

The Extreme Weather Challenge

Guiding Group Conversation

v.8-21-14

MISSION STATEMENT:

To facilitate preparedness for extreme heat and other weather-related emergencies at the neighborhood level in Southern Arizona.

Conversation Objectives/Timing

1. ASSESS YOUR READINESS

(Time: 30-45 minutes)

2. CHANGE VULNERABLE TO RESILIENT

(Time: 45-60 minutes)

3. PREPARE FOR A CHALLENGING FUTURE

(Time: 30-60 minutes)

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Vulnerable Communities and Neighborhoods Task Force, 2014

<http://www.psr.org/chapters/arizona/climate-smart-southwest/working-groups.html>

Ground Rules

The Extreme Weather Challenge Group Conversation packet is structured to guide your group through a series of three parts. These parts generate group conversations that can be used flexibly in the time available. Each section can take up to an hour depending on the number of people involved. We suggest you keep conversation groups small – three to seven. A larger group can be divided into small groups, each with a facilitator. Establish a ground rule: listen to understand, and don't give advice unless it is asked for. Ask participants for their agreement to this before moving into conversations.

This is a conversation and commitment process. The process starts in the first part with initiating a round of participant introductions. At this time identify yourself or another member who will serve as a facilitator to keep time and help move the group through the steps outlined in this guide. Commitment comes from a deeper understanding of risk, and that may not happen immediately. Don't insist that people make a commitment, simply encourage the possibility.

At any time that it helps inform the conversation, point out the resources on pages 15 to 20. Become familiar with the material you will find there.

Additional Packets:

Contact:

PART ONE

1. Assess Your Readiness

Review the Table of Contents. Clarify the time your participants can give to the conversation. Start with the Assessment of Readiness and proceed as far as you can go with the commitments you have.

The next step in introductions is to read the “Heat Emergency Scenario” on page 4 and clarify any questions members may have.

The first activity after introductions is an individual assessment of Community Cohesion on page 5 and 6. The facilitator introduces the Community cohesion Scale and clarifies any questions members may have. Based on personal experience, ask participants to select a number rating his or her neighborhood or community. Share your scores, and reflect on both the similarities and differences among you, recognizing that there is no right and wrong answer, only similar and different perceptions. Encourage people to share their reasoning for the score.

Share this with participants: “The Cohesion scale gets you thinking about the likelihood that neighbors will help in a real emergency. Actual emergencies have shown that the difference between life and death in a heat emergency is the difference between knowing you can trust your neighbors and not knowing them. The less cohesion existing in your community, the more work on developing cohesion that will need to be done to organize for a weather emergency.”

Before moving on to the second part, check that there is consent to move forward. If you are agreed to continue and have the time, continue to page 7 “Managing Community Risks.” At the end of the time you allowed, agree on the schedule for part three.

PART TWO

2. From Vulnerable to Resilient

The focus of Part Two is to move the conversation from assessment to action that results in resilience. Our trust in others is part of our ability to make it through tough times. Preparedness is another aspect of that ability. Being prepared requires assessing risks in advance.

The next step is to clarify the indicators of high risk of an emergency actually happening. The Risk Assessment table on page 7 shows the relationship between assessment and action to reduce risk (mitigation).

The first column is labeled Probability. The probability of a risk of emergency is related to the options we take for preventing the risk from occurring. The risk management options available to you are listed on page 7. Review the options and ask people to think about what actions they have already taken to reduce risk.

Sometimes we have no warning of a risk. This can happen because we are not paying attention to the warning signs. Review the Forewarning Indicators and ask participants to describe the warning signs in their community. These warning signs are related to their reading of community cohesion discussed in Part One.

Next, ask participants to make notes on the “Who is Vulnerable?” exercise on page 8. This is an exercise that requires some thought, so give it the time that your members need for a thoughtful response. Some may find it helpful to discuss with a partner as part of their reflection process.

When everyone is ready, give everyone in the group a chance to express what thoughts and feelings the “Who is Vulnerable” exercise has produced.

Introduce the “Prepare for Weather-Related Emergencies” on page 9 and 10. Ask people to note what they already have available, and what they think would be most useful to acquire.

