

New York City Organizing Support Center

**BUILDING A BASE  
FOR  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**

**With a Focus on  
ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS**

*Draft*  
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# CONTENTS

<b>Page 3</b>	Why Do One-On-One Meetings To Build A Base?
<b>Page 4</b>	Guidelines For What One-on-One Meetings ARE... And What They ARE NOT
<b>Page 5</b>	What Is A One-On-One Meeting?
<b>Page 6</b>	Self-Interest In Community Organizing
<b>Page 7</b>	Building a Base, Building Lists and Identifying Who We Should Do One-On-One Meetings With
<b>Page 8</b>	Components of Base Building
<b>Page 9</b>	Leaders in Community Organizing
<b>Page 10</b>	There Are <i>Different Levels</i> of Leadership In Every Project and Organization
<b>Page 11-12</b>	How Do We Identify People For One-On-One Meetings?
<b>Page 13</b>	Scheduling A One-On-One Meeting
<b>Page 14-17</b>	Communication Skills
<b>Page 18-20</b>	15 Points for Holding a One-on-One Meeting
<b>Page 21</b>	Some Handouts And Exercises That Can Be Useful For Training
<b>Page 22</b>	What Motivates Me -- Head / Heart / Gut?
<b>Page 23-24</b>	The 6 R's of Participation
<b>Page 25-27</b>	Characteristics Of Leaders In Community Organizing Levels Of Leadership In Community Organizing Styles Of Leadership In Community Organizing
<b>Page 28-29</b>	Leadership Building Chart
<b>Page 30</b>	Using Open Questions Examples and Sample Exercise
<b>Page 31</b>	Setting up a One-on-One Role-Play
<b>Page 32</b>	Credits

## Why Do One-On-One Meetings To Build A Base?

Organizing gives us a rare, exciting opportunity to develop strong, *public relationships* with many interesting and *hopeful* people who care about the same things we do. Meeting with people individually -- one-on-one -- not just in groups, enables us to build a base of people who...

know each other...

are accountable to each other and...

want to build collective POWER!

### *One-On-One Meetings Help Us Build Collective Power Through:*

- **identifying** and **linking** people based on their motivation or self-interest: *What motivates this person? What does this person want to get out of being a leader in our organization?*
- **building** relationships: *When we show we're committed to listening and sharing one-on-one, we show how much we value relationships.*
- **creating** a positive organizational culture: *We personally invite people in. We don't just expect them to respond to announcements.*
- **offering** people a rare opportunity to explore their own ideas and needs, and to share them: *We're told all the time what we want and who we are, by the media and culture and by people all around us. One-on-one meetings encourage each of us to know ourselves.*
- **strengthening** our listening skills, our assessment skills, our understanding: *One-on-one meetings require all staff and leaders in the organization to practice essential skills.*

If staff members or one or two individuals decide what the problems and solutions are for the community, they are mobilizing people for an agenda, *not* organizing for power.

## **Guidelines For What One-on-One Meetings ARE... And What They ARE NOT**

### ***ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS ARE:***

- interviews to learn what **motivates** someone, what's their **self-interest**.
- asking what their hopes are, **what they would like to see in their lives**.
- mostly **listening** – 75% of the time!
- finding out what people are **angry** and **concerned** about.
- learning what someone's **networks** are, who else they can bring in.
- discovering what they're involved in, what **leadership roles** they've had.
- building a **public relationship**, not a private relationship: we don't talk about the kids, we talk about the kids' school.

### ***ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS ARE NOT:***

- Chit chat
- Therapy
- Individual problem solving
- Intake
- Preaching or judging
- Recruitment

## What Is A One-On-One Meeting?

The *one-on-one meeting* is essential for building collective power among people in our community.

One-on-one meetings involve two people sitting down together for ½ hour to 45 minutes and learning what's important to each other. While that sounds simple, it requires that we use and develop key organizing skills, primarily our communication and listening skills and our ability to do quick, strategic assessment. It also requires that our organizations commit staff time and resources to this time intensive process.

The primary goals of one-on-one meetings are to:

***BUILD PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS:*** In one-on-one meetings, we develop PUBLIC relationships, not PRIVATE relationships (we may become friends, but the purpose of the one-on-one is to build our public organizing, not our social circle!) We hear what the problems are that concern people, and the issues they want to work on...the solutions people in our communities want to pursue for themselves.

***UNDERSTAND WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE – ALSO KNOWN AS “SELF-INTEREST”:*** By meeting with people one-on-one, we begin to really understand what motivates them. What are the most important *motivations* in their lives that could lead them to get involved? Are they motivated by their family? Their race or gender? Their career? What do individual human beings (Maria, John...) -- not generally defined groups (public housing residents, the South Side community) -- *want to get* from building our organizing efforts? What kind of leadership roles can they take on?

