

# Community Café

CHANGING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN  
THROUGH CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

## Cafes Comunitarios

CAMBIANDO LA VIDA DE LOS NIÑOS  
POR MEDIO DE CONVERSACIONES IMPORTANTES



### A Quick Guide to Hosting a Community Café

This Quick Guide is a shorter alternative to the full Orientation Guide, and focuses on the typical steps involved in hosting a Community Café. There are many variations to hosting a Community Café and this is only a guide to the practice of hosting meaningful conversations in a group setting. Hosting Community Cafés are part of an Appreciative Inquiry process:

- Dream - What is your vision for strengthening families?
- Design - What change(s) would you like to see happen in your community?
- Discovery - What do you want to learn, need to know?
- Delivery - Host a café conversation and commit to action as a result of the conversation. After your café, revisit this process again. Communities are encouraged to adopt cafés as a part of their community function.

A Community Café is typically hosted by parent volunteers who live in the community and in partnership with at least one other community entity or organization. Café conversations are intended to spark leadership to develop the relationships necessary to strengthen families. If a group is anticipated to be larger than 12, hosts typically employ the World Café method and principals for convening meaningful conversation. If you would like more information on The World Café model, go to [www.theworldcafe.org](http://www.theworldcafe.org). The following seven steps outline a typical process for hosting a Community Café. Each step references tools which may be helpful can be found on the Community Café website, [www.thecommunity.com](http://www.thecommunity.com).

#### *Seven Steps to Hosting a Community Café*

##### **STEP 1: Define the purpose for this particular Café and form a hosting team**

Clarify the purpose of the conversation and what you want to learn. Invite organizations and community members interested in the purpose of the Café into the planning. (Tool: Team Discussion Guide, Protective Factor handout)

##### **STEP 2: Plan the Setting for the Café**

Where and when would having a café be most inviting in your community? Are there activities that already occur that you could

##### The World Café Model:

- Is relevant for a group of 12 or more (if less than 12 consider other forms of democratic group conversation such as a circle process)
- Participants are seated in small café style tables in groups of 3 or 4 (5 at the most)
- There are progressive rounds of two or more questions in small groups
- People are invited to move to different groups between questions
- Questions genuinely matter to that community
- Conversations and ideas are captured on some form of paper and can be written, drawn or doodled
- Two people act as hosts and one person per table acts as table host
- Encourage participants to listen for patterns, share insights, and connect ideas, thoughts and conversations
- After at least two rounds of small group conversation the large group participates in conversation to share discoveries; Adapted from "Café to Go" ([www.theworldcafe.org](http://www.theworldcafe.org))

add a café component to? Consider the culture of the community you are inviting. What food, music, poetry, art, language, or even usual ways of gathering would you like to consider in creating a welcoming environment? List all the activities and roles that your team decides are needed, for example: food, inviting others, set up and clean up, a team for hosting the Kid Café (child care.) Develop your list of tasks, needs and resources according to your budget - there is a café for every budget! Include the resources and strengths of your hosting team, their network and the neighborhood in your planning. (Tool: Planning Team Discussion Sheet)

### **STEP 3: Design a compelling invitation**

Think about the kind of invitation that would be effective for the culture of the community; it should feel personal and communicate purpose. Include your cultural considerations in your invitation. Including food, childcare and transportation in the invitation help make it more compelling. In most cases a personal invitation is much more effective than a flyer. Reminder phone calls the week of the café are also helpful. Asking others to help you with the invitation is a great way to enlist others.

### **Step 4: Develop a general idea of the time together**

Cafés usually run about two hours not including clean up and include a great start, eating together, a dyad conversation followed by two rounds of conversation, then a harvest and a beautiful ending. It also includes a Kid Café so all ages can meaningfully contribute to strengthening families. Cafés may include a flip chart and markers, paper and markers for each table of four, elements of art and nature, nametags, a Kid Café area, tablecloths and music. Tables are arranged to seat four, five at the most! (Tool: Flow Agenda and Designing Questions tool)

### **STEP 5: Design your Café and Kid Café Activity Schedule**

Write out the time, activity, and who is leading each activity. Draft two or three questions that promote deep discussions about the café purpose. (Hosts often revise questions several times.) Write out the final café design and distribute it to hosts and helpers. Kid Café activities often include circle conversations related to the protective factors, stories and songs and activities from diverse cultures (Tool: Kid Café Guide at [www.thecommunitycafe.com](http://www.thecommunitycafe.com); Conversation Template)

### **STEP 6: Host the Café**

Think ahead of time and plan to do what you need in order to be fully present personally and as a host team. Show up ahead of the café start time to set up a welcoming environment without feeling harried and to check in with your team. Greet each person as they enter, invite them to sign in and make them feel comfortable; people enjoy being in the company of others who also care! (See Tips for Hosting)

### **STEP 7: Follow up after a Café**

Discuss with the planning team what was learned, what went well, and opportunities for growth. Gather and share all relevant information of your Café with the community and your partners. Share your harvests with others. You are part of a larger community working with you to strengthen families. Celebrate your accomplishments then ask what is next! (See Sample Harvest Form)

Please visit our website and offer your ideas, harvests, thoughts or questions at [www.thecommunitycafe.com](http://www.thecommunitycafe.com) or write us at [thecommunitycafe@gmail.com](mailto:thecommunitycafe@gmail.com).