



Deep Listening. Fostering Trust. Bridging Communities.

Madison Community Dialogue

October, 3rd, 2018

Thank you to Sherman Ave. United Methodist Church for hosting these Listening Circles.

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Executive Summary

The first Madison Community Dialogue took place at Sherman Ave. United Methodist Church on October 3, 2018. The topic of the listening circle enthralled what defines and what looks like a successful Police and Resident Listening Circle for community members participating in the event. Participants were asked a round of two questions by Zeidler Center trained facilitators:

1. *"In a dialogue that includes law enforcement, criminal justice, organizations, and residents, what do you feel is essential in order for participants to feel comfortable and share openly?"*
2. *"When thinking about participating in dialogues involving police officers from the Northside, what are some areas of uncertainty for you? What's your motivation to participate? What may be holding you back?"*

If time permitted, participants were asked to engage in connected conversation and were asked the following questions:

"What specific issues do you feel should be addressed in dialogues between law enforcement and Madison resident of the Northside?"

"What have others said in this conversation that triggers new thoughts for you?"

"Did you hear common themes or concerns from others?"

"What next steps are important for you in moving this conversation forward?"

During the first round, resident participants felt that having security and trust during a police and resident could potentially lead to success. participants also felt that knowing there is value in their voice, one could continue to attend these circles. During the second round, participants were still suggesting the importance of feeling safe in a constructed dialogue. Furthermore, participants expressed seeing value to the organization of Police and Resident Listening Circles, as they would also like to understand officers and the positivity that could derive from dialogue. During the connected conversation, many participants shared personal accounts and topic ideas for future dialogues.

Questions about this dialogue may be directed to:

Listening Circle Analysis

Question Round One: *"In a dialogue that includes law enforcement, criminal justice, organizations, and residents, what do you feel is essential in order for participants to feel comfortable and share openly?"*

1.1 To not feel targeted, but at home

Multiple participants expressed their angst of obtaining safety, safety being a big concern. For successful and safe Police & Resident Listening Circles it was suggested for it to be a place for one to feel comfortable, and not to feel as if an argument is about to take place.

In addition, many participants indicated that one must feel the Listening Circle is a safe place and to not be concerned with others attending the Listening Circle, as can be seen in the following testimony:

"From a civilian perspective, I see the value in coming together where there is no enforcement going on. Police are not running plates and there are no armed or uniformed police onsite. I also see the value in having an organized task so that people are not ranting."

"Residents and police should be able to relate to each other. There was one time the police threw a block party and it seemed to have went over well. Police are hated in their uniforms. It's hard being able to trust them to help when needed."

Overall it was suggested that participants want to feel equal to one another. The responses show that participants would yearn to feel at "home" while potentially already being out of a comfort zone:

"I moved into this community. It is a low-income community. It seems as if the police are always here in this area, so I feel meetings should be where people live in their community, not held in the same location all of the time. I believe that people in these other communities deal with the same problems. "

1.2 Trust, honesty, and acceptance of vulnerability

Many residents mentioned trust and honesty being a key factor for the listening circles' future success. Participants expressed the need of being able to share without feeling timid:

"Trusts in these kinds of dialogue will be a key factor for open honest discussion."

"That individual understands that there will not be any retribution for anything they may say during or within the group."

Other participants voiced for reassurance knowing that others are being understanding. Participants indulged in vulnerability, and expressed importance's of understanding backgrounds of people who suffer from trauma and mental illness, as can be seen below:

"An understanding of the backgrounds of people from a mental health and trauma background is really important. It is hard for people with those conditions to open-up and trust. I grew-up in a household with mental illness. My father was afraid of the police. It was so sad. He would go and hide whenever police were around. It was almost like he was going to have a nervous breakdown. "

Participants concluded that trust, honesty, and the acceptance of vulnerability were essential to having a successful Police and Resident Listening Circle Series in Madison.

1.3 Knowing that one has a voice & value

Some participants conveyed the importance's of one's voice and the value that it has. It was expressed that individuals participating find value in finding understanding and respect in one another, and for what they speak about:

"Need to understand to meet people where they are."

"Be willing to listen and not be afraid to have these conversations."

Residents also stressed the value in respecting the voice of other participants, as no one wants to feel judged in vulnerable conversations:

"Let people know they have a voice and what they have to say is of value and important."

