

WORKSHOP 2

Skills for Community-Centered Libraries

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



WELCOME!

WORKSHOP 1 REVIEW

What topics did we cover in
the Building Connections Workshop?

Let's practice your networking introduction
with a partner at your table!

Remember to highlight the programs
and services that would be most interesting
to the person you are connecting with.

“TAKE AND TURN” ASSIGNMENT UPDATE

Your assignment was: After a day of work, reflect on how you used your personal strengths, which team roles you used, and how you used your networking introduction on a community walk.

- Who did you speak with?
- What was the purpose of the networking introduction?
- How did it go?

Discuss with a partner at your table.

WORKSHOP 2 AGENDA: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

- Examine assumptions based on your worldview and learn to “go beneath the surface” in order to connect with your library community.
- Reflect on your communication style and practice implementing effective strategies for speaking, listening, and asking questions.

BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Improving communication skills is necessary if you want to facilitate deeper discussions and make stronger connections.
- Can you think of a time when communication with patrons led to a change or improvement in programming or processes at your library?

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 RULES¹

- 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

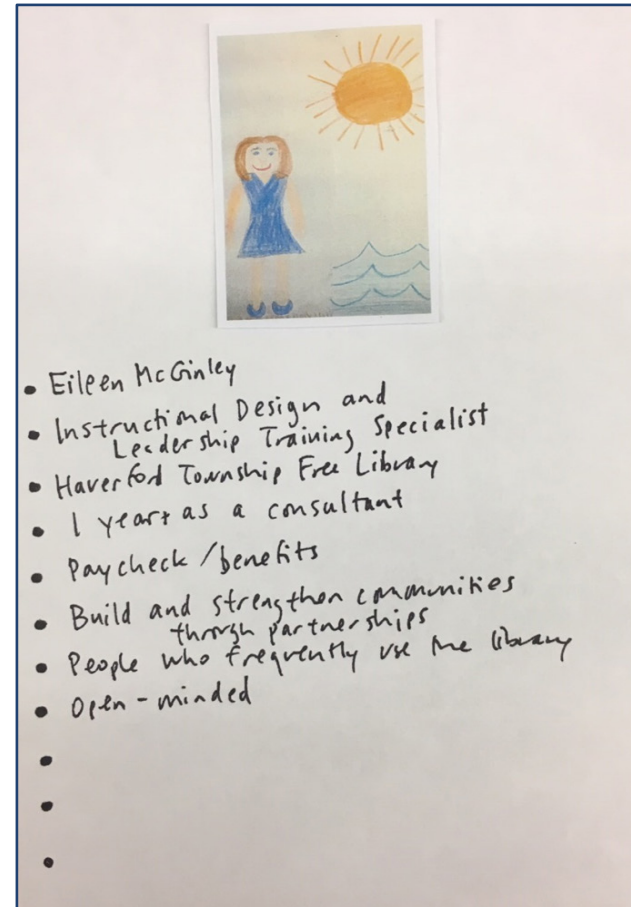
- Ground rules create a safe space to broaden our perspectives and connect.
- Our goal is to have authentic conversations that stimulate growth and learning.
- Let's use our ground rules and dig into today's topic.

TRADING CARD

Using one word or a short phrase,
answer this question on your card:

What is effective communication?

Example: Being open-minded



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

WARM-UP

Using one word or a short phrase, answer this question:

What is effective communication?

Example: Being open-minded

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Pragmatics
 - ◆ Turn-taking
 - ◆ Asking different types of questions
 - ◆ Showing interest through verbal and non-verbal signals
 - ◆ The words we choose to communicate
- How we *use* language, both verbal and non-verbal, to communicate

MEETING THE NEEDS OF MY COMMUNITY

How does my idea of “effective” communication differ depending on the library patron? Why is this important?

MY EXPERIENCE: MY LENS

Our cultures, races, faiths, socio-economic statuses, neighborhoods, and life experiences, among many other factors, shape the lenses with which we view the world.

How do we uncover what's happening behind our lenses?

MY SELF



MY SELF

Take 5 minutes to share what you wrote with a partner.

As you talk with your partner, note the one or two words that have the biggest impact on your view of the world.

A PRIMARY LENS

Lens: A personal way of interpreting the world

Selected word: Mother

REFLECTION OPPORTUNITY: LIFE EXPERIENCE CONNECTION

Which word, or set of words,
has the biggest impact on your view of the world and why?

