



Deep Listening. Fostering Trust. Bridging Communities.

Madison Community Dialogue #2

April 26, 2019

Thank you to the Warner Park Community Center for hosting this event.

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Questions about this dialogue may be directed to:

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Executive Summary

The second Madison Community Dialogue took place at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center in Madison on Friday, April 26, 2019. The topic of the listening circle focused on safety in the community. Participants were asked one question by facilitators who were trained by the Zeidler Center:

"Share a personal experience when you felt safe in the community."

If time permitted, participants were asked to participate in Connected Conversation and were asked the following questions:

"Do you have questions of curiosity for each other?"

"What are the themes that you have heard come up during the go around?"

"As a resident, what are potential barriers you might face to increase the safety of this community?"

During Question Round One, participants recalled places where they felt safe. Safety was in groups, either at work, in church, or with family and friends. One individual shared her experience in the hospital when others cared for her. Some individuals stated that they safe in their home, but others did not. It appears that may be due to management issues, including lack of personal space and communication.

During the Connected Conversation, discussion centered around negative perceptions of police officers. Participants shared opinions and experiences that expressed dissatisfaction and fear of police officers. Participants expressed that racial bias was a major issue regarding response to calls and how they are handled, including the number of police cruisers on scene for a traffic stop and cuffing individuals for perceived minor issues. A specific incident at the Lake View Library was also discussed. Several participants expressed frustration about how the police officers handled the situation, attributing it to a potential lack of training and racial bias. They also noted that no matter the level of training, the officers entered with a preconceived notion about the situation. Ideas for future needs, stemming from the incident, were programs for the children, with child input, and more persons of color in positions of authority. A participant did that a Youth Response Team will be created in attempt to deescalate situations before police are involved.

Analysis

Question Round One: *"Share a personal experience when you felt safe in the community."*

1.1 Safe with Others

A few participants discussed safety among numbers, stating they felt safe when they were in a group. Examples included being at work or church and being with family and neighbors. One woman shared a place where she felt most safe:

"The place I felt most safe was in the hospital – there was a nurse and med team. I was hemorrhaging after the birth of my child, and they cared for me."

1.2 Safe at Home

A couple participants stated that they felt safe at home, with one noting that although they are relatively new to the place, they still felt secure. The other individual recalled how the management company respected her space and how she appreciated that:

"Home -I work from home. When I had a water problem the management company came and fixed it. I was in my pajamas and asked them to come back later, so they did. They were so respectful."

1.3 Do Not Feel Safe

Several participants stated that they did not feel safe at home. Management appeared to be the main issue, with an individual stating that they just *"opened the door and came in."* Another participant expressed that communication was lacking, which contributes to these feelings of insecurity. One particular statement summed up their thoughts on management issues:

"On my lease, if you read it you sign away your freedom and sanctity."

Connected Conversation: *"When didn't you feel safe? (As a resident, what are potential barriers you might face to increase the safety of this community?)"*

2.1 Perception of Police

General discussion focused on the topic of police. Participants stated that they were "not safe with police around." One individual shared their fear of being pulled over and how they took precautions to be prepared:

"I am nervous driving in case I am pulled over. I keep my ID, license out, stuff ready. JBM security is just as bad as the police. When I am afraid it is fight or flight."

Someone shared a story of police detaining kids and voiced their opinion of the scenario:

"One day I was driving on Northport. I saw that the police had detained my nephew. He and his friends got in some trouble and the friends ran away. So why were they detaining him? 'He's not telling the truth' is no reason to detain him. There was no parent there – I thought they had to have a parent there? Kids don't have rights."

One participant shared that they themselves had not had a negative experience with police officers but still held negative beliefs:

"I am white, so I haven't had a bad experience with police. I have mixed race kids and am closer to my husband's family than my own, and so I talk to them about police all the time. I trust the cops I know personally, but not in general."

Racism and assumptions were discussed, regarding when and who calls the police in the community and how many officers respond to a traffic stop, depending on the race of the person being pulled over:

"There is so much tension in the community. Some police officers abuse the badge."

