

# Community Engagement - Harwood Style



Prepared for the Trustee Institute  
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Westchester Library System

# Ask and Listen!

## Instructions:

- Ask each other these four questions ( 1 person goes through all four then switch; 3 min each)
- Return to main group to share highlights of what you heard / observed



## ASK TOOL

**Use this tool:** Engage individuals in quick three to seven minute conversations. Start by introducing yourself. You can say, "Hi, I'm part of *[insert name of organization]* and we're trying to learn more about people's aspirations for the community. Would you be willing to answer four quick questions?"

### 1. What kind of community do you want to live in?

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### 2. Why is that important to you?

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### 3. How is that different from how you see things now?

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### 4. What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

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# What is the Harwood Approach?



Inspiring community leaders to build **public knowledge**  
and foster innovation to build a better futureCE



*“Public innovators are pragmatic idealists. They hold a deep understanding of the reality of their community and, at the same time, incessantly tap their imagination to see possibilities for a path that leads to a brighter future.*

*Public innovators are dogged in their determination to make progress; and they are risk-takers, when necessary. They have learned to innovate from within whatever structure they operate.”*



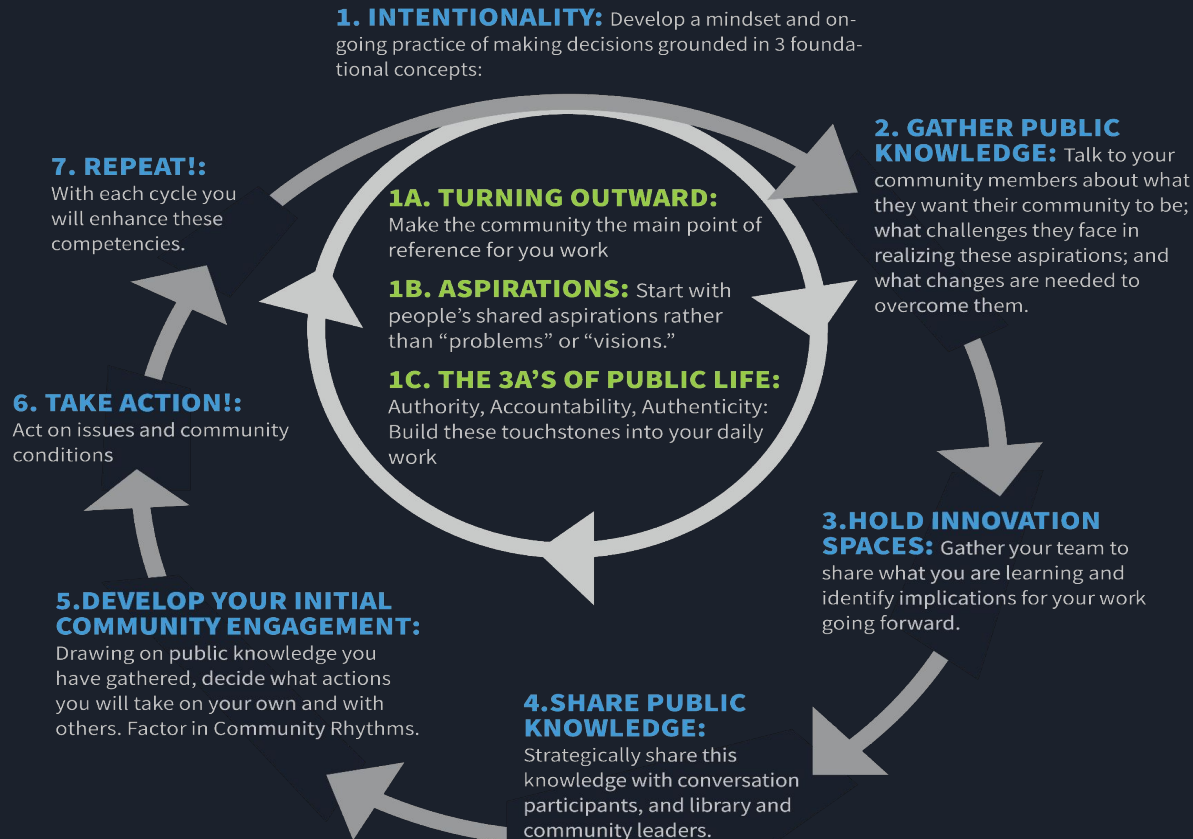
# A New Orientation

1. **Intentional**
  - a. **Turned outward**
  - b. Aspiration-focused
  - c. Committed to  
evidencing authority,  
accountability, and  
authenticity
2. **and Ongoing...**

