

Connecting Advice In Dorset



'GETTING TO KNOW YOU' EXERCISES AND TOOLS

The purpose of getting to know you exercises is to efficiently enable members of the Local Advice Network to get to know each other and understand the organisations in which they work. There are a number of tools that can be used for this purpose (see below). It is recommended that the networking exercise is followed by an informal period (perhaps tea/coffee) where individuals can further develop relationships. It is useful also to circulate contact details for each attendee before or after the exercise.

EXERCISES TO CONSIDER

(1) Round the table updates

- Each attendee of a meeting takes it in turn to talk about their organisation for 10 minutes and answer questions from other attendees
- Advantages
 - Very simple to organise
 - All the attendees hear the same information
- Disadvantages
 - This method can be time-consuming. For a meeting of 12 people, the process will take 2 hours
 - It may be difficult to restrict each speaker to 10 minutes and so the process may over-run, or some speakers may have less time
 - It is difficult for individuals to quickly form 1-2-1 relationships and explore how their organisations can work with each other

(2) Introductions

- Attendees split into pairs and spend 5 minutes talking to each other – each pair must identify one thing they have in common. Each individual then introduces their pair to the rest of the group (5 minutes).
- Advantages
 - Attendees will focus on gaining key relevant information to pass on
 - The process can be relatively short – for 12 attendees, the process will take 1 hour 5 minutes
- Disadvantages

- Information shared can be very basic
- 1-2-1 relationships are only formed between pairs of individuals

(3) Speed Networking – 1 (1-2-1)

- Attendees mingle in a room.
- They are then given 10 minutes to find someone in the room they don't know and talk to them
- After 10 minutes, the process repeats
- Advantages
 - Individuals only need to interact with people they don't know
 - The process can fit the time available – for 12 people who don't know each other, the process will take 1 hour 48minutes.

(4) Speed Networking – 2 (Round Robin)

- Attendees form two circles, one inside the other. The inner circle faces out and the outer circle faces in, so that individuals end up facing each other in pairs
- The group is given 10 minutes – each pair will spend that time introducing themselves to each other and talking about their work (5 minutes each)
- After the ten minutes, individuals in the outer circle move clockwise, thus forming new pairs and the process repeats
- Advantages
 - Individuals can quickly form 1-2-1 relationships and discuss information relevant to them.
 - The process can be relatively quick and easy to control timing. For a meeting of 12 people (6 in each circle), the process will take 1 hour.
- Disadvantages
 - Attendees will only meet half the other attendees. i.e. those in the inner circle will only meet those in the outer circle
 - It will be difficult for the facilitator/chair to take part in the networking themselves

(5) Speed Networking – 3 (Groups)

- Attendees are split into groups of 4
- Each group is given 15 minutes to introduce themselves and talk as a group

- 2 members of each group then move to another table and the process continues
- Advantages
 - The process can be quick and easy to control. For a meeting of 12 people (3 groups), the process will take 45 minutes.
- Disadvantages
 - Some attendees will hear individuals speak more than once
 - Attendees will not all have the chance to meet each other

(6) Group Task

- Attendees are split into smaller groups of 3 or 4
- Ask attendees to introduce themselves – name, organisation
- Give them a task to complete – this could be a fun task (such as building a tower out of newspaper) or a practical, relevant task, examples include:
 - What one joint action would make the biggest impact on your clients?
 - If you were given £10,000 to spend, what would you spend it on (as individual organisations/as a group)?
 - What are the different ways clients access advice services in the local area?
 - Give the group 1 or more case studies to consider – what actions would each organisation take?
- You may wish to take time to feedback to the rest of the group
- Advantages
 - Individuals will build working relationships with the rest of their group
 - The results of the task can inform the work of the whole network

The ideas above are set out as examples of networking exercises. There are many other options available. Local Advice Networks are encouraged to share their ideas and experiences with other LANs through the Project Manager.