



# **BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY**

The challenges and opportunities of mobilizing and organizing communities to prevent and respond to domestic violence

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## **Facilitator Guide**



**Transforming Communities**  
Creating Safety, Justice & Equality

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING & RESOURCE CENTER

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BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY

# Facilitator Guide

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**TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES**  
*Creating Safety, Justice & Equality*

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING & RESOURCE CENTER

© Transforming Communities: Technical Assistance, Training & Resource Center  
734 A Street  
San Rafael, CA 94901  
Phone: 415.457.2464 • Email: [info@transformcommunities.org](mailto:info@transformcommunities.org)



This resource was made possible with funding provided by the Family Violence Prevention Program, funded by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), Domestic Violence Section (formerly the California Emergency Management Agency [Cal EMA]).

TC-TAT extends its gratitude to the participants of the Building Beloved Community conversation last April and to all of the people who have contributed to this issue: Aimee Thompson-Aravelo, Close to Home; Cristy Chung, Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence; Jill Zawisza, WOMAN, Inc; Sarah McCoy-Harms

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## Introduction

*Building Beloved Community: The challenges and opportunities of mobilizing and organizing communities to prevent and respond to domestic violence.*

Throughout the United States, domestic violence practitioners are working to engage their communities in developing and implementing *community-driven solutions* to domestic violence. Over the last several years, Transforming Communities: Technical Assistance, Training & Resource Center (TC-TAT) has had the opportunity to work with current leaders in the movement who are putting the concept of beloved community into practice.

**To build upon** the work completed thus far and to keep the conversations moving forward, this Facilitator Guide was created so that practitioners have access to a tool that can be used to further the work locally. The contents of this guide were drawn from TC-TAT's previous trainings and work with experts in the field.

The following sections contain information and tools to help you get started. The first contains background information on the concept of beloved community, including suggested preparation. Next are the training modules themselves, which include facilitator instructions, model agendas, and participant handouts. Finally, the guide closes with further resources.

# 2

## Planning and Preparation: Getting grounded in your understanding of Beloved Community

*Prior to planning a gathering in your organization or community, it is recommended that facilitators prepare by reviewing the recommended resources as needed. These resources include further information on beloved community in theory, beloved community in practice, activities/icebreakers, and conflict resolution.*

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**PURPOSE**

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To learn how to prepare for a conversation on building beloved community.

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**OBJECTIVES**

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By the end of this unit, facilitators will be able to:

- ✓ Access resources available to deepen facilitator's understanding of beloved community work.
- ✓ Identify core components central to a conversation about beloved community.
- ✓ Prepare to handle situations of conflict.
- ✓ Create a recruitment/marketing plan to engage participants.
- ✓ Identify next steps to continue the conversation in the community.

# Why “Beloved Community?”

## A Brief History

Popularized by activists Grace Lee Boggs and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Beloved Community* presents ways to think about confronting domestic violence in ways that are loving and accountable. It is the idea of the community as the agent of change, moving away from self-interest and isolation and moving toward well-being of the whole and a shared sense of belonging.

Dr. King believed beloved community is realistic, achievable, and attainable by a critical mass of people, is all-inclusive, and embraces:

- Nonviolent philosophy and methods.
- Global vision.
- Shared wealth.
- Peaceful conflict resolution.
- Love and trust.

*“The goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a **qualitative change in our souls** as well as a **quantitative change in our lives.**”*

*-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The core value of Dr. King’s vision is that the expression of this love is justice for all people: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Characteristics of Ms. Boggs’ vision of beloved community include:

- Learning.
- Common issues.
- Self-transforming and structure-transforming.
- Responsibility for being part of the solution
- Making principled and intentional choices.

*“Each of us needs to be awakened to a personal and compassionate recognition of the **inseparable interconnection between our minds, hearts, and bodies**, between our physical and psychological well-being, and between our selves and all the other selves in our country and in the world.”*

*-Grace Lee Boggs*

Ms. Boggs called on us to transform both ourselves (internal – selves) as well as our surrounding organizations, policies, and systems (external – structures).

## **Transforming Our Communities**

**I**n his book *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Peter Block invites readers to shift our thinking about our communities as hosts of problems or deficiencies to thinking about communities as vessels of possibilities. As we prepare to think about community, it is helpful to begin from a shared understanding of our approach to building a restorative, beloved community.

### *Overall Premise*

We wish to build the social fabric and transform the isolation within our communities into connectedness and caring for the whole.

### *Operating Guidelines*

Social fabric is created one room at a time, the one we are in at the moment.

The key to a new future is to focus on gifts, on associational life, and on the insight that all transformation begins through language.

The essence of creating an alternative future comes from citizen-to-citizen engagement that constantly focuses on the well-being of the whole.

We have all the capacity, expertise, and resources that an alternative future requires.

The small group is the unit of transformation and the container for the experience of belonging.

### *The Context for a Restorative Community*

The existing community context is one that markets fear, assigns fault, and worships self-interest.

The new context that restores community is one of possibility, generosity, and gifts, rather than one of fear, mistakes, and self-interest.

Communities are human systems given form by conversations that build relatedness.

The conversations that build relatedness most often occur through associational life, where citizens are unpaid and show up by choice.

The future hinges on the accountability that citizens choose and their willingness to connect with each other around promises they make to each other.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Block, P. (2009) *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco.

## Beloved Community and Domestic Violence Prevention

Exploring the concept of beloved community provides organizations an opportunity to **re-center** prevention work to reflect the fact that domestic violence takes place within the context of the community. In practice, it offers a chance to honor each other and to develop and hold a common purpose and vision by:

- ❖ Putting people and community at the center.
- ❖ Creating transformation within ourselves.
- ❖ Creating transformation within our organizations.
- ❖ Engaging the community to create a vision for a new movement.

Fundamentally, beloved community, when practiced, creates the **possibility of finding common ground** with other social justice movements. It enables us to **identify intersections and connections** even though our day-to-day work involves different subject matters or focuses on specific groups within a community. Rather than focusing on differences or disagreements, beloved community focuses on **building relationships** in order to **heal broken people and broken communities**. It begins with turning inward, to begin healing in our selves, and continues with our individual relationships, our organizations, and our communities.

