

Town Hall Toolkit

The Town Hall toolkit has been designed to help support community coalitions plan, implement, and debrief town hall meetings in their communities. It provides a roadmap for implementation, as well as way to provide tailored feedback and/or technical assistance to coalitions. In addition, it can be used as a rubric for recognizing coalition work in the successful implementation of town halls. The toolkit consists of a topic brief, a fidelity matrix, and a planning checklist.

The topic brief provides key information on town halls, including: a definition of town halls, elements of effective town halls, and suggestions for planning and implementation. It is meant as a resource for coalitions to share with their members, as well as other key stakeholders interested in planning or participating in town hall events.

In conjunction with the topic brief, both the fidelity matrix and the checklist are meant to help coalitions think more deeply through the process of planning an effective town hall and the activities that may increase the impact that town halls have in communities.

Fidelity is the degree to which a program or activity is delivered as intended. Lower levels of fidelity may be why some town halls may not have the same outcomes as those with higher levels of fidelity. The matrix helps coalitions think through how different activities may have low, moderate, or high levels of fidelity. In this way, coalitions can think through how their own processes might impact the effectiveness of town halls.

Similarly, the checklist helps coalition think through different decisions that can affect the success of a town hall. It provides options for consideration and is meant to serve as a tool in the planning process.

It is important to note that some aspects of the toolkit may not directly apply to all town hall meetings. Community coalitions must decide what works best for their own communities and for their own particular situations. For instance, some town halls might be intended to provide expert information on a single topic; in other cases, the town hall might be more effective if engaging a wide range of voices from the community. Depending on the goal and format of the town hall, some aspects of the fidelity matrix or checklist may not fit the context.

It is also important to think of these toolkits as living documents, subject to improvement and change. Any feedback on these documents are most welcome. Please send comments and suggestions to the Evidence-Based Practice Workgroup at TNEBPW@gmail.com.

Town Hall Checklist

Planning

Activity	Notes
<p>Various community stakeholders involved in the planning process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition developed a planning committee for the town hall of 5 -10 people <input type="checkbox"/> Planning consisted of key community stakeholders, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> County commissioners <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare providers (Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Health department representatives <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Counselors/Psychologists/Substance Abuse Counselors <input type="checkbox"/> People in recovery, recovery professionals (Lifeliners) <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Overdose Prevention Specialists (ROPS) <input type="checkbox"/> Social workers <input type="checkbox"/> Youth <input type="checkbox"/> Faith-based leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Law enforcement or corrections personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Subject matter experts <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee met on a regular basis and collectively made decisions on the town hall event 	
<p>Data used in planning current event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Data was used to decide on specific community issue to address <input type="checkbox"/> Data was used to determine format of town hall <input type="checkbox"/> Data was used to identify speakers/panel <input type="checkbox"/> Data was used to determine appropriate venue <input type="checkbox"/> Data was used to identify best time/date <input type="checkbox"/> Data was used to identify best marketing avenues <input type="checkbox"/> Key informant/stakeholder data was used <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled Substance Monitoring Database (CSMD) data was used <input type="checkbox"/> Survey data from previous events was used <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback from previous town hall debriefing sessions was used <input type="checkbox"/> Other data: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> If no data available, coalition reached out to mentoring coalition or DSAS for support 	
<p>A specific issue in the community is addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Data was used to decide on specific community issue to address <input type="checkbox"/> Issue has significant impact on county 	
<p>Target audience is determined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee determined target audience for town hall, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers/School Administrators/Parents 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare providers <input type="checkbox"/> Local government leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Faith-based organizations <input type="checkbox"/> General county population <input type="checkbox"/> Specific underserved populations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic or racial minorities <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQI individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Youth <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Service providers (Police, Firefighters, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Target audience was decided based on previous data about county need, feedback from coalition members, or a national program like SAMHSA 	
<p>Clear and measurable goals for the town hall are determined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Goal is specific <input type="checkbox"/> Goal is measurable <input type="checkbox"/> Goal is attainable <input type="checkbox"/> Goal is relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Goal is timely 	
<p>An effective format for the town hall meeting is determined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee chose a central theme for the town hall <input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee determined a format for event before contacting speakers/panelists <input type="checkbox"/> The central theme matches and/or relates to the format of the event <input type="checkbox"/> Event format includes time for introductions, key speakers, and audience participation 	
<p>Moderator and panelists/speakers are identified and invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee identified number of speakers for town hall <input type="checkbox"/> If a panel was chosen, panelists have an appropriate relationship to central theme and each offer unique information on topic <input type="checkbox"/> If a panel was chosen, committee identified an appropriate moderator <input type="checkbox"/> Speakers/panelists are invited in a timely manner <input type="checkbox"/> Speakers are provided with description of event and expectation of their participation 	
<p>Accommodations to meet target audience's needs were considered and planned for:</p> <p>An easily accessible venue was chosen for the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Venue is located centrally within target population <input type="checkbox"/> Venue is located near public transit stops 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Venue is located near highways<input type="checkbox"/> Venue has ample amounts of parking<input type="checkbox"/> Venue has accessible parking/ramps/entryways<input type="checkbox"/> Venue is in a location familiar to constituents <p>Other logistic considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Food was arranged for the event<input type="checkbox"/> Childcare was arranged for the event<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation was arranged for the event<input type="checkbox"/> The AV equipment is available for event<input type="checkbox"/> Considerations for live casting or videoing event are considered	
<p>Specific outreach and advertising plan created:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Town hall was advertised via e-mail(s)<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall was advertised via web site(s)<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall was advertised via social media<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall was advertised via print flyers/postings<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall was advertised in local newspapers<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall was advertised on local radio/TV<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall was advertised using DSAS resources<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall was advertised in other formats	

