

## Community Living Room Conversation



We are delighted that you have considered joining us for an exciting social experiment — a **Community Living Room Conversation** in which a small group of people will come together to get to know one another, in a more meaningful way by talking about the Contra Costa County public **health system issues** that are of **personal priority and concern to each participant**.

What are your hopes for the future? What are you concerned about? Do you have ideas that could improve our community health system together? The Community Living Room Conversation will include dialogues about each person's view of **the Contra Costa County Public Health System and how we can make it more welcoming and accessible**. The purpose is not to debate any issue but rather to be open and curious about all perspectives and see what we learn from one another.

Many of us find that we barely know people who have different points of view than ours, and if we do, we often shy away from discussing uncomfortable topics. The folks at Living Room Conversations have come up with a great model to help us have respectful and productive conversations. We hope these conversations will build relationships that cross some divides, so that we can get to know one another and work together to find areas for **partnerships** that will lead to **innovative solutions to the system barriers that affect our consumers/patients, families and health providers**.

We'll be following the well-planned Living Room Conversations guidelines that focus on finding common ground! The complete Overview and Pre-Work are included in this invitation packet to provide all that you need to feel comfortable when we gather. This is a safe process to share your experience of receiving or providing care in Contra Costa's Public Health System.

### **Thursday, October 27, 2013 -Agenda**

<b>Welcome, Introductions, Dinner:</b>	5:30pm - 6:00pm
<b>Community Living Room Conversations:</b>	6:00pm - 8:00pm
<b>Building Partnerships:</b>	8:00pm - 8:30pm

If you can't attend *this* Community Living Room Conversation, please let us know if you would be interested in participating in another in the future.

Thank you!

***The Community Living Room Conversation Partners***



## Community Living Room Conversation: Overview

Thank you for accepting the invitation to take part in this unique social experiment. The Living Room Conversations (LRC) team has created this Suggested Pre-Work and Conversation Guide to support you in engaging fully in a purposeful and meaningful conversation.

The Living Room Conversations process is designed to be a simple and sociable living room conversation in which a small group of people comes together to get to know one another, in a more meaningful way than usual, by talking about their sense of personal purpose in their lives and about the issues that are of personal priority and concern. The goal is for everyone to be open and curious about all perspectives and see what we learn from one another, rather than to debate any topic or issue.

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### **Suggested Conversation Pre-Work**

This is a ‘no surprises’ and transparent approach to an unusual conversation. You are about to see and read the material that will be covered and referenced during the Community Living Room Conversation of CCC. With this material in hand, all the participants have the opportunity to think and prepare before the event as much or as little as you care to. We encourage you to participate and contribute fully before and during the event.

### **Please Consider the Following Conversation Questions and Rounds**

Take just a few minutes, or as long as you want, to think about each question listed below (and found again in the Living Room Conversations Guide). You are welcome to make and bring notes as you please.

*Note: Some of the bullets below have several questions and in those cases you are welcome to answer the one or two that are most meaningful to you.*

- Why did you accept the invitation to participate in this conversation? What interested you or drew you to this conversation?
- Who are you? What sense of purpose / mission / duty guides you in your personal and/or professional life? What would your best friend say about who you are and what makes you “tick”? What three words would a family member use to describe the “essence” of you?

- What are your hopes and / or concerns for the Contra Costa County health system?
- What most concerns you about your community public health system right now?

*Note: The following questions will be asked at the gathering and are presented here so you know what to expect. As you can see, they are not answerable before the fact.*

- What learning, new understanding or appreciation do you have about the health issues discussed?
- Has this conversation changed your perception of anyone in this group, including yourself?
- Is there any next step you would like to take based upon the conversation you just had?
- What is one important thing you thought was accomplished here? What did you appreciate the most about what happened here? Who would you especially like to acknowledge? In one sentence, share what was most meaningful/valuable to you in the experience of this conversation.

## **Community Living Room Conversations of Contra Costa County Guide**

### **Purpose, Intended Outcomes, Conversation Guidelines and Rounds / Questions: the Purpose of the Community Living Room Conversation Project**

1. Develop a practical, personal and social approach to hosting rewarding and productive conversations among people with different perspectives and experiences in the Contra Costa County public health system. The Community Living Room Conversation is intended to provide a simple means to support people who see the need and are willing to actively outreach and connect across all Contra Costa County public health divisions/silos to create new healthcare partnerships.
2. Provide a simple and sociable living room conversation format in which a small group of people comes together to get to know one another, in a more meaningful way than usual, by talking about their sense of personal purpose in their lives and about their priority hopes and concerns for the future of their personal and community health.
3. The Community Living Room Conversation provides a framework and means to move away from divisive “opinion” debate and instead have a purposeful “desired future” conversation while staying open and curious about all perspectives and then to see what participants learn from one another.

