



Our Voice
Our Community
Our Future

A city-wide
interactive virtual
community
forum supporting
dialogue
between high
school students
and community
leaders on topics
that matter to
youth!

27th Annual Teen Town Hall

Friday, April 8, 2022

8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

 Zoom Virtual Platform



IN COLLABORATION WITH



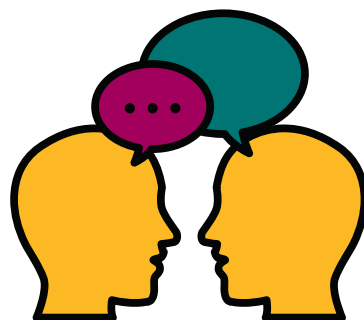
COMMUNICATION CREATES
TRANSFORMATION



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This report serves as documentation for the 27th Annual Teen Town Hall. This event was made possible by the Metropolitan Education Commission's (MEC) Youth Advisory Council/Tucson Teen Congress, and sponsored by the City of Tucson and Pima County, which attracts students from across Tucson and Pima County. The event created the opportunity for students to voice concerns directly with their community leaders, including superintendents, law enforcement representatives, elected officials and more. The Center for Community Dialogue & Training, a program of Our Family Services, conducted eight virtual Dialogue Circles. Each Dialogue Circle focused on one specific topic of interest chosen by the Youth Advisory Council. The Center creates the documentation for the event each year for dissemination to youth serving institutions and community partners.

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Agenda

1	8:35-8:40am	Opening - Welcome & Land Acknowledgement
2	8:40-8:55am	Icebreaker
3	8:55-9:15am	Introductory Remarks Opening Speakers Andrés Cano, AZ House of Representatives Mica Hoeffner, Tucson Magnet High School
4	9:15-11:10am	Dialogue Circle Introductions Dialogue Circles
5	11:10-11:25am	Report outs with Top 3 Solutions
6	11:30-11:50am	Reflective Writing Exercise Youth Takeaway Break Out Rooms
7	11:50am-12:00pm	Wrap-up & Closing

Schools in Participation



Sunnyside



Empire



Tucson High



Star Academic



Desert View



Cienega



Sabino



Walden Grove



Cholla



Tanque Verde



Sahaurita

Dialogue Circle Information

Led by the Center for Community Dialogue & Training, skilled community volunteers facilitated eight virtual dialogue circles through Zoom. Using a talking piece, participants spoke one by one in a safe, respectful format that encouraged thoughtful exploration of experiences and values. Circle participants engaged in conversation with circle questions, a report out & two activities.

****Report outs in documentation are in no particular order.**

Eight dialogue circles with seven to eight participants each.
Students & Community Members combined.
57 participants with 15 facilitators.

In each dialogue circle the group identified the following:
Primary Issues
Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions
Top Three Solutions

- Responses from three of the questions in the Dialogue Circles were scribed and documented.
- What are your biggest concerns about this topic?
- What solutions or positive actions could be tried to address our concerns about this topic?
- Participants were asked to prioritize their Ideas, choose and vote on their top three solutions for report out

Participants were then asked to participate in a reflective exercise & a youth takeaway break out room

Dialogue Circle Topics



Dialogue Circle Documentation

College Access



Biggest Concerns

- Students might be discouraged because of expense.
- Not many people know about scholarships that are available or that they are eligible for.
- Parents not informed by the FAFSA so they refuse to sign.
- Cost of tuition, also cost of requirement to live on campus.
- Parental buy-in for FAFSA completion.
- Expense--thousands of dollars that add up
- Not everyone has the money to go to college, don't think that folks should have to pay for their education, should be public and free.
- Affordability
- Where to find scholarships or how to use systems. There are resources out there but how to find them? Its a job in itself to figure it out.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions

- Having a one on one conversation with parents about the FAFSA and what it means to get money from the government.
- Make school free--cover the tuition for school.
- Lower college tuition for folks who are not financially stable, lower tuition during your four years of college.
- Think of an investment in yourself rather than a product that you're buying
- Telling parents more about FAFSA. Counselors and teachers talk more about FAFSA, parents know more. Unified course/educational source for parents about the FAFSA.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions cont...