While building beloved community holds the possibility of **radical change**, it can also be **messy**. We must learn to create **open spaces for truth-telling and sharing** his/herstories. When confronted with difficult truths, it is important to humbly sit with our discomfort. Only then can we begin to better understand each other and our communities and begin to find ways to undo harm.

We have all been exposed to and taught so much in our lives that does not align with the principles of beloved community. Many of our systems, policies, and institutions have been created with end goals in mind rather than reflecting community values. How do we begin to shift these structures and institutions to hold principles of honoring women and girls, emphasizing grace and acceptance, holding space for disagreement, and valuing diverse perspectives?

Many organizations serving survivors of domestic violence exist within a culture of activities, deliverables, and timelines defined by boards, mandates, policies, and funders. The types of activities and conversations needed to grow and sustain beloved community are difficult to evaluate in terms of traditional measures of “success,” particularly in the short term. Just as in building trust and rapport with service users, funders, local law enforcement, courts, and family services, it takes time to build trusting relationships with



individuals, organizations, or movements so that open dialogue and reconciliation may begin.

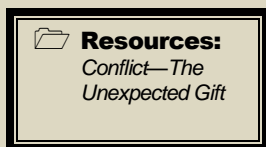
## Core Components

Central to discussions on building beloved community is laying a foundation, creating a framework, and bringing it into context:

1. What is beloved community (introduction, education, principles)?
2. What does it mean to live/embody beloved community (deepening the conversation, practices)?
3. What does beloved community mean to/look like in my community (vision, implementation, challenges)?

## Conflict: Handling Uncomfortable Situations

Opening a space for honest dialogue will inevitably bring up differences of opinion. Although uncomfortable, it is important to be prepared to handle conflict and disagreement, and to create a safe space for dissent and constructive criticism. It is also important to understand why conflict and disagreement can be a healthy aspect of beloved community. These potentially “messy” situations can be both a challenge and an opportunity. Just as creating space for open exchange of thoughts and ideas is an important component of building beloved community, so is the way we manage conflict.



Whether a misunderstanding or difference of opinion, being in community means that we are committed to being in right relationship with each other. As facilitators, our job is to promote a safe environment for engagement and to provide tools for navigating these situations.

In addition to creating safe space to share personal stories and opinions, there needs to be space for others to speak up if they find a comment offensive or hurtful. One approach to managing these situations is to use “oops” and “ouch:” inform participants that during the course of the conversation, they may realize they said something that was offensive or hurtful but cannot take it back. In that case, they can say “oops,” acknowledging to the group the self-realization but allowing the flow of conversation to continue uninterrupted. On the other hand, if a participant is listening and feels hurt or offended by something another person has said, they can say “ouch,” informing the group without having to necessarily address it at length at that moment. Depending on the situation, you may want to revisit as a group or privately in order to determine if steps are needed toward reconciliation.

## **Recruitment: Who Will Be at the Table?**

Who is your intended audience for this first conversation? It may be your organization or several, your church, or your neighborhood, for example. This guide is for a gathering that is ideally the first of many gatherings, and is intended to lay the groundwork and create momentum among people committed to this work. It is important to keep in mind that there may be power differentials among participants and to let participants know that within these conversations, everyone is given equal voice. In practice, this is difficult (and perhaps impossible at first), but it is the goal to strive toward. For example, if this conversation is to take place within an organization, there may be a combination of directors, managers, administrative staff, advocates, maintenance workers, etc. It may be uncomfortable for staff to be truly open in front of their supervisors, but it is important to include everyone, and not just decision makers.

Individuals may identify with a number of different communities. It is important to keep in mind that one may be an “insider” in some communities and an “outsider” in others. There are many forms of privilege – such as wealth, education, ability, citizenship, language – that could unintentionally leave some people out of the conversation. But in building beloved community, there is the potential of becoming part of each other’s families – of bringing people from different places and experiences together toward a common purpose. This is where some of those messy conversations can come into play, but if we hold that open space in humility, openness, and inclusion, deeply transformative work can begin to take place.

# 3

## Facilitating a Conversation

*Hosting a conversation on building beloved community in your organization or community.*

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### PREPARATION

- Print agenda & handouts
- Set up round tables
- Set up food and beverage (if applicable)

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### TIME

- 7 hours (includes breaks)

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### MATERIALS

- Writing utensils
- Brown paper to cover tables
- Poster paper or flip chart
- Marking pens
- Food, snacks, and beverages

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### HANDOUTS

- Circle of Multicultural Community
- Group Agreements
- Agenda
- Why Beloved Community?
- Brainstorming: Practices, Principles, and Challenges
- Beloved Community: Practices, Principles, and Challenges
- Deepening Community

**AGENDA**

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**ENGAGE** (40 minutes)

- Housekeeping 5 minutes
- Introductions 10 minutes
  - Activity: Circles of My Multicultural Self
- Group Agreements 7 minutes
- Review Schedule and Goals 3 minutes
- Activity: Group Brainstorming 15 minutes

**EXPLORE** (90 minutes)

- What is Beloved Community? 10 minutes
- Why Beloved Community? 60 minutes
  - Activity: Discussion Questions
- Live/Embody Beloved Community 20 minutes
  - Activity: Brainstorming: Practices, Principles, & Challenges
  - Process: Beloved Community: Practices, Principles, & Challenges

**BREAK** (10 minutes)

**EXPLAIN** (115 minutes)

- Defining Community 95 minutes
- Deepening Community 20 minutes

**BREAK** (35 minutes)

**ELABORATE** (120 minutes)

- Application to Domestic Violence Work 60 minutes
  - Activity: Define Community. Choose Community. Make Community
- Where Do We Go From Here? 60 minutes

**EVALUATE** (10 minutes)

## Stage 1. Engage

🕒 **40 minutes**

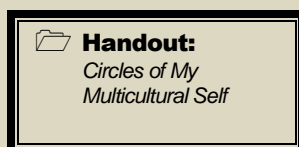
- **Facilitator notes:** Consider practicing yoga/stretching for a few minutes as you come together. Structure introductions in order to keep them informative but concise. This is a time to get to know one another and begin building trust and rapport in order to facilitate open, honest discussion and sharing.