The discussions we are going to have are personal and could be emotional. Please respect the ground rules and support each other. We encourage you to take a break for processing if you need to and thank you for sharing your experiences bravely.

The life experience, or experiences, you chose has had a major impact on you and has allowed you to connect to and have a level of empathy for people who have similar experiences.

LIFE EXPERIENCE CONNECTION DISCUSSION

1. Explain how that deep life experience makes it easier for you to communicate with others with the same life experience.
2. What experiences *don't* you have that others might? How might that impact your lens of communication or your ability to be empathetic?
3. How do positions of power that you and others hold impact communication?

*Remember to follow the ground rules during this discussion.

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For the next phase of today's introspection we ask:

What might be some of the lenses that others have when they interact with people and the world in general?

THE ICEBERG

Iceberg: A metaphor for an individual's lived experiences. That is, if any individual were an iceberg, we would only see what's above the water. Below the water are many more lived experiences that we can't see.

COMMON THEMES IN ICEBERG DISCUSSIONS

- Race
- Gender Identity
- Types of Marginalization
- Power Dynamics

Ground Rules:

- No one knows everything, together we know a lot
- Acknowledge the difference between intent and impact

USING THE ICEBERG TO CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS

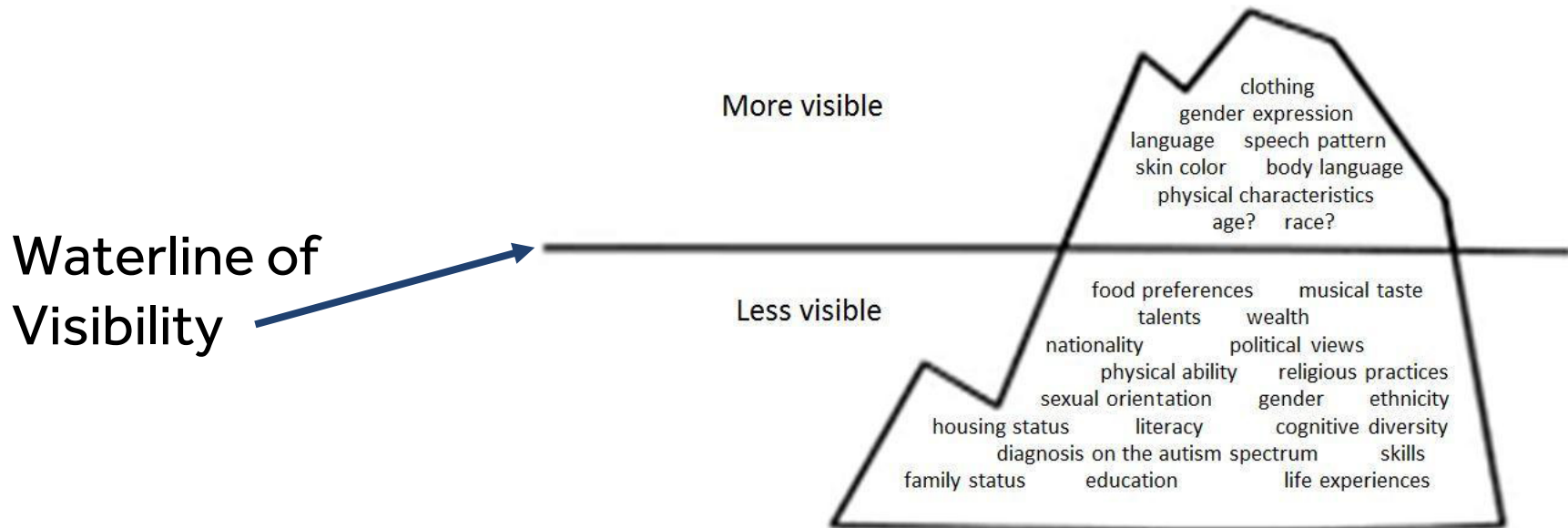
- Our life experiences and worldview cause us to approach certain people and situations with assumptions.
- Going beneath the surface and connecting with individuals gives us an opportunity to challenge false assumptions and understand our library patrons on a deeper level.

GOAL FOR THE ICEBERG ACTIVITY

Go beneath the surface!