*“When people and organizations turn outward, efforts to solve challenges have a much greater chance of having a lasting impact, generating more support and resources, and creating a community that is better equipped to sustain the change – AND tackle other challenges. “*

# THE CYCLE OF PUBLIC INNOVATION

(ALA Libraries Transforming Communities and the Harwood Institute)





# Why Us?

.... all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided **for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves**. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information **presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.**

III. Libraries should **challenge censorship** in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should **cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.**

V. A **person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged** because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an **equitable basis**, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should **advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data**, including personally identifiable information.

**ALA Library Bill of Rights**, Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

# Why Now?

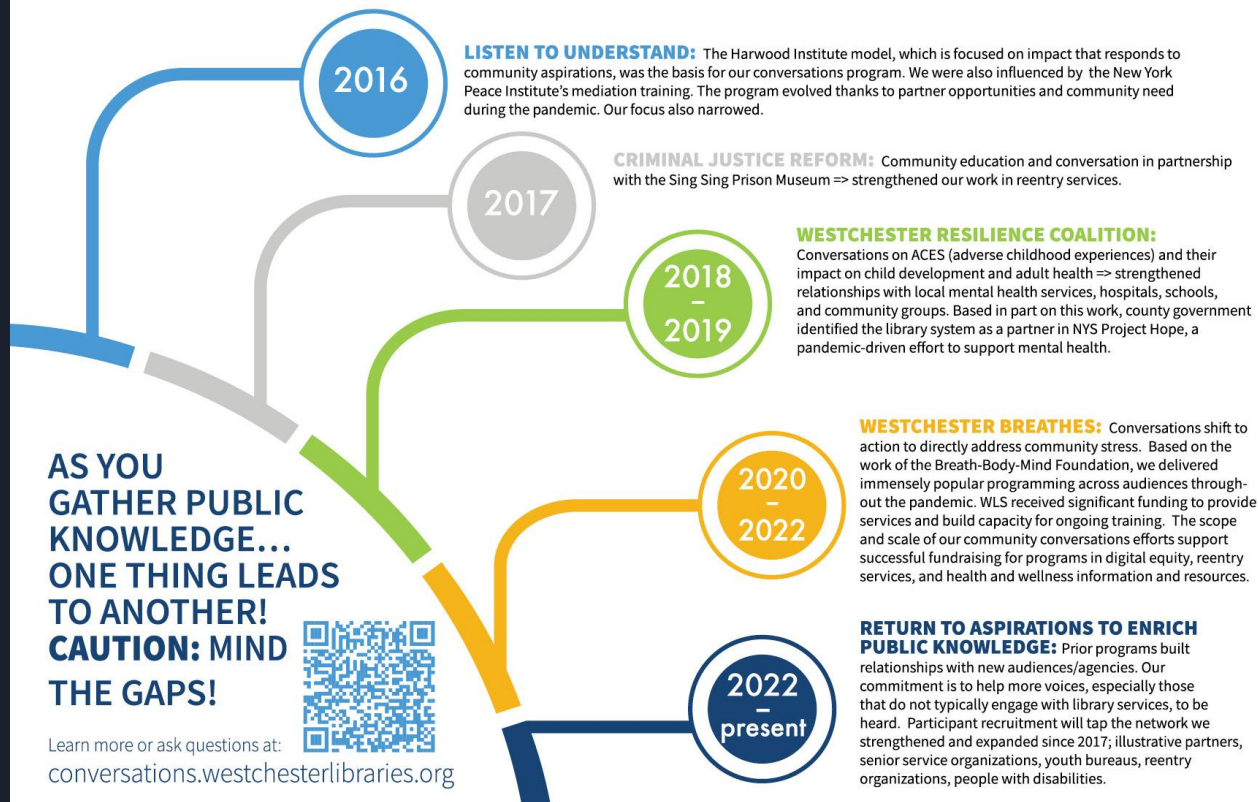
Key findings from “Civic Virus: Why Polarization is a Misdiagnosis”