***IDENTIFY LEADERS:*** Organizing for power is different from getting people “involved” and mobilizing “numbers.” We look for individual people who can deliver, are accountable to others, and can build networks. We look for people who are ready to move to ACTION! We start by asking people in the community what they care about in one-on-one meetings. We use that knowledge to set priorities and plan strategy.

**There is only one way to understand what someone sees as the solution to her/his problems, and only one way to know why someone may join us in building power...ASK!**

## Self-Interest In Community Organizing

“Self-interest” is what a person wants to get out of being involved with an organization. It is connected to what *motivates* that person. Is he or she most motivated to do things that help their children? To expand the rights of their racial or ethnic or gender group? Does she or he want their involvement to lead to a job? A better school for the kids?

Community organizing for power is based on the belief that people are motivated to act based on their self-interest. Importantly, our organizations have progressive agendas. We build POWER around self-interest that *expands the rights and resources of all people*, not self-interest that oppresses others.

Most people are more familiar with the concepts of being:

- **Selfish** – concerned only with oneself
- **Selfless** – putting the needs of other above one’s own needs

In the political landscape we can add the concept of:

- **Self-preservation** – We hear all the time that there is nothing we can do as individuals to change things we don’t like about society. Personal financial success and power are highly valued in America. The clearest message we get every day is that we should *just take care of ourselves*.

**Having self-interest is different than being selfish or selfless, or just being concerned about self-preservation.** Organizing recognizes that people have individual needs, but it maintains that *people get their needs met most effectively when they engage with others who share their experiences*.

Organizing teaches people that they know better than “experts” what is needed in their neighborhood, in their city. They experience the power of coming together to get something they need. They broaden their view of their own self-interest, by seeing their problems and more importantly their issues...their *solutions*, in relationship with others.

**The only way to find out someone’s self-interest is to *ask*.**

Asking skillfully may include helping people with the often-difficult process of getting in touch with their own needs.

When we ask people what is most important to them and what they want to get out their involvement, we learn who can be a leader. We build relationships. We learn who wants to join with others to solve problems from their roots, and who wants to stay on the level of self-preservation – just take care of their own problem and move on.

## **Building a Base, Building Lists and Identifying Who We Should Do One-On-One Meetings With**

Since one-on-one meetings require a substantial investment of time and resources, we can't do them with everyone we meet. Sometimes, we do one-on-one meetings with *ALLIES* or potential allies. These are groups and individuals outside our organization who will support or join us in achieving our goals. But we primarily need to have one-on-one meetings with people who may become members of our organization, and who are *POTENTIAL LEADERS*, willing and able to build our organizing and our organization.

Sometimes, we can identify someone for a one-on-one meeting by asking people who are already active in our organization or who care about our work, for the names of their friends, colleagues, or family members. But first, we need to use a variety of strategies to *build a base*.

The first component of base building is *building a list* of names. Some of the *outreach strategies* or activities that may help us get names are:

- **Doorknocking** – going door to door, informing people about our organization or an issue campaign and inviting them to participate
- **Teach-ins** – holding public forums to educate people about our issues
- **Distributing Flyers** – going where people in our community gather, speaking with them and giving them written information about our work
- **Petition Drives or Surveys** – gathering information and engaging people with concrete tools

While each of these strategies gets us a concrete result -- a name on a petition, a person coming out to a meeting, a flyer posted in a stairwell -- **THESE OUTREACH STRATEGIES HAVE MORE THAN ONE PURPOSE.** They all enable us to build lists, from which we can identify people for one-on-one meetings and from there, people who may be potential members and leaders.

## Components of Base Building

Base building is a process that has distinct strategic components or steps. Moving through the steps enables us to build a broad, solid base for our organizing. If we try to skip the steps, we wind up with a shaky base.

We start out by doing outreach to build our lists. From the lists we try to identify people with whom we can do one-on-one meetings. From the one-on-ones we identify people who may be further recruited as members or leaders. Note that recruitment does not happen in our first contact! We engage in *relationships first*, then recruit people.

### Strategy

1. Outreach
2. Lists
3. One-On-One Meetings
4. Membership Recruitment
5. Leadership Development

### Goal

Lists  
One-On-One Meetings  
Members >>> Leaders  
Dues Paying Members  
Committed Leaders

Similarly, leadership development is a process. *Not everyone will become the same kind of leader* in our organization. On the next pages, we look at qualities of leadership and levels of leaders.