"They need to check-in with themselves. Many say that they want to help the community but need to look inside of themselves to ask the why. For these dialogues to be effective we must get enough people to attend. Some people may be intimidated to come."

Some participants spoke on the hesitation some may have in attending Police and Resident Listening Circles. It was suggested that for the circles to be successful, enough participants had to attend.

1.4 Cultural competence & humility

Residents voiced needs of cultural competence and humility to achieve success with this program. Participants expressed other needs of reassurance that others have modest and humble view of their own importance, and are respectful of where others are coming from.

"It is essential for safe, beneficial discussion that there is cultural competence and humility. There needs to be assurance to people who have experienced angst, oppression and hurts that their issues matter. It is great to behave in an orderly fashion but when your people are getting rounded-up...We have been pushed to the side for decades. Those in power don't want to share the resources and no one wants to make the necessary changes."

Other residents shared how one may be afraid to participate due to various cultural viewpoints. Participants shared that for the program to be effective, one should not be afraid to share ideas and experiences:

"People may be afraid to speak out because of the various cultural viewpoints."

Question Round Two: *"When thinking about participating in dialogues involving police officers from the Northside, what are some areas of uncertainty for you? What's your motivation to participate? What may be holding you back?"*

2.1 Wondering the uncertainty

Participants articulated feeling some type of uncertainty regarding the outcomes of the Police and Resident Listening Circle program. Some participants expressed ambiguous feelings on whether the Listening Circles would create a safer community, or on whether they would be held accountable outside within the community.. The following testimony exemplifies these uncertainties:

"My uncertainty is about whether the officers on the Northside are willing to make changes to arrest and enforcement policies. This is my home. I grew-up here. It is my mission to make sure it's safe and that people feel and believe it's safe – without over-enforcement."

Some participants shared being unsure about the potential difference that the program may create in their lives. However, participants also shared being eager to participate with hopes of changes for the better within the community.

"I wonder about coming to the meetings and putting in the effort: Will it be taken seriously? Will the information go back to someone who can really make a difference? Will the person the information goes back to be competent or will it be a rookie? I am a member of this church so I am committed to the community. It is a boon for me to be here. I want others to have the same opportunity to participate and hopefully make things better."

Some participants also voiced concerns regarding how non-participating officers and residents would see the existence of racial bias? Participants expressed wanting to progress positively forward, through the opportunity of participating in dialogues with officers and fellow community members:

"I have worked with some officers that are unaware of racial bias. As an officer, myself wanting to give back, I feel that officers are a gang."

2.2 Fear of mistrust

A considerable number of participants expressed fear of initially attending the Police and Resident Listening Circles, as well as fear of potential outcomes:

"From my experience, the biggest concern with having a dialogue is our safety. We don't know what the police will do. What if they are trying to do something underhanded? What if they take our information and use it against us? People have history with the police. How will they know the information will not be held against them later? I am in a place of fear. That worry about the safety for myself and my family holds us back from an open dialogue."

A few participants expressed wanting to see new police officers participate in the dialogue instead of seeing the same people over and over again, as can be seen in the following testimony:

"People who work in this community are not willing to come to these circles in fear of police that harass. What holds me back is the fear of getting these so-called bad egg officers motivated to come to these meetings. We would like to see new officers. Not the same officers all the time. We would also like to see officers, the chief, and captains participate in these meetings."

Participants articulated the need of trusting others and to be trusted. Some confided in obtaining experience from diverse Police and Resident Listening Circles for the future.

2.3 I would like to understand ...

Though some participants felt lack of trust, uncertainty, and fear, other shared their interest in understanding the other, and in learning more about policy and procedures of police departments:

"I would be interested in finding out about the policy and procedures of police department."

Other participants voiced being interested in understanding the police department's point of view, as well as the point of view of other fellow residents with different cultural backgrounds.

Finally, some participants confided in what could be done to improve the current state of things, and expressed how the criminal justice system could be better.

Connected Conversation -- *"What specific issues do you feel should be addressed in dialogues between law enforcement and Madison residents of the Northside?"; "What have others said in this conversation that triggers new thoughts for you?"; "Did you hear common themes or concerns from others?"; "What next steps are important for you in moving this conversation forward?"*

3.1 Conversation moving forward

Some participants suggested that the Northside PD could be given more consideration of their work, while others voiced that the Northside PD could be involved more within the community.