Implementation

Activity	Notes
<p>Town Hall meeting followed the pre-determined central theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Town hall closely followed the central theme and format throughout the event<input type="checkbox"/> Any deviance from theme or format was purposeful and reflected needs/questions/participation of audience	
<p>Town Hall meeting included speakers addressing information relevant to the county's substance concerns/ Appropriate presenters/speakers addressed information relevant to the central theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> One or more speakers are addressing town hall central theme<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers understand and follow their delivery format (roundtable, panel)<input type="checkbox"/> A back up plan is used in the event that one or more speakers is unable to make the event at the last minute	
<p>Town Hall meeting included an opportunity for audience participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Town hall included a Q & A session<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall provided sufficient time for audience members to participate in discussion<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall included relevant and achievable action items for participants	
<p>Town Hall meeting offered information on local resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee created a handout with information on central theme/topic, contact information for speakers (as they want to provide), and coalition's position on theme or steps for prevention<input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee partnered with health care providers, DSAS, etc. to ensure information was accurate and current<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall provided "resource tables" with literature from appropriate organizations<input type="checkbox"/> Town hall invited representatives from county resource organizations to attend event and provide resources<input type="checkbox"/> Coalition followed up with information on resources in an email to town hall attendees	

Debrief

Activity	Notes
<p>Surveys were circulated at the end of the event to collect data on current town hall event and planning for the next</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A short survey was created, no longer than 10 questions<input type="checkbox"/> Survey was distributed through either paper or electronic format<input type="checkbox"/> Attendees are able to anonymously provide feedback on the survey<input type="checkbox"/> Every attendee was given the opportunity to complete the survey<input type="checkbox"/> Survey included questions on current town hall event, ideas for future town hall events, and prevention needs of the county<input type="checkbox"/> Survey allowed attendees to provide open-ended feedback	
<p>Meeting information was recorded and tracked in a database for future reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Individual sign in data for attendees is recorded<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting demographics (date/time, location, attendees, theme, etc.) were recorded into a spreadsheet or database<input type="checkbox"/> Survey data is recorded into a spreadsheet or database<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking system (database, etc.) is accessible for planning future town hall events <p>This information should include topic(s) covered, approximate attendance (broken out by demographic and other relevant factors, when possible).</p>	
<p>Coalition held a debriefing session with various stakeholders following the town hall meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee met at least once within two weeks of the town hall event for a debriefing session<input type="checkbox"/> Planning committee invited outside stakeholders to provide feedback during the debriefing sessions<input type="checkbox"/> Survey data was discussed in debriefing sessions	
<p>Coalition held a debriefing session to develop an action plan relevant to county's needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Information from town hall, survey feedback, and debriefing sessions are compiled<input type="checkbox"/> Data is used to inform current year's plan or to create new action plan as needed<input type="checkbox"/> Coalition elicits feedback on new or updated action plan from county stakeholders, board members, mentor coalitions, and/or DSAS	

