

Communications Activities

Activity 3: Fishbowl Conversation

Introduction

Fishbowl conversations are a great way to elicit multiple viewpoints about a topic and allow stakeholders to be interviewed in a controlled and open way that makes them feel safe to share their opinions and thoughts.

Material List

Computer (if online), paper and pencil (for questions and notes)

Procedure

1. Identify stakeholders from different points of view and invite them to a forum or a group zoom call. Examples include:
 - Town manager
 - Fire chief or police officer
 - Business person
 - Land trust director
 - Town planner
 - Parent
 - Other community member
2. Have questions formulated before the forum. Make sure to give them to your speakers prior. Tip: Take the time to plan well-thought-out questions that will elicit the information you want to know or get across. Here are examples of discussion questions (these examples can be changed into questions relating to your topic):
 - How long have you lived in this community?
 - What do you value about this town? Enjoy? What are some places that are special to you?
 - Does the town you remember from your past look the same as it does today? If not, what do you think caused those changes?
 - What do you know about the topic?
 - Do you have concerns about climate change in our community? What are your concerns?
 - What concerns do you have about the future of our town?
 - How do you think that the weather or the seasons have changed since you have lived here?
 - How do you think the weather changes affect our community?
3. If in-person, seat the interviewees in front of the audience in a semi-circle so each person can see everyone else. (If online, pre-determine the order in which they answer questions).
4. Ask one question at a time, allowing a few minutes for each person to answer the question from their perspective before moving on to the next question. Move towards the opposite direction for the next question and continue back and forth until all questions are asked.
5. Leave time in the end for general discussion or for your panel to ask questions to the audience. This type of forum will open communications between community members and stakeholders, creating a wonderful dialogue.

