

Theming Public Knowledge

What We'll Cover

- Public Knowledge – A Brief Recap
- Moving From Notes to Themes
- Moving From Themes to a Public Knowledge Report

Public Knowledge – Brief Recap

What has your experience so far taught you about public knowledge?

Public Knowledge – Benefits

- Builds credibility and trust
- Builds community ownership: momentum to pursue a path of possibility and hope
- Sets realistic goals for moving ahead and making change
- Makes work more relevant and impactful

Moving From Notes to Themes

Anytown Community Conversation Notes Sample 2 - Excerpt

Aspirations

- We want a community that is safe (crime free and drug free) and aesthetically pleasing so that residents can walk safely at any hour and have places to meet and congregate. “When you feel safe enough to walk outside, people become more neighborly.”
- Clean environment, peaceful environment – meaning not being “targeted” by police.
- Want people living in that community to feel empowered to “be part of the strength of the neighborhood.” Feel like they truly live here; be comfortable with being here.
- Would like to see people who come to worship from the suburbs have a more “genuine connection” with the neighborhood and a “more complex understanding than the stereotypes.”
- Churches would like to not need to lock their doors, as they feel it limits community access.
- The refugee population in the neighborhood is “outdoorsy” and wants to be outside, walk and bicycle everywhere. The community should feel safe for their children. They want a sense of security.
- Some of the phrases used when talking about aspirations for the community were “Connectedness,” “Communication,” “Engage,” “Empowering the community” “Cultural Competence”

Moving From Notes to Themes

Anytown Community Conversation – Sample 2

Aspiration Themes

People in Anytown say that they want to live in a safe, connected community where they know their neighbors. They talk about wanting a neighborhood “where we can rely on neighbors,” “where we all look out for each other,” and “we need more togetherness.”

People want to be able to go outside and have visible community gathering places where they can meet and socialize with their neighbors. “If I got a chance to talk with and get to know my neighbors, that’d be great.” They acknowledge it’s not just about new investment; they have some of the things they need but they don’t feel like they can use them: “there’s no way to get outside on a beautiful day, the parks are locked.”

Moving From Notes to Themes

Preparing to Theme

Start with notes from at least 3 conversations.

Organize the information in the notes into these 6 categories.

- Aspirations
- Main Concerns
- Specific Issue Concerns
- Actions that would make a difference
- Who people trust
- Questions people have

Merge the 6 categories of information from all conversations into one combined set of notes.

Moving From Notes to Themes

Preparing to Theme

Have the Right:

- People - that were in the conversation.
- Space - allow time for exploration and discovery
- Questions - to reveal meaning

From Notes to Themes

Preparing to Theme

Ground rules for theming:

- Start with what you can agree upon – build momentum.
- Don't debate language – discuss meaning.
- Ask questions to gain clarity and understanding instead of arguing a point.
- Keep the themes loose at first – only narrow as you go.

Moving From Notes to Themes

Preparing to Theme

Start with one question

- What did you take from the conversations?

Then use these questions for each category

- Looking at the category what do you see?
- What are people trying to say?
- What are they trying to tell us?
- How do the ideas and concepts fit together?

Moving From Notes to Themes

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- Some of the phrases used when talking about aspirations for the community were “Connectedness,” “Communication,” “Engage,” “Empowering the community” “Cultural Competence”
- “I have a young family. I want to be able to take my kids to the park to play. Now I take them to the Field House where it’s safer.”
- Attendees like to see activities in the park... “Isn’t the park a place to hang out?”

Guiding Questions

What do you see?

What are people trying to say?

How do the ideas and concepts fit together?

Moving From Notes to Themes

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Moving From Notes to Themes

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People want to be able to go outside and have visible community gathering places where they can meet and socialize with their neighbors. “If I got a chance to talk with and get to know my neighbors, that’d be great.” They acknowledge it’s not just about new investment; they have some of the things they need but they don’t feel like they can use them: “there’s no way to get outside on a beautiful day, the parks are locked.”

Moving From Notes to Themes

Specific Concerns related to Safety (See full list in notes.)

- Police have not been harassing lately, but still “intimidating”
- Parking is an issue at night – it is not safe to park on the street and have to walk home.
- “Yeah, this is a pretty scary place at night, lots of hookers and drug deals going down in the park.”
- People go for walks for exercise early in the morning when there is a police presence. Otherwise it is too risky. “We need the police but at the same time they are part of the problem. They treat everyone like they are bums or suspicious... what’s the deal with that?”
- People hang out when they don’t have any work or are shelter dwellers that have to leave the shelter during the day.
- There are training programs and a police substation but people don’t know what is available to them. These programs don’t seem to reach the people in the neighborhood and they don’t seem to have the connections to get into these programs.
- Large number of apartments – difficult to communicate with people. Easier to reach people in single family dwellings because you can knock on the door or leave information in a mail box.
- Someone noted that there are many supportive housing residences in the area and that the majority of residents are single man, many of whom are unemployed.

Guiding Questions

What do you see?

What are people trying to say?

How do the ideas and concepts fit together?

