



ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Learning Resource Pack

Developed through learning with and alongside our wonderful communities in East Sussex

Section One: Introduction

Section Two: Start Small

Section Three: Build Relationships

Section Four: Make Connections

Section Five: Support communities to take the lead; communities need allies.

Section Six: Equality and Social Justice

Section Seven: Leadby Stepping back

Section Eight: Demonstrating the value of ABCD

Section Nine: Evaluation



2 START SMALL

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- d **Note:** other tools from the resource pack would work here

What does it mean in practice?

Starting Small is the first principle of the ABCD approach.

**"ABCD VALUES SMALL, GRASSROOTS,
RESIDENT – DRIVEN APPROACHES THAT
USE STORIES AS THE BASIS FOR LEARNING,
SHARING AND ACTING FOR CHANGE."**

The ABCD Institute

A key message is to keep it simple – take the small steps necessary, bring people with you and don't take on more than you can handle!

In this section we've included tools which are about drawing out your own and other people's interests, passions, priorities and ideas. The tools illustrate how you might arrive at a starting point for turning the seeds of an idea into action.



Tools

The Tools on the next pages are about encouraging conversations to share and exchange ideas, experiences and stories. They can be a great way to uncover people’s interests, passions and priorities.

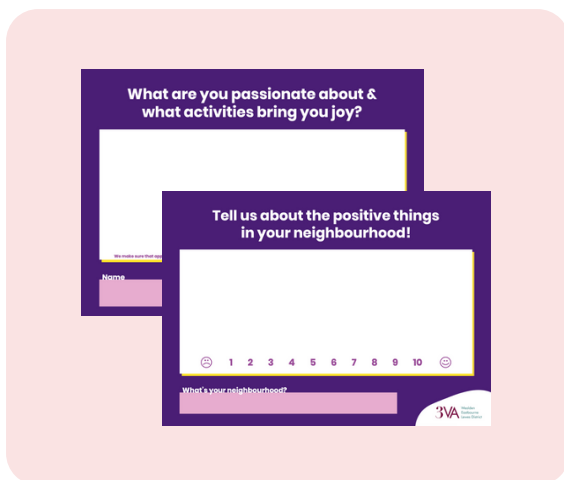
Getting Started



Powerful Questions



Postcard Prompts



Positivity



Getting Started *Guidance*

This guidance was put together by the 'Making it Happen' (MiH) Team to share learning about getting started in an ABCD way, in a neighbourhood - because it can be really difficult to do!

We produced this with people who are employed in a community setting in mind, but there may be useful ideas for anyone keen to engage others from their neighbourhood.

Think about:

- The best way to engage with people in different contexts
- How to ask open questions to draw out interests and things to spark ideas
- How to capture what you learn
- How you will keep track of good ideas

1 Starting a conversation

3 Open questions

2 What to think about before you start

4 Capturing what you've learned



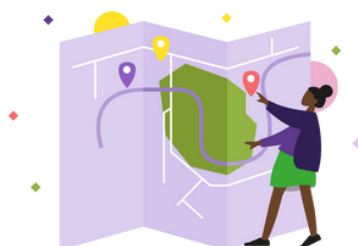
2 What to think about before you start

Keeping Safe

Think about what you need to do to keep yourself safe whatever you do. Make sure local Councillors or community leaders know and are supportive of what you're doing, don't go out alone, and think about any organisational or practical procedures you should follow.

Tell the Community who you are

- Deliver leaflets explaining who you are, with a photo, to homes.
- Send personal invitations and introduce yourself.
- Use social media, posters or use postcards to display in places where people gather such as Parish noticeboards, local shops, post offices, churches or community centres.
- Word of mouth.
- Ask people to tell their neighbours and friends.
- Request to provide a quick introduction on community meeting agendas.



3 Open Questions

Ask open questions i.e don't ask questions that will simply elicit a yes or no answer. Use questions that begin with 'why' or 'how' or 'what' or 'who' ('how could', 'what if', 'what would'.....)

Think about questions that will:

- Provoke
- Invite energy
- Focus attention
- Create forward movement
- Expand possibility
- Thought provoking
- Stimulate curiosity / creativity



Examples of open questions

- What story would you tell about the best thing that has happened in your life?
- What key event has happened in your neighbourhood in the time you've lived here?
- How do you like to spend your spare time?
- What makes you happy?
- What do you love about where you live?
- What do you like to do that makes you forget time?
- What sparks positive memories for you?