- 1 People say Americans have separated and segregated themselves, focusing on their differences and not what they hold in common. Human connection has frayed.
- 2 Many political leaders and news media are manufacturing polarization to stoke division and pursue their own self-interest, with social media helping to create and amplify these divisions. This is producing overwhelming “surround sound” that is engulfing people, pushing them apart, and creating deep anxiety.
- 3 People are experiencing a profound sense of loss of reality and control, leaving them dizzy, disoriented, and feeling helpless.
- 4 People’s response to the threatening cross-currents engulfing them is fight or flight.
- 5 Many people are quick to view their fellow Americans as “the other,” using simplistic cues and preconceived notions which are leading to even deeper feelings of isolation and instability.
- 6 People trust God, their faith, themselves, and those they personally know. No one else.
- 7 While being an American is an important part of who most people are, being a part of America is complicated and strained for many.
- 8 Across the country, there is a desperate search for acceptance and belonging.
- 9 Empathy, productive talk, and compromise are prerequisites for moving society forward. But who will feel safe enough to step forward?
- 10 Locally, people are working together. And they saw vivid examples of community action throughout the pandemic but are uncertain whether these responses will last. Still, most people believe that change must start in local communities.

# Conversation Yields Rewards

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS TO BUILD PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE



# Lessons Learned

## DEVELOPING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND BEING TURNED OUTWARD IS THE WORK OF LIBRARIES

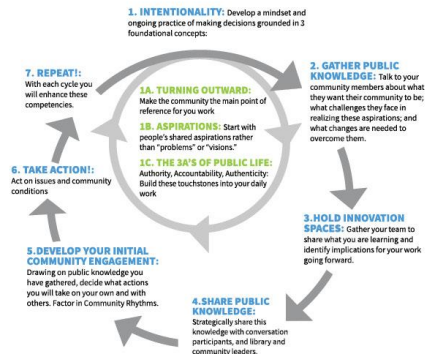
*"Turning outward is fundamentally an orientation... a posture, a mindset. Only when you are Turned Outward can you truly see and hear others. Only then can you have reality in your line of sight..."*

*Once you turn outward, then what? You must become more intentional in the choices that shape your actions. Each of us must decide whether we will pursue the status quo that too often is filled by division, disappointment and frustration – or choose an alternative path of possibility and hope. For instance, will we choose to authentically engage people, or simply offer lip service to such engagement? Will we focus on issues that matter to people, or pursue some other agenda? Will we produce positive impact in people's lives, or become consumer by endless activities? This alternate path is about stepping forward and accounting for the pledges and promises we make."*

—Rich Harwood on Turning Outward

## THE CYCLE OF PUBLIC INNOVATION

(ALA Libraries Transforming Communities and the Harwood Institute)



## Westchester Library System (WLS)

WLS empowers lives and communities. It provides model programs, affordable and easy-to-use information technology, and support services that enable libraries to continuously improve their service to their communities.

Outreach audiences include seniors, adults, families and caregivers seeking information and referral to community services; those returning to the community after incarceration, adults seeking to expand core skills to support jobs and careers; community members seeking assistance in evaluating and accessing digital information; and community agencies seeking to enhance client access to our essential services.



## CAUTIONS:



**BEING OPPORTUNISTIC CAN YIELD BENEFITS, BUT KEEP YOUR INTENTIONS IN MIND.**



**IT IS WAY TOO EASY TO DEFAULT TO TELLING VS. LISTENING** – Structure an agenda so the conversation takes precedence. Welcome, set ground rules, and go. Conversation thrives when given dedicated time and space.



