

WORKSHOP 1

Skills for Community-Centered Libraries

BUILDING CONNECTIONS



PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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NOTE TO PARTICIPANTS

This workshop incorporates Malcolm Knowles's "Six Principles of Adult Learning"¹. They are:

- Adults are self-directed in their learning experiences.
- Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to the learning environment/ experience.
- Adults are goal oriented.
- Adults need to know that what they're learning is relevant.
- Adults learn by doing.
- Adults prefer variety in learning.

As you engage with your group and these materials, you'll see that activities incorporate these principles in different ways. They are designed to create substantive discussion and learning opportunities.

Because of the nature of the topics, there will not be "right" or "wrong" answers throughout much of the workshop. Rather, you're asked to reflect on various ideas, techniques, topics, etc. and use those that are relevant for your unique work and unique communities. An open mind is key for everyone during this process; therefore, avoid any tendencies to tell people "the right answer." Rather, ask questions to help one another uncover how to use the information in a way that is relevant to their communities. Additionally, ask for ideas and expertise from other participants to answer questions. During this workshop, you're encouraged to talk about what you currently know and do in your work and find connections, even differences throughout the workshop. Making connections and finding differences helps to reframe thinking and learn new ideas and skills.

We acknowledge that everyone in this room is coming into this training with varying levels of knowledge and comfort with this topic. For some participants, this information will be new and help them begin the engagement process with their library community. Some participants may know this information, but these workshops will allow you to examine whether you are implementing these topics in your daily practice and consider opportunities to improve these skills. Other participants will have strong knowledge and expertise in community engagement. If this is true for you, we ask that you share

¹ Knowles, M. S. (1984). *Andragogy in action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

your insights and best practices and consider this time an opportunity to reflect on how you can help others at your library home in these community engagement practices.

Ultimately this workshop is meant to be a space for all library staff to reflect on the work they do and shift their professional practices and mindset toward a common goal of community engagement *for their communities as defined by their communities*.

OVERVIEW WORKSHOP 1: BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Community-centered libraries engage staff in promoting and supporting positive change in their local communities. This work is challenging, dynamic, and is helped along if those involved can return to a personal purpose to keep such work advancing.

In this four-hour workshop, you'll engage in self-reflection in order to connect to the paradigm shift of the community-centered library from a house of books to a location of community transformation. You'll identify personal and professional strengths and link those strengths in a statement that expresses why you work for a public library (beyond paycheck and benefits). Small groups will also discuss team dynamics using the Belbin² model and become aware of different roles that each person may have on a team. You'll reflect on which roles seem most comfortable, which ones you could stretch into, and which are most uncomfortable. You will gain a better understanding of the assets that exist in your local communities. You will consider opportunities to create partnerships with community assets in order to better serve the needs of your communities. After reflecting on personal strengths, purposes, and roles, you'll begin to craft a networking introduction that highlights the work you and your library do for your community that can be used to connect with community members and community assets. Ultimately, you'll gain a greater understanding of why it's important to step outside of your library and connect with the community at large.

² <https://knowhownonprofit.org/your-team/people-management-skills/teams/effectiveteam/roles> retrieved 7.27.2018

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this workshop, you will be able to:

Self-Reflection on Professional Strengths and Team Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">... articulate a personal purpose for working at a public library... identify and describe professional strengths... categorize team roles... identify personal team roles and connect those roles to professional strengths
Asset Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">... define community assets... identify current community assets/resources at your library homes... create a map of your library home's community assets... identify potential new community assets/resources within your library communities
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">... network and build community relationships through sharing what you and your library have to offer

VOCABULARY AND TERMS

Team roles: Roles we feel strongest performing that will help us contribute to our teams meaningfully and also clarify how we can work together.

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.

Asset Mapping: An inventory of the resources that exist in your local community, including individuals, community organizations, and larger institutions.

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: getting community members involved in the planning and execution of programming or facilitating conversations in which people can envision what they want out of their library.

Community Outreach: The act of building awareness and sharing information about programs, resources, and services with people in a community. Examples: door-knocking, tabling, flyering, and phone-banking.

GROUND RULES

Creating a Space to Share Ideas and Thoughts

Directions: Read questions 1–3. Answer them by writing down your ideas or simply think about them. You'll be sharing your thoughts in a small-group discussion.

- 1 As an individual, what do you need to ensure a safe environment to have honest discussions about public libraries and community engagement?