Examples of follow up questions

- What makes that important?
- How could you make more things that mirror positives now?
- What do you do to make yourself feel better?
- What would you do to make that change?
- What would positive change look like in your community?
- How could that happen?
- What could you do?
- What do you think other local people would be telling us?
- Who else should we talk to?
- Contact details – can we come back to you another time to discuss further?

4 Capturing what you've learnt

Always ask if the people you meet would like to be kept informed, or be involved, and take contact details if they are willing to share them. It may not be appropriate to take notes while you have a conversation with someone, so make sure that you leave yourself time to reflect and make notes on the key points and themes from your conversation.

Consider:

- Key interests or themes that you drew from each conversation.
- Their specific ideas or interests.
- Do you think they might get more involved? Do you think they might need support or encouragement? What else did you observe?
- Who else they suggested you should talk to?
- What surprised you most about the conversation?
- What worked and what didn't work about the questions you asked or the approach you took?

Powerful Questions

What makes questions inspiring, energising, and mobilising?

- What story would you tell about the best thing that has happened in your life?
- What is the best thing that has happened in your community?
- What key event has happened in your neighbourhood in the time you've lived here?
- How do you like to spend your spare time?
- What makes you happy?
- What do you love about where you live?
- What do you like to do that makes you forget time?
- What sparks positive memories for you?



Powerful Questions

- Are **thought provoking**
- Expand **possibilities** or focus **attention**
- Bring **underlying assumptions** to light
- Stimulate **curiosity** and **creativity**
- Are **open ended** and **help the group move forward**



Powerful Questions include action words like:

Why?

How?

What?

Who?

When?

Where?

Postcard Prompts

Starting a conversation with someone new can be hard. Asking open questions that begin with 'why', 'how' or 'who' ('how could', 'what if', 'what would'.....) can help to get the conversation going.

Front



Back



Positivity

Ask positive questions...to get positive answers.

Enable growth from what's strong and discover what people are passionate about in communities.

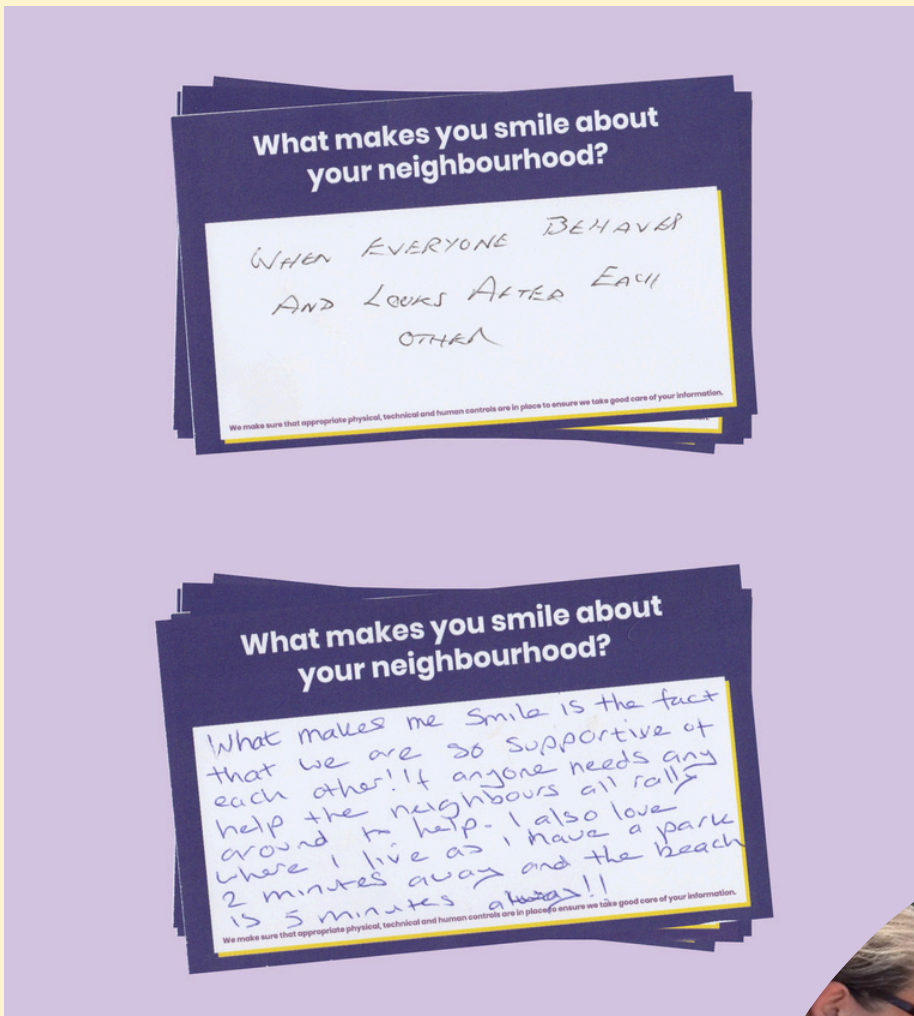
- **What do you love about your community?**
- **What do you love about your neighbourhood?**
- **What do you love about your town?**
- **What do you love about where you live?**



