

# Community Skill-Building and Conversations Playbook



**Better Together**



To Our Partners in Community Health:

First, thank you for your continued partnership with us and the work you do in your community every day. While we recognize St. Luke's has significant responsibilities in achieving our mission to improve the health of the people in the communities we serve, this work is not accomplished alone.

Understanding the importance of community, collaboration and conversation, St. Luke's regularly acts as a sponsor, convener and host of health-related events and conversations—maybe even with you! In 2022, recognizing the dire need for mental and behavioral health resources in our communities, St. Luke's Community Health and Engagement organized and hosted **It Takes All of Us**, an event series held in locations throughout Idaho. Through a partnership with WETA, the public broadcasting group, we shared the screener of a documentary about youth mental health, "Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness," alongside facilitated discussion in each community we serve.

Our goals for this series were to provide education and awareness about the problem; create a space for vulnerable, engaged conversation; and help participants build skills so they might continue the discussion long after the events. We learned a great deal through this experience, and we want others to feel empowered to organize and host change-making events and meetings of their own.

While many of you have expertise in this space, others may find planning and running an event overwhelming. That is why we've created this detailed playbook. It is designed to help you navigate with ease the ins and outs of organizing and hosting meetings. We've included tips, considerations and practical examples based on our experiences.

### The playbook includes:

- An outline of a community-event approach.
- Recommendations and considerations for participants, speakers and facilitators.
- Skill-building videos with exercises that discuss and demonstrate those skills.
- An appendix with practical tools, such as marketing materials, a sample agenda and event resources.



While we built this playbook with our event on youth mental health in mind, we hope you find it helpful, insightful and inspiring as you hold important conversations and promote well-being in your community on a variety of topics. Remember, we're here to support you. If you have any questions, ideas or success stories to share, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your feedback is invaluable to us and shapes the resources we provide as we continue to get better together.

Thank you for all you do,

### St. Luke's Community Health and Engagement

190 E. Bannock Street  
Boise, Idaho 83712

### Questions?

Please contact Erin Pfaeffle, senior director of Community Health and Engagement, at [pfaeffle@slhs.org](mailto:pfaeffle@slhs.org).

[stlukesonline.org](http://stlukesonline.org)



# Goal Setting

*Begin With the End in Mind*

***“If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.”***

Lewis Carroll, “Alice in Wonderland”

You have decided to host a community event—congratulations! This is the first of many important steps along your journey. But as Carroll points out, without a goal, any road will do. Setting goals from the beginning provides direction and helps define a path from start to finish.

Before you go any further in your planning, seek alignment with your partners and key collaborators about the purpose of the event and what you would like it to accomplish. While not everyone has to agree on the vision, there should be some consensus around the desired outcome. Otherwise, problems might arise; for example, if one person thinks the goal of the event is listening and learning, and another thinks it is coming up with a plan to solve the issue at hand, it can lead to a lack of clarity through the entire planning process and cause confusion for those attending.

## **Considerations when setting your event goals:**

- What are your desired outcomes from the event or conversation?
- Do you want people to learn something? If so, what?
- What do you want people to know or understand because of the dialogue?
- Do you want to leave the event with a plan to address an issue or implement a specific action?

# Roles and Responsibilities

*Who Is in the Room?*

To create an inclusive event, invite presenters and attendees who reflect the demographics and perspectives of the local community (e.g., teens, elderly, a faith group, Hispanic/Latino residents). The purpose of community-based events is to encourage conversation and vulnerability; to do this, it is crucial that the diverse lived experiences, roles and perspectives of the community are in the room and welcomed.

ROLE	CONSIDERATIONS
<b>Speaker</b>	<p><b>Who:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The speaker might be someone presenting content, opening and/or closing the event, and/or introducing the content or facilitator.</li> <li>• Public or important community figure.</li> <li>• Person should be able to model vulnerability and psychological safety to set the tone for dialogue.</li> <li>• Could have different people opening and closing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Optional:</i> The welcome might include an opening reflection (e.g., a prayer, ceremonial call of gathering, a historical passage/poem) if it will honor the host's wishes and suits the community.</li> <li>• Use the opening to reinforce respect and dignity as well as reflect a safe place, not to push a message.</li> <li>• A personal story or connection to share.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present the agenda.</li> <li>• Create and hold people accountable to agreements.</li> <li>• Promote dialogue; ask questions.</li> <li>• Ensure the meeting delivers the desired outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a physical space (e.g., tables, booths) for resources to be shared.</li> <li>• Partners and/or health providers or resources can bring materials to share.</li> <li>• Mental health experts can also support the facilitator if strong emotions and/or challenging questions arise.</li> </ul>

## Speakers

The speaker(s) set the tone for the event and can significantly impact the energy of the space as well as the audience's sense of emotional safety, if your event's topic is sensitive.

