

Community Engagement Action Guide

The tables below contain an interactive approach that can be used as you discuss how to move each of the 10 Principles of Trustworthiness from concept to action.

- Tables with an **Orange** header contain an example activity to discuss with your group. You may begin with internal discussion and reflection, and then involve community members. Or you may choose to immediately convene a discussion with community members as you work through the activities
 - Space is allowed for your group's response to the discussion questions, as well as additional actions you might consider in response to the activity.
- Tables with a **Purple** header can be used to add your own activity, prompting questions, and potential actions.

Principle 1: The community is already educated, that's why it doesn't trust you.

Words matter. Be mindful of how you frame your relationship. It is not your job to teach to the gaps you assume the community has. Mistrust is a rational response to actual injustice. The community knows what it doesn't know and will ask when it thinks you have answers it can trust. (This goes for "empowering" the community, too.)

Principle 1 Suggested Activity: Consider your institution's three most recent community communications re: COVID (either about your work in the community or a message directly to your community)			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
• How was your relationship framed? • What unintended messages might you have been delivering? • How (if at all) was the messaging co-developed with the community? • What channels and methods are available for the community to communicate with your organization?	<i>(this column can be filled in during or after a training session)</i>	With community partners, co-create a new style guide for community conversations and messages. Also, identify together the most appropriate venues and channels.	<i>(this column can be filled in during or after a training session)</i>
Add your own Activity here for Principle 1 (this table can be filled in during or after a training session)			
Principle 1 Suggested Activity:			

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

This work is funded by a cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Improving Clinical and Public Health Outcomes through National Partnerships to Prevent and Control Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Disease Threats (Award # 1 NU50CK000586-01-00).” to the bottom of the page.

Principle 2: You are not the only experts.

People closest to injustice are also those closest to the solutions to that injustice. (That is probably not you or your organization and even if it is, there's a power imbalance.) Listen to people in your community. They have deployed survival tactics and strategies for decades. Centuries, even. Take notes. Co-develop. Co-lead. Share power.

Principle 2 Suggested Activity: If you've conducted a community needs assessment in the past or are planning one, consider how it was constructed.

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
• What are the unique assets you think you bring to the table AND the unique assets you think others/partners bring? • To what extent did you involve community members in your most recent community assessment? • Was the community involved in co-developing the questions being asked? • If the assessment involved data collection(e.g. qualitative-interviews, focus groups, or quantitative), who actually collected the data? • How (if at all) did you share results with the community • How do you recognize community contributions to your work?		Look at your current practices re: community assessments and list specific actions you can take to increase community involvement. In addition to community needs, ensure all assessments include a focus on available community assets.	

Principle 2 Suggested Activity: Consider your most recent formal meeting with community members.

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
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• What format did the meeting take? • Who was involved in setting the agenda? • How much time was one-way, didactic communication? • What was the process for inviting community members? • Where was it held? • How was it advertised? • How were community responses captured and incorporated?		Commit to the co-convening of meetings with shared responsibility for agenda development and meeting oversight. Ensure all communities have an equitable opportunity to attend and participate.	
Add your own Activity here for Principle 2 (this table can be filled in during or after a training session)			
Principle 2 Suggested Activity:			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

Principle 3: Without action, your organizational pledge is only performance.

Walk the walk, please. Deploy resources. Coordinate across your organization. Hire someone to the C—suite AND a network/coalition of experts to be responsible because transformation is not a one-person job. Be authentic. Don't just say you're committed to the goal of health equity, do the work to achieve it.

Principle 3 Suggested Activity: Conduct an evaluation of who on staff is currently working on community-related tasks.

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
- Does your institution have a dedicated staff position(s) to work with the community? - Does your organization have a formal strategic plan related to your community engaged work? How do you evaluate progress? - To what extent do all staff positions incorporate working with the community? - What are some coordination points between staff and the community? - What internal resources are available to support this work? Are they sufficient?		Revisit (or develop) a formal strategic plan related to engagement and trustworthiness. Work with your community partners to identify gaps and required support. With your community partners, develop metrics of success and the capacity to track them going forward.	
Add your own Activity here for Principle 3 (this table can be filled in during or after a training session)			
Principle 3 Suggested Activity:			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

Principle 4: An office of community engagement is insufficient.

One FTE doesn't cut it. And don't jam this work into your existing diversity and inclusion office, either. Trustworthiness is not a "minority tax": we are *all* responsible. This is system-wide, all-hands-on deck work, and as such should be acknowledged, incented, and promoted – literally.

Principle 4 Suggested Activity: Review your organization's policies on tenure and promotion			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
- To what extent is the work being valued by the institution through reward and recognition? - How do you ensure that responsibility for engaging with the community is equitably distributed across your organization?		Review and revise merit and promotion policies, and requirements to recognize community service, scholarship and engagement activities.	
Add your own Activity here for Principle 4 (<i>this table can be filled in during or after a training session</i>)			
Principle 4 Suggested Activity:			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

Principle 5: It doesn't start or end with a community advisory board.

Running *your* thoughts by a group of self-appointed community leaders for a thumbs-up does not suffice. Take to the streets to get some unfiltered opinions. And then work together with the community to put that wisdom into the work. Make it clear to all you've done so and explain the benefits accrued.

Principle 5 Suggested Activity: Closely examine your current advisory board(s).