As in each of the other assessments, take time alone to complete your own assessment, and then go hear what your neighbors think their situation looks like.

Explore what it would take to “Make Help Available.” Ask participants to respond to the questions on page 11. Invite people to share their thoughts.

Stay away from comparing or judging each other in this process. Find opportunities to help each other fill in gaps you may find in the assessment. This will easily fill the remaining minutes given to the second part.

If members of your conversation decide to continue working, move on to the third part of this conversation: “Prepare for a Challenging Future.” Ask members at that time to complete the Evaluation on page 14 of the Packet. Help the organizers of this conversation guide by sending them a summary of the evaluation of the results.

At any time that it helps inform the conversation, point out the resources on pages 15 to 20.

PART 3

Prepare for a Hot Future

Preparing for a heat emergency is a short-term project. You may want to use this meeting to continue organizing your activities related to your heat emergency plans. Use the questions on page 13 of the packet to generate ideas for short and long term projects. Use the Ease/Impact exercise on the following page to help the group converge on a few high impact projects that are within your capabilities.

Mitigating the sources of heating requires a longer-term perspective – like growing a forest, or creating walk-able neighborhoods. This final meeting is also an opportunity to think longer term about how neighborhood relationships and resources can make a difference for generations to come.

As a neighborhood or civic organization, you are in a position to make changes that can help lessen the risk of heat emergencies for the long haul. Help people to form small groups to share ideas like the following:

- Neighborhood organizations are planting trees to help replace an aging tree canopy that has lost many trees to the combined stress of draught and damaging freezes.
- Neighborhoods are supporting local organizations to assist people who need help getting to a grocery store, or weeding a yard. These are some of the vulnerable people who will need help in a heat emergency.
- Neighborhoods sponsor celebrations that can help neighbors to meet each other, increasing the connections that will serve the most vulnerable in a crisis situation.
- Another neighborhood is designating its park as the coordination post, and the likeliest place to get cool at night, in case of a heat emergency. This includes making plans with first responders that this will be the natural staging area for assistance.

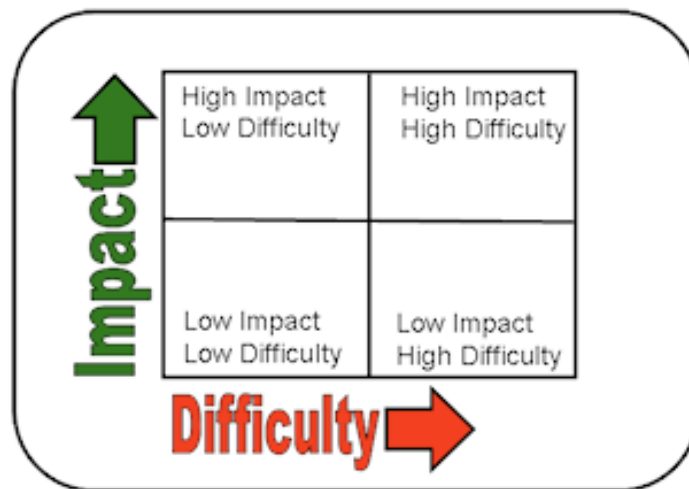
The Heat Emergency Challenge Action Evaluation

We consider this series of meetings a success if you are able to select projects for action that will have an impact, whether it is easy or difficult to implement. We will contact you again when your progress is known, to see if you were successful.

Ease/Impact Analysis Link

<http://www.leankaizen.co.uk/impact-analysis.html>

Facilitator will relay instructions for the evaluation from the link above. Essentially the group will prioritize its projects going forward using this tool. Collect project ideas and agree on where to place them.



The main reason we use Impact Analysis is to take a number of potential improvement actions to group them into four meaningful sub-groups.

- A. Those actions that will have a big impact on our objectives and are fairly easy to implement.
- B. Those actions that will only have a small impact on our objectives and are fairly easy to implement
- C. Those actions that will have a big impact on our objectives but are more difficult to implement.
- D. Those actions that will only have a small impact on our objectives and are fairly difficult to implement.