

Facilitating a “Bridging the Community” Meeting

Starting the Meeting

- Assure all attendees have nametags with their name written in large black bold type so the facilitator can easily read attendees’ names from the front of the room.
- Begin on time at 7:00 pm. Enthusiastically welcome everyone.
- Explain the meeting’s purpose is to build community and “bridge” resources, meet needs and explore new ideas for projects in the community.
- Explain the meeting will proceed from 7:00 pm until 8:30 pm. We will invite everyone to voluntarily introduce themselves and share a little information about who they are, which organization they represent (if any), why they are attending, what they’d like to accomplish, and share any new ideas for the community to explore.
- Present the chart “Bridging Framework and Principles” in front of the room for all to see. Read the words on the chart.
- Explain the **Framework** is the “container” we all step into while attending the meeting. The horizontal line represents our **Motivation**, and the vertical line represents the **Means of Achieving our Goal**.
- Explain the **Principles** that guide our interactions.
- Take about 5 minutes to ask the attendees to select one point on the Framework or one Principle that relates to them. Invite them to share this with the attendees.

Explaining the Process for Conducting a “Bridging The Community” Meeting

- REMINDER: The meeting facilitator’s primary role is to guide the meeting process, allowing everyone the opportunity to share their information and ideas in an efficient and concise manner. Good facilitators lead and make it easy for everyone to listen, understand, and learn. The less a facilitator speaks, the more effective they become.
- Begin with a “Moment of Silence” related to a current purpose or cause. If the Bridging meeting is in a church, the facilitator may begin with a prayer.

- Invite the Host person associated with the meeting site to share a brief overview of the organization and/or building, its history, activities, and community involvement.
- Begin the meeting's sharing portion by inviting new attendees to voluntarily introduce themselves and share a little information about who they are, which organization they represent (if any), why they are attending, what they'd like to accomplish, and share any new ideas for the community to explore.
- After all new attendees have shared, invite all previous attendees to share the same info.
- After each person has individually shared, lead a brief CLAP by saying, "Thank you <name>. Let's please acknowledge <name>'s ideas/input/thoughts". Make the individual feel special for having attended the meeting.
- Keep mental track of the time and of each person's sharing. Conclude the meeting's sharing portion by 8:00 pm.

The Actual Bridging Process

- At 8:00 pm, explain how we break up and "BRIDGE" with each other based upon what each person heard that may have matching needs, resources, ideas, etc. Share flyers, handouts, business cards, etc., during this meeting time also.
- At 8:20 pm, gather everyone quickly back together, bring quiet to the meeting, and ask for "bridges" to be shared aloud that were made. The Secretary will take the meeting notes and shared bridges to publish after the meeting.
- Request for contact info from all new members (name, cell phone, and email address).
- Meeting Minutes are sent out a couple of days after the Bridging meeting.
- Remind everyone about the date and location for the next meeting. Ask who would like to Host the next meeting.
- THANK everyone for attending, and then dismiss the meeting.
- As people begin to depart, walk around and chat with them briefly.