- Uniform educational source for students about where to locate funding sources
- Event to teach parents and others to use scholarship engines and what you can apply for & or a building for college jobs.
- Explaining the resources that are available to students via social media page or easy to access media so students don't get discouraged.
- Teachers and counselors should talk more about college and the tuition.
- Create resources that we can get out to students and parents.
- See a change in the mindset so that people can start to think about next steps after high school to be a natural progression learning something: there are many options-apprenticing, etc. not a black and white "you go to school or not go to school" feeling as if you can't do it because your family member didn't, possibly having a counselor one on one discussion.

Top Three Solutions

- Make school free--cover the tuition for school
- Explaining the resources that are available to students via social media page or easy to access media so students don't get discouraged
- See a change in the mindset so that people can start to think about next steps after high school to be a natural progression learning something: there are many options-apprenticing, etc. not a black and white "you go to school or not go to school"

Dialogue Circle Documentation

College Access



Biggest Concerns

- Having to decide which college you want really early: state vs. reach schools.
- Financial concerns.
- Moving out.
- Having a job.
- Expectations: not being prepared.
- Financial: relying on scholarships.
- Fulfilling my goals, needing the resources to get there.
- Tuition fees.
- Choosing a major: It's a big decision I don't want to get it wrong.
- Students worrying too much about finances, not focusing on prep.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions

- Have a petition or other device to lower the cost, talk to state schools or other organizations so more people can be interested in attending college.
- Experts talking to students and informing them and answering their questions about college access.
- To have everyone in every high school to go visit a university for free.
- Every college build a skate park and invite students to skate there.
- More opportunities for lower-income communities would be helpful for those communities.
- More help to people that are interested in pursuing college or other education in their life.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions cont...

- Help for college for those that can't financially support themselves.
- Give people, especially lower-income people help to go to and see colleges.
- Away from home allow people to experience that - living away from home and at college.
- Have online help program to help people.
- Have counselors and college advisors.
- Not many people know much about college access - better educate people about college access so they don't think they can't do it.
- Making a bike or skate team - they've been added to the Olympics now.
- Online platform for education for higher-income and lower-income populations to all get the needed information.

Top Three Solutions

- Have a petition or other device to lower the cost, talk to state schools or other organizations so more people can be interested in attending college.
- To have everyone in every high school to go visit a university for free. Give people, especially lower-income people help to go to and see colleges. Away from home allow people to experience that - living away from home and at college.
- More opportunities for lower-income communities would be helpful for those communities. Online platform for education for higher-income and lower-income populations to all get the needed information.

Dialogue Circle Documentation



Gender ID & Sexual Orientation

Biggest Concerns

- Current bills being passed infringing on the rights of individuals.
- Lack of access to public bathrooms.
- Transgender students not being able to play on sports teams.
- Restriction on gender reaffirming health care for minors.
- Safety and comfortability of students at school.
- Safety from harassment.
- How students react to their identities – sharing rather than keeping their identities inside.
- Mental health challenges caused by hiding identities.
- Emotional health of transgender students.
- Representation in books and media.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions

- Heterosexual and cisgender folk need to listen to the individuals who identify as queer about their experiences.
- More bathrooms for gender neutral folk.
- Open mind and a willingness to educate one-self.
- Heterosexual and cisgender allies should not say they understand what it is like to identify as queer.
- Partnerships/coalition between college, universities, non-profits, for-profit organizations.
- Less restrictions on schools on how they are allowed to talk about gender identity and sexuality.
- Encourage more folk to vote in order to counter the vocal minority opposing transgender rights.
- Representation in media such as on streaming services.
- Education for heterosexual and cisgender adults about the harmful effects of social norms regarding gender identity and sexuality

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions cont...