- 2 What are some concerns you may have about sharing your professional experiences today? How might the group be able to manage such concerns?

- 3 What are some ground rules that will help you share your ideas?

Ground rules can be helpful when you engage in discussions with your community. Which meetings at your library may benefit from Ground Rules?

Directions: Read the list below. These ground rules³ will guide our discussions. Add rules that you think are missing.

- One speaker, one mic
 - ◆ One person speaks at a time
- No one knows everything, together we know a lot
 - ◆ Each person brings different levels of lived experience and embodied expertise to the conversation
 - ◆ Let's all practice being humble and look for what we can learn from each other
- Move up, move up
 - ◆ If you're someone who tends to not speak a lot, please move up into a role of speaking more
 - ◆ If you tend to speak a lot, please move up into a role of listening more
- We can't be articulate all the time
 - ◆ People can feel hesitant to participate for fear of "messaging up" or stumbling over their words
- Embrace curiosity
 - ◆ We make better decisions when we approach our problems and challenges with a question ("What if we...?") and curiosity
- Acknowledge the difference between intent and impact
 - ◆ If someone says or does something that causes harm, they must take responsibility for the negative impact

Insert your rules here:

- _____
- _____
- _____

If at any time you would like to revise or add an idea to this list, please share your thoughts with the facilitator and the whole group.

³ Adapted from Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance. (2017). *Anti-oppressive facilitation for democratic process*.

PERSONAL STRENGTHS

What do you Bring to your Community Engagement Efforts?

Directions: Circle five qualities that are your personal strengths. If you want to write your own qualities, there are blank lines to do so.

Persistent	Serious	Practical
Loyal	Independent	Focused
Creative	Trusting	Courteous
Objective	Resilient	Open-Minded
Flexible	Cheerful	Positive
Nurturing	Self-Directed	Responsible
Thoughtful	Reliable	Cooperative
Talkative	Relaxed	Frugal
Attentive	Decisive	Tolerant
Helpful	Enthusiastic	Innovative
Confident	Forgiving	Balanced
Optimistic	Sensitive	Honest
Determined	Organized	Generous
Motivated	Patient	Dreamer
Insightful	Realistic	Modest
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

TEAM ROLES (BASED ON THE BELBIN MODEL⁴)

Teamwork for Community Engagement

Dr. Meredith Belbin is a researcher who studies how to manage teams effectively. His work provides tools to help organizations uncover individual preferences when working on a team. These preferences match with an individual's personally identified strengths that go beyond their actual job tasks and responsibilities. The fundamental idea is that individuals bring unique talents and strengths to a team. These individual strengths are strategically combined with others' unique talents and strengths and leveraged to form stronger teams.

Belbin's Team Roles

- **Idea Maker** (creative: comes up with unconventional solutions to problems)
- **Resource Investigator** (explores opportunities and contacts)
- **Coordinator** (clarifies goals: promotes decision making)
- **Team Worker** (provides support and encourages cooperation)
- **Driver** (moves team forward)
- **Monitor/Evaluator** (objective thinker: sees all options and carefully evaluates)
- **Implementer** (turns ideas into action)
- **Completer** (attention-to-detail)
- **Specialist** (technical knowledge and skills)

Some of you may be doing every one of Belbin's Team Roles as you fulfill your job responsibilities; for the purpose of this exercise we want you to focus on the one or two roles that are most natural to you. Think about the ones you enjoy most and feel strongest performing.

⁴ Retrieved on May 29, 2018 from: <https://knowhownonprofit.org/your-team/people-management-skills/teams/effectiveteam/roles>. Used with permission under an Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Discuss

- 1** When you participate on a team outside of work, whether it is in a community organization, a faith-based organization, your child's school, or your groups of family and friends, what two roles apply to you? How do you demonstrate these roles? What about these roles appeals to you?

- 2** Is there a team role on the list that you can imagine yourself stretching into over time? What steps would you need to take to perform this role? Is there a mentor you could reach out to that could guide you towards this role?

CONNECTION: PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND TEAM ROLES

Putting it Together

Taking time to analyze your strengths allows you to gain a better understanding of the roles that you take on in a group or team. Examining these strengths may also lead you to consider new roles that you have not tried before that are better suited to your strengths. By understanding your strengths and preferences on a team, you will gain an awareness of how you can best serve your neighborhood library community. Ultimately, you can leverage your strengths on a team to create programs and solve issues to best meet the needs of your community.