"The Madison Police Department is one of the most diverse and professional I have ever seen. They generally do not go for shenanigans. Some in Dane County...I have friends with the Madison Police Department. There should be some consideration of the work they put in."

"To have more non-enforcement contact. Once you develop a relationship you can ask 'Can you help me fix it?' rather than 'Here is a problem. Come take someone to jail.'"

Participants expressed interest in having more residents and police interactions, including times during which residents could interact with the officers out of uniform in non-crisis settings:

"Police need to do more work in the community. I work in the community at a residential facility. The police could come there to meet residents in the comfort and safety of their building. Police need to be in the community to see how people live."

Many residents mentioned their concern about the absent of youth at the event. Participants were interested in what the youth population had input on and about. Some residents believes for the program to be a beautiful opportunity for youth to get involved in dialogues:

"Would like to see the youth in the community engaged in this communication process. They do not have, or are given a chance to speak, but they have a voice that needs to be heard. There is a wonderful opportunity missing by keeping them out of the conversation."

3.2 Common themes

During the connected conversation, many participants explored the notion of there being both bad and good cops:

"All officers are not bad. Bad officers are the ones we worry about. Good officers are respected."

Some participants expressed how they were affected emotionally due to interactions with "bad cops", and how they feel defeated:

"Police officer work can be a hard job. You love it or you hate it. I shut down because of their hard faces, but I am not afraid. I don't argue because I know that I am not going to win."

3.3 Address for the future

For future dialogues held during the program, participants made some topic suggestions. Some participants stressed importance's of being knowledgeable when interacting with others who suffer from a mental illness, while others were interested in talking about safety in the community, not only as an individual but also as a parent:

"Police don't know how to deal with members of the community who have mental issues. They are not being treated like citizens. "

"I want to know how to keep my son safe. We should all be able to be safe. We have a need for law enforcement but these are issues that must be addressed and changed. People are responsible for the narration of their own marginalization and terror and need to know that they will be heard."

Some participants found importance in addressing the action to be held accountable when someone reaches out to the police.

"One thing that should be addressed is what action will be taken when someone calls the police. Sometimes residents need police to come and enforce but they get arrested themselves. There are even instances where I would not call."

Other participants mentioned community change, and were interested in discussing with other residents on the undergoing change.

The topics voiced from the participants run in diverse directions. Overall the residents and officers are intrigued in moving forward in these listening circles. The participants expressed diverse topics to potentially have a conversation about, but participants would as of most recently build trust and break senses of fear.

4. Parting Words

Parting words were overall positive and hopeful regarding the future of this program:

"Having to learn how to reach an agreement, and also being respected."