- Less of a gender and sexuality standard regarding societal norms, roles and expectations by educating heterosexual and cisgender adults to stop telling LGBTQ+ youth they do not understand or know what they want in life by pushing social norms about gender identity and sexuality without being educated on the subject
- Make awareness, empathy & non-judgmental listening training widely available to adults, family members, and school staff and faculty; additional training opportunities for students.
- For heterosexual and cisgender adults to stop telling LGBTQ+ youth they do not understand or know what they want in life by pushing social norms about gender identity and sexuality without being educated on the subject
- More options for the transgender community to engage in the community and community activities, such as sports or debate team
- As a community, finds way to uplift things that represent the queer community and their spectrum of identities
- Reaction of family members to understand and respect the identities of their queer identifying members

Top Three Solutions

- Encourage more folk to vote in order to counter the vocal minority opposing transgender rights
- Less of a gender and sexuality standard. regarding societal norms, roles and expectations by educating heterosexual and cisgender adults to stop telling LGBTQ+ youth they do not understand or know what they want in life by pushing social norms about gender identity and sexuality without being educated on the subject.
- Make awareness, empathy & non-judgmental listening training widely available to adults, family members, and school staff and faculty; additional training opportunities for students.

Dialogue Circle Documentation

Youth Suicide



Biggest Concerns

- For H.S. and Middle Schoolers, more resources to know, schools need to provide more. They don't seem to really care.
- More school support with acknowledgment and resources.
- Covid pushing youth over the edge and schools not responding.
- More people patrolling school grounds.
- No education on how often that youth suicide happens.
- Parent support (and contribution to contemplating). Kids need it.
- Stereotypes from parents of this generation. They do need parental support bc it could help them.
- Why do kids have the thoughts? Where are they coming from.
- They don't have a voice to speak up.
- Lack of how to support someone with what they're going through.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions

- Students being able to take a break at any time, and walk out if needed to take a break.
- Students will have no access to the press box on the bleachers during school hours (not during an event, when there could be a staff to oversee safety), the roofs, or anything 25 feet off the ground.
- Counselors could be more available, and not needing an appt. whole week in advance to talk with them and a peer counseling program.
- Supervision around bathroom areas to prevent overdoses.
- More eyes (security cameras or more staff) to keep an eye on things.
- More safe spaces where students can go to talk, or just to think and not speak, giving students a safe space.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions cont...

- Someone to talk to who could understand and provide support.
- Recognition of the issue, so others experiencing it know it's something that they can talk about and not keep to themselves.
- Have some teachers who are more experienced in mental health, so they can be a source of support and hear students' feelings.
- Have counselors have more training so they can notice the signs quicker.
- Be more supportive and have communication, create a connection with someone who is struggling.
- Classes on how to communicate feelings.
- Education about what happens after suicide, including the consequences and impacts on others.

Top Three Solutions

- More safe spaces where students can go to talk, or just to think and not speak, giving students a safe space.
- Be more supportive and have communication, create a connection with someone who is struggling.
- Education about what happens after suicide, including the consequences and impacts on others.

Dialogue Circle Documentation

Race & Racism



Biggest Concerns

- People don't know that they are being racist. Racism is normalized for a lot of people.
- People think that being racist is OK. They don't think about what they are saying.
- Racism has to do with stereotyping and the assumptions aren't necessarily true.
- People need to speak up about racism.
- People don't want to talk about racism and it's not going away.



Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions cont...

- Safe environment, communication, address the problem.
- Help, reach out for solutions, speak up, community service that address racism
- Accessible support group, safe space.
- Counselling, easy access for help, availability.
- Safe environment, communication, address the problem.
- Misunderstanding, open up, listen to others, easy counselling.
- Racism as class, racism history, teach racism, voice.
- Teaching racism and its affects now, starting from the past.
- All society involve, feel comfortable to address racism, build program.

