



FIVE STAGES OF COMMUNITY LIFE

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD AT ANY STAGE

TO KICK THIS OFF...

- You should know who we are
- We should know who you are
- Please know that every neighborhood represented today is in one specific stage or transitioning from stage to the next
- Please know that goals can be accomplished at every stage
- **Please know that this is a judgment free space!**



TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE FIVE STAGES



- Started by the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation over 15 years ago (www.theharwoodinstitute.org)
- Recognize that communities have rhythms- knowing what rhythm your neighborhood is in helps you to better understand what strategies to use to help your neighborhood advance and grow
- Helps you think differently about how you work with people and problems
- Gives context to issues that you're dealing with in your neighborhood



IMPASSE

WHAT TO DO:

- Engage in conversations to articulate what people are for
- Figure out what language helps people imagine a better future
- Find small ways to demonstrate people coming together

EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD HAS A *RHYTHM*

“All of this building and action and linking and spreading takes time. We must be aware of a community’s rhythms and work with them. But when we do, we can witness genuine progress and feel a true sense of possibility that a different direction is in the offing and that [neighborhoods] can tap into and express their capacity to act.”

-Richard Harwood, President
and Founder of the Harwood Institute



LEADERSHIP...

“Leadership is provided by anyone who carries out any of the tasks in the work of change. This kind of leadership passes to different people at different times. There are many leaders.”

**-David Matthews
Kettering Foundation/
Cousins Research Group**



**EMPOWERING THE
LEADER IN ALL OF US**



HELPFUL LINKS

If you want to access the information shared today, here are the web links:

- Harwood Institute video on the five stages
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lXpw2iwuec>
 - Leaders or Leaderfulness? Lessons from High-Achieving Communities (PDF)
https://www.kettering.org/sites/default/files/product-downloads/CRG%20Leaders%20or%20Leaderfulness%20Digital%206_16_16.pdf
 - Community Rhythms: Five Stages of Community Life (PDF)
<https://www.prosperityindiana.org/resources/Webinars/CommunityRhythmsReport.pdf>
 - Olde Huntersville Neighborhood Strategic Plan (PDF)
<https://www.norfolk.gov/documentcenter/view/29031>
 - Asset Based Community Development
<https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/Pages/default.aspx>
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SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- What are you looking to address next?
- Who do you need to include that you're not already including?
- What are some ways you can prevent burnout?
- Are you meeting people where they are?
- Are you celebrating the successes?
- Are you taking advantage of available resources?
- Are you pacing yourself?
- Are you okay with the phrase "if at first you don't succeed- try, try again?"

Questions?



The Harwood Index: 5 Stages of Community Life



Communities evolve in stages. Learn about the stages below.

THE WAITING PLACE

- In the Waiting Place, people sense that things are not working right in their community, but they are unable to clearly define the problem; the feeling could be described as a "felt unknown"
- People feel disconnected from leaders and from different processes within the community for making decisions; the community itself is fragmented; discussion about common challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive.
- Community discussion about challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive. People want to create change, but negative norms for public life keep them locked into old patterns.
- People often are waiting - for issues to become clearer, for someone else to "solve" their problems. People in this stage often say, "Everything will be better when we get the right mayor to save the community!" So, People just wait.

IMPASSE

- At Impasse, the community has hit rock bottom, and people can be heard saying, "Enough is enough! It can't go on like this any longer!"
- In this stage, unlike in the Waiting Place, there is a sense of urgency in people's voices; people are tired of "waiting." But while people want change, they lack clarity of what to do.
- The community's norms and ways of working together keep the community stuck in an undesirable status quo. The community is mired in turf wars; it lacks of leadership at different levels of the community; and people seem fixated on their own individual interests.
- People's frustrations have hit the boiling point but the community lacks the capacity to act.

CATALYTIC

- The Catalytic stage starts with small steps that are often imperceptible to the vast majority of people in the community.
- Small numbers of people and organizations begin to emerge, taking risks and experimenting in ways that challenge existing norms in how the community works.
- The size of their actions is not the vital gauge. Their actions produce some semblance of results that gives people a sense of hope.
- People feel renewed spirit of community. More people are working together. Efforts are taking place across the community and are targeted to more concerns.
- A feature of this stage is that you can randomly ask people on the street what kind of community they live in, and they provide similar answers. A common story has emerged about the community.

