WORKSHOP 4

Skills for Community-Centered Libraries
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WELCOME!

TAKE AND TURN UPDATE

Your assignment was:

- Improve an existing program for the long-term through changes to capacity, sustainability or communication.

- Design a survey for a successful program or a program that needs improvement.

  1. Discuss the survey that you created and the specific program.

  2. What are you hoping to learn from this feedback?

  3. Which platforms will you use to share your success stories and the voices from your community?

The purpose of these workshops is to work toward a common goal of community engagement <u>for your</u> community <u>as defined by</u> your community.

Today's workshop addresses this goal by providing the skills to have productive dialogues with our community members to better understand their unique needs and goals.

WORKSHOP 4 AGENDA: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

- Clarify the differences between community outreach and community engagement

- Share our community engagement strategies

- Become familiar with SOAR, a strengths-based approach to strategic planning

- Discuss facilitation tips

- Practice the SOAR model to create a vision and set priorities at your library

- Plan a community meeting using SOAR

PARTICIPANT GUIDE INTRODUCTION

- Design Framework (pages 4–5)

- Overview and Specific Learning Objectives (pages 6–7)

- Vocabulary and Terms (page 8)

Participant Guide Pages 4–8

GROUND RULES[1]

- One speaker, one mic

- No one knows everything, together we know a lot

- Move up, move up

- We can't be articulate all the time

- Embrace curiosity

- Acknowledge the difference between intent and impact

- Specific rules for your group

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[1] Adapted from Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance. (2017). Anti-oppressive facilitation for democratic process.

GROUND RULES IN PRACTICE

- We will use the ground rules to guide our discussions.

- At times we may refer back to the rules to keep us on track.

- Let's put these rules to the test and dig into our activities!

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OUTREACH vs. ENGAGEMENT

- **Community Outreach:** Building awareness and sharing information about programs, resources, and services with people in a community.

- Examples: door-knocking, tabling at community events, flyering, phone-banking, and doing presentations about the library's resources

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OUTREACH vs. ENGAGEMENT

- **Community Engagement:** Building relationships between staff and surrounding communities to empower people to take ownership of their library and its resources. Engagement is an active partnership that serves the interest of local communities and the public good.

- Examples: team roles, networking, community walk, asset mapping, the iceberg, open-ended questions, program development with community input, survey design, sharing your program success, thinking about "failure" as information and a small step towards success and facilitating conversations in which people can envision what they want out of their library
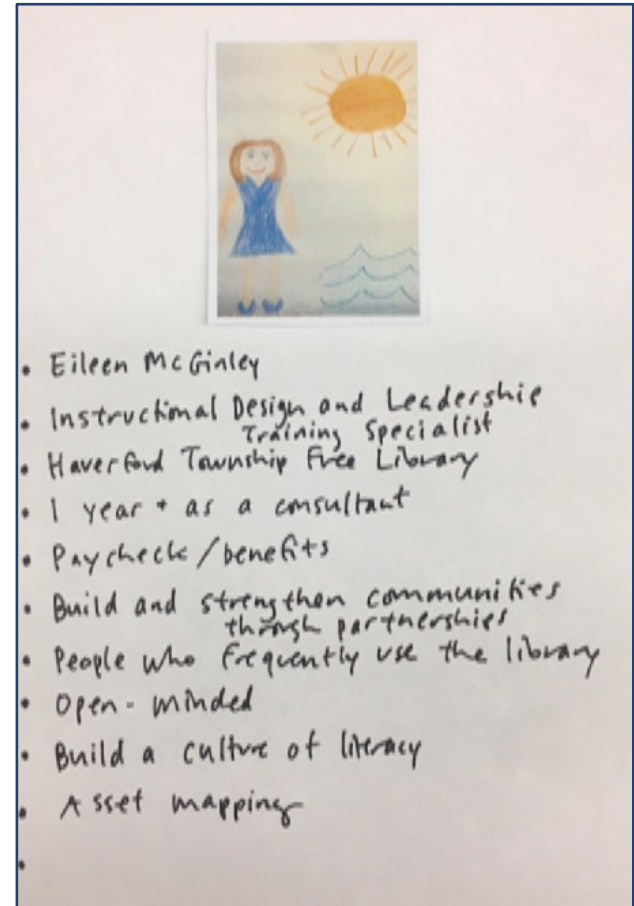
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TRADING CARD DISCUSSION

- Select <u>two community engagement practices</u> from these workshops that have been valuable to you. How will you continue to incorporate these into your day-to-day work?

  - ◆ **Examples:** team roles, networking, community walk, asset mapping, the iceberg, open-ended questions, program development with community input, survey design, sharing your program success, thinking about "failure" as information

- What community engagement practices <u>do you use</u> to build connections with your community? Explain why these practices have been successful.

