



# OPEN HOUSES



## WHAT THEY ARE, HOW THEY WORK

A forum where the public can tour through several information stations at their own pace, ask questions and provide feedback.

The facility is set up with information stations, each addressing a separate issue. Resource people guide participants through the exhibits.

PROS	CONS
<p>Foster small group or one-on-one communications.</p> <p>Ability to draw on other team members to answer various questions.</p>	<p>Difficult to document public input.</p> <p>Usually more staff intensive than a meeting.</p>

**What are your thoughts on using Open Houses for informal public conversations? Any ideas on how this model could be improved?**





# TOWN HALL MEETINGS

## WHAT THEY ARE, HOW THEY WORK

A group meeting format where people come together as equals to share concerns.

Often hosted by elected officials to elicit input from constituents.



Image credit: vineyardgazette.com

PROS	CONS
Views are openly expressed. Officials hear from their constituents in an open forum.	Facilitators are not able to establish an open and neutral environment for all views to be shared.  The meeting may escalate out of control because emotions are high.

**What are your thoughts on using Town Meetings for informal public conversations? Any ideas on how this model could be improved?**





# REVOLVING CONVERSATIONS (ALSO KNOWN AS SAMOAN CIRCLES)



Image credit: euforicservices.com

## WHAT THEY ARE, HOW THEY WORK

Leaderless meeting where people are seated in a circle encompassing another circle.

Only those seated in the inner circle are allowed to speak.

The inner circle should represent all the different viewpoints present, and all others must remain silent. The process offers others a chance to speak only if they join the ‘inner circle’.

PROS	CONS
Can be used with 10 to 500 people. Works best with controversial issues. Stimulates active participation.	Dialogue can stall or become monopolized.

**What are your thoughts on using Revolving Conversations for informal public conversations? Any ideas on how this model could be improved?**





# OPEN SPACE MEETINGS

## WHAT THEY ARE, HOW THEY WORK

A forum where participants offer topics and others participate according to interest.

Elements of an open space meeting include:

- No agenda, just a general topic or “invitation”.
- Participants to create the agenda at the beginning of the meeting or event by posting and prioritizing issues on a bulletin board.
- A number of breakout sessions/conversations take place from the issues bulletin board.
- Participants can choose which sessions they are interested in joining and can move on to another at any time.



*Image credit: pinterest.com*

PROS	CONS
Provides structure for giving people opportunity and responsibility to create valuable outcome or experience. Includes immediate summary of discussion.	Most important issues could get lost in the shuffle. Can be difficult to get accurate reporting of results.

**What are your thoughts on using Open Space Meetings for informal public conversations? Any ideas on how this model could be improved?**





# WORLD CAFES



Image credit: Co-creative recipes

## WHAT THEY ARE, HOW THEY WORK

A meeting process featuring a series of simultaneous conversations in response to predetermined questions. Participants change tables during the process and focus on identifying common ground in response to each question.

PROS	CONS
<p>Participants feel a stronger connection to the full group because they have talked to people at different tables.</p> <p>Good questions help people move from raising concerns to learning new views and co-creating solutions.</p>	<p>Participants resist moving from table to table.</p> <p>Reporting results at the end becomes awkward or tedious for a large group.</p> <p>The questions evoke the same responses.</p>

**What are your thoughts on using World Cafes for informal public conversations? Any ideas on how this model could be improved?**