

Safe and Strong Neighborhoods: Discussion Leader’s Agenda

This agenda is a suggested road map for a 90-minute forum about community safety, using the discussion guide: **“Building Safe and Strong Neighborhoods: What Works?”** A timeframe is provided to help keep the forum moving and focused on the issue. If 20 people or more attend the forum, you can divide people into groups of ten to discuss the questions. Then reconvene everyone at the end to share ideas and complete the post-forum questionnaire.

Phase/Timing	Process	Who
Meet and greet (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide name tags, discussion guide/agenda, refreshments & conversation as people arrive. 	Host
Introductions <i>Page 1 of Guide</i> (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome everyone and say a few words about your organization and why you’re sponsoring the forum. Review forum goals and suggestions for a productive meeting. <p>Ask people introduce themselves & where they live.</p>	Host Discussion Leader
Imagining a positive future <i>Page 2 of Guide</i> (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer people to “Approaches to Community Safety” in the guide as one way of looking at the issue. Then ask: <i>What does a safe and strong neighborhood look and feel like to you?</i> <p>Go around the room and ask each person to share one idea; After everyone has shared one idea, open it up for other ideas not yet mentioned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record all ideas on flip chart. 	Discussion Leader Recorder
Assessing what we have now <i>Pages 3-4 of Guide</i> (15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer people the “Snapshot of Community Safety and Well-Being” section of the guide. Then ask: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What do we have now that helps make our neighborhood a safe and healthy place to live?</i> <i>What are the challenges we need to address?</i> Record all ideas on two lists. 	Discussion Leader Recorder

Tips on Leading Discussions

- **Share the work.** It's best to have at least three people helping with the forum – the discussion leader, the flip chart recorder and the host/timekeeper. If you prefer, you can also have two people co-lead the discussion who take turns leading the different phases of the forum.
- **Be inclusive.** Help make all participants feel that their opinions are valid and welcome. Use the “go around the room” technique part of the time to give each person the opportunity to speak or to pass if they prefer not to speak.
- **Remain neutral.** Refrain from sharing personal opinions, pushing an agenda, or taking sides.
- **Scratch below the surface.** Ask follow-up questions to deepen the discussion. Bring up issues that participants have not mentioned. Ask people to think about others who aren't here and what they would say about the issue.
- **Work within time limits.** This agenda allows for a 90-minute forum, which is typically the amount of time people are able to pay attention and participate without a break. Rely on the timekeeper for a “two-minute warning” when time is ending for that phase of work. *Be sure to allow at least 5 minutes at the end for people to complete the post-forum questionnaire.*

Tips for Flip Chart Recording

- **Keep an accurate record.** When recording, paraphrase people's comments using their own words whenever possible and be careful not to alter their intended meaning. You don't need to capture every word, just the main idea. Ask for clarification when needed.
- **Write large and legibly.** Remember – The notes are an important reference for the group's discussion and reflection, as well as for writing a summary of the forum. Write in dark or bold colors and large enough for people to read. Post each filled sheet on a wall where people can see it.