***It's not all about the 300 people who come to our event,  
it's about the 30 people we build relationships with!***



## Leaders in Community Organizing

### *Leaders Are People Who:*

- **Deliver** - if a leader promises to do something, they do it.
- **Have Networks (or want to build them)** - leaders know other people in the community who share their concerns - leaders identify other people who can be brought into the project and/or welcome new people readily.
- **Are Accountable** - leaders talk with the other people who share their concerns – other people care about what a leader is saying or doing on their behalf.
- **Get Respect** - other people listen to leaders and trust them.
- **Rise to the Occasion** - in a crisis, leaders can be counted on to respond.
- **Are Angry** - leaders know what's bothering them, and are comfortable expressing their dissatisfaction with oppressive people and institutions.
- **Are Hopeful** - leaders believe that change is possible, and that they have a role in creating their own future.
- **Understand Self Interest** - leaders know what's important to them, and what they want to get from building the organization – leaders believe that working with others is how to get what they want.
- **Want to Build Power** – leaders understand that collective power *with others* is different from having power *over others* – leaders embrace collective power as the way to create long-term solutions to problems.

### *A Leader Is Not Necessarily:*

- The loudest person in the group
- The person who speaks the most
- The one with the most education

## **There Are *Different Levels* of Leadership In Every Project and Organization**

Our circle of leadership can be viewed as concentric circles, with a core of leaders at the center, surrounded by a wider circle, a circle of general members and our base building lists around the circle's edge:

- ***Core leaders*** - a small number of people who are most involved
- ***Wider circle of leaders*** - a larger number of people who get involved if something they're interested in is happening
- ***General members*** - people who stay in touch with the project and may send money or come to an event once in awhile
- ***Lists*** - the people we meet in our initial outreach who may be brought into the circle of members and leaders once we establish relationships

## How Do We Identify People For One-On-One Meetings?

The following is an example of how you might identify people to do one-on-one meetings with:

- 1) You are an organizer with South Siders United, which is working to improve Rivers Park. You go to the park on Saturday morning. You know that you may get half of the people you approach to give you their names and contact information, and that a third of those may be appropriate for one-on-one meetings. So, to reach your goal of *building a list of 15 people and identifying 5 people to do one-on-ones with* next week, you plan to approach 35 people to fill out surveys on what they think the park needs.
- 2) Of the 35 people you talk to, 10 ask you to leave them alone, but 25 are willing to talk to you. Of these, 15 fill out the survey. You see that 2 of the people are really *angry* about the condition of the park and an additional 3 say they would *come to a meeting* with others who want to make the park cleaner. These are two of the many things you might recognize as characteristics of a potential leader.
- 3) You met your goal! You've built your list by 15 and can further explore if any of these people will respond to South Siders' invitations in the future. You have some input on your survey. And you have a total of 5 people who show signs of being potential leaders – they're angry – they want to join with others to get something they want. You ask if you can call on Monday to talk more.
- 4) You call each of these potential leaders and ask if you can meet with them to learn what they think about the park, for 30-45 minutes. You decide together on a place that feels comfortable—a coffee shop or office. (If you do happen to know someone you're scheduling a one-on-one meeting with, *meeting at their home is definitely the best way to learn about them*, but always use your judgement and choose a place that feels safe and comfortable. Asking them to come to the organization could make it feel like “intake” so try to find somewhere more personal to them.)

## **How Do We Identify People For One-On-One Meetings?**

5) You do one-on-one meetings with the 5 people and learn a great deal about them, as well as about the park and the neighborhood. You notice how your ability to listen and to assess self-interest improves with each conversation. You learn to hear the difference between someone who cares most about their children versus someone who cares most deeply about other people of their same race or gender. You notice that those who seem motivated by their children tend to feel strongest about the park.

6) You are thrilled when one of the people you did a one-on-one with, a single parent, turns out to be a true leader, leading the struggle to improve Rivers Park and recruiting her neighbors to help build the organization!

7) Of the other 4 people you've done one-on-ones with, 2 stay on your contact list and may become general members or other supporters of your organization. You call them when something is happening that you've assessed may interest them. Two are not interested in building or supporting the organization, so they come off your list.

8) You also contact the additional people you've learned about from those you've met with, continuing to build the base of your organization.