### A. Housekeeping [5 minutes]

- i. Describe location of bathrooms and explain that participants should feel free to use when necessary.
- ii. Encourage participants to partake in refreshments provided.
- iii. Describe any other housekeeping points specific to your facility/location.

### B. Introductions [10 minutes]

- i. **ICEBREAKER/ACTIVITY: Circles of My Multicultural Self**



This activity highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities. It addresses the relationships between our desires to self-define our identities and the social constructions that label us regardless of how we define ourselves.

Place your name in the center circle of the structure. Write an important aspect of your identity in each of the satellite circles – an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist, or any descriptor with which you identify.<sup>2</sup>

Ask for volunteers to share one or two descriptors with the group if they feel comfortable.

- ii. Facilitator(s) introduction: Why are you holding this gathering? Was there an event in the community that prompted action? Was it a shift or new focus of your

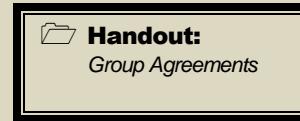
<sup>2</sup> Goski, P.C. (2014). Circles of My Multicultural Self. *Edchange.org*. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from [http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/circlesofself\\_handout.html](http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/circlesofself_handout.html)

organization? Is it something you have been doing informally but wanted to integrate into practice? Use this as an opportunity to put the day's conversations into context.

**C. Group Agreements [7 minutes]**

i. **READ:**

- Talk to people you don't know.*
  - Talk to people you never talk to.*
  - Be intrigued by the differences you hear.*
  - Expect to be surprised.*
  - Treasure curiosity more than certainty.*
  - Invite in everybody who cares to work on what's possible.*
  - Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.*
  - Know that creative solutions come from new connections.*
  - Remember, you don't fear people whose story you know.*
  - Real listening always brings people closer together.*
  - Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.*
  - Rely on human goodness. Stay together.*
- Margaret Wheatley<sup>3</sup>



ii. **Review Group Agreements Handout**

**READ:** Participants should use supportive behaviors that promote sharing and respect differences of opinion, such as:

- ✓ Returning from breaks on time.
- ✓ Agreeing to keep an oath of confidentiality.
- ✓ Respecting and listening.
- ✓ Not interrupting others.
- ✓ Using stand-alone statements, such as “I feel” or “I think.”
- ✓ Focusing on issues, not individuals.
- ✓ Asking for permission to give each other feedback.

**READ:** Bringing together groups of people with diverse backgrounds, opinions, politics, and beliefs creates rich opportunities to build community, but requires commitment from participants to hold a safe, welcoming space for conversation. In Dorchester, Mass., Close to Home is a community-based organization working “to foster community-wide responsibility to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic violence.” They embrace the following principles for community engagement and organizing:

- ✓ Creating a welcoming, comforting, nurturing, and safe space for people.
- ✓ Creating a space for laughter.

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Born, *Community Conversations* (p.88)

## BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY

- ✓ Building on strengths.
- ✓ Recognizing that every individual has something to offer to the cause.
- ✓ Working from a place of hope and optimism.
- ✓ Building genuine, respectful, and meaningful relationships with people.
- ✓ Meeting people where they are – both physically and emotionally.
- ✓ Respecting all viewpoints and opinions.
- ✓ Responding to differing/conflicting viewpoints with elaborating questions, and a genuine curiosity to learn more.
- ✓ Celebrating our relationships and all the little successes along the way.<sup>4</sup>

Holding these principles at the center of the work encourages individuals to open their hearts and listen humbly to opinions and perspectives they might not otherwise have considered.

- iii. Discuss possibility of dissent, and set expectations for open, respectful conversation. Consider using “oops”/”ouch” or similar strategy.

### D. Review Schedule and Goals [3 minutes]



### E. ACTIVITY: Group Brainstorm. [15 minutes]

What words would you use to describe your ideal community?

- i. Instruct participants to call out responses. Emphasize there are no right or wrong answers, just what feels true for them.
- ii. Ask for a volunteer to record responses on flip chart.
- iii. Prompt if necessary: What would it look like? What would it feel like? Who is in it?
- iv. After a few minutes, end activity but leave responses up, off to the side where they can still be viewed.

## Stage 2. Explore

🕒 90 minutes

- **Facilitator notes:** This section will introduce participants to the concept and history of beloved community in general, it's potential for our work in domestic violence, and explore the practices, principles, and challenges in building beloved community.

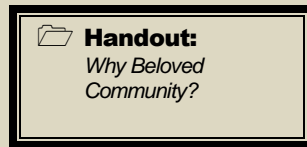
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<sup>4</sup> Community Engagement and Domestic Violence Prevention. (2014). c2home.org. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from [http://www.c2home.org/community\\_engagement.html](http://www.c2home.org/community_engagement.html).

**A. What is Beloved Community? [10 minutes]**

- i. Ask participants to call out a word or phrase that comes to mind when they think of beloved community. Ask for a volunteer to write responses on the flip chart (pre-labeled “What is Beloved Community?”)
  - o Emphasize there are no right or wrong answers, just what feels true for them.

**B. Why Beloved Community? [60 minutes]**



- i. Distribute handout and review.
  - o Beloved community presents ways to think about confronting domestic violence in ways that are loving and accountable. It is the idea of the community as the agent of change, moving away from self-interest and isolation and moving toward well-being of the whole and a shared sense of belonging.
  - o Dr. King believed beloved community is realistic, achievable, and attainable by a critical mass of people, is all-inclusive, and embraces:
    1. Nonviolent philosophy and methods.
    2. Global vision.
    3. Shared wealth.
    4. Peaceful conflict resolution.
    5. Love and trust.
  - o “*The goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a **qualitative change in our souls** as well as a **quantitative change in our lives.**” -Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*
  - o The core value of Dr. King’s vision is that the expression of this love is justice for all people: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
  - o Characteristics of Ms. Boggs’ vision of beloved community include:
    1. Learning.
    2. Common issues.
    3. Self-transforming and structure-transforming.
    4. Responsibility for being part of the solution.
    5. Making principled and intentional choices.



