



## SYSTEMS APPROACHES FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

# 101 on One-to-Ones Participant Guide

### PURPOSE

One-to-ones are designed to:

- **Build relationships.** Relationships cultivate possibilities. It is through relationships that significant things happen. When people are in relationships they can share, plan, dream, create and get things done. Without relationships, people are powerless. One-to-ones build networks of relationships and help build community.
- **Uncover self-interest.** Self-interest is essentially a person's concern for his or her own advantage or well-being. People are most likely to get involved in things around their self-interests.
- **Develop clarity.** One-to-ones allow people to express their feelings. When people talk about something, it helps to make that thing clearer to them. A visit provides the opportunity for people to express themselves to a good listener and gain clarity about themselves. Clarity also strengthens relationships.
- **Gather information.** One-to-ones help people learn more about a community or organization. You will find out what is going on, who you are in community with, and what the people around you are thinking, feeling and doing.

### ARRANGE AND PREPARE FOR A VISIT

Here's how to arrange and prepare for a one-to-one visit:

- It's best to issue an invitation to a one-to-one by phone or in person. However, if you already know someone fairly well, you might extend an invitation by email or text.
- When issuing an invitation, introduce yourself and your group or organization, and then ask if you can have 45 minutes of time to get to know the person. Say something like the following:  
"Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am working with \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
[organization, community group, congregation]." I got your name from \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_. We are visiting people in our [organization, community, congregation] to hear what they're concerned about and what they're interested in. I was wondering if we can find 45 minutes to meet to talk?"
- Be specific about a day, time, and location. Suggest meeting at a coffee shop, café, or some other public place where you can have a relaxed, private conversation.
- Keep your invitation simple and general. Make it clear that you want to hear his or her ideas — not pitch anything.
- Before the visit, take time to prepare. Think about what you may already know about the person, including activities or causes. Review what you think might be in their self-interest. Think through what questions you want to ask, as well as what you say about yourself and your purpose for doing the one-to-one.

## **CONDUCT THE VISIT**

There are factors that contribute to a successful one-to-one, but don't worry about following a rigid format. Enjoy yourself and seek to establish some rapport. Here are a few general guidelines to help you do this:

- Introduce yourself and say why you are there, similar to how you set up the one-to-one.
- Warm up with a few general questions or comments to set a relaxed tone, e.g., "Hi, how are you? What have you been up to lately?" This will help get someone talking and help you get a feel for the person.
- Listen intently, especially for lead-ins to stories. Speak in order to draw someone out. A successful one-to-one means the person you're visiting is talking at least 60 percent of the time. Most people appreciate that you are genuinely interested in them and their opinions. Stories tell the most and are usually more enjoyable than abstractions. Probe for specifics about their experiences and their true feelings about things.

## **AREAS TO EXPLORE**

In order to uncover self-interest, explore some of the following areas: personal history, education, community, ambitions, dreams, organizations, job, family, reading, music, politics, hobbies, religion, and so on. Also ask what makes someone angry and what gives hope. Overall, try to get a sense of the person's values.

## **SEEK TO IDENTIFY SELF-INTEREST**

Listen to hear what seems to excite or motivate the person. Gather enough specifics about his or her actual behavior to see if your hunches about self-interest are correct. Use follow-up questions for more details; follow your own instincts and curiosity. Be courageous — ask "why?"

## **ESTABLISH COMMON GROUND**

Share some things about yourself and your experiences. Seek to find any common ground. Remember: You are not selling anything. You are not recruiting for a project. You are not preaching. You are not judging or analyzing. If you catch yourself doing any of these things — stop!

## **ASK WHO ELSE YOU SHOULD VISIT**

Ask who else you should talk to, including people with both similar and differing perspectives. Ask if you may use their name as a reference.

## **PLAN FOR FOLLOW UP**

Do not leave without establishing a next step. At the very least, promise to contact the person about what surfaced at the visit. You want to leave yourself with a clearly established reason for seeing him or her again.

## **CLOSE THE VISIT**

Watch the time so you do not take too long — 45 minutes is enough. End the visit by thanking the person for their time. Remind the person that your organization or group will be continuing visits with many other people in the community.



## REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

After a visit, reflect upon and evaluate what transpired. Jot down some notes, using the following questions as a guide to capturing your thoughts.

These questions will help you reflect on what you learned:

- What does this person care most about? Why do you think he or she cares about these things?
- What motivates him or her?
- What did the person get excited talking about?
- How does he or she spend their time?
- What talents and abilities does the person have?
- How and where is the person using those talents and abilities?
- What relationships does this person have and value? Why?
- What specific concerns or ideas does this person have?
- What is this person's story? What experiences have shaped the person's life — both positive and negative?

These questions will help you reflect on what you accomplished:

- Did I start to establish a relationship?
- How well did I uncover the person's self-interest?
- How courageous was I?
- What was the riskiest question I asked?
- What did I do well?
- What could I have done differently?