As you start to create a list of potential speakers, be mindful of the goals of the event, and ensure that the people selected can contribute to that. Speakers should also be available for and open to practicing their presentations and messages to ensure they are appropriate for the agenda and target audience.

### Considerations:

- Will the speakers and their messages bring the community together? Are the speakers' views polarizing in any way?
- Do the speakers have lived experiences of the topic? If so, are they in a place in their journeys that they can share without retraumatizing themselves or traumatizing the audience?
- Do their stories' themes align with what you're trying to accomplish (e.g., inclusivity, compassion, etc.)?
- Have you or someone you know heard them speak? Are they willing and able to practice and prepare with you before the event?

## Facilitator

The roles of the facilitator are to keep an event on track, assure working agreements are kept and ask questions that promote dialogue. The facilitator does not need to be a subject-matter expert or have lived experience like the speaker(s), but the person in this role should be aligned with the goals of the event. The facilitator's presence should be consistent and comforting, too. If leading any skill-building exercises or providing any education during the event, the facilitator will need to be comfortable with and knowledgeable about the content.

If a facilitator is from outside the hosting organization, make sure to spend time prior to the event discussing the mission, vision, and values of the host organization and the event.

***Find more guidance for facilitators below in "Facilitation."***

## Expert Resources

It is natural for strong emotions and reactions to arise during vulnerable conversations or as a result of difficult content. If you think your event or the conversations during the session have the potential to activate emotions or cause distress, we strongly suggest having mental health experts in the room to provide support. St. Luke's is always happy to partner with community members and groups doing this work and can recommend experts and providers who might participate.

You can also identify community partners who are available to provide support to individuals and/or supply take-home resources for participants. It can be helpful to set up space or a resource table for attendees to visit if they would like additional support, too.

### Considerations:

- What other organizations or groups are doing similar work in this space?
- Who do you regularly partner with that might be interested in attending?
- What resources might be helpful for those who want to learn more?
- What resources might be helpful for those who want to get involved?
- What resources might be helpful for those whose emotions are activated and/or who are distressed and need support?

## Key Messages

### *Choosing the Right Words*

Because words matter when presenting and discussing important topics, it can be helpful to identify the key messages you want all participants to receive before, during and after the conversation.

Think back to the goals and purpose that you identified, then develop key messages and talking points that support your desired outcome. Share those talking points and messages with the other members of the hosting organization (your team!), the speaker(s), the facilitator and anyone else who might speak at or share information at the event.

By being intentional and consistent in the language you use, it is more likely the correct message is communicated to and understood by your audience. As part of this exercise, also think about the words or ways of talking about a subject to avoid. For example, in a conversation about mental health, words such as “activated” or “adverse childhood experiences” may be preferred over “triggered” or “troubled youth.” Aligning messaging before the event can help avoid misunderstanding or confusion.

### **Considerations:**

- Which keywords and phrases do you want everyone involved in the event to understand before the conversation? After the conversation?
- What key messages and phrases need to be included in all marketing, communication and promotional materials?
- Are there words or phrases that are charged, have the potential for creating negative reactions and/or might cause disruption in understanding?

***See sample marketing materials—ways to get your target audience’s attention and increase attendance—in the appendix.***

## Facilitation

### *Leading With Compassion and Vulnerability*

All facilitators, especially those who are not a part of the organization, will benefit from building a shared understanding with the host organization(s) before the event. The facilitator will want to know if the host has preferences about how and when to bring the group back on topic—for example, if the discussion gets derailed and goes in an unexpected direction—or if the host would prefer for the conversation to flow naturally.

The host and facilitator can also agree on how they might communicate or signal if it is time to move on. If the facilitator feels comfortable and is willing to show vulnerability, the group can also be asked if the conversation is productive or if it is time to change directions.