**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING** – Repeat to the participants what you've heard; use their words, not your own. Give them the opportunity to correct you!



**DON'T OVERSTATE** – Don't report as if what you've heard is illustrative of the entire community. When you overstate, you shut other voices.

# Turning Outward

## THE TURN QUIZ

### Are you Mostly Turned Inward or Outward?

Look at the two columns below. For each row circle the word that best describes the focus of your work or efforts in the community. Descriptions on the next page.

I am generally focused on:

#### INWARD



Activity



Programs



My Organization



People as Consumers



Process



Outreach



Public Relations



Inputs



Claiming Turf



Charity



Feeling Good

#### OUTWARD



Action



People



My Community



People as Citizens



Progress



Engagement



People's Reality



Impact



Coming Together



Change



Doing Good

## TURN QUIZ DESCRIPTIONS

### INWARD



#### ACTIVITY

Getting tasks on my list done; the better I'm doing!



#### PROGRAMS

Making sure the programs I'm part of are well executed and the people who are part of them feel good about the services they receive.



#### MY ORGANIZATION

Our bottom line, our brand position, our reputation, our competitive advantage – these things frame our internal conversations.



#### PEOPLE AS CONSUMERS

Our job is to provide good customer service, through good programs, good experiences, services, etc. Our success is whether our customers are satisfied with that they get from us.



#### PROCESS

I emphasize making sure that the steps are fulfilled in whatever I'm doing. Getting through the steps is important and how I measure my success.



#### OUTREACH

We need to make sure that we have enough ways to connect with people. This might be educational opportunities and other kinds of fun activities where people get to learn about our work.



#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

We need to make sure we are selling the positives of our work to as many people as possible.



#### INPUTS

I have to stay focused on the tasks I have to do as part of a larger effort. I can't worry about anything else.



#### CLAIMING TURF

We need to really make sure people know what issues or efforts we "own" in the community. If we don't make sure it happens, we won't get credit.



#### CHARITY

People and groups getting resources they need; making sure that giving is happening.



#### FEELING GOOD

Success is measured by whether people enjoyed programs, like our organization and have good things to say about us. We don't "rock the boat" too much.

### OUTWARD



#### ACTION

Making sure that what I'm doing is adding up to the result I want.



#### PEOPLE

Thinking first about the people whose lives I want to impact and making sure their experiences drive my programmatic choices.



#### MY COMMUNITY

What is our role in relationship to our community? Is the state of the community what frames our conversations inside our organization?



#### PEOPLE AS CITIZENS

Our job is to work with people in communities, who also have a responsibility and a role to play in addressing problems that we all hold in common.



#### PROGRESS

I emphasize whether I'm moving the issue forward I care about. Processes are useful insofar as they help do that and should be adjusted as needed.



#### ENGAGEMENT

We have to regularly listen to people in our community in a way that lets them be open about the kind of community they want and the challenges they see.



#### PEOPLE'S REALITY

The most important thing we can do is reflect the reality of people's lives so they know they're heard and then how our work connects to that reality.



#### IMPACT

My tasks are important, but only insofar as they are leading to results that improve lives and our community. I am always checking whether what I'm doing adds up.



#### COMING TOGETHER

Making sure that things are getting done and people are working together to make it happen produces results, and we have to start there before we think about credit.



#### CHANGE

Making sure that progress is happening in the community and issues are getting addressed, which sometimes takes money and programs and sometimes doesn't.



#### DOING GOOD

We are willing to make hard choices to do what's right by people in the community, which means we have to accept that not everyone is going to like what we do, and we aren't always going to be happy with doing it.



# Poll

Based on this quick review....is your organization turned more inward then outward?

