



***What Can We Do
About Prescription Drug Abuse
in West Virginia?***

***Dialogue to Action Initiative
A Guide for Moderators and Convenors***

***An initiative of the WV Prevention Resource Center,
the West Virginia Center for Civic Life,
and the WV Partnership to Promote Community Well-Being***

Take Care:
**What Can We Do About Prescription Drug Abuse in West
Virginia?**

A Guide for Forum Convenors and Moderators

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*For more information on convening and moderating community forums,
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The Purpose of Community Forums

"Why are we doing this?" It's a good question to ask when convening or attending a community forum. People lead busy lives and want to make sure they are spending their time in worthwhile ways. They like to have a sense of "what they're getting into."

Deliberative public forums seek to accomplish many goals:

- *Help people better understand the issue.* This understanding comes not only from the information provided in the discussion guide, but also from listening to and learning from fellow community members.
- *Examine different approaches to dealing with the issue.* Forums encourage thoughtful consideration of a variety of perspectives in a respectful manner, emphasizing that there is no one right answer.
- *Weigh the benefits and trade-offs of each approach.* Forums help people identify the positive aspects of each approach, as well as the trade-offs or sacrifices that might have to be made.
- *Identify common ground and areas of disagreement.* By the end of a forum, people will have discovered where they agree, where they disagree, and why. This helps set the stage for people to work together on the issue.
- *Explore possible actions, individually and as a group.* There are no quick and easy solutions for complex public problems, but there are steps that people can begin to take to address them. Forums give people the opportunity to share their ideas and decide what they want to do next, individually and/or together.

Deliberative forums are nonpartisan and do not advocate a particular perspective or solution to any public issue. Rather, they enable diverse groups of citizens to determine together what direction they want policy to take, what kinds of actions they favor or oppose, and what they are able to do, individually and as a community.

Convening a Community Forum

Logistics to Consider

- What date and timeframe will work best?
- Where will the forum be held?
- Are facilities handicapped accessible?
- Is the meeting space large enough to accommodate all participants?
- Is it possible to arrange seats in a circle or U-shape in the meeting room?
- Will you serve refreshments?
- Will you provide childcare?

Who will do what?

- Will there be a sign-in process? Who will handle it?
- Who is responsible for designing and distributing promotional materials?
- Who will help with outreach and invitations to the community?
- Who is responsible for securing discussion guides and other materials?
- Who will moderate the forum? Who will record?

Equipment/Materials

- Issue booklets, starter video (your choice of DVD or VHS tape), questionnaires, moderator's guide
- Easels with flip charts, markers, tape
- Video player and monitor
- Extension cords, if necessary
- Microphones (Note: Only if group is quite large, usually not needed.)
- Pens or pencils for completing questionnaire

Tips for Creating Partnerships

Building a broad base of support for local public issues forums not only ensures participation from many different segments of the community, but also serves to distribute the workload and prevent burnout of committed volunteers.

Following are some guidelines for creating positive partnerships that will ensure the success of local forums:

- Be inclusive. Look for partnerships including and beyond those organizations that already understand the importance of public deliberation. Successful forums represent a diversity of interests, resources, and perspectives.
- Invite partners to participate at the earliest stages of planning a forum. Give them ownership in the forum and the opportunity to contribute their special skills, resources, and points of view. They will be far more likely to fully participate if they are of the planning process as well as part of the forum implementation.
- Clearly define the roles for partners. What skills and resources do they bring to the table that will improve the capacity for public deliberation? Delegate tasks that best serve the partners' needs and interests, so that both parties feel rewarded for their efforts. Who is the partner's contact? What is their task? What kind of involvement in time and resources will the partner provide? What is the timetable to complete the assignment? How will their contribution be recognized?
- Make sure your partner(s) understands the mission and goals for the local public issues forum. Communicate clearly why the forum needs their participation. Ask the partner what their expectations are and how they hope to benefit. From this discussion you can build a mutually beneficial relationship that will be long-lasting.

Inviting the Public to Your Forum

Personalize, personalize, personalize. The most effective way to get people to come to your forum is to ask them personally. Most people lead busy lives, and it helps to let them know how much you value their perspectives and participation. Face-to-face invitations are great, but you might also use email or a handwritten note on a postcard through the regular mail. And since you can't invite everyone yourself, ask partners to invite others personally. For example, ask a local pastor to invite his/her parishioners to the forum; ask a parent-teacher group to invite its members; ask a teacher to invite students; ask your friends to invite their friends.