## Guidance for Facilitators

Conversations on sensitive topics may activate strong emotions or distress; they can also potentially invite participants to share traumatic or emotional experiences. While you want to create a safe space for people, it is important that you establish boundaries, in order to avoid compassion fatigue. This means that it is appropriate and reasonable to show care for and acknowledge an individual's experience while maintaining limits on the discussion.

If participants feel comfortable and share an experience or a strong reaction, thank them and redirect to the appropriate resource(s) in the room, then return to the conversation. As the facilitator, it is important to honor the space as well as the emotional capacity of yourself and the rest of the group. While difficult, it's also essential to not let the discussion go off course while expressing empathy.

Finally, as you prepare, it is important to keep the goals of the event in mind—not your personal goals as the facilitator but the goals of the host(s)—and understand your role as the guide. This can help you be reflective about your contribution, potentially even surrendering your personal desire to execute the agenda perfectly, and instead simply be of service to what the team is trying to accomplish. By doing that, you will do a great job.

### Considerations for the facilitator:

- What are the goals of the event and how can you, in the facilitator role, help achieve those goals?
- How do you need to prepare to be successful in the role?
- Who will be your allies in the room who can give real-time feedback on how to move forward (e.g., in case the conversation moves in an unintended direction)?
- Can you maintain your personal boundaries around compassion and care?

# Event

## *Logistics and Details*

Every hosting organization, audience and community has different needs and preferences. We are sharing suggestions based on what worked well for St. Luke's as well as the feedback we received after recently hosting several community events on youth mental health across Southern Idaho.

## Scheduling

**Day of the week:** Midweek events often have the highest attendance. Mondays are more difficult to help people remember, perhaps due to coming off the weekend or start-of-the-week responsibilities. Audiences generally do not prefer Fridays because they often have plans or are excited to start their weekends.

**Time of day:** Early evening seems to be the best time to host an event. A lunch-and-learn format is not ideal for events exploring sensitive topics, especially if the conversations centers around a video, because of the time required. Some difficult topics are emotional, too, which may make people less inclined to participate in the middle of their days.

**Length of event:** Since events and conversations focused on sensitive, difficult topics can be emotionally taxing, and out of respect for people's time and energy, it's good practice to limit events to two hours or less. It might be helpful to create an agenda early in the planning process to anticipate how much time might be needed.

**Format:** In-person events generally work better for encouraging conversation and engagement among attendees. We would not recommend a hybrid format because of the risk of alienation and/or the potential risk that the content, which is likely sensitive, might be used inappropriately.

**Accommodations:** Consider language and hearing needs during the planning process to ensure that American Sign Language or Spanish (or, depending on the community, another language) interpreters are available in the area. Auditory and visual accommodations may also be necessary (e.g., captions).

**Venue:** Host the event in a place that promotes inclusivity, doesn't make participants feel unwelcome or pressured, is easy to find and enter, and doesn't present transportation or accessibility challenges.

**Food:** Provide water and light snacks at a minimum, avoiding potential allergens such as peanuts and tree nuts. If the event will be held over the dinner hour and be difficult for attendees to plan around, consider offering a catered meal.

**Sponsors and/or Partners:** Consider partnering with a sponsor or co-hosting with another organization who shares your vision and goals. Partners can offer additional financial resources, provide logistical support for the event and share the benefits of the event's outcomes.

## Skill-Building

### *From the Event to the Community*

We collaborated with community health leader Tyler Norris, MDiv, co-founder and CEO of Alliance for Mental Health—and our facilitator for the “It Takes All of Us” events—to create a series of short video vignettes. These are intended to help hosts and facilitators gain a deeper understanding of how to encourage effective group conversations as well as aid participants in building practical skills within the scope of the event. Each video includes a description of context, a demonstration of an exercise and considerations for sensitive content.