○ *Each of us needs to be awakened to a personal and compassionate recognition of the **inseparable interconnection between our minds, hearts, and bodies**, between our physical and psychological well-being, and between our selves and all the other selves in our country and in the world.” -Grace Lee Boggs*

○ Ms. Boggs called on us to transform both ourselves (internal – selves) as well as our surrounding organizations, policies, and systems (external – structures).

ii. Transforming Our Communities:

○ In his book *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Peter Block invites us to shift our thinking about our communities as hosts of problems or deficiencies to thinking about communities vessels of possibilities. As we prepare to think about community, it is helpful to begin from a shared understanding of our approach to building a restorative, beloved community.

○ Ask for 3 volunteers: one to read the “Overall Premise,” one to read “Operating Guidelines,” and one to read “The Context for a Restorative Community” (refer to handout).

iii. **ACTIVITY:** Divide into groups – at least three, but with no more than 4 individuals in each group – and assign each group one of the following discussion questions. Instruct groups they will have 10 minutes to discuss, and to assign a note taker and a spokesperson to report back to the larger group.

○ Discussion Questions

- What are the problems you’ve identified in your community? Write down at least 3. Now reframe each problem to a statement of possibility.

*Example:*

*Problem: littering.*

*Reframe: We have an opportunity to make it easier for people to dispose of trash properly. Let’s try to understand why people litter. Are there too few receptacles? Are they located inconveniently or hidden from view?*

- Beloved community requires qualitative and quantitative changes – transformation of both the structure and the self. What did we mean by this? What would be some examples in your community?

*Example:*

*Qualitative change – feeling a greater sense of belonging*

*Quantitative change – fewer calls to police*

*Structure – extend bus routes/schedules so that kids have better access to after school programs/activities*

*Self – openness to get to know neighbor you do not get along with*

- What potential do you see for intersections/connections with other social justice movements? What about community groups, local businesses, or local leaders?

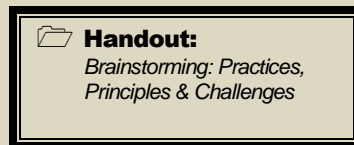
*Example:*

*Many homeless women are survivors of DV. Connect with homeless advocates and work together on access to affordable housing. DV agencies partner with local business owners to create policy to protect employee-survivors of abuse.*

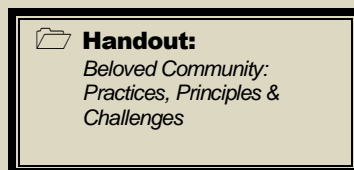
- When 10 minutes are up, ask for one person from each group to report back a two-minute summary to the larger group. Record responses on a flip chart – one sheet for each question. Spend another 10 minutes as a large group so that individuals can comment and contribute to the discussion of questions they had not been assigned to.

**C. What Does It Mean to Live/Embody Beloved Community? [20 minutes]**

- i. We've discussed the "what" and "why" of beloved community, but have not yet defined "how." We will now explore principles, practices, and challenges involved in building beloved community.



- ii. **Activity [10 minutes]:** Explain that you are about to do a sharing activity that will help the group brainstorm the principles, practices, and challenges associated with building beloved community. Ask for two volunteers to share a time they experienced being a part of a beloved community (three minutes each).
  - Instructions: Listen carefully to each story you are told about an experience of beloved community. Think about PRACTICES that were used, the PRINCIPLES the community was based on, and the CHALLENGES that were reported or that ones that you could potentially predict. There are no right or wrong answers. You will have 2 minutes after each story for silent reflection and to continue recording your thoughts.



- iii. **Process [10 minutes]:** TC-TAT previously collaborated with activists who have been working to build beloved community in their own communities. The result was a summary of practices, principles, and challenges they identified in their work. Review the lists and notice similarities and differences from your own.
  - For each column, ask for feedback:
    1. Are there any that resonate with you and your experience of community?

2. Are there any you disagree with?
3. Are there any we should add?

## **Stage 3. Explain**

🕒 **115 minutes**

- **Facilitator notes:** This section will transition from instruction to group thinking and integration. Tables should have brown paper table covers and pens or markers. Distribute a different question printed on a piece of paper to each table.

### **A. Defining Our Communities [95 minutes]**

- i. Ask participants to split up and sit at one of the round tables, which will be covered with brown paper table covers. Instruct groups to talk for 15 minutes about the first question, assigning a note taker. At the end of 15 minutes, ring a bell and distribute the second question. The group should assign a new note taker at a blank portion of the brown paper tablecloth. Repeat for the third questions.
  - What are the communities that exist where I live? What about communities that are not bound by physical space? Do we all belong to a shared community? What overlaps and differences exist between our communities?
  - Who am I in community with? Who *should* I be in community with? Is there anyone I have avoided entering into community with? What would be required of me to enter into relationships with people I do not normally gravitate to?
  - Paul Born states, “Community is not something some people have and others do not. We all have community in our lives.”
    - Do you agree? Can you think of people who might not feel a sense of belonging to any communities? What about communities that are seen as negative – such as gangs or prisoners? How do we come into community with people who society labels as “bad” or “outsiders?”
- ii. When time is up, give 5 minutes for groups to summarize their discussions and choose 3-5 distinct ideas or revelations to share with the larger group.
- iii. Reconvene the larger group and give each table no more than 5 minutes to share. Take notes on a flip chart. When all groups have shared, spend 10 minutes identifying and discussing themes.

### **B. Deepening Community [20 minutes]**

- i. Tell participants: Now that we have defined beloved community and thought about the communities we participate in, let’s think about what it takes to enter into beloved community.
- ii. Read: Chicken Soup story.