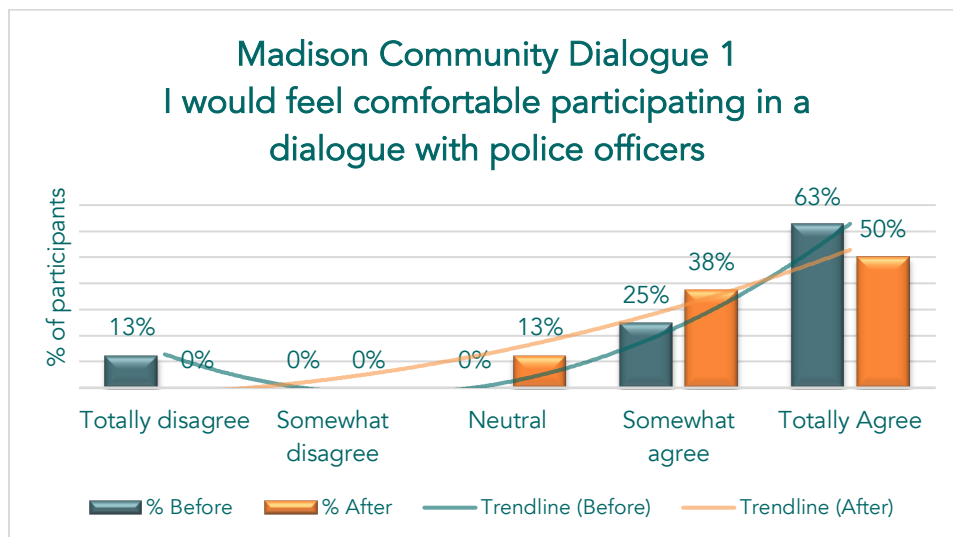
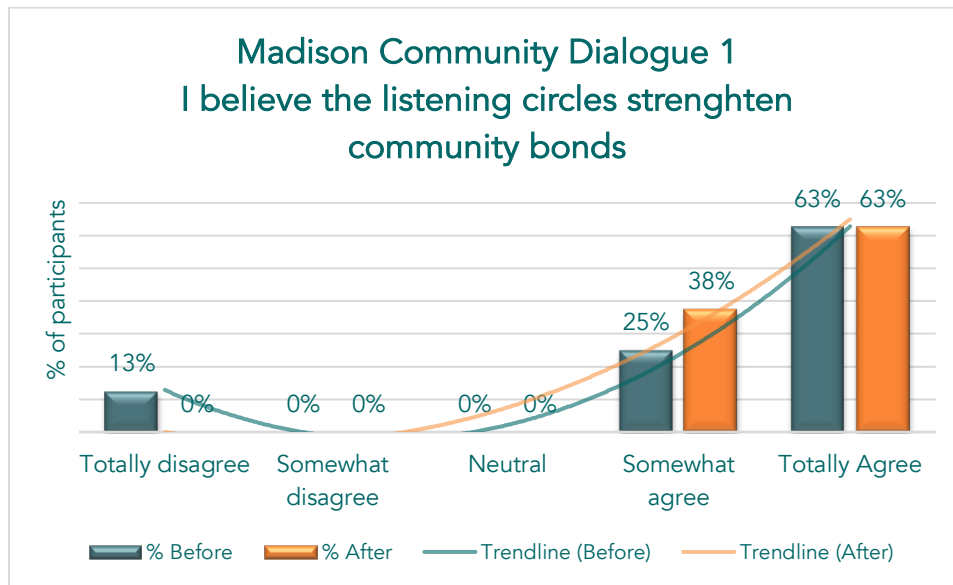
"Learning to engage."

"Learning how to trust again."

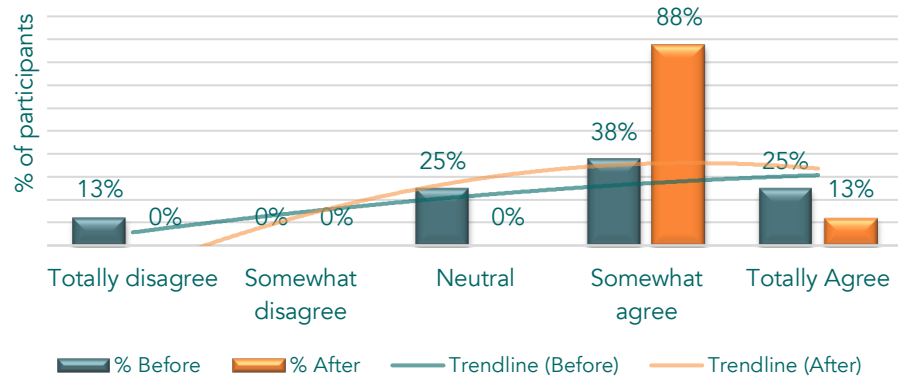
"Looking forward to the next dialogue."

"Respect."