Town Hall Fidelity Matrix

Planning				
Activity	Low Fidelity	Moderate Fidelity	Strong Fidelity	Notes
Various community stakeholders involved in the planning process	Coalition did not involve community stakeholders in the planning process for the town hall meeting	Coalition involved community stakeholders from one sector of the community	Coalition involved a variety of community stakeholders (from 3 or more sectors) throughout the planning process	
Local data considered/used in the planning process (e.g., from previous town hall meetings, CSMD data, survey data, key informants)	Coalition did not use data for planning town hall meeting	Coalition used data in planning 1-2 aspects of the current town hall meeting	Coalition used data in planning all aspects of the current town hall meeting	
Specific issue in the community identified for the town hall meeting	Town hall meeting was not related to a specific community issue	Town hall meeting was related to a specific community issue	Town hall meeting was related to a specific community issue based on data or key informants	
Target audience was identified	Coalition did not predetermine a target audience	Coalition predetermined a target audience	Coalition predetermined a target audience based on data or key informants	
Coalition had clear and measurable goal(s) for town hall meeting (e.g., SMART goals)	Coalition did not determine a clear objective or goal for the town hall meeting	Coalition determined a clear objective or goal for the town hall meeting, but is hard to measure	Coalition determined a clear, measurable goal or objective for the town hall meeting	
Moderator and panelists/speakers were identified and invited	Coalition did not invite moderator and/or panelists able to address chosen issue	Coalition invited a moderator and panelists or speakers able to address a single aspect of the chosen issue	Coalition invited a moderator and panelists or speakers representing multiple viewpoints on the chosen issue	
Specific outreach and advertising plan created	Coalition did not advertise the town hall meeting	Coalition advertised town hall meeting through a few available channels	Coalition advertised town hall meeting through all appropriate, available channels	
Event Implementation				
Activity	Low Fidelity	Moderate Fidelity	Strong Fidelity	Notes
Town Hall meeting followed the pre-determined central theme to address specific community issue	Town hall meeting did not follow the predetermined central theme	Town hall meeting followed a theme throughout the meeting, but did not address specific community issues	Town hall meeting followed a theme throughout the entire meeting, addressing specific community issues	
Appropriate presenters/speakers addressed information relevant	Town hall meeting included presenters/speakers who did not	Town hall meeting included presenters/speakers that	Town hall meeting included presenters/speakers that represented	

to the central theme	address issues relevant to the central theme	represented a single viewpoint relevant to the central theme	multiple viewpoints relevant to the central theme	
Town Hall meeting included a Q & A session of appropriate length (e.g., most people who wanted to ask a question had time to)	Town hall meeting did not include a Q&A session	Town hall meeting included a limited Q&A session	Town hall meeting included an extended Q&A session that allowed attendees to fully participate in the meeting	
Town Hall meeting included action steps that the audience could take away from the meeting.	Town hall did not include action steps for the audience.	Town hall included action steps that would be difficult to accomplish.	Town hall included relevant and attainable action steps for participants.	
Meeting had information on local ATOD (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs) prevention resources available for participants	Town hall meeting did not offer information on local resources	Town hall meeting offered only handouts on local resources	Town hall meeting hosted representatives from local organizations to directly provide information and resources	
Debrief				
Activity	Low Fidelity	Moderate Fidelity	Strong Fidelity	Notes
Brief exit surveys were circulated at the end of the event	Brief surveys were not circulated at the town hall meeting	Brief surveys were circulated to some attendees at the town hall meeting	Brief surveys were circulated to most or all attendees at the end of the town hall meeting	
Meeting information was recorded and tracked in a database for future reference.	Meeting information was not recorded	Meeting information was partially recorded	All meeting information, including survey data, was recorded in a database for reference	
Coalition held a debriefing session with various community stakeholders following the town hall meeting	A debriefing session was not held following the town hall meeting	Coalition consulted one or two community stakeholders after the meeting to solicit feedback	Coalition held a debriefing session following the town hall meeting that included a variety of community stakeholders	
Coalition used data from the town hall meeting and debrief sessions to develop follow-up action items	An action plan was not created following the town hall meeting	Coalition created an action plan using data from the town hall meeting attendees only, without input from a community stakeholder debriefing	Coalition developed an appropriate action plan relevant to the county's needs using data from the town hall meeting and the debriefing session with community stakeholders	