  - ◆ **Examples:** community meetings, bookmobiles, working with Friends Groups, or shelving non-fictions books in a way that supports all reading abilities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

■ What practices from these workshops have been most valuable to you?

  ◆ Asset Mapping

  ◆ Community Walk

  ◆ The Iceberg

  ◆ Survey Design

  ◆ Sharing Success

  ◆ Program Development with Community Input

  ◆ Something else?

Activity from: http://gamestorming.com/trading-cards/

- Eileen McGinley
- Instructional Design and Leadership Training Specialist
- Haverford Township Free Library
- 1 year + as a consultant
- Paycheck/benefits
- Build and strengthen communities through partnerships
- People who frequently use the library
- Open-minded
- Build a culture of literacy
- Asset mapping

WARM-UP DISCUSSION

What community engagement practices do you use to build connections with your community? Explain why these practices have been successful.

- Examples: community meetings, bookmobiles, working with friends, or shelving nonfictions books in a way that supports all reading abilities.

Knowing what matters to your community
helps you set programming and plan initiatives.

The big question is:
How do you find out what your
community members want?

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."
—Albert Einstein

One way to get a different angle on things is by using a SOAR Analysis.

This is a strengths-based approach to strategic planning.

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WHERE DOES THE SOAR FOR LIBRARIES COME FROM?

The Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, created the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries to help advance the work that public libraries are doing to address community challenges and to support the transformation of communities and their public libraries in the digital age.

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RISING TO THE CHALLENGE: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries FACILITATOR'S GUIDE, The Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries

WHAT IS SOAR?

- **S**trengths: What can we build on?

- **O**pportunities: What are our best chances to leverage success?

- **A**spirations: What do we care deeply about?

- **R**esults: How will we know we are succeeding?

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MODELING SOAR

This workshop demonstrates the full SOAR model through a series of table and whole group discussions.

We will use the SOAR analysis as a framework to move beyond the community outreach model in order to create a vision and action plan for community engagement in this library network.

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SOAR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you ever been part of a SOAR discussion, or used a similar model? What was it like?

- What types of meetings have you facilitated or attended at your library or elsewhere that engaged the community in planning or goal setting? What strategies did you use to prepare for and lead these meetings?

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Now we are going to review some facilitation
tips that will be helpful as you engage
with the SOAR model at your tables.

FACILITATION TIPS

These tips will help you facilitate meaningful dialogues:

- ✓ Prepare in advance

- ✓ Create an agenda

- ✓ Share your objectives

- ✓ Manage conversations

- ✓ End with action items

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Now you will have an opportunity to use these tips as we engage in the SOAR analysis for community engagement in your library network.

SOAR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This SOAR Analysis will give you a clear understanding of the current strengths in your community engagement practices.

Then you will **build on those strengths!**

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SOAR LAYOUT

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A	**R**
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STRENGTHS:
WHAT CAN WE BUILD ON?

1. What is the library known for?

2. What does the community think the library does well? How can we build on that together?

3. What key resources give the library an advantage to connect with their communities in a world where information resources can be found nearly everywhere?

4. What makes the library unique?

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WHAT IS THE LIBRARY KNOWN FOR?

- books

- resources

- programs

- free space

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WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY THINK THE LIBRARY DOES WELL? HOW CAN WE BUILD ON THAT TOGETHER?

- active listening to patron needs

- access to WiFi

- storytimes

- children's programs

- afterschool programs

- job programs

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WHAT KEY RESOURCES GIVE THE LIBRARY AN ADVANTAGE TO CONNECT WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES IN A WORLD WHERE INFORMATION RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND NEARLY EVERYWHERE?

- staff: experiences, training, and expertise!

- programming for ALL ages

- free access to wifi, computers, and printing

- author events

- databases

- collections

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WHAT MAKES THE LIBRARY UNIQUE?

- free and open to anyone

- safe space

- place for social connection

- neighborhood locations

- serve the needs of your unique neighborhood

- free resources for English Language Learners and job seekers

- free computer lab classes

- special collections, archives, rare books

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SOAR MODEL

S	O
▪ books, resources, programs, space ▪ programming, active listening ▪ staff, computers/printing, author events, collections that serve diverse populations ▪ free and open to anyone, safe space, social connections, free resources for ELLs and job seekers	▪ ▪ ▪ ▪
A ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪	**R** ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪

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OPPORTUNITIES: WHAT ARE OUR BEST CHANCES TO LEVERAGE SUCCESS?

1. What community needs and wants could the library address?

2. How do the library's strengths align with community needs? How could the library develop programs or services targeting these needs?

3. What community partnerships would lead to greater programming success?

4. What are key areas of untapped potential for the library?

5. What changes do we expect to see in our communities over the next five years? Where could the library make a difference?