**We need to talk to *many* people  
in order to identify a strong group of leaders!**

## Scheduling A One-On-One Meeting

- You will usually call the potential leader you've identified on the telephone. *The goal of the phone call is to only arrange the meeting.* You cannot build a relationship over the phone, so don't even try!
- Introduce yourself. *Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am working with South Siders United to make the South Side stronger.*
- Remind the person how you met, or tell where you got her/his name and number. *Do you recall we spoke at the park on Saturday, and I mentioned I would call you?*
- Explain that you would like ½ hour to 45 minutes of their time to get to know what's important to them and listen to what they believe is important for the community. *South Siders United is visiting people in the community to learn what they would like to see happen with the park. I'd like to arrange to have ½ hour to 45 minutes of your time to listen to your ideas about the park, and other things you care about.*
- Keep it simple, and be clear that you are not selling anything.
- Be specific about the date, time, and place. Decide together on a place that feels comfortable—a coffee shop or office. If you know the person you're scheduling a one-on-one meeting with, *meeting at their home is definitely the best way to learn about them*, but always use your judgement and choose a place that feels safe and comfortable. Asking them to come to the organization could make it feel like “intake” so try to find somewhere more personal.
- Before the meeting, think about what you already know about the person, what you think their self-interest is.
- Practice explaining the work of your organization and your role in less than 2 minutes!
- Practice explaining why you got involved with the organization, as a way to connect and share with the person. But remember, you're there to mostly listen, so talk about yourself and your ideas less than 25% of the time!

## **Communication Skills**

Effective community organizing requires organizers and leaders to practice good listening and communication skills. We use these skills in all aspects of building powerful organizations that people respect and want to be a part of, including:

### **Outreach**

### **One-on-One Meetings**

### **Recruitment**

We communicate assertively, and show we're listening when we use our:

### **Eyes**

#### *MAKE EYE CONTACT:*

Look the person you are talking to straight in the eye while you are talking, or while you are listening. This shows you mean what you say and that you are paying attention.

### **Bodies**

#### *NOD:*

Nod your head or say "uh hum" when the other person makes a point so he or she knows you are listening.

#### *PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY:*

Sit or stand upright so you look engaged. Keeping your body straight will also help your energy and focus to remain level.

#### *STAY STEADY:*

Keep your hands free. Put aside any papers or pens you may be tempted to fidget with to keep from appearing distracted or nervous. If you *are* nervous about talking with others, you're not alone. But if you want to build this skill, it's important to practice often with the help of a supervisor, co-worker, or another leader.

#### *WATCH OTHERS:*

Notice others' body language to assess how the conversation is going. Are they also upright, engaged, making eye contact, or do they seem bored or distracted?

## Questions

### *CLARIFYING QUESTIONS:*

Usually, when people don't understand each other they just stop listening. If you do not understand what the other person is saying or what she or he means, ask questions.

### *OPEN QUESTIONS:*

Ask open-ended questions, not closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions invite a full response. Closed-ended questions require only a yes or no answer. For example:

*What do you think should be done about the waterfront?*

(open-ended)

*Do you think there should be a park on the waterfront?*

(closed-ended)

### *QUESTIONS THAT SEIZE OPPORTUNITY:*

By doing things like making eye contact, observing body language and focusing our attention, we can learn to ask the right questions at the right time. Our goal is not to chat or to go off on tangents we may find somewhat interesting, but to move the conversation toward depth, understanding and commitment.

*It sounds like that encounter with the police really changed you. What do you think can be done about police violence?*

### *QUESTIONS THAT AGITATE:*

Organizers often need to ask questions that provoke or agitate, in order to challenge people to grow and assert themselves as leaders, or to test for healthy anger and a willingness to act.

*Do you really think your landlord would suddenly start giving you heat, just because you wrote him a letter?*

### *QUESTIONS THAT RESPOND TO QUESTIONS:*

When people ask for help with individual problems, it is often effective to answer their questions with questions. This can lead to finding out more about their situation and their approach to problem solving.

(potential member/leader) *Do you know how I can get my benefits reinstated?*

(organizer) *What have you already tried to do?*

## Responses

### VALIDATION:

If people are confused or pessimistic, acknowledge their feelings and try to offer an alternative or create one with them.

*“It’s upsetting when someone promises to come to the meeting, then doesn’t show up. Let’s talk about how we can create more roles for people in the meetings, so they feel more invested in coming.”*

### REFLECTION:

Restate the important points you heard, to ensure that you understood, and that the person you’re speaking with knows you understood.

*“So, it sounds like working on the park issue interests you more than working on the school issue.”*

## Assertiveness

### “I” STATEMENTS:

When stating a point of view, try to use “I” statements rather than “you” statements. This builds assertive communication while avoiding making people feel defensive.