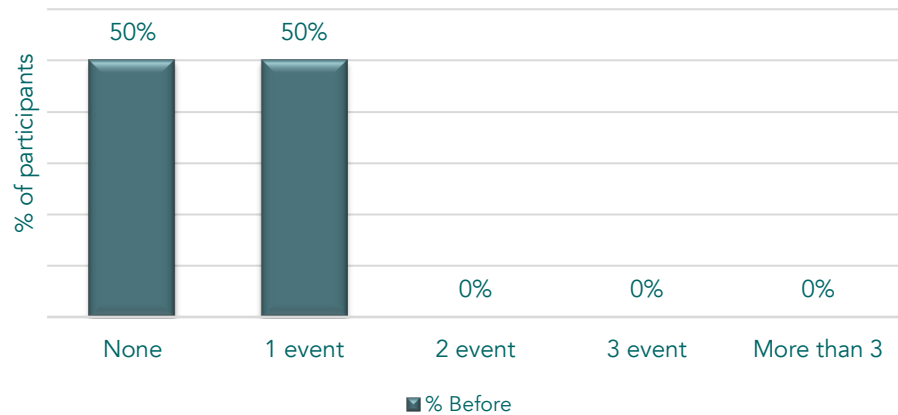
Feedback forms



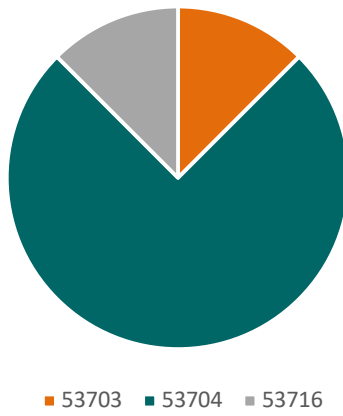
Madison Community Dialogue 1 I believe community and police relations will improve



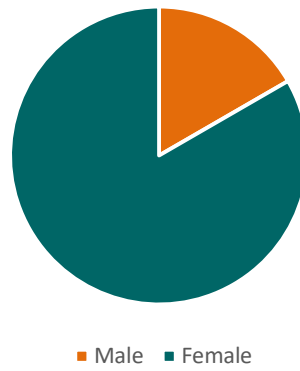
Madison Community Dialogue 1 # of events attended

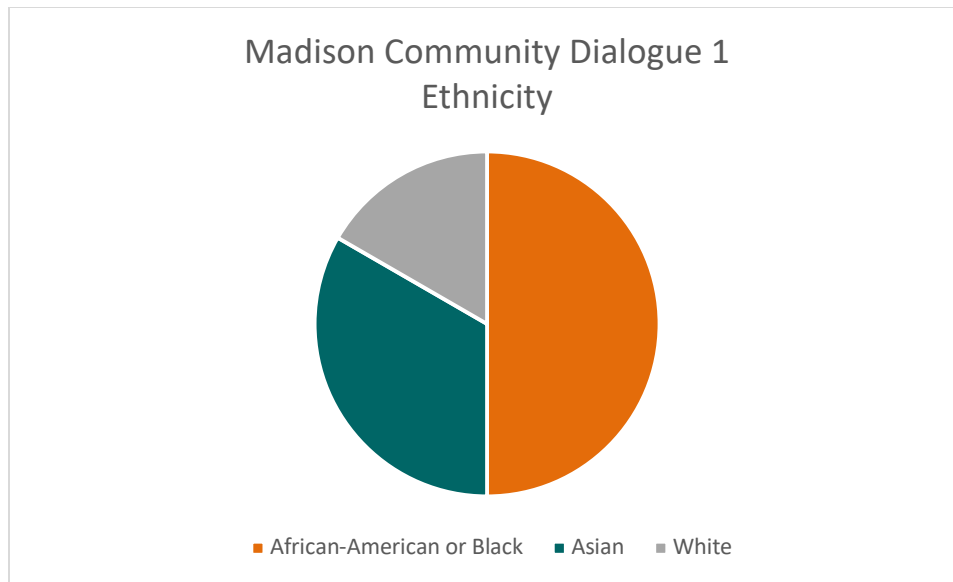


Madison Community Dialogue 1
Zip Code



Madison Community Dialogue 1
Gender





What was most satisfying or valuable about this experience? What, if anything, did you learn about the police today?

- I learn that I am authority and needs to work together
- Blank
- To share my personal experience
- Still learning
- I'm hopeful of change
- Talking about raw personal experiences and feelings
- How police are perceived by minority groups
- Blank

What questions or concerns are you leaving with?

- Poverty needs to stop
- Good experience
- I am not certain how these circles will improve community and police relations
- How to implement change
- How we draw people to attend
- How to comfort friends and family with this work that due community is trying to bridge between police and community?
- Blank
- Blank

What's one important topic you'd like to discuss for an upcoming listening circle?

