inquiry process as a guide to plan next steps and designing questions

6. What if no one knows which contribution will be the key ingredient?
 - Model respect of everyone's style of communication and point of view
 - Capture conversations with words, pictures, graphic recordings
 - Send out written harvests after each café
 - Ask people to share themes or patterns they heard in their conversations

7. What if listening together is how movement happens?
 - Invite all to listen and write, draw or doodle during their conversations
 - Make the individual conversations visible to the whole group (post paper table cloths)
 - Allow time for people to recap highlights of the previous conversations
 - Allow time for individual reflections, moments of silence
 - Practice a deep listening activity at each café
 - Hosts encourage listening for patterns, the deeper meaning and other questions that arise

8. What if the harvest provides seeds for action and...?
 - Make a plan for sharing harvests with others including potential neighborhood, community and state partners
 - Look for themes in café harvests, share themes with others
 - Ask, "What can I do? What must we do together?"
 - Allow at least 30 minutes for the harvest conversation
 - Document strengths and what is working well in harvests (Appreciative Inquiry,) stories of changes that happened as a result of cafés
 - Engage community partners throughout the process
 - Encourage participants to share what they learned at cafés with the community
 - Encourage others to become hosts
 - Allow room in opening and closing routine for sharing insights, ideas, changes they have made as a result of café conversations
 - Celebrate and communicate achievements!

Please visit our website and offer your ideas, harvests, thoughts or questions at www.thecommunitycafe.com or write us at info@thecommunitycafe.com

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