Publicize early. When possible, send out a first round of announcements several weeks prior to the forum to allow organizations (civic groups, schools, faith groups, etc.) to include the information in their newsletters, bulletins, and mailings (email and regular mail).

Publicize often. Advertising experts say that it can take 5-6 tries before your message "sinks in" with the people you are trying to reach. Don't assume that one letter or flyer will make enough of an impression on people that they will actually show up for your forum.

Used varied media. People have many different learning and communication styles, so you need a variety of avenues to reach them. If your newspaper has a "community calendar," send in an announcement. See if you can interest a local reporter in doing an article prior to the event or write a letter to the editor. Many local stations have early morning or noontime shows where you can invite the community to your forum on the air. Some local newspapers might print the basic outline of the discussion guide in the paper, so their readers can think about the issue before attending the forum.

Appearances matter. Your printed materials don't need to be slick, but they should look thoughtfully prepared—correct spelling and grammar and an attractive layout.

Sample Press Release

[Date]

[Contact: Name, Phone, Email]

What Can We Do About Prescription Drug Abuse in _____ County? Community Dialogues Planned

Over the past decade, the abuse of prescription drugs in West Virginia has increased among adults and youth alike, with profoundly negative impacts on individuals, families and communities throughout the area.

In order to consider ways to address prescription drug abuse in the area, the _____ is joining with the WV Prevention Resource Center, the WV Center for Civic Life, the WV Partnership to Promote Community Well-Being, and many local organizations to sponsor community discussions throughout the community. The discussions will bring together members of the community in thoughtful conversations about what can be done. A neutral moderator will lead participants in a discussion of several approaches to address prescription drug abuse in an atmosphere that encourages respectful sharing of differing perspectives. An issue guide has been developed with background information about the issue.

Prescription drug abuse is an extremely complex issue requiring the involvement of nearly every sector of the community: law enforcement, education, health care, churches, businesses, neighbors, government and social services. In the community discussions and future action planning meetings, _____ Countians of diverse backgrounds can come together to set directions for improving local conditions and quality of life.

The public is invited to attend these community discussions. For more information about attending or sponsoring a community discussion in your neighborhood or organization, please contact _____.

Sample Partner Invitation

What Can We Do about Prescription Drug Abuse in _____ County?

Date_____

Dear_____

Over the past decade, the abuse of prescription drugs in West Virginia has increased among adults and youth alike, with profoundly negative impacts on individuals, families and communities throughout the area.

You are invited to join with _____] in co-sponsoring a community forum to discuss what we can do to decrease prescription drug abuse in _____ County. [*Your organization*], in partnership with the WV Prevention Resource Center, the WV Center for Civic Life, the WV Partnership to Promote Community Well-Being, and many local organizations are sponsoring forums throughout _____ County.

The forum will bring together members of our community in a thoughtful conversation about what can be done. A neutral moderator will lead participants in a discussion of several approaches to address the problem of prescription drug abuse in an atmosphere that encourages respectful sharing of differing perspectives. An issue guide will be available with background information about the effects of prescription drug abuse in our county. We think your organization would add important insights for tackling this critical issue in our communities.

The ultimate goal of the forum is to consider individual, organizational, and community responses to the growing incidence of prescription drug abuse. We hope opportunities for community action will emerge from this discussion that will be best implemented by a partnership among the agencies and organizations in our community. If we are going to be successful in tackling the issue of prescription drug abuse, our first step is to listen to and learn from each other.

Please contact [name and information] to join as a sponsor for the forum or for more information.

Sincerely,

[Convener]

Sample Participant Invitation

What Can We Do About Prescription Drug Abuse in _____ County?

Date_____

Dear _____,

Over the past decade, the abuse of prescription drugs in West Virginia has increased among adults and youth alike, with profoundly negative impacts on individuals, families and communities throughout the area.

You are invited to attend a community forum to discuss what we can do to decrease prescription drug abuse in our region. . [Your organization], in partnership with the WV Prevention Resource Center, the WV Center for Civic Life, the WV Partnership to Promote Community Well-Being, and many local organizations sponsoring the forum [time and place]

You will join other members of the community in a thoughtful conversation about what can be done. You'll consider several approaches to dealing with prescription drug abuse in an atmosphere that encourages respectful sharing of differing perspectives. You'll receive useful information about the effects of prescription drug abuse in _____ County. The goal of the forum is to consider individual, organizational, and community actions.