*“You always slow us down with your long winded answers!”*  
(You statement)  
*“I need to get home on time to feed my kids.”* (I statement)

### SPECIFY RESULTS:

Whenever possible, be clear about the results or interventions you want to see. Don’t leave this to chance!

*“I’d really like for you to join our committee tonight.”*



## **Attitudes**

### *REALLY LISTEN, DON'T PRE-JUDGE:*

It's hard to listen when we disagree with what we are hearing from the other person. If you are doing a one-on-one meeting with someone who may be a potential leader for your organization, you will only learn what motivates her or him if you are listening, not judging.

### *DEAL WITH ANNOYING HABITS:*

It's also hard to listen if the person we are speaking with has annoying mannerisms or speech patterns. Good listeners look past this. Even people we find annoying may have good ideas and can make valuable contributions.

### *DON'T TRY TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS:*

As organizers and leaders, we are working together to build power as a way of making all our lives better. Never try to solve people's individual problems, or tell them what they should be doing to make their own lives better. This is not a time to give advice, even if you are asked to do so.

### *DON'T INTERRUPT:*

You cannot talk and listen at the same time! Wait until the other person is finished speaking before you reply.

### *CONCENTRATE AND FOCUS:*

Hold one conversation at a time, focused on the person you are speaking with. Listen to the words, ideas and feeling you are hearing.

### *AVOID ANTAGONIZING STATEMENTS:*

Sincere listening, open-ended questions, assertive communication and skillful agitation are more effective than starting an argument.

### *UNDERSTAND CONFLICTS:*

If a conflict arises, try to clarify a few things in order to most effectively respond. Do you both agree on what the conflict is about? Do you think it's about another leader and the other person thinks it's about you, or do you both agree on the source of the problem? Reflect on whether what's going on is actually a conflict within yourself or something that requires resolution with others. Finally, question whether or not you are clear about where others involved in the conflict are coming from.

### *EMPATHIZE:*

Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes, so you can really understand her or his point of view.

## 15 Points for Holding A One-On-One Meeting

There is no one formula for having a good one-on-one meeting. **Try to relax and enjoy learning about another person!** Here are some general guidelines that may help:

1) **Introduce yourself**, just like you did over the telephone. **State very clearly why you are there.** *I'm here to listen to what's important to you and what you think about Rivers Park. I can share some information about South Siders United and why I work there, but I'm really here to listen to you.* You could try to mention the names of people or organizations you both know and trust, to establish some rapport.

2) This is not the time to say that you hope this person might be able to be a core leader. **Leadership development is a long process that starts with the relationship you're beginning to build with the one-on-one meeting.** First, you want to understand this person's self-interest and learn more about their leadership skills and potential.

3) If you are in their home, **take mental note of what you see.** Are there family members around – does this person have a support system to support their organizing? Are there books or music that could reveal the person's priorities? Does the home convey that the person is financially comfortable? Struggling? What else do you notice?

4) Ask **open-ended questions** that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer and listen for lead-ins to their stories. Explore different areas, to see what most interests this person.

- *Can you tell me about what you'd like to see for the children in this community?*
- *Can you tell me about other community organizations you participate in?*
- *What do you think would make the park better?*
- *You think the city needs to have more trash cans in the park –how do you think that would help?*

### **Some possible areas to ask open-ended questions:**

- *Neighborhood:* changes they've seen, problems they've experienced
- *Children - Their Own & Others:* schools, recreation, opportunities for young people
- *Family Pressures:* work, education
- *The Wider Social Community:* their connections to others in their culture, their view of what society is facing

(MORE >>>)

## 15 Points for Holding a One-on-One Meeting

- 5) **Don't give advice** or look for ways to help them personally. You are not here to be a social worker or to make a friend! Use this person's comments only to learn more about them. *It's awful that your daughter was mugged in the park. Can you tell me about other incidents you've heard about and what you think should be done about them?*
  
- 6) **Share some common ground.** *I took a job with this organization because my father was active with his labor union in our home country, and I saw how much people can win for themselves if they're organized.* You're sharing only to connect. Never go into a long explanation about what you think the community needs...even if you live there!
  
- 7) Try to **identify self-interest.** What does this person get excited about? Ask follow-up questions, to see if your hunches prove to be true. *You seem really interested in trying to get new swings in the park. Tell me how you could see your children using them.*
  
- 8) Assess if this person's views are **generally similar to the vision of the organization.** Is he/she interested in restricting the rights of others or in creating the more open, and progressive society your organization envisions? If your organization is only working on the parks, does this person have self-interest related to parks, or is she/he really angry about the school next to the park? It's okay if this person is not a leader for your organization right now! There may be other issues down the line they want to work on.
  