Post Card Prompts

The post cards can be popped through letter boxes or used at events and pop ups to get people talking and exchanging ideas. This can help people find shared interests and common ground, and sometimes this can blossom into action.

The follow examples were from a Pop up at the Shinewater Fun Day.



Starting Small

Finding people with the same or similar interests or life experiences by talking to neighbours and sharing ideas, posting on a neighbourhood forum or asking in a local community centre can lead to some wonderful outcomes. The following are examples where groups have come together having discovered similar passions and interests.

Peer Support

People are coming together to **support each other** all over the county, including to encourage better mental health and wellbeing or for mutual support, such as for parents of children with SEND; new parents and breastfeeding; recovery from substance misuse; or people living with other challenging life circumstances. A key feature of these groups has often focused around coming together through a shared interest, or to participate in a positive activity.

Mountain Men

Based in Newhaven, the Mountain Men took shape after Dom shared a post on Facebook explaining that his mental health had suffered during lockdown, and asking if others had experienced the same. He invited local men to join him and his dog for a walk on the Downs. The MIH Community Development workers supported Dom to **take the small steps needed to connect** with local organisations who could offer support, and to encourage other local men to get involved in leading walks. Members of the group have undertaken mental health first aid training and **the group has grown from strength to strength.**



Starting Small

Crochet Club

People **coming together through a shared interest** in arts and creativity has proved so valuable to so many groups.

The Crochet Club was started by a local resident in Hailsham during 2020 who was keen to share her skills and love for crochet. She wanted to help people learn so they had something **creative and relaxing** to do with their time. Due to the pandemic, the club moved online for a while, but it has stayed the course and members continue to meet. The club has proved **immensely valuable** to members of this small group, some of whom are dealing with challenging life circumstances. One member described the group as a **'life saver'**.



Starting Small

Let's Get Fishing

This group is led by an angling coach who was keen to encourage greater interest from young people, women and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds in fishing. He worked with the local Community Development Worker and decided to **take the simple step** to organise a presence at the Shinewater Family Fun day. The Community Development Worker was struck by his passion and enthusiasm not just for the sport, but how it offers **an opportunity for people to belong** to something bigger, to feel part of a community and of the health and wellbeing benefits. He has worked hard to create a group which will always have an open door for new people, and to make them feel like they have a contribution to make.



Case Study

Eastbourne Scrapstore

C and J from Eastbourne Scrapstore had been working hard to get their project off the ground but **they were feeling uncertain about the best approach**. They felt pressure to formalise quickly, but they weren't ready – they still had questions and felt they needed a clearer vision before taking such big steps.

MIH Development Workers arranged **a visit to the Library of Things (LOT) in Hastings**. LOT was well established and operated as a borrowing space and as a Public Living Room. As they stepped inside LOT, C and J were immediately struck by the energy of the space. People were chatting and laughing. The layout was warm and functional, filled with nooks where groups gathered for different activities. C and J began asking questions, **realising how much they could learn** from seeing a similar project in action.

By the end of the visit, not only were they full of ideas for their own space, but they also felt more assured in their vision. **They realised they didn't need to rush** into formalising the project. They could take their time to build it in a way that felt authentic to them. They also realised they didn't need to 'go it alone'. C said "Seeing LOT in action has shown us that we can make this our own, and **it doesn't have to be perfect from the start**".