- More inward
- More outward
- 50 / 50

*Psst. This poll is anonymous!*



# Conversation Models to Enrich Public Knowledge

**Ask Tool** - 5-7 minutes; one-on-one or small discussion groups; excellent staff learning opportunity

**Aspirations Dialog** - 45-60 min; ideal for discussions with groups at existing meetings.

**Community Conversation** - 90 min-2 hours; planned event that allows groups to go a bit deeper into a subject area.

*Ask and Aspirations are good ways to become more familiar with this type of community engagement. A powerful way for your community to hear and understand.*

# Aspirations Conversation



## Aspirations Facilitator's Guide

### Instructions for leading a conversation about aspirations

- For this exercise you'll be asking the three questions shown below and helping to identify patterns or themes from the answers given.
- Make sure everyone has a copy of the Aspirations questions.
- Give your participants ten minutes to read and write down their answers to these three questions.
- Go through the questions in order and for each, record their answers on a flip chart and identify any patterns or themes that emerge from their answers.

#### ① What are your aspirations your community?

Record your participant's answers on the flip chart. Capture the key words they use.

Ask the group:

- What patterns do you see?
- Are there any themes emerging? Name some of these themes.

Make sure that you've captured the essence of their thoughts and responses.

#### ② What challenges do we face in reaching these aspirations?

Record your participant's answers on the flip chart. Capture the key words they use.

Ask the group:

- What patterns do you see?
- Are there any themes emerging? Name some of these themes.

Make sure that you've captured the essence of their thoughts and responses.

#### ③ What needs to change in the community to reach our aspirations?

Record your participant's answers on the flip chart. Capture the key words they use.

Ask the group:

- What patterns do you see?
- Are there any themes emerging? Name some of these themes.

Make sure that you've captured the essence of their thoughts and responses.

(continued on the back)

Try another Harwood in a Half Hour: Turn Outward, Intentionality, and Sustaining Yourself  
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## Aspirations Facilitator's Guide

### How to summarize:

Once the three questions have been answered and the responses recorded, summarize what your participants have said by telling a story.

We began by saying that we wanted a community where \_\_\_\_\_ (aspirations) but we face \_\_\_\_\_ (challenges). So if we want to reach our aspirations, we need to create \_\_\_\_\_ (new conditions/change)

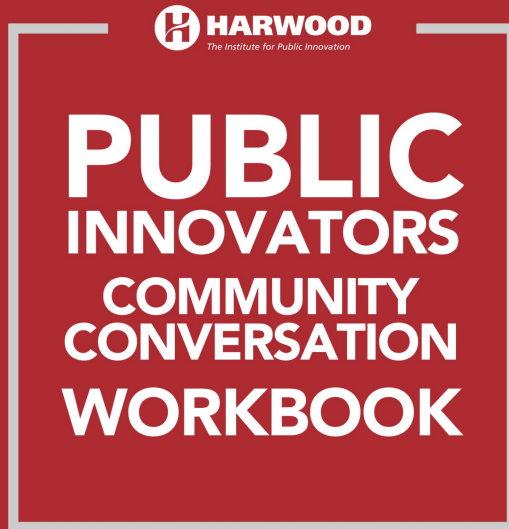
### HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

- ① Record the themes and post them where people will frequently see them. Ask: If this story about our shared aspirations is true, then what does that mean for our work together?
- ② Share this exercise with others - with your co-workers, at your place of worship, with friends, your PTA, your board, etc. Ask: What are the implications for our work? What other groups could use this exercise for their own work?

Next Step? Register for a Harwood Learning Experience, like a Public Innovators Lab, read a Harwood book or sign up for our weekly blog for inspiration and news: [www.theharwoodinstitute.org/harwoodhalffour](http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/harwoodhalffour)

Try another Harwood in a Half Hour: Turn Outward, Intentionality, and Sustaining Yourself  
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# Community Conversations



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# Community Conversation Questions (*illustrative*)

What kind of community do you want? Why is that important? How is that different from the way things are now?

Given what we just said, what are the 2-3 most important issues or concerns when it comes to the community? *Decide which issue is most important for the group and use it for the discussion. If you are going to test a specific issue introduce it here. Introduce the specific issue with follow-up questions like, "How does that fit with what we're talking about?" and "What concerns do you have about that?"*

How do these issues [SUBJECT AREA] we're talking about affect you personally? What personal experiences have you had? How about people around you -- family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, others -- what do you see them experiencing? Are some people affected more than others? Who? In what ways? Why?