- 9) Find out their **networks and other leadership roles.** *Can you tell me about some of the organizations you work with? Are you active in the PTA or at your church?*
  
- 10) Get **names of other people** they know. *Can you tell me about other people who may want to talk with me about the same kinds of things we're talking about?*
  
- 11) **Follow-up.** *I'll call next week to share what others are saying about the park.*

(MORE >>>)

## 15 Points for Holding a One-on-One Meeting

12) **Engage** them in something only if you're sure they want to do something now. Remember, your goal has not been to recruit. Offer responsibility only if you're sure this person wants to come to the next meeting, wants to do something now, and has leadership potential. *We're meeting at the park next Saturday with all the people we've been listening to. Will you come? Could you invite some neighbors? You've lived near the park for a long time, would you give a history of the park at the meeting? I can call you tomorrow to go through the agenda...*

13) Always **thank** the person for their time!

14) Try not to take notes in the meeting (except for the correct spelling of any names they give you!) But when the one-on-one meeting is over, go somewhere quiet and write down a few points on what you learned about this person and what you believe motivates her or him. As a guideline you could write:

- The 3 biggest things that impressed me about this person.
- What he or she agreed to do.
- Do I think this person will really get involved with our organization? Why?

15) If you're new to doing one-on-ones, do them for awhile with a more experienced organizer. Especially in the beginning, **discuss or de-brief the one-on-one with someone who has more experience**, so that you can improve your skills, and learn from your strengths.

**Holding effective one-on-one meetings takes practice.**

**Many people consider this to be an art,  
and one of the most rewarding skills of organizing!**

## **Some Handouts And Exercises That Can Be Useful For Training**

- *Page 22: For understanding motivation or self-interest:*

### **Head / Heart / Gut Stick Person (exercise)**

- *Page 23 - 24: For understanding the importance of relationships, results, and other aspects of organizations:*

### **The 6 R's of Participation (handout and sample exercise)**

- *Page 25 - 27: For practicing leadership identification:*

### **Characteristics of Leaders, Levels of Leadership in Community Organizing, Styles of Leadership (handouts, exercises, worksheet)**

- *Page 28 – 29: For formulating a plan for leadership development:*

### **Leadership Building Chart (worksheet)**

- *Page 30: For practicing good communication skills:*

### **Using Open Questions (handout and sample exercise)**

- *Page 31: For practicing one-on-one meetings:*

### **Setting up a One-on-One Role-Play (exercise)**

## ***What Motivates Me -- Head / Heart / Gut?***

### **Exercise:**

- We'll **view** an example of a stick person chart. *(about 5 minutes)*

*(The facilitator should post a pre-made stick person chart of their own, using the questions below as a guide. The chart should be simple, ideally focused on one aspect of the facilitator's motivations, and touch on something comfortably personal, so that the participants feel invited to be "real." An example might be a facilitator who is motivated to work for universal health care because of the death of a family member who could not pay for health care. Another may be someone who is working for an end to police violence after a brother suffered injuries in custody.)*

- Each of us will **create** a stick person chart of: *(about 10 minutes)*

What motivates me?...

- *in my head* – What do I think is socially, politically, economically wrong?
  - *my heart* – What motivates me on a feeling level?
  - *my gut* – What motivates me most personally—what do I need?
  - *my hands and feet* – What do I like to do?
- We'll each tape our charts to the walls, and together, we'll **hear** a sample from the charts. *(about 10 minutes – 5 minutes each)*

*(It works well to have everyone find a partner with whom they can share their chart, so that everyone's chart is described to at least one other person. Then, you can invite a sample from the whole group, if there is time.)*

- Together, we'll **review** what you learned from this exercise. What surprised you? *(about 5 minutes)*

**You'll need big chart paper, tape and colored markers.**

**This exercise takes about 30-40 minutes total.**

**Keep the charts taped to the walls so you can refer back to them!**

## The 6 R's of Participation

*Relationship...Role & Responsibility...Recognition...Respect...Reward ...Results!*

### 1) RELATIONSHIP

Organizations are organized networks of public relationships. We often enjoy making friends and fostering *private* relationships through organizing, but our *goal* is to build a strong network of *public* relationships. Doing one-on-one meetings where we listen to what potential leaders think...for at least a half hour in person, not just in a quick phone call...helps us learn what's important to each of us, and helps us to build relationships. An invitation from another person is what convinces us to join with others, not an announcement slipped under the door! We get to know each other, have fun together, and through our relationships we build accountability and POWER!