Discuss

- 1 How do your identified roles connect to your strengths? Or maybe they don't? Explain.

- 2 If your strengths don't seem to connect to your identified roles, why might that be? Is it possible your strengths could lead you to consider a different role for yourself?

- 3 Think about the people you work with daily. What might their roles be? How many different roles do you think exist on your library team?

WHO'S ON YOUR TEAM?

Teams for Community Engagement

Directions: As a group, you will select an activity that all libraries across your network engage in such as summer reading programs or workforce development. Then, you will take an inventory of your tablemate's preferred team roles. Some roles may be left blank. Finally, discuss the questions on the following page in your small group.

Program Activity: _____

Team Roles	Team Members Name(s)
Idea Maker	
Resource Investigator	
Coordinator	
Team Worker	
Driver	
Monitor/Evaluator	
Implementer	
Completer	
Specialist	

Discuss

- 1** Are all nine team roles covered? What roles are missing? Which of the missing roles would need to be filled in order to complete the program activity?

- 2** How might you share this tool with your library team? When would you introduce the topic?

- 3** Identify friends, group members, library patrons, civic groups, or local nonprofits that could potentially fill a missing role on your library team or expand your abilities in a certain role (ex. resource investigator, specialist).

- 4** Plan specific ways to begin to engage with these individuals and organizations on an upcoming project or to strengthen a current program.

Library Team Roles

Project Description: _____

Desired Outcome(s): _____

Team Roles	Name/Title	Action Items
Idea Maker		
Resource Investigator		
Coordinator		
Team Worker		
Driver		
Monitor/Evaluator		
Implementer		
Completer		
Specialist		

If one of our key roles is not filled, do we know someone at another library or within our community who can assist?