We need your voice. Only you can share your concerns and insights on this issue. Please bring others who would like to participate. If we are going to be successful in tackling the issue of prescription drug abuse, our first step is to listen to and learn from each other.

Please contact [name and information] if you would like more information.

Sincerely,

[Convener]

Sample forum flyer

Please join us . . .

for an important community discussion

***What Can We Do about
Prescription Drug Abuse
in _____ County?***

Over the past decade, the abuse prescription drugs in West Virginia has increased among adults and youth, with profoundly negative effects on individuals, families and communities throughout the area. In this community forum, citizens from all walks of life are invited to come together to discuss what can be done to address the problem of prescription drug abuse in _____ County.

Date:

Time:

Location:

Sponsors:

Community Sectors—Do You Have Broad Community Representation?

The success of your community forums will depend on gathering broad community input, which will also provide the foundation for an effective community-based plan of action to address the prescription drug abuse problem. When you are considering audiences for your community forums, strive for broad community representation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Prescription drug abusers • Students • Young adults • Probation officers • County commissioners • Treatment providers • General public • Faith groups • Emergency medical technicians • Volunteer organizations/clubs • Domestic violence shelters: employees and residents • Residents with diverse backgrounds: Income level Geographic location Racial/ethnic background Educational level • Counselors: school/mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicians • Pharmacists • Health care professionals • Personal care workers • Teachers • Law enforcement personnel • Prosecuting/defense attorneys • DHHR caseworkers • Prisoners • Elderly residents • Members of the clergy • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
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Potential Hosts for Discussion Forums

While many community forums are completely open to the general public, it is also a good idea to approach already existing groups to see if they will host a forum for their members—or the larger community. Here are some ideas—you'll have lots more.

Service clubs:

Men's: Rotary, Masons, Lions, Civitans, Moose, Elks

Women's: Altrusa, Junior League, Business and Professional Women, Soroptimists

Faith-based meetings and classes for adults and youth

Employee trainings at local businesses and agencies

Chambers of Commerce

Parents' organizations

Youth organizations

4-H, HI-Y, Boys and Girls Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs

Senior organizations

Senior centers, AARP, senior housing complexes, Agencies on Aging

Veterans' organizations

American Legion, VFW, Vietnam Veterans, Disabled Veterans

High school and college classrooms

County Medical Society

See <http://www.wvsma.com/membership/default.asp> for county medical societies

Health organizations/Users of prescription drugs

County Health Department, Cancer society, Heart Assoc, Lung Assoc, MS Society, etc.

Emergency Services

Volunteer Fire Departments, EMTs, Red Cross, Salvation Army

Children and Families

Headstart, Parent Councils, Family Resource Networks

Summer Events

Summer festivals, summer youth programs, e.g. Energy Express, public libraries

Think creatively: What events are planned for your community? Where do people go?

Others _____

Stages of a Community Forum

In a two-hour forum, most moderators allow about a half-hour for the welcome, guidelines, video, and personal stake; about an hour for the discussion of the three approaches; and about a half-hour for the reflections and questionnaire. If you have more or less than two hours, adjust your time for each section proportionately.

Welcome Let the participants know who is sponsoring the forum. Stress co-sponsorship if several organizations are involved. Depending on the number of people present, you may want to ask participants to introduce themselves. If you have a particularly large group, you can ask participants to identify themselves the first time they speak in the discussion.

Guidelines Review the suggested guidelines for the forum. (See page 28.)

Starter Video Play the 8-minute video, which will provide an overview of the issue and the approaches that will form the framework for your discussion.

Personal Stake Before you begin deliberating together, take a few minutes to connect the issue directly to people's lives and concerns. There will not be time for everyone to offer a concern at this time. You are really looking for a range of comments that reveal the breadth of the issue. Some questions you might ask:

- What concerns you most about this issue?
- When you hear people discussing this issue, what makes it so difficult?
- Have any of you had a personal experience that illustrates what's at stake here?

Deliberation Provide a structure for people to examine each approach as fully as possible by encouraging them to consider the costs and consequences of each. The types of questions you might ask:

- What is there about this approach that you find appealing?
- What might be the effect of that idea on others?
- What is there about this approach that you just cannot live with?
- What makes this approach difficult? If it is a good idea, what stands in the way?