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
• What was the primary purpose/goal of establishing it? • How was it constructed? • Who's on it? • How were members selected? • How (if at all) was it announced? • How many Community Advisory Boards (CABs) exist across your organization? Are they complementary? Aligned? How do you know? • What recognition/support do you provide for your advisory members? • How are you evaluating and communicating the impact of the community advisory board? • What language and tone do you use when communicating with your advisory board? • What channels/forums do you use to communicate with your advisory board?		Identify and review all CABs across your organization. Assess composition and internal policies regarding the process of nomination/selection. Address gaps with an eye toward diversity, inclusion, and new perspectives.	
Add your own Activity here for Principle 5 (this table can be filled in during or after a training session)			
Principle 5 Suggested Activity:			

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

Principle 6: Diversity is more than skin deep.

We are diverse within our diversity. Do not rely solely on matching skin tones to make a difference. Think intersectionality and multiple identities but remember: humility and honesty are the foundation for earning trust.

Principle 6 Suggested Activity: Examine your currently active projects that focus on the health of communities that have been under-resourced and minoritized.

Questions to for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Action
- How do you identify and select staff who are asked to serve on diversity and health equity related groups, task forces, etc.? - Who is leading them? - How did they get there? - Do you see any patterns? - Are there other experts that are not engaged in the work? why not?		Convene your organization's current community engagement leaders and review the Discussion Questions with them. Develop a plan to broaden organizational expectations about who can and should lead this work.	
Add your own Activity here for Principle 6 (<i>this table can be filled in during or after a training session</i>)			
Principle 6 Suggested Activity:			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

Principle 7: There's more than one gay bar, one “Black church” and one bodega in your community.

Not all gay people go to the club, and not all people of color go to the same church (or go at all.) Know *all* of your community's assets. Visit them. Meet the patrons. Meet the leaders. Break bread and share a meal – at their tables.

Note: For more information on activities, including the Health Equity Inventory, please see [Building a Systems Approach to Community Health and Health Equity | AAMC](#)

Principle 7 Suggested Activity: Research the resources available in your local community.			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
- Has your organization's leadership visited community partners' sites? - Do clinicians visit the community organization to which they're referring patients for social services? - What is your strategy for ensuring broad engagement across your community? - What have you learned from residents about the community's assets and resources? - What opportunities exist for people from your organization to spend real time with the community at events that matter to the community?		Use the Health Equity Inventory (or another data collection method) to review which community partners might be overburdened and which might be under-engaged. Develop a strategy and action steps to broaden your community connections.	
Add your own Activity here for Principle 7 (this table can be filled in during or after a training session)			
Principle 7 Suggested Activity:			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

Principle 8: Show your work.

The community does not think you are perfect, and the past is always present. So be transparent with your limitations, your biases, your goals, your funding, and the outcomes that matter to you. Then ask the community to do the same. Identify the “win-win” for all parties. No secrets, no surprises.

Principle 8 Suggested Activity: Take a close look at one of your most recently funded community projects and the outcomes

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
• How do you ensure that all players in the programs/projects have aligned goals and objectives? • Did you share information regarding the allocation and source of funding? • Did you discuss/co-create how outcomes would be evaluated and disseminated? • How are you setting up programs/projects to ensure sustainability? • What are your policies on sharing data?		Develop and incorporate consensus-building processes for your next set of programs/projects.	

Add your own Activity here for Principle 8 *(this table can be filled in during or after a training session)*

Principle 8 Suggested Activity:

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

Principle 9: If you're gonna do it, take your time, do it right.

Demonstrating trustworthiness is not a one-and-done proposition. Keep at it. Be mindful. And remember, it takes a long time to build trust and only a split second to destroy it. Pace yourself.

Principle 9 Suggested Activity: Plot the life course of a typical community engaged project for your org and then think through ways to improve it.

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
- How does your community assess the strength of its partnership with you? What tools does it use? - How do you assess the strength of your community partnerships? What tools do you use? - Reflect on partnerships that you think are well developed. What characteristics do they have? - How long did they take to build? - Why are they successful? - What doesn't work?		Create a roadmap: short-term and longer-term commitments, including key milestones and ongoing assessments. Co-develop with community partners mechanisms for gathering feedback from the community on an ongoing basis.	
Add your own Activity here for Principle 9 (this table can be filled in during or after a training session)			
Principle 9 Suggested Activity:			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions

Principle 10: The project may be over, but the work is not.

Do not drop in and drop out. Share results. Partner on next steps. Close the loop. The community is constant – it is not there only for the duration of your grant or initiative. Be there for it always and it is more likely to want to be there for you.

Principle 10 Suggested Activity: Reflect on a recent community project that ended more than 1 year ago.

Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions
• To what extent were community members co-leaders of the work? • To what extent were community members involved in a two-way dialogue about the results and findings? • How are bidirectional communication channels maintained over time, even in the absence of a specific work? • How can the community best engage with you? • How do you plan to continue engagement after a current project?		Develop a sustainability model for the community to continue the work that's important to them, with your continued support and engagement. With community partnership, create routine opportunities for connection and relationship building, outside of projects and work settings.	
Add your own Activity here for Principle 10 (<i>this table can be filled in during or after a training session</i>)			
Principle 10 Suggested Activity:			
Questions for Discussion	Your Response to Questions	Suggested Action	Additional Actions