Top Three Solutions

- Communicate the problem.
- Racism as class, racism's history, voice, teach racism in the society.
- All society involved, communicate, create a safe space, feel comfortable to address racism, build program to address issues.

Dialogue Circle Documentation

Leadership



Biggest Concerns

- Letting others down, maintain a balance between who you are leading and yourself.
- Is the leadership representative and equitable; am I serving all communities- first generation, students of color.
- Proper representation- represent our values that we cherish; ensuring that elected officials represent us and our needs.
- Being a leader even when it's hard, being comfortable taking the lead, especially when there's conflict when there's disagreement; remaining confident.
- My anxiety around other peers, I get concerned that I'm doing the right thing for everyone around me, so I guess my biggest concern is that everyone is taken care of and that I'm doing the "right" thing.
- Having someone who is mentally prepared and can handle the pressure; maintain confidence especially during challenging times/moments.
- Am I helping transition future leaders/officers.
- How do we define and determine who is a leader, consciously thinking about who is and should be one.
- If I've made the other peers feel comfortable and prepared to continue the way they're going or plan to go! for example if a peer wants to go to college that I can make it a comfortable learning and teaching environment so when they do go off to their path they have the support helping them and preparing them for the world outside of high school.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions cont...

- Taking actions beyond listening and be bold with effective solutions.
- Implement leadership courses at schools including workshops, classes, mentoring on leadership to self reflect and gain balance.
- Be ready for change and challenges.
- One solution when it comes to worrying about helping others could be just a simple question, I know it sounds cliché, but never be too worried about asking a question, "Is there anything I could help you with?", "Can I do anything different to better the way I'm helping?", "Did this help you, or do you want something different to happen?" and accept criticism as long as its constructive.
- More diverse voices and representing all groups.
- Shared and meaningful power for youth.
- Communities coming together to practice skills via forums to gather information on leadership.

Top Three Solutions

- Implement leadership courses at schools including workshops, classes, mentoring on leadership to self reflect and gain balance.
- Taking actions beyond listening and be bold with effective solutions.
- More diverse voices and representation in leadership and meaningful shared power with youth.

Dialogue Circle Documentation

Mental Health



Biggest Concerns

- Effect that mental health leaves on people. After they experience something they are still shaken up; how to help them get through the after-effects.
- Afterwards, even if you do get through it, lingering stuff. Depression, for example, people still carry that throughout their life. Where can they get help?
- 1. Isolation, the effects of 42,000 students returning from it. 2. Finding resources to help with it. Even if funding is available, to hire social workers, not enough could be hired. Also the lack of access to counselors, too few counselors, too difficult for students to get in to see them
- When students don't get enough help early.
- How can we help them? What can we do to change how they're feeling or ask questions and try to help them.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions cont...

- Create a positive, safe school environment.
- Mental Health leave from school.
- Adopt a community schools model, example Higher Ground program.
- Setting individual goals for the future.
- Sleep, eat, accomplish your goals.
- Mental Health week, theme each day.
- Ask for help and talk to family and friends.
- Increase pay for counselors and social workers.
- Increase the opportunities for becoming a counselor and social work with academic programs.
- Anonymous talks, a method to have an anonymous talk with someone.
- Take time during your day to check on yourself and others.

Top Three Solutions

- Ask for help and talk to family and friends.
- Take time during your day to check on yourself and others
- Adopt a Community schools model, example Higher Ground program, where trained professionals support students' socio-emotional learning.