#### **Vignette One: “On Leading Great Meetings”**

In this video, you’ll learn the five “W”s (who, what, when, where and why) for planning a successful event. You’ll also hear how you can create an inclusive experience by making sure the right perspectives are in the room; establish boundaries; and build skills, so participants can leave feeling positive. [Watch the video.](#)

#### **Vignette Two: “On Creating Safe Spaces and Events for Honesty and Vulnerability”**

In this video, you’ll learn strategies and preplanning approaches that can help you ensure your event is a safe space for people to be real and vulnerable, share their stories (or not) and be engaged in the conversation. [Watch the video.](#)

#### **Vignette Three: “On Helping People Take Care of Themselves in Events (and Beyond)”**

In this video, you’ll learn how to help participants recognize their current emotional states and use exercises to calm themselves and reset. Facilitators will also discover the importance of this approach for themselves. [Watch the video.](#)

#### **Vignette Four: “On Listening (and Being Listened to)”**

In this video, you’ll be reminded of the value and purpose of practicing respectful, active listening—a skill that participants can use during and after the event. [Watch the video.](#)

#### **Vignette Five: “On Adults Supporting Youth”**

In this video, you’ll be reminded of the importance of adults’ role in creating trust and connection with young people as well as how to be mindful and respectful of the unique experiences young people bring to a relationship. (These were important considerations for an event like ours, which focused on youth mental health, and may be relevant to you in your work.) [Watch the video.](#)

## Vignette Words and Phrases Bank

**Chatham House Rule** – Under this rule, anyone who comes to a meeting is free to use information from the discussion but is not allowed to reveal who made any comment. It is designed to increase the openness of the discussion.

**Fidelity** – The quality or state of being faithful or accurate.

**Objective** – Not influenced (as much as is possible) by personal feelings or opinions in considering and representing facts.

**Query and/or Appreciative Inquiry** – Asking questions and using dialogue to help participants uncover existing strengths, advantages or opportunities in their communities, organizations or teams.

**Reciprocity** – The practice of generosity in exchange for mutual benefit.

**Sovereignty** – Authority; independence.

**Subjective** – Based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes or opinions.

**Sustenance** – Nourishment.

**Vegas Rule** – Under this rule, whatever is said in the meeting must be kept private within the people who were in the room. It should never be repeated to others.

**Vis-à-vis** – Literally meaning “face to face” in French, it’s used when comparing something.

# Appendix

## Resources for Event Planners

### Marketing Tactics

See examples of the suggested tactics under **Marketing Samples** below.

TACTIC	TARGET AUDIENCE	EXAMPLES
<b>Social Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young adults</li> <li>• Adolescents/teens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook (organic or paid)</li> <li>• Instagram (organic or paid)</li> </ul>
<b>Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-age children</li> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Teachers and administrators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School newsletter</li> <li>• School counselor</li> </ul>
<b>Press Release</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the community (can be targeted to specific group)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local online news sources</li> <li>• Hosting organization's website</li> </ul>
<b>Newspaper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest column about event</li> <li>• Calendar or community event schedule</li> </ul>
<b>Bulletins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Elderly community members</li> <li>• Community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grocery store</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Recreational centers (e.g., YMCA, Boys &amp; Girls Club)</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Emails</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public service members</li> <li>• Partners</li> <li>• Board members</li> <li>• Local employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boards of directors for aligned organizations</li> <li>• County/city leadership</li> <li>• Civic groups with interest in topic</li> <li>• Leaders/HR departments at local organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Radio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the community (can be targeted to specific group)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local stations, including Spanish radio</li> </ul>
<b>Advertising and Promotions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the community (can be targeted to specific group)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event</li> <li>• Event Program</li> <li>• Newspaper</li> <li>• TV</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>

## Marketing Samples

### Press

If you can, share a press release or event information with local media sources who may be interested in publishing information about your event or writing a story.

**NEWS > KSAW MAGIC VALLEY**

### St. Lukes hosting a youth mental health event to raise awareness on a challenging topic

**Shine A Light**

By: Isaiah Sharp

Posted at 6:32 PM, Sep 30, 2022 and last updated 6:32 PM, Sep 30, 2022

**TWIN FALLS, Idaho** — St. Luke's plans to host a free youth mental health event at the College of Southern Idaho on Tuesday, October 4.

This event invites those in the high school range and older to see a 30-minute screening of the Ken Burns documentary, *Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness*, followed by a community discussion on youth mental health.

St. Luke's Health System  
about 10 minutes ago

### St. Luke's holding free event to address mental health challenges

Discussion, documentary set for Oct. 5

By KIM SMCALZ, Express Staff Writer, Sep 23, 2022

Listen to this article now  
Posted by Trinity Audio  
00:00 01:45

On Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 6 p.m., St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center will hold an event featuring a free 30-minute screening of the Ken Burns documentary, "Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Health," followed by a facilitated community discussion on youth mental health and the role community members can play in supporting young residents.