GROWTH

- During the Growth stage, people begin to see clearer and more pervasive signs of how the community is moving forward.
- People in the community are able to name leadership at all levels and where such leadership is expanding and deepening - from the official level to neighborhoods, within civic organizations and non-profits. Networks are growing and sense of common purpose and direction are taking deep root.
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SUSTAIN AND RENEW

- In Sustain and Renew, the community is ready to take on, in a deeper and more sustained way, the tough, nagging issues that may have been tackled before but were not adequately addressed.
- Such issues might include the public schools, racism and race relations, and economic growth in all neighborhoods' change on these concerns typically requires sustained, long-term effort.
- Lessons and insights and new norms that have emerged over time now pervade the community.
- But, the community may be struggling to maintain its momentum. It must find new ways to bring along a new cadre of leaders, civic groups, and active citizens, as other tire or move on.
- There is a danger that community will fall into a new Waiting Place as it comes to rest on its laurels.



The Waiting Place

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- Community discussion about challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive. People want to create change, but negative norms for public life keep them locked into old patterns.
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Be Careful Not To . . .	What To Do	What To Think About
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflate expectations by announcing grand plans. • Start visioning exercises that fail or don't have enough community support for action. • Try to engage people by making them feel guilty if they are not involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create forums for conversation and interaction where people feel they belong and crystalize feelings of frustration. • Connect community actions to realities in people's lives. • Demonstrate small signs of progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you really know how committed your partners are? • What small things could help you to move forward?



Problems are not
stop signs,
they are guidelines.

~ Robert H. Schuller

Impasse

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflate expectations by announcing grand plans. • Convince yourselves there are strong networks and organizations to support civic work. • Shut out citizens because they are frustrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let people share their concerns and discover common aspirations for something different. • Identify taboo issues that contribute to the impasse. • Find language that helps people imagine and alternative future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues are citizens most immediately concerned about? Are those issues being worked on? • What is being done to bring people back into public life?



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- As this stage unfolds, the number of people and organizations stepping forward increases, and links and networks are built between and among them.

Be Careful Not To . . .	What To Do	What To Think About
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate activities too quickly, stifling innovation and action. • Rush to visioning exercises before the community is ready. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try lots of small things with room for failure, emphasize learning. • Build Boundary-Spanning Organizations that can generate change. • Encourage informal conversations, networks, and new engagement norms. • Develop a new cadre of leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is motivating folks to work together? • Where are the Boundary-Spanning Organizations in the community? Who supports them? • What are we learning?



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- A feature of this stage is that you can randomly ask people on the street what kind of community they live in and they provide similar answers. A common story about the community has emerged.

Be Careful Not To . . .	What To Do	What To Think About
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss parts of the community left out of progress. • Let “official leaders” drive the action. • Neglect the need to continually strengthen networks, leaders, and organizations that can keep the community moving forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use community-wide engagement activities to coalesce and spring forward from the Catalytic stage. • Do bigger projects, building on collaborations & natural progress that have come before. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is doing the hard work? • Are residents involved? • Are new people getting involved in the efforts?



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- But, the community may be struggling to maintain its momentum. It must find new ways to bring along a new cadre of leaders, civic groups, and active citizens, as others tire or move on.
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Be Careful Not To . . .	What To Do	What To Think About
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think “success” has been achieved. • Assume others know the story of progress and norms for action that have been built. • Become arrogant and feel you have solved it all. • Start to rest on laurels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new leaders across the entire community and new Boundary-Spanning Organizations and new leaders. • Continue creating opportunities to bring citizens into processes, especially new residents. • Look for challenges not yet tackled to focus energies, and use lessons learned to expand progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the new leaders? • Who is still missing from the community’s progress? • How are we feeling about ourselves: pride, fully humble, or smugly self-confident? • How are we consciously strengthening our norms of working together?