# Community Conversation Questions (*illustrative*)



When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference? What do you think these things might accomplish? What are the kinds of things individuals can do to make a difference? What do you make of what other people say should be done? What's important for us to keep in mind when we think about moving forward?

What do you think is keeping us from making the progress we want? Why do you say that? How do you think things got to be this way?

If we came back together in six months or a year, what might you see that would be an indication that the things we talked about tonight were starting to happen? Why would that suggest things were changing? What would it mean to see that?

Thinking back over the conversation, who do you trust to take action on the issues you've been talking about? Why them and not others?

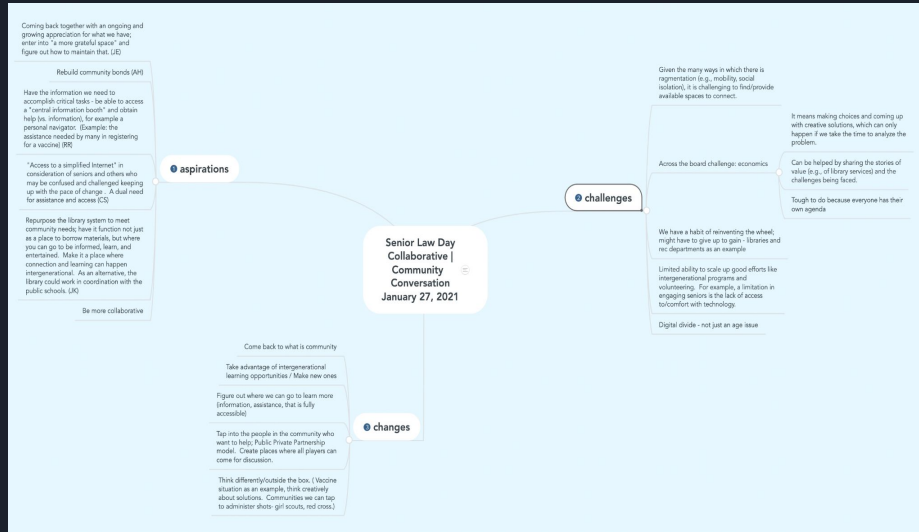


## Tip: MadLIB Format for quickly summarizing

People want .....(aspirations) ..... But they're concerned that ..... (main concerns) .....are in the way of achieving those aspirations. As people talk about those concerns, they talk specifically about ..... (specific issues)..... They believe we need to focus on ..... (actions) ..... and if ..... (groups) ..... played a part in those actions they would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward themselves.

# An example: Aspirations Dialog, Senior Law Day Community, January 2021

*“We began by saying that we wanted a community where people feel connected and can access information that they need, including getting assistance with navigating the information and required technology. The library was identified as a possible focal point for this type of connection and service; if not libraries on their own, then libraries in collaboration with schools. To reach our aspirations we need to make a space to connect that is used by all members of the community (e.g., on the model of public private partnerships, intergenerational programs), and we need to think critically and creatively about how to move forward so we can address challenges posed by technology and economics, seek efficiencies across services, and be sure we know who is left out and think about how to engage them.”*



Session held on Zoom; notetaking done using MindMeister.com.



# Strategic Planning Turned Outward

Same steps as in *typical* strategic planning efforts, but with an outward focus.