Reflections Turn the participants' attention to the insights and directions that have emerged in the forum. The types of questions you might ask:

- How has your thinking about the issue changed during the forum?
- What new insights or information did you gain?
- What were the greatest areas of concern?
- Where did we agree? Disagree?
- What might you do personally about this issue? What might we do together?
- Are there next steps we want to take?

Questionnaire Ask participants to complete the post-forum questionnaire (pages 32-33) as a way to capture their final thoughts and impressions. Collect the post-forum questionnaires and return them to _____ (page 35).

Forum Guidelines

At the beginning of the discussion, most moderators review the following guidelines with participants. Some moderators write the guidelines on a flip chart and post them in the room. **You might also ask the participants if they agree with the guidelines or if they have their own suggestions for the group to consider.**

- The moderator will guide the discussion yet remain neutral.

- Everyone is encouraged to participate.

- No one or two individuals dominate the conversation.

- The discussion focuses on the issue.

- All the major approaches or positions on the issue are considered.

- An atmosphere for discussion and an analysis of the alternatives is maintained.

- Everyone listens to each other.

- Other ideas agreed upon by participants.

The Moderator's Role

- Provide an overview of the process of deliberation—the rationale for the kind of work the participants are getting ready to do.
- Ask questions that probe deeply into what's at stake in the issue and in each of the approaches.
- Encourage participants to direct their responses and questions to each other, rather than to the moderator.
- Remain neutral throughout the discussion, while encouraging participants to explore all facets of their own and other's opinions
- Keep track of the time so participants can move through a discussion of each of the approaches, reserving enough time for a period of group reflections at the end.

If this is your first moderating experience, keep these thoughts in mind:

You don't have to be an expert on the issue. Reading the discussion guide thoroughly, considering questions that get to the heart of the issue, and thinking through the essence of each approach are the critical parts of preparation.

Stay focused on what the forum is about—deliberation. Your natural curiosity and your interest in understanding diverse views will be your greatest assets; they're probably what got you here in the first place.

Keep the discussion moving. Sometimes it's hard to move on to another approach with so much more that could be said. But in order to deliberate—to really weigh what's at stake and make progress on the issue—participants need the opportunity to weigh all the major approaches.

Reserve ample time for reflections at the end of the forum. It's easy to find yourself with little time left at the end of the forum to reflect on what's been said. But, in many ways, this is the most important work the group will do—IF they have time to do it.

Questions to Promote Deliberation on Prescription Drug Abuse

As you examine this issue with forum participants, you (and they) will undoubtedly think of questions that need to be explored. Although many of these questions will arise during the course of the forum, most moderators find it helpful to consider ahead of time some of the basic, broad questions underlying each approach. Here are some possibilities:

How can we prevent prescription drug abuse?

What are ways to create an environment that would discourage prescription drug abuse?

What is your responsibility for preventing drug abuse? Your community's responsibility?

What kind of information and education is needed about prescription drug abuse?

What are the challenges in preventing prescription drug abuse?

Your own questions: _____

How can we support the enforcement of laws and regulations?

What can individuals and communities do to support law enforcement efforts?

How can we increase awareness about laws/regulations regarding prescription drug use?

What should physicians and pharmacists do to reduce prescription drug abuse?

Should drug abusers be incarcerated?

Your own questions: _____

How can we support early intervention, treatment and recovery?

How can our county support the efforts of those who are trying to live "in recovery"?

What are barriers to residents receiving proper treatment? What can be done about them?

Would you support a treatment center or group recovery home in your neighborhood?

How can the community best support early intervention efforts?

Your own questions: _____

The Role of the Recorders

The roles of the recorders are extremely important ones during a deliberative forum. Many moderators coordinate with the moderator ahead of time to plan effective strategies for working together during the forum. The purposes of recording are to—

- Remind forum participants of their key concerns, the areas of greatest agreement and disagreement.
- Provide a written record of the group's work that might feed into future meetings of the group or additional forums.
- Help inform other members of the community about the outcomes of the forum.
- Contribute insights from the forums to form a foundation for the September prescription drug abuse summit.

1. **Group Recorder** (works at a flip chart in front of the group)

- Use brief phrases to capture main ideas. Don't try to get down every word.
- Capture the tensions and trade-offs that surface.
- Write clearly and legibly. Use dark markers and print large enough to be seen in the back of the room.