2.2 Home

Participants briefly discussed their own home situations. Participants stated instances of unsanitary living conditions and management attempting to get residents in trouble. One individual stated, *"People are in fear of homelessness."*

2.3 Incident at the Lake View Library

2.3.1 Perception of the Police Response

Overall, participants expressed unhappiness about how the situation was handled. One individual summed up their dissatisfaction by stating, *"I can't depend on police –they are trained improperly."* At least one individual voiced the need for an apology from the police department. Participants noted that the police officers came in with preconceived notion about the children:

"I don't believe they could have responded differently. They still would have believed that these young children could have been threatening."

Someone pointed out that the police did try to calm the students down, but nobody took the necessary time to defuse the situation. The participant shared, *"We need to change the way we think."*

2.3.2 Needs for the Future

Discussion regarding the Lake View incident turned to what is needed in the community. Programs for children was shared, noting that children or someone younger should be involved in creating the programs. The lack of resources was pointed out. Participants stated that resources were available, yet allocation was challenging.

"Facilities aren't adequate. Marveled at Stoughton – they have so many facilities for kids to make sure they are good. We need to allocate resources. It isn't like they couldn't, they just don't. Some schools and facilities don't even have A/C."

Lack of persons of color in positions of authority was expressed as part of the problem and part of a future need:

"There is a lot of pressure to handle these situations. White people don't realize that impact isn't the same as intention. The library needs to hire black people to make changes."

2.3.3 In Response/Consequence to the Incident

Participants discussed fear of visiting the library which affected the children involved:

"These children are traumatized. We should give them ways to unleash their anger. Nobody took time to help them. We need compassion, people who care. It's gonna take all of us."

One individual stated that a “Youth Response Team” was in the process of being created, so they can be called as opposed to the police.

Feedback Forms

Demographics

Gender:

Male: 0%
Female: 100%
Other: 0%

Zip Code:

53704: 57%
53713: 29%
53719: 14%

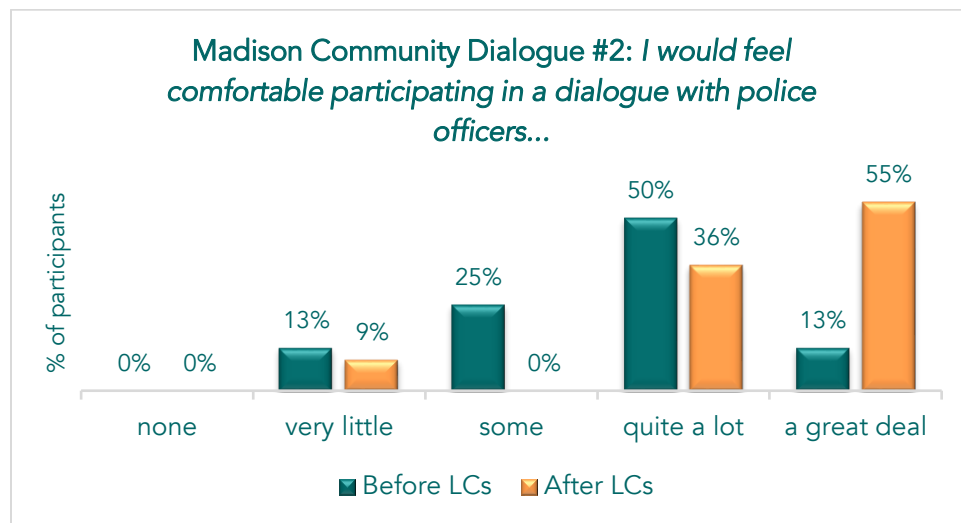
Age:

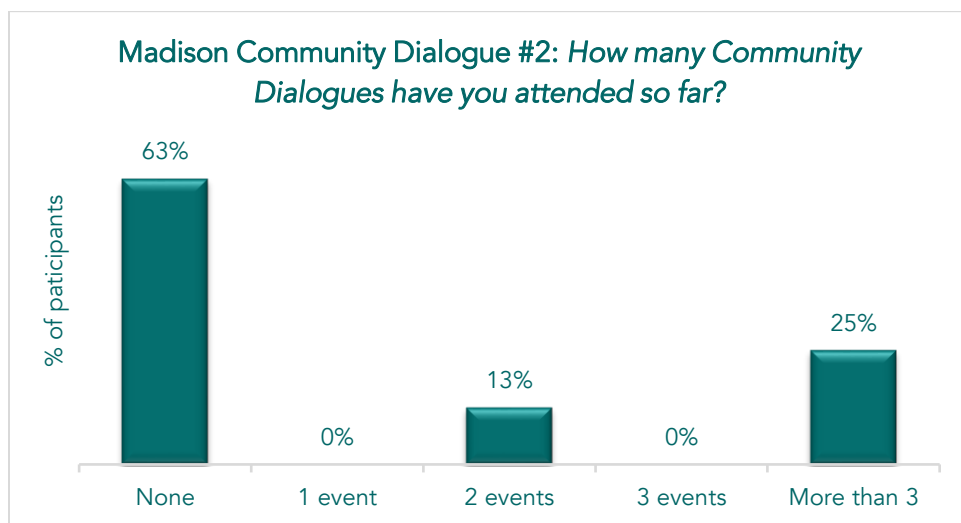
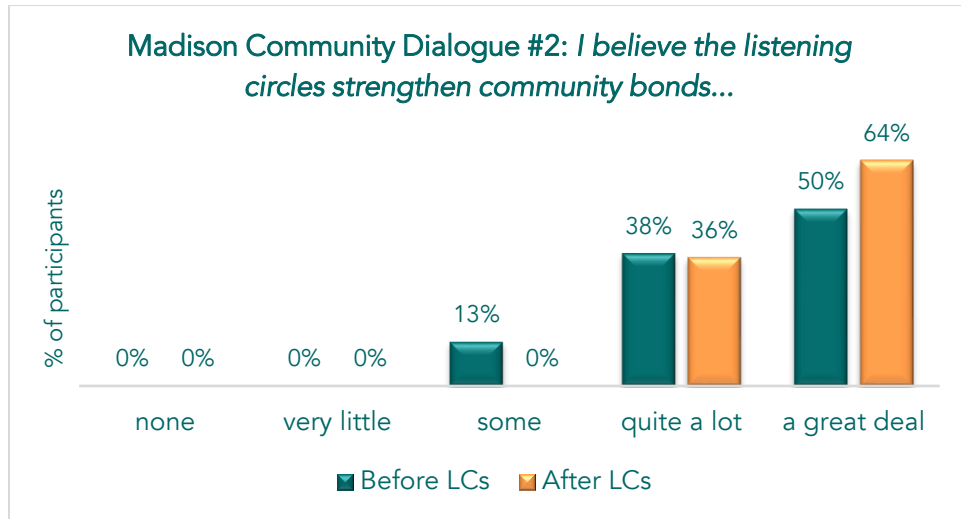
Under 18: 0%
18-24: 9%
25-34: 64%
35-44: 0%
45-54: 18%
55-64: 9%
65-74: 0%
75+: 0%

Race/Ethnicity:

African-American or Black: 42%
Native American or Alaska Native: 0%
Asian: 0%
Pacific Islander: 0%
Latino/a or Hispanic: 25%
White or Caucasian: 17%
Other: 17%

Quantitative Data





Qualitative Data: Answers to Open-Ended Questions

- What was most satisfying or valuable about this experience?
 - Reflecting on my relationships with my neighbors.
 - Hearing from others and thinking of my safety.
 - Learning other people's experiences.
 - Building connections around strengthening community safety.
 - Hearing others share similar experiences.
 - Hearing people's lived experiences.
 - The communication.
 - Dialogue.
 - Blank.
 - Being in a positive environment.
 - Being able to connect with other members in community.
- What questions or concerns are you leaving with?
 - It would have been nice to have one big circle.
 - Why don't I know my neighbors?
 - Why not use local resources for circles instead of Milwaukee?
 - Will police actually make structural changes to address community concerns?
 - Whose safety is valued and whose isn't?
 - Policy questions related to barriers.
 - Safety of the kids.
 - When will we start to make some of these changes?
 - Blank (x3)
- What's one important topic you'd like to discuss for an upcoming listening circle?
 - The trauma in communities of color of policing.
 - Why they arrest or ticket youth?
 - I'm not convinced talking with police makes a difference - they do what they do no matter what people say.
 - Police brutality.
 - Accountability.
 - Uncertain.
 - The safety and rights for our kids and as a community.
 - Will our children ever be safe around them (all children, all nationalities)?
 - Health disparities in POC community.
 - Blank (x2)

Annex

Question Round One: *"Share a personal experience when you felt safe in the community."*

1.1 Safe with Others

- The place I felt most safe was in the hospital – there was a nurse and med team. I was hemorrhaging after the birth of my child, and they cared for me.
- Church, family, neighbors, when I'm in a group.
- At work.