There are so many opportunities to truly connect with individuals in your library communities when you have the tools to understand someone on a deeper level.

Sample Cultural Iceberg



In your small groups, you will discuss ways to go below the surface to connect with your library community members.

ICEBERG ANALYSIS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to keep this iceberg in mind when performing our daily roles at the library? How does it impact communication?
2. What physical characteristics above the waterline may be misinterpreted? Why?
3. People reveal more about themselves when they are comfortable and feel welcomed and valued. What are some of the specific strategies your library employs to create an inclusive, welcoming culture that shows patrons they are valued? For example, do you have welcome signs with library hours and programs translated into multiple languages?
4. Based on your unique community, consider one additional way you could promote an inclusive, welcoming culture.
5. Consider a patron or group of patrons that you have struggled to connect with in the past. What ways could you attempt to connect with this person or group in relation to their iceberg?

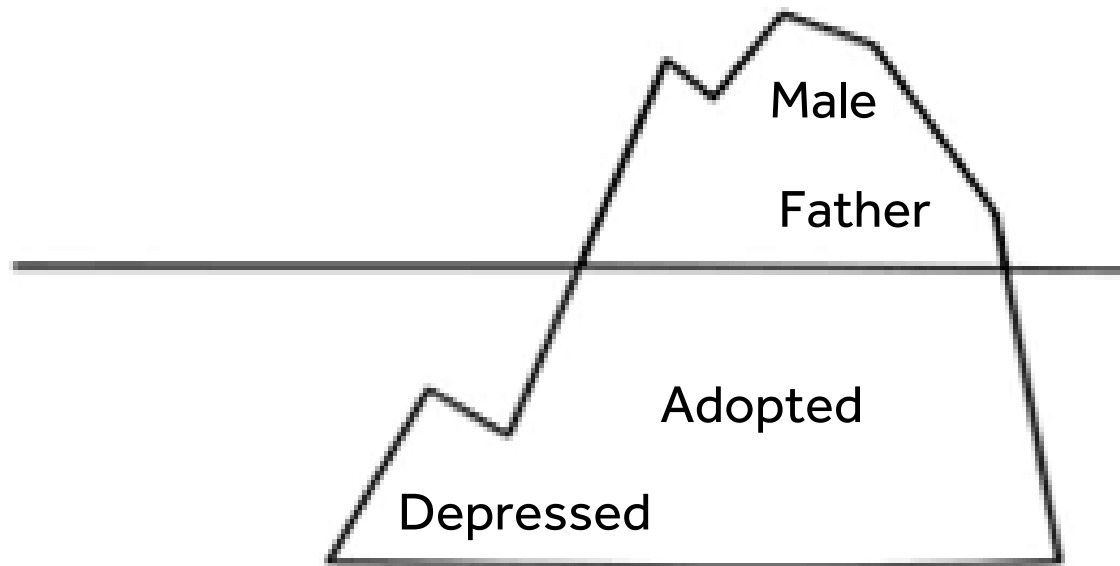
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ICEBERG WHOLE GROUP DEBRIEF

- What is interesting about the iceberg as a visual representation of human complexity?
- What insights did you gain from your group discussion about the iceberg?

Now let's consider your own iceberg.

MY ICEBERG



MY ICEBERG DISCUSSION

- Looking at your iceberg, which idea(s) did you write that you are certain impact your communication with others? How so? For example, if you're a parent, you might find it exciting to talk about children with people and enjoy the opportunities to share stories about your children.
- Are there aspects of your iceberg that people rarely see? Is there something below the surface that you would like to connect with more people about? Are there ways you can use all parts of your iceberg that can help you connect more deeply with your library community?

BREAK

COMMUNICATION: A SELF SURVEY

I usually...	Yes	No
Make eye contact.		
Use a calm, patient tone.		
Stay on topic.		
Turn my body towards the person I am speaking to.		
State as little as possible; I like to keep conversations brief.		
Purposely listen to make meaning of what is being said.		
Show interest by nodding, facial expressions of reaction, etc.		
Wait until the person is completely done talking to respond.		
Restate what the person has said for clarification.		

REFLECTION

1. How does knowing how you communicate help you to communicate with others?
2. Why is it important to adapt to others' communication styles or preferences in your day-to-day role in your library?
3. How might an individual's life experiences and lenses impact their styles of communication?