- iii. Discuss the three types of community: Paul Born, recognized for his innovative work in community development, talks about three types of community:<sup>5</sup>
- **Shallow** – *Turning away from others* and accepting or even embracing shallow community. We have associations but lack bonding. Example: We see friends once a month and family on certain holidays.
  - **Fear-based** – *Turning against others* through the building of fear-based community. We bond together against something or others; we are right, they are wrong. We are stronger when they are weaker.
  - **Deep** – *Turning toward others* and working together to create deep community. We know each other’s families, birthdays, and care for each other when sick.
- iv. We have defined community, and discussed who we are (or should be) in community with. Next we will explore practices to create and/or deepen community. Paul Born suggests 4 simple acts that deepen community.<sup>5</sup> As we discuss them, think about how these could apply to our work in domestic violence prevention.
- *Sharing our story* – Deepens community because through this activity we open ourselves to one another, show our vulnerability, and build mutual trust.
    - What considerations need to be made given the sensitive nature of our work? How do we create safe space to share personal stories without re-traumatizing survivors, and how do we prepare community members to hear them?
  - *Enjoying one another by spending time together* – When we play on a regular basis with the same people, we build social bonds, increase our capacity to learn from others, and strengthen what is commonly referred to as our “emotional intelligence.” In a relaxed manner, we enjoy the company of others, make mistakes, pick up cues, and learn to be together.
    - Paul talks about being able to visit a neighbor uninvited. When thinking about families who may be experiencing abuse, how can we take this approach without putting both parties at risk? What about individuals who are isolated by an abuser? How do we think about and be in community with abusers – and avoid fear-based community?

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<sup>5</sup>Adapted from Paul Born, *Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times*.

- *Caring for one another* – We are empathic creatures with a deeply held instinct for compassion, feeling one another’s joys and pain. Helping one another is key to the survival (and evolution) of all living things.
  - How do we avoid creating unintentional hierarchies? For example, some people have more resources to offer than others. How do we also encourage each other to practice self-care?
- *Working together to build a better world* – When we work as individuals, we are able to express our altruism. When we do these together, with collaborative intention, we create the power of collective altruism. Something special happens when we are part of an ongoing group of caring. We not only do good for others, but also, through our collective energy, experience a strengthened bond with one another.
  - Working in our communities to end domestic violence – How do we avoid reverting to fear-based community (“us” against “them” – the abuser)? How do we hold each other accountable? How do we hold abusers accountable? How do we do this in a way that promotes safety for everyone involved? How/where does justice fit in? Are our current systems working?

## **Stage 4. Elaborate**

🕒 **120 minutes**

➤ **Facilitator notes:** In this section, participants will apply learning.

### **A. Applying Beloved Community to Domestic Violence Work [60 minutes]**

- i. Let us think about concrete ways to begin to build beloved community and identify next steps to continue the work started today.
  - Consider the forest and the trees – how to nurture the individual plants in a garden while tending the garden as a whole. We must fully understand that the health of the community as a whole is critical to the success of each social change initiative. This requires systems thinking – the ability to see and nurture patterns in a community – to understand the complexity and interrelated nature of the issues.
  - Deepening community as a way to prevent domestic violence is not just about preventing domestic violence. It’s about creating a safe, healthy, vibrant environment. This includes thinking about the physical, economic, environmental and social health of the community and individuals.
- ii. **ACTIVITY:** Define community. Choose community. Make community. (p.48)

- What can I do? Ask participants to recall their ideal community from the beginning of the day. Spend 10 minutes contemplating and responding to the following questions:
  1. Think about how your current experience of community compares. What are areas of *possibility* for you to deepen relationships?
  2. What gifts can you contribute to your neighbors/fellow community members? (Expertise, skills, talents, passions?)
  3. What are 3 concrete actions you are willing to commit to in the next month?
    - a. Examples: introducing yourself to a neighbor you've never met; getting to know the co-worker you exchange greetings with but know little about; organizing a neighborhood barbeque.
  4. Ask for a few of volunteers to share one of the commitments they made to deepen their personal experience of community. By sharing these commitments, we indicate we are open to support and loving accountability by others in the group. Part of building community is building trust; if you are not ready to make a public commitment, we support that, too.
  5. What are our gifts? Ask participants to share their gifts. Record on a new flip chart so participants can easily read. Have everyone take a few minutes to appreciate the diversity of gifts possessed by the group.
- What can we do? Together, considering our many skills and talents, what can we do? What are areas of *possibility* in our community that we can work together towards? Brainstorm as a group, recording ideas on a flip chart so that participants can read.
  1. Consider:
    - a. Are there any systems/institutions/practices in our community that do a good job of promoting safe, healthy environments? What can we learn from them?
    - b. Are there any systems/institutions/practices in our community that are not promoting safe, healthy environments, or are detrimental to deepening community?
    - c. How do we think about abusers and survivors in deep community? Do we allow the abuser to remain in community? If not, is this fear-based community? If so, how do we ensure the health and safety of the survivor? What about justice?

- d. In what ways do things like access to education, job training/experience, financial stability, social ties, standing in the community, criminal history, access to healthy food, etc. play a role in an individual's ability to avoid getting into abusive relationships, to notice signs and address potential abusive behaviors before they begin, and to safely leave a relationship once it becomes abusive?
- e. What shifts do we need to make in our community(ies) to make it a safer place for women and girls? How do we find out?
- f. (For conversations within an organization): Of the practices and principles we discussed, which do our organizations do a good job with? Where could we use some improvement? What are some specific examples? Does our organizational culture unintentionally create "insiders" and "outsiders," whether it is with staff, service users, volunteers, partners, or contractors? Are we allied with other social justice movements? Are there some we hadn't previously considered, but as a result of this conversation, may prove to be important allies?

**B. Where Do We Go From Here? [60 minutes]**

- i. How can we take the work we've begun today and move forward with these conversations and building community? There are three levels of next steps to consider:
  - **Within our reach.** Something that does not require a large amount of time, resources, or commitment. (Example: host a community-wide picnic/potluck.)
  - **A stretch.** Something that is within the reach of one community may be a stretch for another. This step requires commitments from individuals or organizations to be actively participating. Some communities may be more receptive to these conversations than others. For example, convening a quarterly meeting of local leaders, business owners, and interested community members to continue these discussions.
  - **A leap forward.** Something that requires a major commitment and structure for accountability, and may require more resources. For example, a campaign to support new or changed policies at the school, organization, or city level that support prevention activities.