- Warner needs a swimming pool
- ? #2
- What are some concerns from police? How are PO's planning to improve their relationship with community?
- TargetingRace
- Blank
- How police/authorities work with residents with trauma who want to live a normal live and how to build a relationship together?
- What are police policies concerning ensuring racially equal treatment?
- Cultural awareness

Annexes

Question Round One: *"In a dialogue that includes law enforcement, criminal justice, organizations, and residents, what do you feel is essential in order for participants to feel comfortable and share openly?"*

1.1 To not feel targeted, but more at home

- People don't want to come someplace to argue, they want come someplace where they feel comfortable. Place where there is a positive situation where they are not getting into a situation where they feel like they have to prove their point of view.
- From a civilian perspective, I see the value in coming together where there is no enforcement going on. Police are not running plates and there are no armed or uniformed police onsite. I also see the value in having an organized task so that people are not ranting.
- Residents and police should be able to relate to each other. There was one time the police threw a block party and it seemed to have went over well. Police are hated in their uniforms. It's hard being able to trust them to help when needed.
- I moved into this community. It is a low-income community. It seems as if the police are always here in this area, so I feel meetings should be where people live in their community, not held in the same location all of the time. I believe that people in these other communities deal with the same problems.
- Safety may be a huge concern for some. People must feel this is a safe place to come and not be concern with who is here.
- We see the same thing; experience the same thing. The police enter the hood; here they come. No reason for them to be here. They just come and bully the residents. They harass. I don't think they want to help us. Our community is being targeted so no one wants to come to the meeting.
- It was just the other day when the police officer came into the community and harassed a young man for no reason and that's why people are not going to come to these meetings, because they are afraid of the police whether they are in uniform or not.

1.2 Trust, honesty, and acceptance of vulnerability

- Trusts in these kinds of dialogue will be a key factor for open honest discussion.
- That individual understands that there will not be any retribution for anything they may say during or within the group.
- The first two who shared pretty much covered it. Cultural competence and an understanding of the backgrounds of people from a mental health and trauma background is really important. It is hard for people with those conditions to open-up and trust. I grew-up in a household with mental illness. My father was afraid of the police.

It was so sad. He would go and hide whenever police were around. It was almost like he was going to have a nervous breakdown.

1.3 Knowing that one has voice and value

- Need to understand to meet people where they are.
- Be willing to listen and not be afraid to have these conversations.
- Let people know they have a voice and what they have to say is of value and important.
- A place where they can hear other voices and be heard.
- They need to check-in with themselves. Many say that they want to help the community but need to look inside of themselves to ask the why.
- We have a wide variety of people on the Northside who have lived here a long time. Residents who have no, or never had any problem whatsoever with police officers, and the information they get is what they heard about in the press. They may feel they don't have anything to contribute.
- For these dialogues to be effective we must get enough people to attend. Some people may be intimidated to come.

1.4 Cultural competence and humility

- It is essential for safe, beneficial discussion that there is cultural competence and humility. There needs to be assurance to people who have experienced angst, oppression and hurts that their issues matter. It is great to behave in an orderly fashion but when your people are getting rounded-up...We have been pushed to the side for decades. Those in power don't want to share the resources and no one wants to make the necessary changes.
 - People may be afraid to speak out because of the various cultural viewpoints.
-

Question Round Two: *"When thinking about participating in dialogues involving police officers from the Northside, what are some areas of uncertainty for you? What's your motivation to participate? What may be holding you back?"*

2.1 Wondering the uncertainty

- My uncertainty is about whether the officers on the Northside are willing to make changes to arrest and enforcement policies. This is my home. I grew-up here. It is my mission to make sure it's safe and that people feel and believe it's safe – without over-enforcement.
- I wonder about coming to the meetings and putting in the effort: Will it be taken seriously? Will the information go back to someone who can really make a difference? Will the person the information goes back to be competent or will it be a rookie? I am a member of this church so I am committed to the community. It is a boon for me to be here. I want others to have the same opportunity to participate and hopefully make things better.

- I have worked with some officers that are unaware of racial bias. As an officer, myself wanting to give back, I feel that officers are a gang.
- Personal concern about what I have to add to this type of dialogue, because I have no personal experience with violent on the Northside, nor any interaction with the police department.