According to St. Luke's Idaho media 50b among areas with a higher prevalence of youth mental illness and lower rates of access to care. Nearly one out of every four Idaho residents suffers from some form of mental illness.

Blaine County School District Superintendent Jim Floufy believes that addressing mental health issues is as important as ever for the community.

"It's important to nurture and support the whole individual by allowing them to discuss their feelings and through providing tools to support their mental health. Doing so helps ensure the safety of the individual and others throughout our community."

Jim Floufy  
BCSD  
Superintendent

"School districts often focus on academic achievements, setting goals and determining initiatives. However, we realize that mental health must come first," Floufy said. "Students and staff who are experiencing feelings of stress, anxiety and depression are not in an optimal place for teaching and learning to take place. It's important to nurture and support the whole individual by allowing them to discuss their feelings and through providing tools to support their mental health. Doing so helps ensure the safety of the individual and others throughout our community."

In 2019, the St. Luke's Community Health Needs Assessment identified improving mental health and reducing suicide as one of the top three

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### Flyers

Flyers are versatile: print and post them around the local community, share them embedded in or attached to an email, or load them as a PDF on a website. You'll want the photos and language on the flyer to be consistent with the content that will be shared at the event. Be sure to include general information and details about the event; consider a QR code that readers can scan to learn more.

**St. Luke's**

## It Takes All of Us

A Community Screening and Conversation About Youth Mental Health

KEN BURNS PRESENTS  
**HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT**  
A FILM BY ERIC EVERS & CHRISTOPHER LOREN EVERS

Please join us for a 30-minute preview of "Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness," a new public television documentary from Ken Burns, followed by a critical community conversation.

This unflinching documentary gives voice to the experiences of young people who struggle with mental health challenges, highlighting the importance of awareness and empathy. It will take all of us to recognize and address the many obstacles our youth face in this increasingly complex and stress-filled world.

Event hosted by St. Luke's. Conversation facilitated by Tyler Norris, MDiv, former CEO of Well Being Trust.

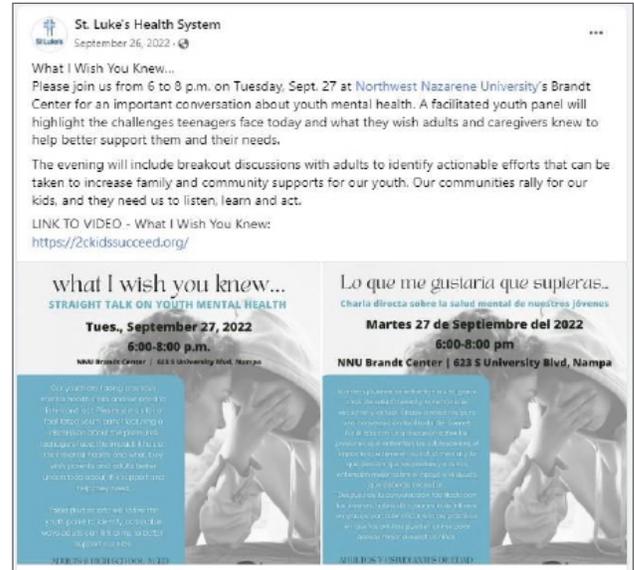
**Wednesday, August 17, 2022**  
4-6 p.m. No RSVP required.  
Mature content. Recommended viewing age: high school students and older.

JUMP  
Pioneer Room, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1000 W. Myrtle Street  
Boise, Idaho 83702

Please scan the QR code to access the original documentary trailer.