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Let's share our ideas! Each group will share **one opportunity** for community engagement that builds on an existing strength. We will add these to our main list.

ASPIRATIONS:
WHAT DO WE CARE DEEPLY ABOUT?

1. What is our community passionate about?

2. What should our future community look like?

3. What strategies and actions support our vision for this future library and community?

4. Based on the passions and needs of our community, what can we do to advance the library's strategic plan goals?

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Let's share our ideas! Each group will share **one aspiration** for community engagement that builds on an existing strength. We will add these to our main list.

RESULTS:
HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCEEDING?

1. Considering the identified strengths, opportunities, and aspirations, how will we know we are on track in achieving our goals? What results do we want to see?

2. How might we track the impact or changes that have happened?

3. Imagine it's ten years in the future and your neighborhood library is being recognized as one of the most community-centered libraries in the country. What is said in the proclamation? What did you do along with the community to receive this recognition?

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Each group will share ideas about **measuring results** for community engagement. What type of tools would be most effective? We will add these to our main list.

BREAK

SETTING PRIORITIES AS A GROUP

Community Engagement: Building relationships between staff and surrounding communities to empower people to take ownership of their library and its resources. Engagement is an active partnership that serves the interest of local communities and the public good.

> "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."
> —Albert Einstein

- Top three Opportunities for Community Engagement

- Top three Aspirations for Community Engagement

- Five Action Steps

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DISCUSSION

- Identify one idea about the community or the library that stands out more clearly for you after participating in the SOAR analysis.

- Now that you have experienced the SOAR model and practiced some facilitation skills, what opportunities can you think of for encouraging similar community conversations at your library?

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SOAR for Community Engagement
was a great introduction to this strengths-based
model for strategic planning.

Let's practice SOAR as a Back-to-School
Community Meeting to gain more confidence in the
process and use the facilitation tips!

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SOAR ROLE-PLAY

Scenario: Your library is brainstorming activities, events, and programs to help kick-off the new school year. You are hosting a Back-to-School Community Meeting at the beginning of August to better understand the needs of the community and strategize how to strengthen current programs that relate to our neighborhood students.

You want to engage the entire community (parents, students, young adults, seniors) in this conversation to hear all perspectives and gain diverse feedback and knowledge. Remember that members of our community could be potential community assets or have connections to community assets that will strengthen and help focus our programming.

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Community Asset: The individuals (their knowledge, skills, attitudes, talents, awareness, social connections—everything they embody), community organizations, and larger institutions that provide resources and services to your local community.

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL SOAR ROLE-PLAY: STEP 1

Step 1: Each group will select a <u>discussion leader</u> and a note-taker. The discussion leader will use facilitation tips to manage conversations and to engage participants (refer to pg. 13 in the Participant Guide) for the entire SOAR model.

Other participants in the group will choose a <u>role</u> for the meeting (examples: parent of a 3rd grade student concerned about the high cost of school supplies, senior citizen that wants to volunteer to work with a gardening club after school).

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL SOAR ROLE-PLAY: STEP 2

Step 2: The discussion leader will guide the group in brainstorming "S" for Strengths. The discussion leader will use facilitation tips to manage conversations and to engage participants. The note taker will write the group's ideas on chart paper.

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STRENGTHS:
WHAT CAN WE BUILD ON?

1. What is the library known for?

2. What does the community think the library does well? How can we build on that together?

3. What key resources give the library an advantage to connect with their communities in a world where information resources can be found nearly everywhere?

4. What makes the library unique?

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL SOAR ROLE-PLAY: STEP 3

Step 3: The discussion leader will guide the group in brainstorming "O" for Opportunities, building upon the Strengths. The discussion leader will use facilitation tips to manage conversations and to engage participants. The note taker will write the group's ideas on chart paper.

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OPPORTUNITIES: WHAT ARE OUR BEST CHANCES TO LEVERAGE SUCCESS?

1. What community needs and wants could the library address?

2. How do the library's strengths align with community needs? How could the library develop programs or services targeting these needs?

3. What community partnerships would lead to greater programming success?

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL SOAR ROLE-PLAY: STEP 4

Step 4: The discussion leader will guide the group in brainstorming "A" for Aspirations, building upon the Strengths. The discussion leader will use facilitation tips to manage conversations and to engage participants. The note taker will write the group's ideas on chart paper.

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ASPIRATIONS:
WHAT DO WE CARE DEEPLY ABOUT?

1. What is our community passionate about?

2. What should our future community look like?

3. What strategies and actions support our vision for this future library and community?

4. Based on the passions and needs of our community, what can we do to advance the library's strategic plan goals?

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL SOAR ROLE-PLAY: STEP 5

Step 5: The discussion leader will lead the group in brainstorming "R" for Results, building upon "S" "O" and "A". The discussion leader will use facilitation tips to manage conversations and to engage participants. The note taker will write the group's ideas on chart paper.

