



Hackathon

Overview

- **Objective:** Brainstorm promising strategies for community violence prevention and actionable ideas for reducing community violence in DC.
- **Time Required:** 2 hours
- **Facilitators:** Six youth researchers and two staff members from the Sasha Bruce team and one staff member from the Child Trends team. A violence interrupter will also be present.
- **Structure:** Hackathon
- **Participants:** Youth (ages 14-24), parent/guardian figures of youth, and community members
- **Incentives:** \$30 electronic gift card
- **Supplies:** Study information sheets, handouts, pens, markers, Post-its, art materials, newspapers and magazines, and recruitment card.
- **Location:** In-Person at community-based locations (e.g., schools, libraries)

Introduction

Welcome. Hello, my name is [SAY NAME] and I am [INSERT RELEVANT POSITION]. [INTRODUCE OTHER STAFF PRESENT.] This project is being conducted by youth researchers supported by Child Trends, a nonprofit research center, and Sasha Bruce Youthwork, a DC-based nonprofit. This project is funded by the National Institute of Justice (#15PNIJ-22-GG-01420-RESS). The purpose of this research is to deepen our understanding of youths' experiences with community violence in Washington, DC. By community violence, we mean interpersonal violence that occurs in public spaces between individuals or small groups who may or may not know each other. Findings will be used to inform new and ongoing community safety strategies in Washington, D.C.

We think the best way to understand youths' experiences is to listen to individuals like yourself as well as other youth, parent/guardian figures, and/or community members. The hackathon today will last about 2 hours.

Verbal consent/assent. [HAND OUT STUDY INFORMATION SHEETS.] As shared on the study information sheet, participation in today's session is voluntary. Perspectives and experiences that you share today will be kept confidential. This means we will not tell anyone outside of the researchers on this study what was said in the group, and we will not use your real names in reports for this study. You will not benefit personally from participating in this conversation. You may feel uncomfortable answering certain questions, but you may refuse to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering or leave at any time. If you would like to leave, please let me know. You will receive a \$30 electronic gift card via email or text within 30 minutes of the end of our session. Please take a few moments to read over the study information sheet.

[PAUSE FOR TWO MINUTES.]

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Learn more about Safety 7 at <https://www.childtrends.org/project/centering-youth-experiences-youth-participatory-action>.

Do you have any questions? **[If unsure about comprehension, use the following probes:]**

- Could you tell me about why you are here today?
- Could you tell me about the purpose of this study?

Thank you for reading the study information sheet. I am now going to individually ask each of you to confirm your participation in today's conversation. **[Ask each participant the following question].**

Do you agree to participate in this hackathon as I have described it to you?

[The participants should one at a time say "yes" the question. If a participant says no to the question, thank them for their time and dismiss them from the room.]

Thank you for providing your agreement to participate in today's conversation.

Establish group norms. Before we get started, we wanted to have a couple community agreements while we're in this space together:

- We're really interested in your own personal experiences and opinions, but there may be a time where you want to share a story or experience of a friend that you think is really important. That is okay, but do not share their name if you do.
- Do not specifically reference crimes that you have committed or may have committed.
- Do not specifically reference the names of any criminally active groups within this setting.
- There are no right or wrong answers. It's okay to say, "don't know." You also do not have to answer questions that you do not want to answer.
- There are no bad questions. If you are confused about a word or what we are asking, let us know and we will strive to clarify what we are saying.
- At some point, I may have to interrupt you and move onto another question or activity. Know that I value your perspectives and experiences, but we may need to move on for the sake of time.
- Some people may have different opinions, and that's okay. We can disagree with each other respectfully and talk about our different viewpoints.
- Please don't share what is said during our conversation after we leave the meeting. What is said during the conversation should stay private.

Ice Breaker

Let's start by getting to know each other. Please share one activity that you like to do in our community.

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Participants will have an option to use **Appreciative Inquiry Handout** to support each phase of the hackathon.

DISCOVER, 30 minutes: The hackathons will start with a short presentation by youth researchers of the findings from Cohort 1 then followed by a reflection and discussion about the findings with participants. Participants will be asked to reflect on what is working well in their community. We

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will ask participants to identify strengths, successes, and other positive elements that contribute to community resilience.

- What stood out to you about the data?
- What concerns you?
- What did you expect to hear but did not hear?
- When thinking about the key data points, which of these themes speak to you the most?
- When thinking about experiences of trauma, which of the themes speaks to you the most?

Participants will also be able to share their general thoughts about the findings on Post-its.

DREAM, 30 minutes: Following the discussion, the participants will be placed into small working groups to envision an ideal future for their community.

The participants will be given the option of creating a behavioral change campaign, programmatic solution, policy solution, or resource/tool. Youth researchers will do a short presentation on the types of solutions and provide examples of each type of solution. Participants will have access to definitions of what each type of solution entails. See **Solutions Handout**.

Each group will be assigned one theme from the findings from Cohort 1. Each group will have a handout with each theme's description and findings. Groups will be asked to imagine the best possible outcomes for reducing violence, fostering safety, and building strong relationships. Participants will be asked to develop their solutions for how to address community violence based on learnings from the data. Groups will use whiteboards for their ideation discussions.

Probing questions for DREAM:

- If we won an award for best Ward in DC, what would our Ward look like?
- What could we do to amplify or improve what is already working?
- How can we get even better?
- If we had no limitations at all what would our future look like?
- What kind of future would mean we would be unstoppable?
- How can we take what is going well and apply the same behaviors or thinking somewhere else?

DESIGN, 30 minutes: Each group will create a "solutions board" and choose one item from their ideation board to develop and focus on. The solutions board should include solutions of what a city without violence would look like. Participants will be instructed to use the arts and crafts supplies to create their boards.

Probing questions for DESIGN:

- What would it take to deliver it?

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- If we're doing this work what else has to happen around us?
- What would be the outcome? How will we know when we finish?
- Who benefits from this work?
- What do we need to achieve this?
- What skills do we need? What people do we need? What funding do we need?
- Does this resonate with the city's goals?

DESTINY, 30 minutes: Participants in each small group would present their ideas on how to address violence within the community. Each group will present their ideas to the larger group, fostering accountability and shared commitment. Participants will identify specific actions they can commit to, whether through personal changes, community initiatives, or policy advocacy. This phase emphasizes empowerment, ongoing engagement, and collaboration among all stakeholders, with the goal of building sustainable solutions that resonate within the community.

Probing questions for DESTINY:

- What steps must be implemented to achieve this dream? Consider the changes to systems, processes, and strategies discussed above.
- Who is responsible for making these changes?

Conclusion

Thank you for your participation today. If you need additional support in processing your experiences or feelings that arose from today's conversation, we are providing a list of free resources available in your community. **[Hand out Resource Sheet]**. People associated with these resources will not know that you have participated in today's conversation and we will not disclose your participation with them.

If you have any questions, concerns, or additional information you would like to share, email Samantha Holquist at dcsafetystudy@childtrends.org. Her name and contact information also are included on your study information sheet. You will receive your \$30 electronic gift card via email or text within 30 minutes.