Dialogue Circle

Documentation

Mental Health



Biggest Concerns

- Affects both physically and emotionally -- getting tired, eating disorders, affects relationships with families and loved ones, feel like you are stuck someplace you cannot get out.
- Because mental health can get worse, and not having a support system/person to help you with that.
- How it affects you and how you think and how you live your life; anxiety and depression affect how I see my self and the world and it can be very scary, get worse; the fact that it follows no rules is scary.
- Young people not having the access to things that could help them to learn/understand/be diagnosed/treat for mental health when needed -- young people/children feeling like they have no where to go.
- People not knowing how to deal with/understand young children/help.
- Lack of Early diagnosis and treatment that leads to lengthy suffering before they get help -knowing even who to go to or how to think about one's problems.
- Not enough access to services or understanding in schools, not enough counselors, resources, to meet the needs.
- Mental health concerns being overlooked, not having help available when needed or even when first diagnosed.
- Lack of counselors with ability to support mental health issues is making things worse.
- The ongoing stigma with mental health leads to isolation, reluctance to seek help or even persevere through it -- shaming is a barrier to getting help.

Top Three Solutions

- More input from students, speakers and having more experts available to include a safe person/s, openly talk, with a safe space at school.
- Institutional changes. Take out of school system things that create stress (study periods as punishment), create fewer burdens to take out of school home, so that when you get home you have the ability to have quality time with friends and family; create/add in a day at school designated to support mental health
- Institutional changes with more highly trained counselors and school nurses & improved ratios of care providers within the school and greater community.

Suggested Solutions or Positive Actions cont...

- More input from students on the topic with speakers and having more experts available.
- Talking groups at schools where people can get together safely and share their experiences & be open about what's happening.
- Use some of the empty class rooms into a more comfortable space for students to go to with access to books, sketch pads, head phones, provide ability to take a breather in a comfortable space.
- Institutional changes -- take out of school system things that create stress (study periods as punishment) and create fewer burdens to take out of school home -- so that when you get home you have the ability to have quality time with friends and family.
- Having greater expertise - i.e., therapists in school, whose only focus is mental health instead of having counselors try and do it all.
- Easily accessible training for peer& family support
- A day designated for mental health care, take care of self and own needs. Break/mental health aware awareness day within the school/breather for brain in school
- People being leaders and sharing/having their voices heard on their mental health need.
- Greater access to services and safe places out side of school -- with insurance coverage.
- More highly trained counselors and school nurses and improved ratios of care providers.
- Group sessions/access and availability so you can get support from peers.
- Better health care and better access and more affordability - eliminate barriers to care for everyone in a safe/unjudging space.
- Having a safe person available that you can openly talk to possibly within the safe space at school.
- Low cost or free community access to care/support & coping strategies
- More people available to provide mental health care.
- Safe spaces availability and normalizing of access and availability.

Data & Demographics

Satisfaction with the event

	VERY DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Opening Ceremony	2.63% 1	0.00% 0	42.11% 16	55.26% 21	0.00% 0	38	3.50
Dialogue Circles	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	36.84% 14	63.16% 24	0.00% 0	38	3.63
Report Out	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	47.37% 18	52.63% 20	0.00% 0	38	3.53
Youth Takeaway Break Out Rooms	0.00% 0	2.63% 1	39.47% 15	57.89% 22	0.00% 0	38	3.55

Participating in the Dialogue Circle was helpful in sharing my perspective and understand other viewpoints in regard to the topic I chose.

	NOT HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	VERY HELPFUL	INDISPENSABLY HELPFUL	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	5.26% 2	52.63% 20	42.11% 16	0.00% 0	38	3.37

How has this conference empowered participants:

	NOT HELPFUL AT ALL	A LITTLE HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	VERY HELPFUL	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Navigate difficult conversations with topics such as we discussed today?	0.00% 0	2.63% 1	23.68% 9	71.05% 27	2.63% 1	38	3.70
Use skills learned today to move forward in dialogue with my family, friends, community?	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.42% 7	78.95% 30	2.63% 1	38	3.81

Demographics: Zip Codes represented

85641, 85757-2, 85756-2, 85746-2, 85704, 85747-4, 85629, 85706-14, 85756-2, 85606, 85714, 85743, 85705-2, 85750, 85745, 85742, 85796, 85641