### 2) ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY

Our RELATIONSHIPS help us to understand what each leader or member wants to do and could do well. Roles give people responsibilities, and share power within the organization. Roles include chairing meetings, making outreach calls, doing one-on-one meetings with potential leaders, heading a negotiation team, bringing materials to a meeting, writing minutes...

### 3) RECOGNITION

We all want to be recognized initially by members of our own organization, but also by members of the wider community. Thanking each other in public builds a positive organizational culture, where people feel valuable, not "used". We can hold awards dinners, applaud achievements at the end of our meetings, give training certificates...

### 4) RESPECT

Our organizations need to be places where each person is respected for who they are, for their values, traditions, and life experiences. We can make sure to do adequate translation of all materials. Schedule meetings when most people can make them and start and end all meetings on time. Provide childcare so that parents can participate fully. When someone from inside or outside the organization treats others offensively, members must deal with it in a united, official way, swiftly and directly. **(MORE>>>)**

23

## The 6 R's of Participation

*Relationship...Role & Responsibility...Recognition...Respect...Reward ...Results!*

### 5) REWARD

The rewards of membership in our organizations must outweigh the costs. Identify the public and private rewards which respond to the self-interest of members and leaders. Make sure every leader who is prepared, qualified, and wants to, gets a chance to speak in public or to the press. If the organization hires people from its leadership or membership, we have a thoughtful, fair process for making those decisions. Create opportunities for families and friends of members to participate in social activities.

### 6) RESULTS!

Leaders and members in our organizations want to get something out of being involved. They want their self-interest to be directly satisfied. We can never sit back and expect people to stay in our organization because we do "good work" or because we're such "nice people".

We need to keep doing our one-on-one meetings to know what motivates our members. We need to stay vigilant about our goals, strategies, targets, allies, and tactics. We need to make sure our leaders and members are developing their own issues...the solutions to their own problems...and speaking on their own behalf. These are the building blocks for successful campaigns that win and keep **RESULTS!**

**EXERCISE:** Make a list with each of the 6 R's. Next to each R make a list of "What We Do Now" and "What We Could Do."

Adapted by Joan Minieri for the New York City Organizing Support Center from: "**From the Ground Up**", Gillian Kaye and Tom Wolff, editors, published by AHEC/Community Partners, Amherst, MA, 1997. Ira Resnick, Center for Social and Community Development, Rutgers—The State University, originally developed the 6 R's.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERS IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

- **Read** the following and **circle** what is most meaningful to you.
- **Discuss** what you've circled with a partner.
- We'll **discuss** as a group.

\* \* \*

### *Leaders Are People Who:*

- **Deliver** - if a leader promises to do something, they do it.
- **Have Networks (or want to build them)** - leaders know other people in the community who share their concerns - leaders identify other people who can be brought into the project and/or welcome new people readily.
- **Are Accountable** - leaders talk with the other people who share their concerns – other people care about what a leader is saying or doing on their behalf.
- **Get Respect** - other people listen to leaders and trust them.
- **Rise to the Occasion** - in a crisis, leaders can be counted on to respond.
- **Are Angry** - leaders know what's bothering them, and are comfortable expressing their dissatisfaction with oppressive people and institutions.
- **Are Hopeful** - leaders believe that change is possible, and that they have a role in creating their own future.
- **Understand Self Interest** - leaders know what's important to them, and what they want to get from building the organization – leaders believe that working with others is how to get what they want.
- **Want to Build Power** – leaders understand that collective power *with others* is different from having power *over others* – leaders embrace collective power as the way to create long-term solutions to problems.

### *A Leader Is Not Necessarily:*

- The loudest person in the group
- The person who speaks the most
- The one with the most education

## LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

- **Interview** at least 5 people from your community and **identify** one person for each level of leadership. Then **write** 3 reasons why that person could be the type of leader you're suggesting. Use the list of characteristics as a guide.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are *different levels* of leadership in every project and organization:

- ***Core leaders*** – a small number of people who are most involved

One person who could become a ***core leader*** is \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

- ***Wider circle of leaders*** – a larger number of people who get involved if something they're interested in is happening

One person who could be in our ***wider circle of leaders*** is \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

- ***General members*** – people who stay in touch with the project and may send money or come to an event once in awhile

One person who could be in our ***general membership*** is \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

## STYLES OF LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

- **Read** the following and **circle** whatever matches your own leadership style.
- **Join** with others who share this aspect of your leadership style.
- We'll **discuss** as a group.

\* \* \* \* \*

*There are different styles of leadership in every project and organization.  
This includes things such as the following:*

- Some leaders like to look at the “big picture” and have trouble focusing on detail oriented tasks.
- Some leaders enjoy taking care of the details.
- Some leaders are good at probing and challenging others.
- Some leaders talk a lot.
- Some leaders listen more than they talk, and use few words.
- Some leaders are extremely good at moving the process along.