*Cast a wide net:* Start by brainstorming ideas, spending about 10 minutes on each, with each level written on a different flip chart. Record responses under each level.

*Bring it into focus:* Next, spend 30 minutes discussing which of these ideas are reasonable and do-able. Add new ideas as they emerge. Get more specific.

1. Ask the question, “Which of these steps are we ready to commit to?” Have group select 2-3 individuals to take responsibility for moving the goal forward. This first step will likely be setting a time to meet again to refine an action plan.
2. Decide if there is a core group willing to continue these conversations on a regular basis. Appoint a lead to organize logistics (either for the next meeting or on an ongoing basis) and gather contact information.
3. Decide whether and how you will share today’s conversation with the broader community, along with an open invitation to participate in future gatherings.

## **Stage 5. Evaluate**

🕒 **10 minutes**

- **Facilitator notes:** Use this time for an informal evaluation. You may wish to have participants record responses, or you may decide to walk among the groups and listen.
  - A. As our time together comes to a close, please take a few minutes to reflect on the day and consider what worked well and if anything could be improved were we to have these conversations again. Turn to someone next to you and share your thoughts.
  - B. Close with any housekeeping information, such as inviting participants to help clean up the space together.



## 4

## Additional Resources

**Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence** (API Institute) is a national resource center on domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence in Asian and Pacific Islander communities. It serves a national network of advocates, community-based organizations, national and state programs, legal, health, and mental health professionals, researchers, policy advocates and activists from social justice organizations working to eliminate violence against women. It analyzes and addresses critical issues; provides consultation, technical assistance and training; conducts research; and engages in policy advocacy. Access at [www.apiidv.org](http://www.apiidv.org).

Boggs, G.L. (2003). *These are the Times that Try Our Souls*. National Exchange on Arts and Civic Dialogue, Flint, MI. Access at <http://www.boggscenter.org/fi-souls-10-12-03.html>.

Boggs, G.L. (Director). (2013). *American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs* [Documentary]. USA: LeeLee Films, Inc. Access at <http://americanrevolutionaryfilm.com/>.

Brosi, G. & hooks, b. (2012). *The Beloved Community: A Conversation between bell hooks and George Brosi*. *Appalachian Heritage* 40(4), 76-86. The University of North Carolina Press. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from Project MUSE database.

Catalyst Connection: Building Beloved Community (2013). *Transforming Communities: Technical Assistance, Training, and Resource Center (TC-TAT)*, San Rafael, CA. Access at <http://transformcommunities.org/content/tc-tat-resources>.

Chung, C. (Presenter). (2012). *Intersectional Movement Building: Exploring the Concept of Beloved Community* [Webinar]. *Transforming Communities: Technical Assistance, Training, and Resource Center (TC-TAT)*, San Rafael, CA. Access at <http://www.transformcommunities.org/content/training-archives>.

Close to Home fosters community-wide responsibility to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic violence. We believe that domestic violence is a critical community issue and that all community members – youth, residents, families, friends, neighbors, civic leaders, and organizational partners – are essential to designing and implementing the solutions to the problem. Access at [http://www.c2home.org/community\\_engagement.html](http://www.c2home.org/community_engagement.html).

Gabel, P. (2012) From Individual Rights to the Beloved Community: A New Vision of Justice. *Tikkun* (27) 1: 18. Access at <http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/from-individual-rights-to-the-beloved-community-a-new-vision-of-justice>.

**BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY**

Hamilton, J. & Seaman, E. (2013). *Conflict – The Unexpected Gift: Making the Most of Disputes in Life*. iUniverse, Bloomington, IN.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1966). Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom. *Ebony Magazine*, 21, 27-31. Access at <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/nonviolence-the-only-road-to-freedom/>



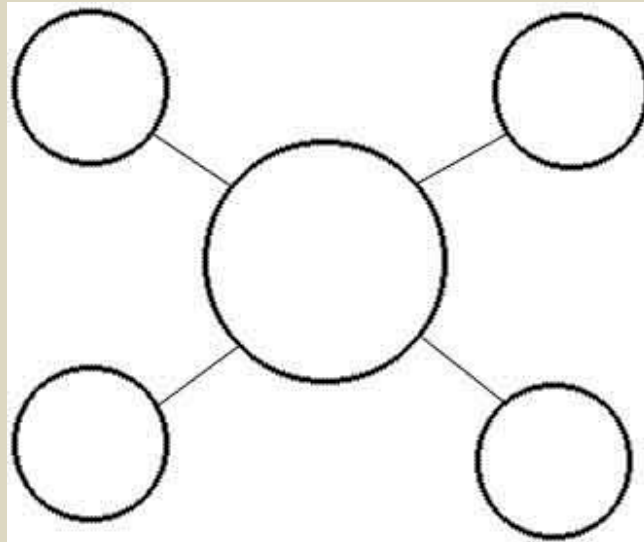
## Handouts

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# Circles of My Multicultural Self<sup>1</sup>

This activity highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities. It addresses the relationships between our desires to self-define our identities and the social constructions that label us regardless of how we define ourselves.

Place your name in the center circle of the structure below. Write an important aspect of your identity in each of the satellite circles -- an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist, or any descriptor with which you identify.



1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify with one of the descriptors you used above.
2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors.
3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

I am (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_ but I am NOT (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_.  
(So if one of my identifiers was "Christian," and I thought a stereotype was that all Christians are radical right Republicans, my sentence would be:

I am a Christian, but I am NOT a radical rightwing Republican.

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<sup>1</sup> Goski, P.C. (2014). Circles of My Multicultural Self. *Edchange.org*. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from [http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/circlesofself\\_handout.html](http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/circlesofself_handout.html)



# Group Agreements

In order to get the most out of our time together, we encourage everyone to be willing to try the process, but you have the right to pass if you do not feel comfortable sharing at certain points.