The purpose of the Living Room Conversations project is to provide a practical and powerful approach to support the rising spirit of citizens coming together, outside of current adversarial relationships, to create new and unlikely relationships, to encourage sustained engagement and to spark opportunities for cooperative action to address local health challenges. We dream of enhancing the quality of our public dialogue so that we can benefit from purposeful and respectful interactions among consumers, patients, families, providers, and health leaders both locally and nationally.

**The Intended Outcomes of a Living Room Conversation are:**

- 1 To generate a spirit of mutual curiosity, respect and appreciation among those of differing health services perspectives.
- 2 To create trust in order to develop the courage to generously express and actively appreciate one another's authentic revealing of heartfelt values, principles and sense of purpose.
- 3 To listen generously and actively support the discovery of common interest and concern.
- 4 To be open to all perspectives and see what can be learned from listening to one another, rather than debating differing "opinions" on the topic or issue.
- 5 To experience an authentic, meaningful and rewarding conversation.
- 6 To foster a sense of partnership and willingness to take initiative to reach out to those usually avoided.

**The Living Room Conversation Guidelines**

- **Be Curious and Open to Learning:**  
Listen to and be open to hearing all points of view. Maintain an attitude of exploration and learning.
- **Balance Advocacy and Inquiry:**  
Seek to learn and understand as much as you might want to persuade. Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking.
- **Show Respect and Suspend Judgment:**  
Human beings tend to judge one another, do your best not to. Setting judgments aside will enable you to learn from others and contribute to others experiencing being respected and appreciated.

- **Seek Common Ground:**  
In this conversation we look for common ground and simply appreciate that we will disagree on some beliefs and opinions.
  - **Be Authentic and Welcome that from Others:**  
Share what's important to you. Speak authentically; from your personal and heart felt experience. Be considerate to others who are doing the same.
  - **Be Purposeful and to the Point:**  
Notice if what you are conveying is or is not "on purpose" to the question at hand. Notice if you are making the same point more than once. Do your best to make your point with honesty and depth.
  - **Own and Guide the Conversation:**  
Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and the quality of the conversation by noticing what's happening and actively support getting yourself and others back "on purpose" when needed.
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### ***Tips for Managing Difficult or Disruptive Situations during the Community Living Room Conversation***

The co-host will be guiding the conversation but you are invited to be self-monitoring and take responsibility for helping keep the conversation on track.

There is one simple set of steps to do in the event that the conversation has gotten off track or one or more people have gotten excited.

1. Respectfully interrupt the situation.
2. Ask everyone to refer to the Participant Handout where the Purpose, Intended Outcomes and Conversation Guidelines are described.
3. Ask the group to identify what Purpose, Intent or Guideline would help get the conversation back on track.
4. Ask the individual or group if they are willing to get back on that Purpose, Intent or Guideline and to get back on track with the current question of the round.

## **Rounds/Questions:**

### **The Community Living Room Conversation of Contra Costa County Starts Here**

A Living Room Conversation is designed to flow through 5 rounds of questions. Each round has multiple questions. During some rounds, each question will be addressed. In other rounds, the multiple questions are intended as Conversation Starters and you need only respond to the one or two that matter the most to you. In the event the conversation wanders off track, we will refer to this Conversation Guide to get it back on track.

#### **Round One: Getting Started / Why Are We Here? (10 minutes)**

- Why are we here? Let's get clear about that by taking turns reading out loud the Purpose, Intended Outcomes and Conversation Guidelines.
- Why are you here? Why did you accept the invitation to participate in this conversation? What interested you or drew you to this conversation?

#### **Round Two: Let's Get Personal (20 Minutes)**

*(Please answer one or more of the following questions)*

- Who are you?
- What sense of purpose / mission / duty guides you in your personal and / or professional life?
- What would your best friend say about who you are and what makes you "tick"?
- What three words would a family member use to describe the "essence" of you?

#### **Round Three: Where Do We Stand On the Contra Costa County Public Health System Integration Issue? (30 minutes)**

Remember that the goal for this Community Living Room Conversation is for all of us to listen and learn about where we have different opinions and where we have shared interests, intentions and goals regarding our hopes and concerns for the Contra Costa County Public Health System:

- When it comes to the Contra Costa County Public Health System integration issue, what are you most concerned about right now?
- What is on your top 5 list?
- Why?

- Do you see any simple things that could be done right away to make the system work better?

**Round Four: What Are We Learning Here? (30 Minutes)**

*(Please answer each of the following questions)*

- What learning, new understanding or appreciation do you have about the issues of concern?
- What are your hopes and dreams for a perfect system? What is your vision?
- Is there any next step you would like to take based upon the conversation you just had?

**Round Five: Closing – Accomplishment, Appreciation, and Acknowledgement.**  
(30 minutes)

*(Please answer one or more of the following questions)*

- What is one important thing you thought was accomplished here?
- What did you appreciate the most about what happened here?
- Who would you especially like to acknowledge?
- In one word or phrase, share what was most meaningful / valuable to you in the experience of this Community Living Room Conversation.