2.2 Fear of mistrust

- From my experience, the biggest concern with having a dialogue is our safety. We don't know what the police will do. What if they are trying to do something underhanded? What if they take our information and use it against us? People have history with the police. How will they know the information will not be held against them later? I am in a place of fear. That worry about the safety for myself and my family holds us back from an open dialogue – especially now when ICE is so real.
- People who work in this community are not willing to come to these circles in fear of police that harass. What holds me back is the fear of getting these so called bad egg officers motivated to come to these meetings. We would like to see new officers. Not the same officers all the time. We would also like to see officers, the chief, and captains participate in these meetings.
- Residents don't respect officers, and officers don't respect residents. I feel that people would like to see more officers in the community walking the beat. My cousin was killed by an officer.

2.3 I would like to understand

- I would be interested in finding out about the policy and procedures of police department.
- I would like to understand the department view point when engaging people from different cultural backgrounds.
- Criminal justice system could be better, and what can we do to help improve the system.

Connected Conversation: *“What specific issues do you feel should be addressed in dialogues between law enforcement and Madison residents of the Northside? What have others said in this conversation that triggers new thoughts for you? Did you hear common themes or concerns from others? What next steps are important for you in moving this conversation forward?”*

3.1 Conversation moving forward

- The Madison Police Department is one of the most diverse and professional I have ever seen. They generally do not go for shenanigans. Some in Dane County...I have friends

with the Madison Police Department. There should be some consideration of the work they put in.

- The easiest next step would be to have more non-enforcement contact. Once you develop a relationship you can ask “Can you help me fix it?” rather than “Here is a problem. Come take someone to jail.”
- Police need to do more work in the community. I work in the community at a residential facility. The police could come there to meet residents in the comfort and safety of their building. Police need to be in the community to see how people live.
- Our youth don’t seem to get a chance to speak, just judged.
- Would like to see the youth in the community engaged in this communication process. They do not have, or are given a chance to speak, but they have a voice that needs to be heard. There is a wonderful opportunity missing by keeping them out of the conversation.

3.2 Common themes

- All officers are not bad. Bad officers are the ones we worry about. Good officers are respected.
- Police officer work can be a hard job. You love it or you hate it. I shut down because of their hard faces, but I am not afraid. I don’t argue because I know that I am not going to win.
- Will the police officers be open and willing to share in these dialogue, and while the officers may be open the residents may not because fear of being arrested?
- It is easy from the outside to academically say we can work on that. I am very aware of the urgency of others who are actually having these experiences.
- I appreciate that.

3.3 Address for the future

- Relationships are different. It’s us versus them. I am not treated as a resident with respect. I wish their attitudes would change. The community people are afraid of the police. They don’t want to speak out or get involved. Police don’t know how to deal with members of the community who have mental issues. They are not being treated like citizens.
- I want to know how to keep my son safe. There was a reference to an officer asking that a concerned parent allow them to get to know their son with mental health issues so they could keep him safe. He is every citizen! We should all be able to be safe. We have a need for law enforcement but these are issues that must be addressed and changed. People are responsible for the narration of their own marginalization and terror and need to know that they will be heard.
- One thing that should be addressed is what action will be taken when someone calls the police. Sometimes residents need police to come and enforce but they get arrested themselves. There are even instances where I would not call.

- Our community is undergoing change, which means there are some new culture dynamics taken place. Change is never easy and because of the culture dynamics; how do we get the resident to come together and be open is of some concern.
- Facilitator: You mentioned the need for policy change. Do you have a specific policy in mind for change or enforcement?
- Yes: Some police randomly check license plates. When I ask for the roster of licenses checked I see that they are primarily people of color; Referring for criminal charges rather than civil charges or tickets. Individuals of color have 4-5 contacts with police and are considered habitual criminals. Their white counterparts with the same number of contacts are not criminalized and get tickets or are let go; Choosing to enforce or monitor certain areas. Currently, the most heavily monitored areas are not the highest crime areas. They are the areas where people are in possession of less than an ounce and they are being picked-up on felony charges. It is primarily people of color.
- How does ICE affect those with a Green Card as opposed to those who are Undocumented?
- Only 2 rounded-up had criminal records. I worry for my family - even for those who have been here for 17 years.
- If they have not committed crimes of moral turpitude like murder, rape, domestic violence, abuse they are supposed to be okay.
- Is a church a good venue for these dialogues?
- I feel that cultural competency is more of a problem than location right now.

4. Parting Words:

- Have to learn how to reach an agreement, and also being respected
- Looking forward to the next dialogue.
- Learning how to trust again
- Learning to engage
- Good conversation
- Respect
- Sincerity