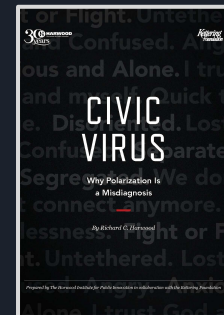
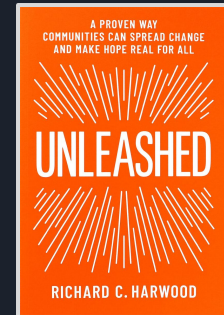
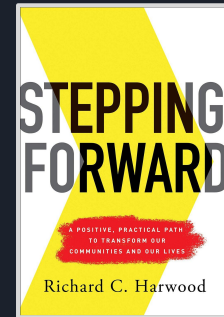
1. **Gathering Input/Reviewing Data** ⇒ Use all the conversation models; summarize both to inform planning and to share with partners and community members.
2. **Setting Direction and Goals** ⇒ How are you currently doing at reflecting the 3As (Authority, Authenticity, and Accountability) in the work of the library? How can you increase and strengthen these dimensions?
3. **Identifying Strategies** ⇒ Do your strategies reflect your Public Knowledge?
4. **Developing Targets and Metrics** ⇒ Can you select metrics that align with community perspective on progress?

# Turning Outward Strategy Chart



KEY MANTRAS TO DRIVE ACTION	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR IMPACT	GUIDEPOSTS ON INFLUENCE & IMPACT	INFLECTION POINTS TO WORK THROUGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn Outward</li> <li>• Get in motion</li> <li>• Start small to go big</li> <li>• Create a new trajectory for hope</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are people's shared aspirations and what matters to them?</li> <li>2. How are you sharing public knowledge to reframe what matters to people and enlist allies?</li> <li>3. What is the community's stage of life and what are the implications for what you should do?</li> <li>4. Who are the right partners to run with?</li> <li>5. How are you working in the sweet spot to take effective action and build underlying conditions for change?</li> <li>6. How are you making your progress visible to yourself and others?</li> <li>7. How are you regularly recalibrating your strategies based on what you are learning?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What space do we/I occupy in the community?</li> <li>2. What is our/my sphere of influence?</li> <li>3. What impact do we/I want to create?</li> <li>4. How do I stay true to what I value?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stuck in planning mode</li> <li>• Turning Outward is Community Conversations</li> <li>• Ignore community context</li> <li>• Fail to choose a doable starting point for action</li> <li>• Wrong partners</li> <li>• Set unrealistic expectations</li> <li>• Lack backing of key internal players</li> <li>• Fear of ambiguity and making choices</li> <li>• "We already do this"</li> <li>• Not opportunistic</li> <li>• Impact is not the focus</li> </ul>

Revised 4/2021





# Next Steps

Join a conversation.

Try the ASK exercise tomorrow. Build connection.

Explore the tools for innovation.


Get inspired and build your civic faith.

**Challenge:** Create a community of practice within Westchester that enriches our perspective and planning as well as that of our partners and our patrons.

“COMMUNITIES MOVE FORWARD WHEN  
ENOUGH PEOPLE INTENTIONALLY  
CHOOSE TO STEP FORWARD, TURN  
OUTWARD TOWARD ONE ANOTHER,  
AND SET IN MOTION MEANINGFUL  
ACTIONS THAT SPREAD LIKE A POSITIVE  
CONTAGION.”

– RICH HARWOOD

# ALWAYS MORE AT: CONVERSATIONS.WESTCHESTERLIBRARIES.ORG



## Community Conversations

Brought to you by Westchester Library System

[Home](#) [Conversations](#) [Breathe](#) [Core Resources](#) [COVID-19](#) [Resilience](#) [About](#) [Q](#)

**Community Conversations** ([conversations.westchesterlibraries.org](https://conversations.westchesterlibraries.org)) is a project of the Westchester Library System that fosters dialog and action on topics of importance to communities throughout Westchester County. Current programs are listed **below**.



### Community Conversations

Turnout outward....Harwood-style.

[READ MORE](#)



### Westchester Breathes


Your opportunity to experience and learn gentle movement, breathing and relaxation exercises that reduce stress and anxiety and increase a sense of calm and well-being.

[READ MORE](#)

### Core Resources

Here's a list of links to resources that can assist you as you work to make the connections you need to manage the changes in your life.

[READ MORE](#)



### COVID-19

Current information: what to do if you get sick, where and how to get vaccinated, keeping track and learning more.

[READ MORE](#)

### Resilience

Learn about the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on child and adult health and the ways in which individuals and communities can build resilience.

[READ MORE](#)



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ACEs informed and aligned