Effective Virtual Community Engagement

Linda Delormier & Jessie Hemphill
9:30am - 10:30am, October 23
Virtual BC Comprehensive Community Planning Workshop 2020

Topic Overview

Karonhienhawe Linda Delormier - Ionhnhi:io Consulting, Kahnawake CCP Coordinator
Jessie Hemphill - Alderhill Consulting, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations

Linda:
- Have been using Zoom in Quebec for regional coordinators meetings for a few years now - so we were well prepared for COVID!
- Zoom for kitchen table discussions - families, office departments, small groups, etc.
  - For focus groups - helps people make visual contact with you (even if they have their camera off) - helps people contribute comfortably what they want to in community engagement
- Making sure your equipment works properly is key
- Zoom works best if you are updated to the latest version - if there are tech issues in a meeting, it is likely because folks haven't updated to the newest version
- Gallery view and speaker view - these are useful depending on the situation
  - You can also pin a specific person's video
  - This helps to limit being distracted
- *What are the best ways to get folks on board with using online engagement who are not technologically inclined?*
  - Zoom is a good method - one of the easiest because you can call in with a phone number (don't have to be on your computer)
- Recording - important to discuss privacy concerns - always ask permission if you can record, identify how the recordings are going to be used, let participants decide if they want to be recorded
- Host and co-host have different privileges than the rest of the meeting participants
  - Hosts - can create and modify breakout rooms
  - Co-host - automatically become host if something happens to the first host
- Making Zoom interactive - people keeping their video off is ok; you can use different things to make it interactive
  - Zoom group chat
  - Remember! Even if you send aa message privately on the group chaat, the host will be able to see it after the meeting
- *Are there legalities if a host or recorder doesn't disclose why they're recording?*
  - Not sure - Linda is actually looking into this!
- It is worth getting the paid Zoom account if you can - to avoid the 40 minute time limit

Jessie:

- IAP2 spectrum of engagement
  - Inform - one way information; least engaged
  - Consult - to obtain feedback; participants don't have a lot of power (we constrain options available)
  - Involve - concerns and aspirations are understood; dialogue is happening
  - Collaborate - more engaging, more power shifting to the community; partner in each aspect of decision making
  - Empower - final decision making is in the hands of community; ie. participatory budgeting (leadership lets the community decide)
- Different types of CCP activities/engagements fall on different parts of the spectrum
- We know how to use virtual tools on how to inform people pretty well (ie. newsletters, emails, facebook) - but what about more engagement focused activities?
- Different tools serve different purposes
- Social media tools:
  - Instagram - visual, don't need to be super tech savvy to be on instagram; good for *informing* - infographics or photos of real life things
  - Different generations have different apps we like
  - Facebook - good for *informing and consulting*; have to be able to commit the time to conversations if you want to engage people - monitoring facebook can take a few hours a day; if you don't have the time/energy to moderate, it's ok to just use it as a place to inform people (especially if comments are negative)
    - Difference between pages or groups - there are differences with privacy and what you can do with these options
    - Page - more public, for info
    - Group - for more private conversations within community
- Virtual whiteboard tools:
  - Miro - you can do so many interactive activities with this!
    - Visual deck - how are you feeling today?
    - Rose, bud, thorn - post it notes for things that went well, ideas they have, things that didn't go well - then you can move these post it notes around the Miro board to group them, facilitate the next discussion (ie. the goals for the coming year)
    - Voting/dotmocracy - using icons to vote on priorities
  - There's also Google slides, Mural, etc.
  - Suggestion - there are a lot of virtual whiteboard programs, so get really familiar with just one to support virtual engagement visually
- ***[Miro practice session]***
  - Lock things you don't want people to move!
  - Things get messy - make sure you take time to practice beforehand, and make a "sandbox" space where people can play around to figure out the tool

