Honing Community Engagement and Communication Skills to Catalyze Local Adaptation Planning

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Resilience Dialogues
Session Objectives

- Learn about the Resilience Dialogues process and platform, including principles, best practices, and lessons learned regarding community engagement in an online, asynchronous setting.
- Reflect on and share experiences, expectations, and objectives for engaging with communities to build climate resilience.
- Use real-life scenarios from past dialogues to strengthen skills for responding to communities’ climate resilience questions.
Session Agenda

8:00 am  Welcome and Overview of Resilience Dialogues
8:20 am  Alumni Experiences Panel
8:45 am  Overview and Skills Practice: Active Listening
9:10 am  Top Five Best Practices: Lessons from the Resilience Dialogues
9:25 am  Break
9:35 am  Overview and Skills Practice: Eliciting Community Context
10:10 am Group Reflections & Wrap Up
10:30 am Adjourn
What is the Resilience Dialogues?

- Connects community leaders to subject matter experts (SMEs)
- Uses a facilitated online process
- Lays the groundwork for long-term resilience by helping participants identify challenges, locate relevant resources, and prioritize achievable action steps
Subject Matter Experts & Participating Community Leaders and Organizations

Facilitators

Framing Dialogue
Identifying local climate adaptation risks and opportunities
Day 1: Community context setting
Day 2: Identify climate-community intersections
Day 3-5: Discuss and refine community questions

Connecting Dialogue
Identifying relevant and useful resources, and next steps
Day 1-2: Identify action areas
Day 2-3: Identify next steps
Day 4-5: Identify supporting resources

Resilience Dialogues

Outcomes

Individualized Synthesis Reports summarizing the conversation and highlighting next steps
Community resilience planning informed by experts and supported by public and private resources
Follow-up engagement with and access to a network of resilience scientists, professionals, and community leaders
Communities Served: 2016-2018
Poll Everywhere Instructions

- Use text messaging to connect and submit responses
  - To: 22333
  - Message: Meridian
  - Hit Send to connect to poll
- Multiple choice or word cloud
- For “1-word” answers, connect key words with hyphens for coherent display (e.g., community-engagement)
With which role do you most closely identify - community leader or subject matter expert?
In your experience, what is the biggest challenge in catalyzing resilience action in communities?
What are you hoping to take away from this session?

- Understanding of Resilience Dialogues
- Enhanced engagement skills
- Connect w/new colleagues
- Ideas to catalyze climate action
Resilience Dialogues Alumni Experiences

- **Justin Kates**, Director of Emergency Management, City of Nashua, NH
- **Juliana Lucchesi**, City Planner, City of Mt. Shasta, CA
- **Patrick Marchman**, Mitigation Champion, Resilience Action Partners
Justin Kates
Director of Emergency Management
City of Nashua, NH
Active Listening in a Virtual Context
What is Active Listening?

• The act of mindfully hearing and attempting to comprehend the meaning of words spoken by another

• Active listening techniques
  1. Pay attention
  2. Show that you’re listening
  3. Provide Feedback
  4. Defer Judgement
  5. Respond Appropriately
Why is Active Listening Important?

• Experts learn to value and connect with all kinds of expertise
• Experts learn about the context and priorities of the communities they are serving
• Community leaders feel heard and validated
• Experts suggest tools and resources that are locally relevant
Exercise: Listener & Talker

1) Split into pairs
2) Decide who will be the "talker" first and who will be the "listener" first
3) **Talker** spend 2 minutes describing what he/she wants from a summer vacation *without mentioning a destination*
4) **Listener** practice active listening skills
5) **Listener** spend 2 minutes summarizing the main criteria they heard the talker express and makes a tentative pitch for a suitable destination
6) **Talker and listener** spend 2 minutes reviewing together how well the listener captured what the talker said and how well the listener demonstrated active listening behaviors
7) Swap roles and repeat the steps 3-6
8) Be prepared to share a key takeaway
# In-person vs. Virtual Active Listening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>In-person Strategies</th>
<th>Virtual Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention</td>
<td>Maintain eye contact</td>
<td>Keep up with new posts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Show that you’re listening</td>
<td>Nod occasionally, smile and use other facial expressions</td>
<td>Share encouraging responses, summarize past comments, ask probing questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask questions, reflect on past comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defer judgement</td>
<td>Don’t interrupt</td>
<td>Value speakers’ expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respond appropriately</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assert your opinions and ideas respectfully</td>
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From the Resilience Dialogues Platform

Post 06-04-2018 19:23

Thanks, Catherine, this is great information about Anchorage!