Demographics: Gender

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Boy/Man	21.05% 8
Girl/Woman	71.05% 27
Non-binary	5.26% 2
Transgender	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	2.63% 1
TOTAL	38

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	im gender fluid	4/8/2022 12:01 PM

Data & Demographics

Demographics: Race / Ethnicity

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.63%	1
American Indian/Alaska Native AND White	2.63%	1
American Indian/Alaska Native AND Black/African American	2.63%	1
Asian or Asian American	5.26%	2
Asian/Asian American AND White	0.00%	0
Black or African American	13.16%	5
Black/African American AND White	0.00%	0
Mixed Race	28.95%	11
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0
White or Caucasian	34.21%	13
Other (please specify)	28.95%	11
Total Respondents: 38		

Demographics: Race / Ethnicity Hispanic / Latine : 11 participants

Demographics: Age
13-17: 22 participants
18-24: 16 participants

Demographics: Grades participating

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
9th	23.68%	9
10th	10.53%	4
11th	18.42%	7
12th	28.95%	11
Home School	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	18.42%	7
TOTAL		38

Comments

Activities participants would like to see in the future

- In future Teen Town Halls activities such as icebreakers could be included more during breaks or to get to know each other more.
- Games to help make us more comfortable.
- More activities like this. and the new generations might have some different ideas.
- I have none in mind! All the ones we did were amazing topics.
- We need to make sure that participants have the technology they need to participate fully (working, charged devices and headsets).
- Having groups come together to discuss the intersectionality of their topics/issues (example: mental health/suicide prevention and gender and sexuality groups coming together to discuss common issue in both).
- Less of the awkward conversations and more change.
- I think more time for the Youth Takeaway would be good.
- I would like to spend a little more time getting to know each other and I hands on activities.
- In person interactions.
- A more active community, maybe more talkative people and slight in-games like kahoots
- More school resources. Group discussion. Safe places.
- More Mindful Movement activities.
- Presentations created by groups.
- Home or financial problems and how to address.
- Arguing for more programs so students can gain new skills and ideas.
- More time for breakout room conversations and more Arizona and school board representatives present to hear and understand students.
- Most definitely sexual assault because its something is is very hidden .
- More things to get us in the right groups about what subject they want to talk about as individuals.
- Interactive things such as kahoots or question games in circle dialogues.
- More time with elected officials. We need to hear from our youth.
- A parent break-out or follow-up option?
- Some activities I would like to see are more dealing with racism and mental health.
- Scholarships and how to get them (2x).
- Follow up on issues form previous Teen Town Halls.
- More time with elected officials, greater presence of principals and superintendents especially in youth breakout room.
- Attending more than one breakout room.
- Invite more schools and break up kids that are at the same school. I think it is good for them to be exposed to other people.
- Talking to people in power.

Comments

Additional Comments from the Event

- Maybe making more break our rooms were we can discuss more than just one thing.
- Thank you! Wonderful discussions
- Overall was so much fun and i enjoyed talking to different people about topics that aren't normally talked about.
- Thank u for today, I really enjoyed the zoom Teen Town Hall meeting.
- Wonderful experience, and so glad that leadership showed up to hear the youth voices here today.
- Note on next question (6) Transgender isn't a gender, it is a descriptor. Trans people can be men, women, or nonbinary so to make it more inclusive it might be better to allow more than one selection on that question. I had fun at this event thank you!
- Maybe less time for the starting exercises, and more time in the circles.
- I loved the experience.
- Thank youuuu.
- It was nice!
- It was wonderful and I definitely enjoyed it.
- Very communicative and interactive
- Thank you, ALLLLLL the people who provided facilitation, technology support, time off for participants to focus on this essential conversation, and most of all, to the students who shared with such generosity.
- Thank you for another amazing Teen Town Hall!
- I was very confident in my speaking.
- Meaningful event!
- Thank you, great experience, I feel empowered.
- I was very comfortable communicating.
- I think this is a great event and many more people should be allowed to attend.