2. **At-the-seat Recorder** (takes notes at his/her seat)

- Capture direct quotes that reveal the deep concerns or emotions that surface.
- Record comments that reflect the spirit of the conversation.
- Summarize stories that are told that illustrate tensions or main ideas.
- Record specific ideas for dealing with the issue.

Take Care: What Can We Do about Prescription Drug Abuse West Virginia?

POST-FORUM QUESTIONNAIRE

Now that you've had the chance to participate in a forum on this issue, please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your insights will help form the basis of our county's upcoming prescription drug abuse summit. We hope you will attend.

1. Do you agree or disagree with the statements below?	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
a. Tougher punishment will discourage people from using and selling drugs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Drug abuse is an illness to be treated, rather than a crime to be punished.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The public is generally unaware of the dangers of nonmedical prescription drug use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. We should focus on reducing the demand for drugs rather than trying to stop the supply.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Do you favor or oppose the following actions?	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure
a. Register all prescriptions through drug database.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Require drug-screening tests in workplaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Raise funds for more treatment options in the county.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Increase law enforcement efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Increase drug awareness messages in communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Increase drug education in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Create group homes for recovering drug abusers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Are you concerned about the following?	Very	Somewhat	Not at all	Not Sure
a. There are too few drug abuse prevention programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Some people think prescription drugs are relatively safe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Laws for punishing drug <i>dealers</i> are not tough enough.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Laws for punishing drug <i>users</i> are not tough enough.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Costs to the taxpayers for fighting drug use are too high.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. It's too easy for drugs to come into our county.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. There is too much sharing of prescription drugs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is the best idea, program, or practice you heard in the forum today?

What can you do personally to discourage prescription drug abuse in your community?

What should your community do about this issue? Who should do it?

What policies—local, state, or national—should be changed or implemented to prevent or treat prescription drug abuse?

Any other thoughts?

In order to summarize the demographic representation of participants in the prescription drug abuse forums, **please circle all of the responses that apply to you.**

17 or younger	18-30	31-45	46-64	65 or older
African American	Asian American	Hispanic	Native American	White/Caucasian
Other (please specify) _____				
<i>Schooling completed:</i>	Some High School	High School	Some College	College Graduate
<i>Type of employment:</i>	Student Government	Business Not employed	Nonprofit Other _____	Educational
Town/community _____ Not a county resident _____				

Moving From Dialogue to Action: Challenges and Opportunities

Most community practitioners agree that the first rule of civic engagement is to start where people are, not where you want them to be, or where you hope they'll end up. Local people solve local problems best. The shape each local prescription drug initiative takes will vary because people in each county will start at a different place with a different constellation of resources and challenges.

The success of your local dialogue initiative will depend on--

- the breadth and depth of the discussion at your community forums
- the breadth and depth of the individual interviews you conduct to fill in the gaps
- how fully people from all different backgrounds in your community participate

Capturing the Insights from the Public as a Foundation for Action

It is possible that clear directions will emerge from your discussions that will lend themselves to the creation of action task forces at your September summit, but most likely some community members will just be developing a sense of urgency about the issue and will need more conversation before they know what actions they want to take. In preparation for your community summit in September, you will need to—

- Analyze what has emerged from your discussions and interviews and identify areas of strength, promising directions, and gaps.
- Develop a summary on the status of your discussions so far, identifying what has been learned, what people still need to work on, and any common ground for action that has emerged so far. This will be used as a starting point at the countywide summit.
- Identify the assets that already exist in your county or region to help people who abuse prescription drugs.
- Recruit people to relay insights from the community forums to the summit participants.
- Decide what discussion process you want to use at the summit to involve the people who attend and plan who will facilitate. (See sample agenda on page 39.)
- Determine how the county steering team will respond to the community's desire to continue the conversation and work on follow up action steps that emerge.

Sample Agenda for Prescription Drug Dialogue-to-Action Planning Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Acknowledge sponsors
- b. Agenda review—why we're here

2. Reports from the Community Discussions So Far

- a. Community discussions overview
 - 1. Areas of agreement
 - 2. Things we still need to work on
 - 3. Emerging ideas about what individuals, organizations, and the community can do
- b. Insights from individual community forum participants
- c. Starter video from forums, if desired

3. Overview of Community Assets—

What do we already have available to us to address prescription drug abuse?