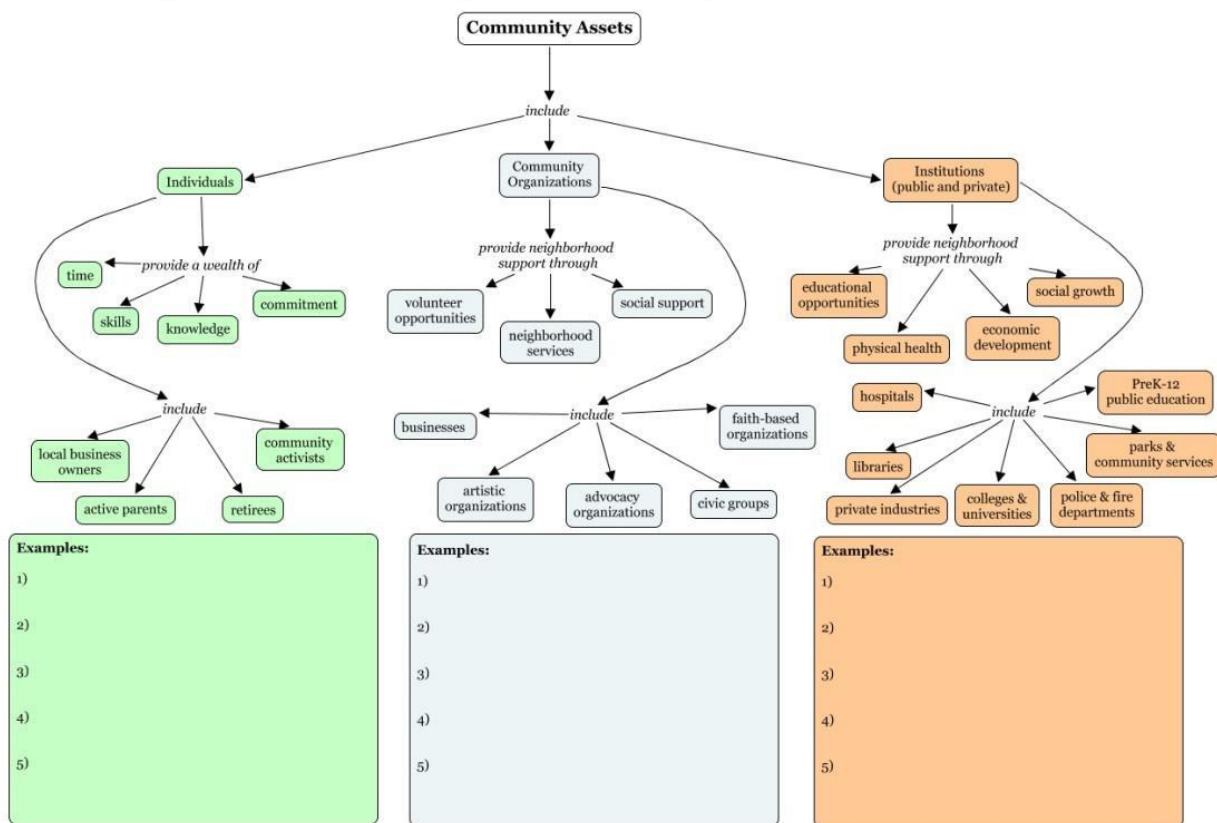
COMMUNITY ASSETS

What's a Community Asset? What's in Your Map?⁵

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.

Community Assets Map: Graphic image with lists of assets within a community.

What are examples of assets in the Arlington NLN Community?



⁵ Asset map graphic adapted from Vosoughi, M. and Monroe-Ossi, H. (2011). *Neighborhood asset mapping: moving toward convergence*. Retrieved from <https://www.unf.edu/uploadedFiles/aa/fie/Certified.msa.NO3Asset%20Mapping%20Accessible.pdf>

Create your own Community Asset Map

Directions: Map your library's neighborhood assets. Consider using the example on the previous page if this is your first time creating an asset map.

Create your map below:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for participants to draw or map their community assets.

Reflection

Directions: *Discuss the questions below with a partner.*

- 1** Talk about the community assets with which your library has relationships. How did you or your library start those relationships? How are these relationships maintained and nurtured? Do you regularly communicate with your assets through email or social media?

- 2** Identify asset gaps in the map you created for your library. Are there certain types of assets that are not represented at all? Who could you talk to in order to learn whether your map is as complete as possible?

- 3** Talk about two or three new community assets you believe would help your library programming. How can you engage these assets?

- 4** Does your neighborhood library have a system for tracking your assets? Is your method for tracking assets in a location (ex. binder or Google Doc) that all staff members can access and add to?

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Connecting Personal Strengths, Purposes, and Library Team Role To Engage With People

As an employee serving the public, you will need to engage in conversations with a wide range of people in many different settings. It is important to remember that your ultimate goal is to *connect* with the community and other service providers throughout the city.

However, this word “*connect*” is often hard to define. What does it mean to create a connection? Is it simply sharing your name or business card? Is it handing out a pamphlet with a smile on your face? Or does it require you to go deeper?

Connecting, especially “Cold Connecting,” when first meeting someone, isn’t always easy. Sometimes we aren’t in the mood to make small-talk or to network. Sometimes we don’t feel comfortable doing so. Sometimes we don’t feel accepted by those around us. That is all normal.

For most people, introducing yourself and engaging in conversations that lead to larger connections—or networks—takes conscious effort...and it can be exhausting! It can even feel unnatural sometimes. However, like riding a bike, it comes with time and practice. You have to put yourself out there and experience these situations in order to navigate them more effectively and to feel more comfortable doing so.

Discuss

- 1** Describe the types of networking experience you have engaged in as part of your library outreach (ex. tabling events, bookmobile, school visits).

- 2** What aspects of networking do you find the most challenging?

- 3** What strategies have led to new connections with your community or new partnerships?

NETWORKING ESSENTIALS

The Information you Need to Share in Order to Build Strong Community Connections

Directions: Consider what information or strategies you can add to the list below to strengthen your networking introduction.

- Name
- Current position and library home
- What you and your library can offer the community, including space
- A goal, interest, or aspiration for your library
- Your purpose/why you enjoy your work
- Social media platforms your library uses
- Other key points?

Begin to craft your library networking introduction. Use the list of networking essentials as a framework for your introduction. Be sure to highlight the unique resources and programming that your library offers.

GETTING STARTED

Strategies for Introducing Yourself in a New Situation

Every conversation is different; there isn't a one-size-fits-all formula for talking! As already mentioned, practice makes perfect. However, there are a few strategies you can use to help you get started.

Tip 1: Prepare

You must be able to briefly introduce yourself, your role/job position, and potentially your goals/motivation for the conversation. This means you must think about this prior to an anticipated situation or conversation. You may choose to write down these bits of information and/or simply think about them, whichever works best for you.

Tip 2: Smile

Looking approachable goes a long way.