Participants should use supportive behaviors that promote sharing and respect differences of opinion, such as:

- ✓ Returning from breaks on time;
- ✓ Agreeing to keep an oath of confidentiality;
- ✓ Respecting and listening;
- ✓ Not interrupting others;
- ✓ Using stand-alone statements, such as “I feel” or “I think”;
- ✓ Focusing on issues, not individuals;
- ✓ Asking for permission to give each other feedback.

**B**ringing together groups of people with diverse backgrounds, opinions, politics, and beliefs creates rich opportunities to build community, but requires commitment from participants to hold a safe, welcoming space for conversation. In Dorchester, Mass., Close to Home is a community based organization working “to foster community-wide responsibility to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic violence.” They embrace the following principles for community engagement and organizing, which we will follow during our time together today:

- Create a welcoming, comforting, nurturing, and safe space for people;
- Create a space for laughter;
- Build on strengths;
- Recognize that every individual has something to offer to the cause;
- Work from a place of hope and optimism;
- Build genuine, respectful, and meaningful relationships with people;
- Meet people where they are—both physically and emotionally;
- Respect all viewpoints and opinions;
- Respond to differing/conflicting viewpoints with elaborating questions, and a genuine curiosity to learn more;
- Celebrate our relationships and all the little successes along the way.<sup>1</sup>

Holding these principles at the center of the work encourages individuals to open their hearts and listen humbly to opinions and perspectives they might not otherwise have considered.

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<sup>1</sup> Community Engagement and Domestic Violence Prevention. (2014). c2home.org. Retrieved August 28, 2014, from [http://www.c2home.org/community\\_engagement.html](http://www.c2home.org/community_engagement.html).

*Talk to people you don't know.*

*Talk to people you never talk to.*

*Be intrigued by the differences you hear.*

*Expect to be surprised.*

*Treasure curiosity more than certainty.*

*Invite in everybody who cares to work on what's possible.*

*Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.*

*Know that creative solutions come from new connections.*

*Remember, you don't fear people whose story you know.*

*Real listening always brings people closer together.*

*Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.*

*Rely on human goodness. Stay together.*

-- Margaret Wheatley<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from Paul Born *Community Conversations* (p.88)



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING & RESOURCE CENTER

# Building Beloved Community Agenda

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## OBJECTIVES

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- ❖ Explore our understanding of beloved community;
- ❖ Identify and explore common practices and principles of building beloved community;
- ❖ Explore challenging issues in the work;
- ❖ Identify next steps to continue the conversation in our community.

### ENGAGE (40 minutes)

- Housekeeping 5 minutes
- Introductions 10 minutes
  - Activity: Circles of My Multicultural Self
- Group Agreements 7 minutes
- Review Schedule and Goals 3 minutes
- Activity: Group Brainstorming 15 minutes

### EXPLORE (90 minutes)

- What is Beloved Community? 10 minutes
- Why Beloved Community? 60 minutes
  - Activity: Discussion Questions
- Live/Embody Beloved Community 20 minutes
  - Activity: Brainstorming: Practices, Principles, & Challenges
  - Process: Beloved Community: Practices, Principles, & Challenges

### BREAK (10 minutes)

### EXPLAIN (115 minutes)

- Defining Our Communities 95 minutes
- Deepening Community 20 minutes

### BREAK (35 minutes)

### ELABORATE (120 minutes)

- Application to Domestic Violence Work 60 minutes
  - Activity: Define Community. Choose Community. Make Community.
- Where Do We Go From Here? 60 minutes

### EVALUATE (10 minutes)

# Why “Beloved Community”?

## Transforming Our Communities

In his book “Community: The Structure of Belonging”, Peter Block invites readers to shift our thinking about our communities as hosts of problems or deficiencies to thinking about communities vessels of possibilities. As we prepare to think about community, it is helpful to begin from a shared understanding of our approach to building a restorative, beloved community.

### *Overall Premise*

We wish to build the social fabric and transform the isolation within our communities into connectedness and caring for the whole.

### *Operating Guidelines*

Social fabric is created one room at a time, the one we are in at the moment.

The key to a new future is to focus on gifts, on associational life, and on the insight that all transformation begins through language.

The essence of creating an alternative future comes from citizen-to-citizen engagement that constantly focuses on the well-being of the whole.

We have all the capacity, expertise, and resources that an alternative future requires.

The small group is the unit of transformation and the container for the experience of belonging.

### *The Context for a Restorative Community*

The existing community context is one that markets fear, assigns fault, and worships self-interest.

The new contest that restores community is one of possibility, generosity, and gifts, rather than one of fear, mistakes, and self-interest.

Communities are human systems given form by conversations that build relatedness.

The conversations that build relatedness most often occur through associational life, where citizens are unpaid and show up by choice.

The future hinges on the accountability that citizens choose and their willingness to connect with each other around promises they make to each other.



## A Brief History

**P**opularized by activists Grace Lee Boggs and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Beloved Community* presents ways to think about confronting domestic violence in ways that are loving and accountable. It is the idea of the community as the agent of change; moving away from self-interest and isolation and moving toward well-being of the whole and a shared sense of belonging.

Dr. King believed beloved community is realistic, achievable and attainable by a critical mass of people, is all-inclusive and embraces:

- Nonviolent philosophy and methods;
- Global vision;
- Shared wealth;
- Peaceful conflict resolution
- Love and trust.

*“The goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a **qualitative change in our souls** as well as a **quantitative change in our lives.**”*

*-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The core value of Dr. King’s vision is that the expression of this love is justice for all people: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Characteristics of Ms. Boggs’ vision of beloved community include:

- Learning;
- Common issues;
- Self-transforming & structure-transforming;
- Responsibility for being part of the solution;
- Making principled and intentional choices.

*“Each of us needs to be awakened to a personal and compassionate recognition of the **inseparable interconnection between our minds, hearts, and bodies**, between our physical and psychological well-being, and between our selves and all the other selves in our country and in the world.”*

*-Grace Lee Boggs*

Ms. Boggs called on us to transform both ourselves (internal, selves) as well as our surrounding organizations, policies, and systems (external, structures).