4. Broadening the Community Dialogue – Moving to Action

(Questions could be addressed in World Café* format:)

- a. What else do we need to know?
- b. Who else needs to be involved in the conversation?
- c. What can we do—what is doable now ?

5. Next steps

6. Closing remarks

*For an overview of World Café, see page 40.

World Café Conversations at a Glance

Seat **four or five people at small Café-style tables** or chairs forming conversation clusters.

Set up **progressive** (usually three) **rounds of conversation** of about 20-30 minutes each.

Questions or issues that genuinely matter to your life, work or community are engaged while other small groups explore similar questions at nearby tables. (See questions on page 39.)

Encourage both table hosts and members to **write, doodle and draw key ideas** on their tablecloths or to note key ideas on large index cards or placemats in the center of the group.

Upon completing the initial round of conversation, ask one person to remain at the table as the “host” **while the others serve as travelers or “ambassadors of meaning.”** The travelers carry key ideas, themes and questions into their new conversations.

Ask the table host to welcome the new guests and briefly share the main ideas, themes and questions of the initial conversation. Encourage guests to **link and connect ideas** coming from their previous table conversations—listening carefully and building on each other’s contributions.

By providing opportunities for people to move in several rounds of conversation, **ideas, questions, and themes begin to link and connect.** At the end of the second round, all of the conversation clusters in the room will be *cross-pollinated* with insights from prior conversations.

In the third round of conversation, people can return to their home (original) tables to **synthesize their discoveries**, or they may continue traveling to new tables, leaving the same or a new host at the table. Sometimes a new question that helps **deepen the exploration** is posed for the third round of conversation.

After several rounds of conversation, initiate a period of sharing discoveries and insights in a **whole group conversation.** It is in this large group conversation that patterns can be identified, collective knowledge grows, and possibilities for action emerge. Once you know what you want to achieve and the amount of time you have to work with, you can decide the appropriate number and length of conversation rounds, the most effective use of questions and the most interesting ways to connect and cross-pollinate ideas.

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Planning for Local Action

Moderators: Your task in this meeting is to help participants from the community move into the “action phase” of their local work together. The following questions will help the group plan for local actions based on the ideas that came up in their forums and the countywide summit.

- **Welcome and introductions**

- **What were the key concerns about prescription drug abuse in our county that came up during our community forum (or summit)?**

(Ask for summaries from participants; refer to notes from forum.)

- **What were the areas where there was the most agreement about the need for action?**

- **Which of these actions does our group want to work on? What are our priorities?**

(Create list of potential action items; prioritize in order of groups' desire and ability to work on them.)

- **Who else needs to be involved to take this action(s)?**

- **What else do we need to learn in order to move forward?**

- **What can we do next to take action on preventing and reducing prescription drug abuse?**

(Create a list of next steps and who will volunteer to take them.)

- **How will we keep track of our action efforts for our own use? How will we contribute our ideas and progress to the countywide effort?**

- **How do we plan to work together as a large group? In small groups? Will we meet again? When?**

Moderator Response Sheet

After the forum, please respond to these questions about the forum you moderated. Use the reverse or additional sheets, if needed.

Moderator's Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Date and location of forum _____

Number of participants _____ Age range _____

Diversity _____

1. What seemed to be the participants' main concerns about the issue?

2. Which approaches and actions had the most support within the group?

3. What aspects of the issue seemed most challenging for participants?

4. What next steps or plans for action did the group discuss?

What To Do After the Forum

A Checklist

It is important to capture the ideas of your forum(s) for use as your community plans how they would like to address the problem of prescription drug abuse locally.

To build a foundation for future work, do the following after your forum:

- Gather completed participant questionnaires.** These questionnaires provide very useful insights from individual participants that will reveal themes, trends, and areas of broad concern when they are analyzed with questionnaires from other forums.
- Complete the moderator's response sheet.** Try to do this soon after the forum, while ideas are still fresh in you mind. During the reflections period of your forum, the group will work through most of the questions on the moderator's response sheet. (See page 24.)
- Prepare recorder notes from the forum.** Better yet, ask the recorder to do this for you. If you can have the "at the seat" notes typed up, that would be very helpful.
- Prepare contact list** (name and email) for forum participants in order to stay in touch with them for follow-up action planning sessions.

Questions?

Contact West Virginia Center for Civic Life
304-344-3430
mail@wvcivicliflife.org

Thank you for your leadership in bringing community members together to consider ways to reduce and prevent prescription drug abuse.