Tip 3: Find Common Ground

It's important to find common ground. Why? Because when you can find an interesting connection, you are memorable to that person and they are memorable to you. Remembering your common ground can go a long way to establishing partnerships. Do you both have the same job position or responsibilities? Do you both serve similar communities? Are you from the same field? Do you live near each other? One easy way to find common ground is by focusing on the current situation—where are you both? Use that as the common ground. Some questions you can use to start a conversation are:

- What brings you to this event?
- What organization are you representing today?
- Have you found any new resources you think you might use?
- Have you attended this resource fair before?

Answers to these questions can grow into a meaningful and natural conversation that becomes a potential connection.

Tip 4: Use “Power” Questions

These are questions that can help you start the conversation, shift the conversation to make sure it’s two-way, and to delve deeper into the conversation, giving it the possibility of creating a platform for future engagement. These “power” questions will help you to (1) show interest in others, (2) learn about others’ ways of thinking, and (3) build trust. Some examples are:

To show interest:

- How’d you get your start in this work?
- What’s your experience with...?
- What do you think about...?

To learn about ways of thinking:

- What are some of the challenges you face at your organization in terms of providing resources for the community?
- How has your organization tried to tackle these challenges?
- Why do you do this work?

To build trust:

- Is there any way I could be helpful to you or your organization?
- Do you think there are any resources I have that could be of assistance to you?

NETWORKING ROLE-PLAY

Creating Connections with Potential Community Assets

Directions: You will engage in a role-play activity based on the scenario described below. You will be given a specific role card that will determine your function in the role-play. If time permits, rotate through the roles so you have the opportunity to engage in a variety of ways.

Scenario: Imagine you're at the Nonprofit Institute for Community Providers with organizations and various individuals. This is a time to meet others and make initial connections that may lead to future partnerships. Your library is hosting an information table at this event, as are a variety of other organizations. Your goal is to find a connection with the person to whom you're speaking. You want to share what you and your library/organization has to offer and find out if there is some crossover in your and the other person's work.

Discuss

- 1 Consider how you could create a more compelling library networking introduction by leveraging your library's programs and services when discussing the specific needs and goals of the community.

- 2 If you supervise staff, how might you train members of your library team to create an introduction that engages community members? If you are not a supervisor, how might you lead by example?

STRENGTHS AND STRETCHES

Self-Evaluation

Directions: 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?

Strengths	Stretches
Team Roles	Team Roles
Community Assets	Community Assets
Networking	Networking

WORKSHOP REVIEW

Personal Thoughts

Directions: *Your table note taker will answer the questions below on a flipchart. Your group will review these answers and create action statements about how you can apply what you've learned.*

- 1 What did YOU learn today? Share your personal realizations or anything you learned that will improve your community engagement practices.

- 2 How can you TAKE what we talked about today and TURN it into action? *For example:*

- ◆ Networking Introductions: try meeting with a store owner near my library just to get to know their name
- ◆ Team Roles: share what I learned about my strengths and preferred support roles with my supervisor and seek advice on how I can support a current program with my strengths

TAKE AND TURN

Workshop 1: Building Connections

Within the first week back at work, fill out each box below on any work day(s) you like. Bring this assignment to the next workshop.

Team Roles: Which of your team roles did you use today? Which strength(s) did you use performing those roles? Did you stretch into a new role? How?

■ Date:

Networking Introductions: Who did you talk to today? For what purpose? How did it go? What did you learn about this person? Could this person be a community asset for your library? How?

■ Date:

■ Person you talked to:

■ Next steps:

Community Assets: A Game Plan

Get to know your community for yourself!

You're going to create a game plan for exploring your neighborhood library. *While you're exploring, you're encouraged to introduce yourself to people and find out how they use your library.* If your library is located in a suburban or rural area, consider where you could go to connect with community members. Perhaps you can visit a strip mall where people do their shopping or a local park that families in your community frequent. Each community will look different, so think of the spaces in your community that will allow you to meet new people.

There is no outcome to your introductions other than to learn someone's name and make a personal connection with them about your library. Remember that this is the first building block to creating relationships. Please talk with your supervisor about how to find the time for you to go on your community expedition.

Possible dates for my community expedition: _____

Possible friend/coworker who could come with me: _____

Ideas for specific community members/community assets I might engage with that would benefit our library programming: _____

Time I plan to spend exploring: _____

(Be sure to block this time on your calendar if you keep one.)

If needed, alternate plan: _____



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