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RESULTS:
HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCEEDING?

1. Considering the identified strengths, opportunities, and aspirations, how will we know we are on track in achieving our goals? What results do we want to see?

2. How might we track the impact or changes that have happened?

3. Imagine it's ten years in the future and your neighborhood library is being recognized as one of the most community-centered libraries in the country. What is said in the proclamation? What did you do along with the community to receive this recognition?

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL SOAR ROLE-PLAY: STEP 6

Step 6: The discussion leader will guide the group to create a shared vision for the future based on the Opportunities and Aspirations shared.

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SETTING PRIORITIES FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL

Community Engagement: Building relationships between staff and surrounding communities to empower people to take ownership of their library and its resources. Engagement is an active partnership that serves the interest of local communities and the public good.

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- Top three Opportunities for Community Engagement

- Top three Aspirations for Community Engagement

- Five Action Steps

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SOAR ROLE-PLAY DEBRIEF

- What insights about facilitation did you gain from this role-play?

- What ideas were you most excited about from this role-play?

- Which part of the SOAR was the most challenging? How could you prepare to make this part work more smoothly?

- What would you need to practice or prepare to feel ready for a SOAR meeting with your community?

Engaging in SOAR discussions with your community
will allow you to understand the needs and desires of
your patrons and create an opportunity to map
out how to achieve those goals.

Let's spend some time planning the logistics
for a SOAR meeting at your library.

TAKING SOAR TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Scenario: You have been asked to work with the head of your library's management team to plan a key meeting. Use the SOAR model to help plan your agenda.

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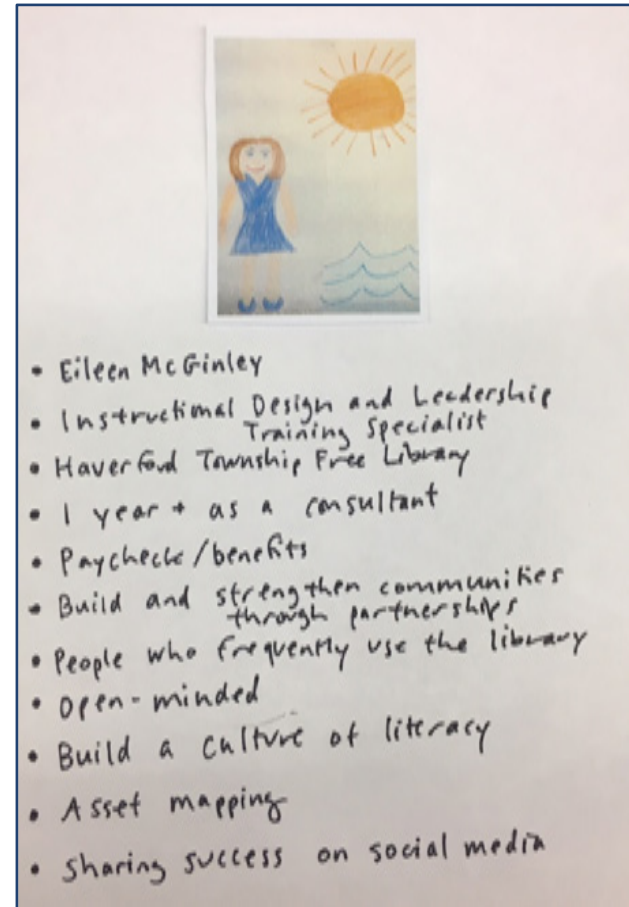# TAKING SOAR TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Planning a meeting

- Planning

- Capture the dialogue and sharing success

- Logistics

- Feedback

Participant Guide Pages 25–27

With facilitation tips, the SOAR model, and these meeting planning guidelines, I hope you feel more confident about planning and facilitating meetings at your library or in other settings.

EMBRACING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What is one thing you can do to embrace this community-engagement model?

- Eileen McGinley
- Instructional Design and Leadership Training Specialist
- Haverford Township Free Library
- 1 year + as a consultant
- Paycheck/benefits
- Build and strengthen communities through partnerships
- People who frequently use the library
- Open-minded
- Build a culture of literacy
- Asset mapping
- Sharing success on social media

Activity from: http://gamestorming.com/trading-cards/

STRENGTHS AND STRETCHES

Reflect on each of the skills we discussed today. What are your areas of strength for each skill? In what ways can you stretch to develop this skill further or share this skill with your library team?

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WORKSHOP REVIEW

- What did YOU learn today?

- How can you TAKE what we talked about today and TURN it into action?

  - Use a few new facilitation tips at my next community meeting.

  - Plan a SOAR meeting with community members for a new project or a specific priority for your community.

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We hope you have learned skills in today's workshop that will shift your practices toward a common goal of community engagement for your community
as defined by your community.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!