1.2 Safe at Home

- Home -I work from home. When I had a water problem the management company came and fixed it. I was in my pajamas and asked them to come back later, so they did. They were so respectful.
- I feel pretty safe at home – I've only lived in this place a few months.

1.3 Do Not Feel Safe

- I don't feel safe. One day my management company opened my door and came in. There aren't many places that I feel safe.
- Home doesn't feel safe.
- On my lease, if you read it you sign away your freedom and sanctity.
- I don't feel safe in my apartment. There is communication lacking. Who can I look to?

Connected Conversation: *"When didn't you feel safe? (As a resident, what are potential barriers you might face to increase the safety of this community?)"*

2.1 Perception of Police

- Not safe with police around. They see color, not humans. Stereotypes, judgements – if you say your rights, they see you as antagonistic.
- I am nervous driving in case I am pulled over. I keep my ID, license out, stuff ready. JBM security is just as bad as the police. When I am afraid it is fight or flight.
- There is so much tension in the community. Some police officers abuse the badge.
- One day I was driving on Northport. I saw that the police had detained my nephew. He and his friends got in some trouble and the friends ran away. So why were they detaining him? 'He's not telling the truth' is no reason to detain him. There was no parent there – I thought they had to have a parent there? Kids don't have rights.
- When I drive by a car that was stopped by the police, I see that if it is a black person it is 3,4,5 cars. If it is a white person, it is a single car.

- When I hear about people calling police when there are more than 2 teenagers in hoodies outside. I was on Next Door for a short while, and it was full of racism and assumptions. When I was on there it was only white people. I didn't upload my picture. 'Man with a hoodie' referred to a black man.
- I am white, so I haven't had a bad experience with police. I have mixed race kids and am closer to my husband's family than my own, and so I talk to them about police all the time. I trust the cops I know personally, but not in general.

2.2 Home

- My husband is abusive, so I don't feel safe at home. The new management at Ridgecrest tries to get people in trouble. The whole neighborhood is upset. They've called police on people not watching kids for 2 minutes, and mail on top of the box.
- Ridgecrest is horrible – they put me next to 2 people who'd been convicted of sexual assault, in spite of me telling them I'd suffered from that. There are roaches and dead mice.
- Meridian Management is awful. People are in fear of homelessness.

2.3 Incident at Lake View Library

2.3.1 Perception of the Police Response

- They police never apologized. Why can't they just apologize?
- I don't believe they could have responded differently. They still would have believed that these young children could have been threatening.
- Police did try to calm the students down first. Nobody took the time to sit. We need to change the way we think.
- Can't depend on police –they are trained improperly.

2.3.2 Needs for the Future

- We need programs for kids. We make decisions for children without involving them.
- An older adult is making programs for children. We need someone closer in age to design programs for them. We should involve children in making decisions about them. No way we should make programs for them. They need to be involved in programs for them.
- There is a lot of pressure to handle these situations. White people don't realize that impact isn't the same as intention. The library needs to hire black people to make changes.
- We need to think outside the box. Don't see black and brown people in authority. Forced to conform in certain ways. They talk too 'loudly'.

- Facilities aren't adequate. Marveled at Stoughton – they have so many facilities for kids to make sure they are good. We need to allocate resources. It isn't like they couldn't, they just don't. Some schools and facilities don't even have A/C.

2.3.3 In Response/Consequence to the Incident

- We are creating a Youth Response Team, so they can be called instead of the Police.
- These children are traumatized. We should give them ways to unleash their anger. Nobody took time to help them. We need compassion, people who care. It's gonna take all of us.
- I am afraid of going to the library now. No one should use force on another.
- Were there adults there supervising?