- Survey and polling tools:
  - Mentimeter - good way to ask questions that are less complicated/interactive than Miro
    - Can do multiple choice, ranking questions, word cloud, etc.
    - Good to create questions that come up during the conversation of a Zoom meeting
    - There is a question limit for the free account of Mentimeter
  - There's also survey monkey, qualtrics, doodle poll
  - Again - suggest picking one and get really familiar with it - have one tool in your toolkit you know really well to use in your community
- Involving elders in virtual engagement
  - Youth mentors, to help and guide them
  - Sharing a meal and trying the tool together (ie. short Zoom meeting)
  - Buying elders ipads
- Slack - can be a good tool for long term collaboration
  - Maybe for CCP advisory committee, staff, etc.
- Engage in different ways - sometimes we still need to do one on one phone calls for folks who might not like any digital engagement at all!
  - Just try to reach people with at least one of these activities
  - Create diversity of options!
- Give staff time to learn these tools, and provide emotional support in using them together!
- Graphic design tool - Canva - good for making info graphics, posts for social media, etc.

Key learnings

- Virtual tools don't have to replace in person meetings, phone calls, newsletters, mailouts, etc. - they can just add to it in this new environment
- Suggestion - try activities with a few different tools, to see which one is best for the activity (ie. design something in Miro and Mentimeter and see how it works/feels different)
- There are so many tools out there! Main thing - focus on a couple of tools that feel relevant for you and get really good with them
  - If you get comfortable with a meeting platform, a whiteboard platform, and a polling platform, you can do wicked community engagement!
- Zoom fatigue - Being comfortable is very important
  - We are leaning in to the computer, we are using focused vision - this can be hard on the body
  - Need to be conscious of how we are sitting - sit up straight, do exercises, look away from the screen when you can (distance vision exercise)

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Amazing Quotes

"Now that we are living during COVID, video conferencing is a part of our lives now, and Zoom fatigue is a real thing. Try to be available to everything around you - instead of focusing in on the computer." - Linda

"Keep the human connection! We are all human behind the computer screen - we are all learning and making mistakes together, and that's ok!" - Jessie

Further Resources and Links

Questions around virtual community engagement (from the Zoom chat - they are going to be answered in the Slack thread):

- What has been the least successful?
- How can we make sure people have access to virtual things? Some elders do not do technology...
- Virtual engagement when there's a lack of internet access? Ex: rural communities
- How have you communicated with people who don't use the internet?
- Curious to hear any best practices for engaging elders and youth in a meaningful way

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- Tips for supporting our less tech savy community members or members with limited internet connection
- how to effectively include Elders & others who may be less familiar with virtual engagement
- Any creative use of visuals (e.g. graphic facilitation) virtually?
- people get tired of surveys including online ones do you have any suggestions also how about on line games
- Worried about unreliable internet for northern communites
- Some households can't afford internet, has any nation "blasted" their wifi to the community? If so, how? Cost?
- I do communications and community support. How do we keep those community members who are not tech savy engaged? What have you done to try to rectify this issue?
- How to encourage more people to come to virtual engagements? How to assure people these tools are easy to use/learn?
- have there been any strategies for community members who cant afford internet or technical devices
- What are the best ways to get folks on board with using online engagement who are not technologically inclined?
- Are there legalities if a host or recorder doesn't disclose why they're recording?
- Are there any resources, checklists, toolkits for getting a communications or engagement strategy in a COVID world?
- Any fun & creative ice breakers to do with participants ?
- How many people can access in one time?
- How private are zoom meetings? there are so many people with security issues.
- What are the benefits of using one method of engagement over the other, other than resource availability?
- My question is not so much towards the tools but for the facilitator. One thing I've noticed is that some our staff are nervous with all the tools and platforms out there, how do we help them from feeling overwhelmed with the vast amount of tools.
- Have you tried to engage in the new chat room option?
- So I have a question on engaging with people who are not a member to our nation but lived on the reserve for a long time.... is it a good idea to add them into the private group that is put together?
- Any suggestions for software that will send mass texts? Like MailChimp but for sms? A lot of members don't check emails regularly but will answer a text message

From Slack:

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Notes by: Tecla Van Bussel