## Beloved Community and Domestic Violence Prevention

**E**xploring the concept of beloved community provides organizations an opportunity to **re-center** prevention work to reflect the fact that domestic violence takes place within the context of the community. In practice, it offers a chance to honor each other and to develop and hold a common purpose and vision by:

- ❖ Putting people and community at the center;
- ❖ Creating transformation within ourselves;
- ❖ Creating transformation within our organizations;
- ❖ Engaging the community to create a vision for a new movement.

Fundamentally, beloved community, when practiced, creates the **possibility of finding common ground** with other social justice movements. It enables us to **identify intersections and connections** even though our day to day work involves different subject matters or focuses on specific groups within a community. Rather than focusing on differences or disagreements, beloved community focuses on **building relationships** in order to **heal broken people and broken communities**. It begins with turning inward, to begin healing in our selves, and continues with our individual relationships, our organizations, and our communities.

While building beloved community holds the possibility of **radical change**, it can also be **messy**. We must learn to create **open spaces for truth-telling and sharing** his/herstories. When confronted with difficult truths, it is important to humbly sit with our discomfort. Only then can we begin to better understand each other and our communities and begin to find ways to undo harm.

We have all been exposed to and taught so much in our lives that does not align with the principles of beloved community. Many of our systems, policies, and institutions have been created with end goals in mind rather than reflecting community values. How do we begin to shift these structures and institutions to hold principles of honoring women and girls, emphasizing grace and acceptance, holding space for disagreement, and valuing diverse perspectives?

Many organizations serving victims of domestic violence exist within a culture of activities, deliverables, and timelines defined by boards, mandates, policies and funders. The types of activities and conversations needed to grow and sustain beloved community are difficult to evaluate in terms of traditional measures of “success”, particularly in the short term. Just as in building trust and rapport with clients, funders, local law enforcement, courts, family services, it takes time to build trusting relationships with individuals, organizations, or movements so that open dialogue and reconciliation may begin.

## **Discussion Questions**

What are the problems you’ve identified in your community? Write down at least 3. Now reframe each problem to a statement of possibility.

Beloved Community requires qualitative and quantitative changes; transformation of both the structure and the self. What did we mean by this? What would be some examples in your community?

What potential do you see for intersections/connections with other social justice movements? What about community groups, local businesses, or local leaders?



# Brainstorming:

## Practices, Principles, & Challenges

Instructions: Listen carefully to each story you are told about an experience of Beloved Community. Think about PRACTICES that were used, the PRINCIPLES the community was based on, and the CHALLENGES that were reported or that ones that you could potentially predict. There are no right or wrong answers. You will have 2 minutes after each story share for silent reflection and to continue recording your thoughts.

PRACTICES	PRINCIPLES	CHALLENGES



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING & RESOURCE CENTER

# Beloved Community: Practices, Principles, & Challenges

Previous conversations on Beloved Community have resulted in the following summary, which is not necessarily exhaustive.

PRACTICES	PRINCIPLES	CHALLENGES
<p>Create spaces and opportunities for people to come together: to share stories, to listen, and to have sometimes difficult and complicated conversations</p> <p>Take risks</p> <p>Learning together across dynamics of power and privilege</p> <p>Find a common goal</p> <p>Being able to fully share yourself</p> <p>Fun, happy healthy times together</p> <p>The magic spark of attaining critical mass</p> <p>Build on peoples' strengths</p> <p>Share meals, eat together</p> <p>Be self-aware and practice self-reflection</p> <p>Expect and value complicated conversations</p>	<p>Honor women</p> <p>Be open to life-long learning</p> <p>Emphasis on grace and acceptance</p> <p>Bring passion</p> <p>Be authentic</p> <p>Be aware of others' his/herstory</p> <p>Intergenerational</p> <p>Be creative</p> <p>Share responsibility</p> <p>Start where people are at</p> <p>Intersectional</p> <p>Need a critical mass</p>	<p>It takes time to build relationships</p> <p>It can be difficult to resource a long-term approach like this</p> <p>It can be difficult to allow things to progress organically, and to trust that things will happen at the right time</p> <p>May be barriers to overcome in order to build relationships and bring together groups or individuals who are not currently in community with one another</p> <p>Individuals may be dealing with multiple issues or traumas, some public and some private</p> <p>Building trust – individuals/groups may be experiencing discrimination or violence because of race, ethnicity, poverty, ability, immigration status, religion, age, gender or other forms of oppression</p> <p>Some individuals may be dealing with multiple forms of these oppressions</p> <p>Deep divisions may exist due to historical policies that have disproportionately affected some</p> <p>Requires us to recognize the different forms of privilege we might possess and to learn to listen humbly and hear hard truths</p>





# Deepening Community

Paul Born, recognized for his innovative work in community development, talks about three types of community: Shallow, fear-based, and deep<sup>1</sup>.

- iv. **Shallow** – *Turning away from others* and accepting or even embracing shallow community. We have associations but lack bonding. Example: We see friends once a month and family on certain holidays.
- v. **Fear-based** – *Turning against others* through the building of fear-based community. We bond together against something or others; we are right, they are wrong. We are stronger when they are weaker.
- vi. **Deep** – *Turning toward others* and working together to create deep community. We know each other's families, birthdays, and care for each other when sick.

## Discussion Questions

- What are we afraid of that might prevent us from deep community? What do others in our community fear? Who do we need to ask and how?
- How do we do deep community given the fact that we all belong to several communities – some overlapping, some not. Given that some of our communities are not based on physical location (for example, Facebook versus a neighborhood), how do we get into deeper relationships/community with one another? How do we avoid leaving individuals/groups out?
- How might this differ in rural vs. urban vs. suburban communities? Ex: San Francisco Bay Area – rent is so high that people are losing homes or forced to move frequently as rent is raised each year. What happens to those individuals? Are their communities changing so quickly that they are not able to get deeper?
- Diverse ages, race/ethnicity – how does community translate across generational and cultural differences? Are there ways of practicing community that might be new and exciting? Unfamiliar or uncomfortable? How do we set and/or respect boundaries when they might be different for everyone?

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Paul Born. “*Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times*”.