

Kinds of Questions to Ask

There are four main question-asking “moves”:

- To dig deeper into what people say and understand their concerns about how this issue affects their lives
- To build on, or help people connect to, what others say
- To shift/or broaden perspective
- Summarizing questions

Digging deeper:

- Questions that connect the issue to people’s lives and concerns
 - Why is this important to you?
 - Why do you think this might be important to others (Your neighbors? Those older or younger than you? etc.)
 - What impact might this have on others?
- Questions that dig into “It’s awful that” or “if only ...”
 - Why do you think that?
 - What does that mean to you?
 - Why do you feel we should/should not move in that direction?

Building on/Connecting with others

- Questions that ask others to respond to what has just been said
 - Does anyone want to add to that? Does that bring up anything for anyone?
 - Does anyone have a similar idea or concern?
 - Does anyone agree with that? Does anyone disagree with that? Why?
 - Do you think any of your neighbors might disagree with that? Why?
 - Can someone give an example of that?

Shift or broader perspective

- Questions that ask people to find something positive in a negative
 - Is there anything in that idea that might work for others you know? How or why?
 - Are there any parts of that idea that might need to change that idea to work for people you know? Why? How?

Summarizing questions:

- Questions that give people an opportunity to identify what they have heard that reveals a shared understanding what people are looking for for their children, or for programs for their children or for themselves.
 - What seemed most important to all of us?
 - What actions could accomplish that?
 - What trade-offs were we willing to make? Which not willing to make?