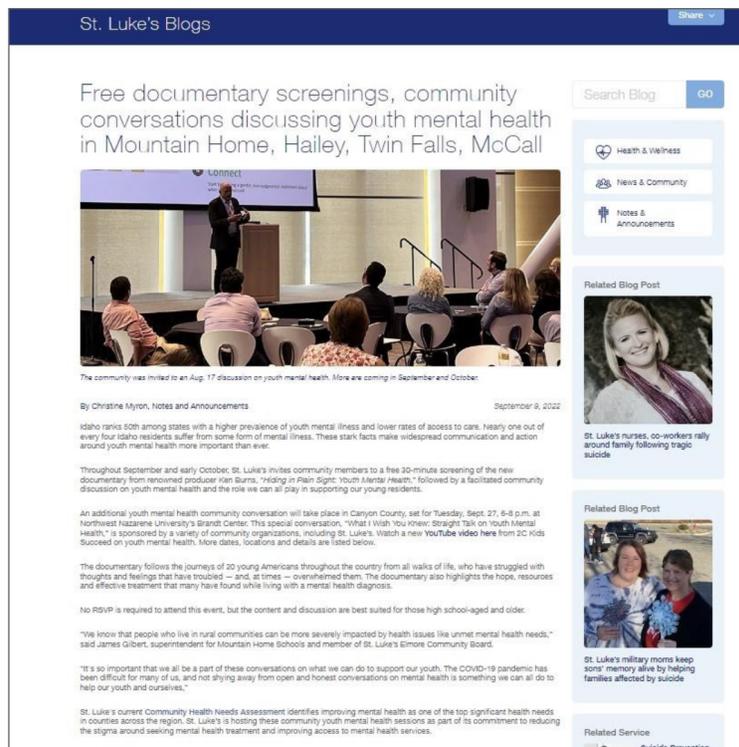
## Social Media

Given that social media has become one of the most consumed forms of media, it is important that events be promoted through the channels with which the target audience will engage. Event attendees expect to be updated via social media, and they rely on businesses to relay important information via their social media channels.



## Content Marketing

This tactic is intended to attract, engage and retain an audience through relevant content. It can also share information and answer questions readers might have. Use the channels already available, such as an organization blog, guest blog or article, such as this piece on [stlukesonline.org](https://stlukesonline.org).



## Sample Event Resources

### Agenda

This is an example of a high-level agenda, which we used for It Takes All of Us, our series of community events centered around the screening of “Hiding in Plain Sight” and conversation on youth mental health. This worked well for this format, which included a video/film component, discussion and skill-building exercises. You can adapt this sample to best fit your content.

### Agenda

- ✓ Welcome and Opening Remarks
- ✓ Our Opportunity Together
- ✓ Screening of “Hiding in Plain Sight” (30-minute preview)
- ✓ Turning to One Another
- ✓ Dialogue: Implications for Our Families, Schools and Community
- ✓ Building Skills and Capacities
- ✓ Opportunities Moving Forward



### Agreements

Throughout this playbook and in the video vignettes, we have discussed the importance of building inclusivity, setting boundaries, and creating trust and a safe environment for vulnerability.

One way to accomplish this is to build an agreement process into the event and presentation. By establishing “rules” around engagement and interactions before the discussion begins, you help participants understand acceptable and expected behavior from the beginning.

### Agreements

- Respect and dignity for all, at all times.
- Listen to understand.
- Speak with truth, courage and brevity.
- Make this time together matter.
- What else? (*Facilitator might invite the audience to participate*).



### Commitment Cards

These cards might be placed around the room to invite participants to consider and record commitments or goals around three actions: Learn, Listen, Act. **See printable examples at the end of the document.**

### Comment Cards

These cards might be handed out when participants/attendees arrive or be available for pickup, so you can capture their feedback immediately after the event. **See printable examples at the end of the document.**

## Contact Us

Please reach out if you have questions or would like more information. We can also help connect you with potential partners and resources. St. Luke's might also be a good collaborator for your event. We'd love to hear from you!

### **St. Luke's Community Health and Engagement**

190 E. Bannock Street  
Boise, Idaho 83702

**Contact:** Erin Pfaeffle, senior director of Community Health and Engagement,  
at [pfaeffle@slhs.org](mailto:pfaeffle@slhs.org).

**LISTEN** > I will listen more effectively by:



**LEARN** > I will continue to learn more about:



**ACT** > I will take action to support:



**LISTEN** > I will listen more effectively by:



**LEARN** > I will continue to learn more about:



**ACT** > I will take action to support:



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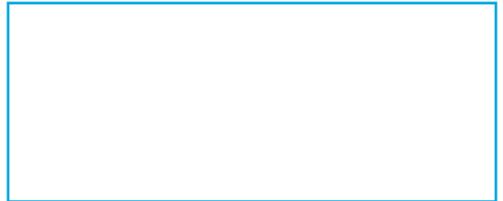
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