Now we're going to role-play a conversation you would have at your library in order to evaluate your communication skills.

ROLE-PLAY AND OBSERVATION

- **Role A:** Library staff member—be yourself
- **Role B:** Choose a role: English Language Learner, Caregiver, Job Seeker, Security Guard.
- **Role C:** You will observe the interaction between Roles A and B, take notes on their interaction using the observation form, and provide feedback about what each person did.

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ROUND 1 DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

Role C (Observer): Using the observation form, what areas of strength did you observe from the library staff member (Role A) and community member (Role B)? Which areas would you suggest growth or improvement?

We will practice this role-play again after we review some effective listening and speaking tips, and talk about question types.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Participant Guide Pages 21–22

BODY LANGUAGE

- What does effective body language look like?
- How might life experiences, lenses, and icebergs impact a person's body language?

Let's take a look at two types of questions:
open-ended and closed questions.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- Engaging in open-ended dialogue is especially helpful when you're trying to reach a deeper understanding or make a connection with someone.
- This type of question creates the opportunity to understand aspects of a person that are below the surface of their iceberg.

OPEN-ENDED VS. CLOSED QUESTIONS

REWRITE THE CLOSED QUESTIONS AS OPEN-ENDED

1. Do you need help?
2. Have you been to library programs before?
3. Are you familiar with our bilingual children's story time?
4. Has your son/daughter attended our Lego building club?
5. Do you know about our resume writing workshop every Tuesday?

MORE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

English Language Learners

- Ask closed questions
- Provide visuals
- Use Google translate
- Create short videos on YouTube
- Library Languages Services

Neurodivergent Individuals

- Ask closed questions
- Provide visuals
- Structure your question to provide choices
- Find out their specific interests and ask questions about that topic

Almost every conversation can be a
community engagement opportunity!

By regularly reflecting on your communication, you can
start to make small adjustments that will have a big impact
on how you connect with your community.

Let's practice the role-plays again and incorporate some of the effective listening and speaking strategies and open-ended questions.

MORE ROLE-PLAY AND OBSERVATION

- **Role A** is still the library staff member. Focus on using specific communication strategies to improve the interaction.
- **Role B** should pick a different role: English Language Learner, Caregiver, Job Seeker, Security Guard. Focus on using specific communication strategies to improve the interaction.
- **Role C** is still the observer.

Participant Guide Pages 25–26

ROUND 2 DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

Observer

- What were the biggest improvements you noticed after providing feedback and reviewing the tips and question types?

Library Staff Member

- How did your interaction change when you incorporated more effective communication strategies?
- Which strategies do you need to focus on when you return to your library?

Community Member

- How did your interaction change when you incorporated more effective communication strategies?
- Which strategies do you need to focus on when you return to your library?

All

- What is it like to pay close attention to a conversation like this? What did you learn/realize?
- What about your life experiences, lenses, or communication style impacted the WAY that you communicated? How so?

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1. Which communication strategies did you consciously use to try to connect with and understand each other?
2. Think of a time when using an effective communication strategy or open-ended questions could have prevented a miscommunication with a library patron.
3. If you participated in the Security Guard role-play, consider how you can empower and engage members of your library team to share insights regarding programming and the needs of your community.
4. Are there life experiences, lenses or communication styles that impede you from connecting with others when you are communicating? How might you reframe your lens to be more open during communication?
5. How could you strategically use these communication tools with your team to improve channels of communication with library patrons?
6. Reflect on how using Belbin's Team Roles may create a space for team members to share their unique knowledge and insight.

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?

WORKSHOP REVIEW

- Each table needs a note taker.
- At your table, take 3 minutes to talk about key takeaways that you learned today.
- Take 3 minutes to talk about how to TAKE what we discussed today and TURN it into action. For example:
 - ◆ Personal Iceberg: how do our icebergs impact how we communicate and connect with our library patrons.
 - ◆ Effective Communication Strategies: select a few effective communication strategies that would improve how you interact with library patrons and fellow staff members.

TAKE AND TURN

- Complete your personal iceberg in your Participant Guide.
- Reflect on an engaging conversation you had in your library. It can be with a library community member or a staff member. This could be a small-talk conversation or an exchange during a meeting or program.
- Use the template to guide your reflection.

Participant Guide Pages 31–32

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!