Moving From Notes to Themes

Anytown Community Conversation – Sample 2 Concerns

Safety – what are people trying to say

- People talked about all kinds of crime; property crimes (stealing cell phones) to prostitution, to panhandling, to harassment, to violent crime and shootings.
- There is a dramatic difference in safety during the night vs. during the day.
 - Crime and problems at night make workers and others afraid of the neighborhood during the day – even though it’s safer during the day.
- Some say that unsafety is a perception, that crime is down. Residents say it’s not just a perception – they know that they will be harassed if they go out at night.

EXAMPLE #1

Anytown seems to be two different places during the day and night.

During the day, things feel safer and improving but at night the neighborhood doesn’t feel safe at all. Residents say that most criminal activity – drug deals and prostitution – happens after dark. One frustrated resident described it as “a pretty scary place at night.”

Moving From Notes to Themes

Anytown Community Conversation – Sample 2 Concerns

Getting Outside and Connecting with Neighbors is Difficult

- Residents say that they want to get outside and connect with friends and meet neighbors.
- People want more places and more time to form bonds.
- They talk about wanting a greater sense of connection - they hope they could unite to “get good stuff done”. But there are barriers to connection - when they gather together outside the cops often send them back inside, or break them up.
- “Good people” aren’t able to congregate because the cops are worried about the “bad guys”.
- There is tension between renters and people living in group homes and long-time residents. These residents wonder if it’s really worth investing to know people if they’re going to leave.
- The parks and streets don’t look vibrant, clean or safe (whether real or not)

EXAMPLE #2

People long for safe places to get outside and connect.

It’s simple said one resident, “When you feel safe enough to walk outside, people will become more neighborly.” Instead crime keeps people isolated, literally locked inside.” People expressed a strong desire for a visible public place like the park where they can get together and get to know each other.

Moving From Notes to Themes

Observations & Questions

Creating a Public Knowledge Report

Bring the Themes together

Context – describe when, where and with whom conversations were held

Aspirations - what people said they want

Concerns – these are the concerns people have

Specific issues – their specific concerns are these

Actions that can help – this is what they think will make a difference

Trust – this is who the trust to take action

Creating A Public Knowledge Report

Context

Between June and August 2013, For A Better Community held 12 community conversations with a total of 156 community members of different age and sectors in Anytown

This is what people said they want

People in Anytown say that they want to live in a safe, connected community where they know their neighbors. They talk about wanting a neighborhood “where we can rely on neighbors,” “where we all look out for each other,” and “we need more togetherness.”

People want to be able to go outside and have visible community gathering places where they can meet and socialize with their neighbors. “If I got a chance to talk with and get to know my neighbors, that’d be great.” They acknowledge it’s not just about new investment; they have some of the things they need but they don’t feel like they can use them: “there’s no way to get outside on a beautiful day, the parks are locked.”

Creating A Public Knowledge Report

These are the key concerns people have:

CRIME IS PREVENTING PEOPLE FROM CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER

Anytown seems to be two different places during the day and night. During the day, things feel safer and improving but at night the neighborhood doesn't feel safe at all. Residents say that most criminal activity – drug deals and prostitution – happens after dark. One frustrated resident described it as “a pretty scary place at night.”

People long for safe places to get outside and connect.

It's simple said one resident, “When you feel safe enough to walk outside, people will become more neighborly.” Instead crime keeps people isolated, literally locked inside.” People expressed a strong desire for a visible public place like the park where they can get together and get to know each other.

Creating A Public Knowledge Report

A LACK OF TRUST

Homeowners do not feel supported... (Supporting Text)

Sporadic interventions by outside groups frustrate residents... (Supporting Text)

POLICE MUST FORM A REAL CONNECTION WITH RESIDENTS

Police actions sometimes increase fear... (Supporting Text)

Residents want more police presence that supports neighbors getting to know each other AND the Police... (Supporting Text)

Etc.

You would continue along this line for actions that would make a difference and who people trust.

Creating A Public Knowledge Report

Observations & Questions

Using and Sharing Public Knowledge

Stewardship – Not Ownership

- Share the knowledge with participants
- Use public knowledge sensitively
- Share it creatively
- Apply it to what you do

Using and Sharing Public Knowledge

Have the “right” people

Identifying who to share public knowledge with and the level and type of detail to share:

- Start within your organization – volunteers, staff and decision-makers;
- Move on to key partners; and
- Move as quickly as possible to the broader community.

Using and Sharing Public Knowledge

Have the “right” space

Create a safe space in which you can focus on what was learned and it’s implications.

Set clear expectations and follow this format.

1. Explain goals and ground rules (10 min)
2. Share what was learned (20 min)
3. Create wider circle of shared meaning (45 minutes)
4. Determine takeaways (15 minutes)

Using and Sharing Public Knowledge

Ask the “right” questions

Four questions will create shared meaning

- What do you make of what we are learning?
- What are the implications for the work that each of us does in our community?
- Where could we use what we are learning?
- What possibilities are there for moving ahead?

Two additional questions to ensure action is taken

- Where can we best get started?
- Who else needs to know?

Theming and Using Public Knowledge

In Summary...

1. Organize your notes from individual conversations and then combine them;
2. Identify themes and create a report;
3. Share the report strategically with others; and
4. Move from learning to action by creating shared meaning together and identifying implications.

Questions / Comments