You made an interesting point about the transportation system being car-centric and infrastructure development determined by boom/bust cycles.

Can you share more about how the existing transportation infrastructure impacts how people get around, where they tend to congregate, and how communities relate to one another? Most importantly, I would love to hear about Anchorage’s community gathering places. Where do people go to have fun? To access resources? And how do they get there?

✓ Responded encouragingly
✓ Synthesized information
✓ Asked probing questions
Top Five Best Practices for Community Engagement: Lessons from the Resilience Dialogues
The Top Five

1) Use good science communication practices
2) Stay positive and focus on solutions
3) Always consider community context
4) Honor and connect to all kinds of expertise
5) Keep a climate resilience lens
Science Communication

What NOT to do:

- Suggest tools with no guidance
- Be alarmist or pessimistic
- Focus on challenges, risks, or vulnerabilities
- Assign scientific papers to read
- Write long, rambling messages
Science Communication

What TO do:
- Stay Positive
- Focus on Solutions
- Provide concrete examples
- Focus on immediate actions
Consider community context

- Does this recommendation align with the community’s values and interests?
- Does it relate to a challenge they’ve shared?
- Does the community have, or could they procure, the resources needed to implement it?
Honor and connect to all kinds of expertise

Consider **Community Leaders as experts** in their own right

Offer **science as one tool** or source of insight among many

Connect your deep subject knowledge to **broad perspectives**
Climate Resilience Lens

**WHAT**
- Anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from external stresses imposed by climate change
- Minimize disruption to daily life and maintain function in the face of climate impacts
- Adapt and reorganize into new configurations that better prepare the community for future climate impacts

**WHY**
- Prepare clients/constituents for future climate conditions
- Encourage thinking and discussion about interdependencies, ancillary benefits, and potential unintended consequences
- Establish a shared understanding of what constitutes climate resilience

**HOW**
- Translate climate science data and information into impacts that relate to a community’s resilience
- Identify paths that communities can take to enhance climate resilience
- Focus on concrete, actionable approaches and outline the first steps to achieve them
Remember...

It’s about the goal, not the problem

The purpose is to launch **action**

Science is necessary but **not sufficient**

**Ask** for clarification

Test assumptions

**Listen**

Share **values and aspirations**

**Relationships**, not transactions
BREAK
Eliciting Community Context: Asking Probing Questions
Why Ask Probing Questions?

• Asking probing questions can help elicit important community context and information.

• Community leaders are experts in their own communities, but may not know what information is important to share with experts for climate adaptation planning.
General Probing Questions

• What do you value most about living in your community?
• Where do people go to have fun? To access resources? How do they get there?
• Are some areas of your community more socially vulnerable than others?
• How does your community discuss emergency preparedness with residents?
Climate-related Probing Questions

• How do residents of your community feel about climate change?
• What work, if any, has already been done to plan for climate change?
• Has the community worked with local businesses in resilience planning?
• How has the community financially supported any climate adaptation efforts?
Skill Building: Eliciting Community Context
Exercise: Eliciting Community Context

1) Break into **groups of 6**
2) Assume your roles - **3 play community leaders & 3 play SMEs**
3) Study **community profile** and prepare for group discussion (~6 mins)
   a) Community leaders study role and decide which prompting question to address
4) Community leaders address **prompting questions** (~2 mins each)
5) SMEs formulate and pose 1-2 **probing questions**, community leaders respond briefly (~15 mins)
6) Be prepared to share a brief **reflection or takeaway**

*Feel free to get creative and make up plausible details!*
Reflections and Key Takeaways
What will you do differently the next time you engage with a community on climate resilience?
Thank You!

www.resiliencedialogues.org

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