## LEADERSHIP BUILDING CHART

*Create a chart about what you know about current and potential leaders, filling in information for the following categories:*

<b>Name</b>	Name the leader or potential leader.
<b>Leadership Qualities</b>	Why do you think this person is or can be a leader?
<b>Motivation/ Self-Interest</b>	What does this person need to get out of her or his involvement with the organization in order to stay involved?
<b>Current Tasks</b>	What kinds of things does this person currently do to build the organization?
<b>New Tasks</b>	What are some other things you can ask this person to do to build his or her leadership?
<b>Training</b>	What kind of training will this person need?
<b>Obstacles</b>	What are some obstacles that may make it difficult for this person to progress as a leader?
<b>One-on-One?</b>	Have you held a one-on-one meeting with this person? If not, when will you?

### LEADERSHIP BUILDING CHART

Name	Leadership Qualities	Motivation/ Self-Interest	Current Tasks	New Tasks	Training	Obstacles	One-on One?
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Core

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Wider Circle

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General Members

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## Using Open Questions Examples and Sample Exercise

*An open question:*

- has no “right” answer
- offers someone an opportunity to draw off her/his own life experience
- invites dialogue
- requires both participants to reflect and think critically

*Examples of open questions:*

- “Can you tell me about your children’s school?”
- “Why do you say that?”
- “What does that mean to you?”

*A closed question:*

- has one answer
- discourages dialogue

*Examples of closed questions:*

- “Do you like your children’s school?”
- “Did you say that because you think it’s a good idea?”
- “Does that mean the problem is with the school board?”

**Exercise:**

- Work with a partner. One of you will describe something you are concerned about for your community. Your partner will then ask 3 open questions about this concern.
- After 3 minutes, switch places.
- As a group, we’ll talk about what you learned and what surprised you.

**You Can Also Use Pages 14-17 “Communication Skills”  
As a Handout With This Exercise**

## Setting up a One-on-One Role-Play

### Exercise:

- We'll **view** a role-play of a one-on-one meeting that uses good communication skills. *(around 10-20 minutes)*
  - *The facilitator should prepare a role-play of a one-on-one meeting and ideally demonstrate it with another staff person or someone who is not a participant in the training. This ensures safety, and that no participant feels put on the spot or unprepared in front of the group.*
  - *The role-play should be based on the skill level of the group, or the kinds of real life situations participants may find themselves facing.*
  - *Both participants in the role-play should know the self-interest of the person who is being interviewed, and agree how that is going to be revealed in their discussion.*
  - *Dynamics such as answering the phone during the meeting can be demonstrated, to point out how distracting these things can be.*
  - *Role-play participants should also intentionally demonstrate the use of skillful questions, eye contact, and other helpful communication tools.*
  - *The role-play should demonstrate how skillfully asked questions enable people to discuss personal motivations in ways that are appropriate for public relationships.*
  - *If there is time, it's useful to do a couple of different role-plays showing different kinds of encounters. It can be helpful, for example to do a role-play based on the real-life motivations of the person being interviewed.*
- We'll **report** on the *good communication skills* we noticed, as well as on the *motivation or self-interest* of the person being interviewed. *(around 10 minutes)*
- In pairs, we'll **practice** doing a one-on-one meeting, using good communication skills. *(around 20 minutes – 10 minutes each)*
  - *Each partner should take a turn as the interviewer and interviewee.*
- We'll **hear** a sample of what you learned. *(around 10 minutes)*
- Together, we'll **state** our public commitments to schedule at least 2 one-on-one meetings in the next week. *(1 minute each per participant)*
  - *The facilitator should record these on large chart paper.*

**This packet was developed  
by Joan Minieri for the  
New York City Organizing Support Center,  
using original training designs and handouts  
as well as materials adapted from:**

- Campaign for Human Development & Gamaliel Foundation  
as arranged by Peter Boyle
- Paul Getsos & Community Voices Heard
- David Beckwith & Charlene Williams,  
Center for Community Change
- The Midwest Academy
- IAF ten-day training

Additional credits appear with handouts and exercises.

**The New York City Organizing Support Center** *offers a full program of technical support, training and other forums for grassroots community organizers and leaders throughout New York City to build power for justice by strengthening their skills as well as their strategies and alliances.*

Roz Lee, Co-Director  
Joan Minieri, Co-Director  
Elaine Kim, Project Coordinator  
July, 2000