

## Speak Freely Facilitator's Guide

**The purpose of this guide** is to assist the session facilitator in conducting guided open discussions on the feelings of trust and mistrust with local organizations among native community members. The guide is meant to provide structure for the sessions. Facilitators should encourage participants to explore topics in depth.

### Preparation

Running an effective focus group is a skill and requires planning. Prior to the session, please review the entire guide, all questions, and questionnaires.

**Understand the Group:** Familiarize yourself with the background, interests, and potential concerns of the participants.

**Set the Environment:** Arrange the space to encourage open communication (e.g., a circle seating arrangement). Ensure the setting is comfortable, private, and free from distractions.

**Materials needed:**

- Flip charts/white boards
- Markers
- Notepads & pens for participants
- Any relevant handouts or informational materials

**Tips for facilitating the sessions:**

- Facilitator's key responsibilities
  - Keep participants engaged.
  - Monitor time.
- How to be an effective facilitator
  - Be an active listener.
  - Ask open-ended questions to allow community members the opportunity to communicate freely and effectively.
  - Encourage one speaker at a time.
  - Encourage participants to share their thoughts and opinions and to feel comfortable doing so even if contradictory to popular belief.
  - Emphasize that all participants have something valuable to offer.

### Introduction [45 min]

**Facilitator's Welcome & Purpose:**

- Greet participants warmly.
- Open with a prayer or blessing.
- Clearly state the purpose of the group: to provide a safe space for sharing & discussing experiences and perspectives related to life and organizational trust in North Omaha.

### Speak Freely Session [5-10 min]

**Introductory Prompt:**

Welcome, everyone! We want to thank you all for being here today. We know many of you have busy schedules, so we appreciate you taking time out of your day to be with us.

My name is {NAME} and I'm with {ORGANIZATION OR HOWEVER YOU'D LIKE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF}. {PLEASE HAVE CO-FACILITATOR SHARE NAME AND ORGANIZATION}.

#### **PURPOSE:**

We are working in partnership with Creighton University, University of Nebraska Medical Center, and about 13 other community organizations to host these sessions. Our goal is to have real, raw conversations about your experiences with healthcare, education, public health, neighborhood and your surrounding environment, and policy. Why do we want to do this?

UNMC, Creighton, and the 13 other community organizations received a grant from an institution interested in increasing trust among healthcare and communities across the country. Our group decided to take it a few steps further and we want to understand your level of trust in four other areas too:

1. Education
2. Neighborhood and environment
3. Policy
4. Public health
5. {HEALTHCARE – YOU DON'T NEED TO SAY THIS ONE BUT MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND

So, we came together as partners in this project because each of us are deeply committed to understanding our community's trust levels and how trust plays a role in addressing poor health conditions in our community. We also recognize and understand there are reasons for distrust in our community as it relates to the five areas I mentioned earlier. That is the purpose of this conversation – we want you to share about your experiences with these different areas whether your experiences are good, bad, or simply observations of someone else's experience.

We want to know about your experiences, how they made you feel, and what you wish would've happened instead. We know our community has had very good reasons for not trusting local organizations and sometimes you may not have an opportunity to share about the experiences you had which led you to mistrust. We truly hope you will open up and share about these experiences because we want to listen and learn from you.

#### **WHY ARE WE COLLECTING THIS INFORMATION:**

We want find ways that will guarantee that organizations within each of these areas do not continue to make these mistakes again when they interact with people in our community. Therefore, we want this to be an opportunity for you to speak freely.

#### **HOW WILL THIS INFORMATION BE USED:**

We hope that the experiences and stories shared during these conversations will be shared with the organizations within each of these areas so that we can build a strategy with those organizations to become more trustworthy to our community.

#### **WHO WILL SEE THIS INFORMATION:**

The information that comes out of these conversations today will be seen by the people serving as members on this project who also represent the organizations who agreed to be part of this work

**{REFER TO SHEET ON THE WALL THAT HAS A LIST OF THE ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING}** We will not share your names or who said what. Instead, the information will be shared in a way that we keep your identity confidential. Basically, it will be a summary of what is shared by all of you today.

**WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF THIS PROJECT:**

We want to use the format of these conversations to help other communities like ours across the country to begin having these conversations and hold the organizations accountable to doing what you all feel is necessary to demonstrate that we can trust them.

We also want these conversations today to be a way to hold the organizations in each area accountable to become more trustworthy organizations so we can see improvements in our community's health and wellbeing.

Does anyone have any questions or comments about the purpose of today's session?

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**{BELOW IS A LIST OF THE ORGANIZATIONS BY AREA IN CASE ANYONE ASKS AT THE SESSION}:**

Education: Malcolm X Memorial Foundation; Bluebird Cultural Initiative; Midlands African Chamber; Empowerment Network

Health: The Wellbeing Partners; NOAH Clinic; Big Elk Native American Center; Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coalition

Neighborhood & Environment: YouTurn; No More Empty Pots; Restoring Dignity

Policy: IBeBlackGirl

Public Health: Douglas County Health Department; Heartland Family Service

**Ground Rules:**

- Respect: Everyone's voice is valued. Listen actively and without judgement.
- Confidentiality: What is shared in the group stays in the group unless explicitly stated otherwise.
- Equity in Speaking: Encourage everyone to speak, ensuring that no one dominates the conversation.
- Use of "I" Statements: Encourage participants to speak from their own experience rather than making generalized statements.

**Speak Freely Session [1 hour]**

**Opening Questions: (Examples below, but questions will vary by community group)**

- What tribe/nation are you a part of?
- What does it mean to you to be native?
- How often do you confront or think about impacts of colonization on the lives of Indigenous and Native American people in our community?

**Reflection & Closing [15 min]**

#### Reflection Activity:

- Ask participants to share one takeaway or insight they gained from the discussion.

#### Closing Remarks:

- Summarize key points discussed.
- Thank participants for their contributions and remind them of the confidentiality of the discussion.

#### Next Steps:

- Schedule upcoming meetings.
- Issue payment.
- Provide contact information for further questions or support.

### **Following the Sessions**

#### Review and Document:

- Summarize the discussion, noting key themes and any actionable points raised.

#### Feedback:

- Consider sending out a brief feedback form to participants to gather insights on how the session went and what could be improved for future meetings.

#### Plan for Future Sessions:

- Reflect on what worked well and what didn't and use this to inform the planning of future sessions.