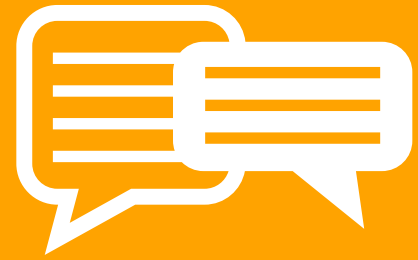


Tool
10



Interviews





Description

Interviews

A successful design project requires the input from individuals who have a vested interest in the project. This includes those who will actively use the space as well as those who will oversee and interact with the site and its purposes in other ways. In the criminal justice context, these stakeholders include those who have committed offenses as well as those who have been victimized and their families/friends, community members, justice professionals (e.g., victim service providers, judges, attorneys, correctional administrators, security officers), social service providers, and civic representatives (e.g., law enforcement officers, government officials). These interviews give life to restorative justice in the design process for the way they actively engage those most impacted by the project.



Interviews with these individuals or groups of individuals serve to solicit their ideas and perspectives for the design project and its elements, which are then considered and incorporated into the final concept. As such, interviews are not meant to merely seek stakeholder support for the ideas and intentions of the project leaders or design team. Ideally, interviews take place from the start of the project through to the end. Stakeholder input can be sought on all areas of the project. For instance:

- Location of the project.
- Goals of the site.
- Values that will shape the creation of the site and its use.
- Programs and services to be offered at the site.
- Architectural and design features of the site.
- Evaluation of the completed project.

With helpful questions in hand, participants can generate many new and important ideas to incorporate into their designs. While listening to interviewees share their perspectives, the interviewer will listen for what they say, or imply, about values that are important, metaphors, relationships to be facilitated, and design themes.

The Make and Build section includes a sample interview guide. Two participant handouts introduce interviews and the creation of an interview guide as well as how to develop and ask helpful questions.



SAMPLE EXERCISE

Interviewing justice stakeholders

Give participants an introduction to the importance of interviewing, drawing on the description above and explain that they will be conducting interviews to solicit input for their design concepts.

As a large group, generate a list of all the people who have a vested interest in the project for which they will be creating design concepts. Discuss, as a group, who on this list they will have access to over the next day or two so they can conduct several interviews.

Transition the conversation to talk about the types of questions to ask during these interviews. Again, invite the group to brainstorm characteristics of helpful and unhelpful questions, giving examples as you go. Be sure to enforce that there are no such things as bad or stupid questions; rather, questions can be worded in a way that moves the conversation forward or slows it down. The Asking Helpful Questions handout provides several questions that are poorly worded, which students can practice rewording so they are more helpful.

After the participants have generated the list of stakeholders and practiced writing design questions, invite them to work in dyads or triads to generate a list of specific design questions they can use in their interviews. They can write their questions on the Interview handout. After they have had time to create a few questions, invite each group to read a few of their questions to the rest of the group. Offer suggestions on how to improve how questions are framed. You may also invite participants to practice interviewing each other.

Offer final instructions to the participants about their interview assignment and provide time for them to ask questions. At the next session, invite participants to share who they interviewed, what they learned, and ideas the interviews generated for the design concept. Sample questions include:

1. What new insight did you gain about your design?
2. How does the insight vary across the different stakeholders?
3. What are most important or interesting insights gained?
4. How will you change or enhance your design based on what you learned?
5. What did you learn about design in the process of interviewing?
6. What was most challenging about doing the interviews?
7. What was most rewarding about doing the interviews?



Plan and Process

Use this tool to:

- Solicit input for design concepts.
- Provide opportunities for participants to discuss their learnings.
- Explore multiple perspectives on a single project.
- Practice listening skills.

Modify the sample exercise

The interviewees and interview questions are unique to each project and the central goal of the sample exercise is the creation of an interviewee list and the interview questions.

Exercise 1: Design team preparation

Participants brainstorm stakeholders and interview questions in the design teams that have been formed to create design concepts as the final project. When completed, they present their list of stakeholders and questions to the large group. Discuss using the questions in the sample exercise.

Exercise 2: Design team practice interviews

After having developed interview questions, members from one design team interview the members of another design team as a way to feel comfortable interviewing and to practice asking their questions.



Make and Build

Other than copies of the Interview handout and Asking Good Questions handout, the interview supplies are minimal.

- Pen or pencil
- Visual diary (in which to take interview notes)



Sample interview guide

Below is a sample interview guide, created to solicit input for a re-entry campus that would also serve as a community gathering place.

1	Give some background to the project to ensure that interviewees know what you are talking about prior to starting.
2	Opening question – What are your thoughts about creating a place for re-entry that you and others in the community could share?
3	Follow-up questions – a. If you were coming to this place to work, play, get assistance, or just hang out, what kind of spaces would you want? b. What values do you want to see represented in the spaces? c. What is your favorite place in your community and daily life? Why? d. Tell us about a typical day. e. What are your dreams or vision for this place? f. Imagine you and your family are visiting the site. Tell me a story about what you did there that day. g. What would you need to feel comfortable coming here for the first time? h. How do you feel when you drive by the corner of Mission Blvd and Hampton Rd, the proposed site of the campus? i. How do you want feel when you drive or walk by this site?
4	Closing question - Is there anything I did not ask you?

While interviewing, listen for the following:

- Values that are important.
- Metaphors that interviewees use to describe their experiences or perspectives.
- Emotions or nonverbal signs when they are talking.
- Relationships that may develop or be nurtured in the space.
- Design themes: nature, sound, textures, color, furniture, objects etc.

Tool
10



Interviews

Participant Handout



Interviews

A successful design project requires the input from individuals who have a vested interest in the project. This includes those who will actively use the space as well as those who will oversee and interact with the site and its purposes in other ways. In the criminal justice context, these stakeholders include those who have committed offenses as well as those who have been victimized and their families/friends, community members, justice professionals (e.g., victim service providers, judges, attorneys, correctional administrators, security officers), social service providers and civic representatives (e.g., law enforcement officers, government officials). These interviews give life to restorative justice in the design process, for the way they actively engage those most impacted by the project.

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With helpful questions in hand, participants can generate many new and important ideas to incorporate into their designs. While listening to interviewees share their perspectives, the interviewer will listen for what they say, or imply, about values that are important, metaphors, relationships to be facilitated, and design themes.

Interview activity

For this activity, you will be interviewing stakeholders to gather their input for your design. The first task is to generate a list of all the people who have a vested interest in the project for which you will be creating a design concept.

The second task is to generate a list of questions that you will ask during these interviews. You will want to be sure that the questions you ask are helpful in gathering information. Individually and as a group, consider the characteristics of questions that engage people in talking to you and which ones are less helpful in engaging people. You are then ready to create specific design questions, using the worksheet on the back of this page. When completed, share and compare your questions with the rest of the group.

Select previously identified stakeholders who you will see or talk to before the next session. Interview these individuals and record interview notes in your visual diary.

Interview guide

Use this space to write down your interview questions. You are already provided with a way to start the interview, a closing question and things to listen for during the interview. You will create your opening question and other questions you will ask after you get started.

1	Give some background to the project to ensure that interviewees know what you are talking about prior to starting.
2	Opening question –
3	Follow-up questions –
4	Closing question - Is there anything I did not ask you?

While interviewing, listen for the following:

- Values that are important.
- Metaphors that interviewees use to describe their experiences or perspectives.
- Emotions or nonverbal signs when they are talking.
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- Design themes: nature, sound, textures, color, furniture, objects, etc.

Asking Helpful Questions

Think back on various conversations you have had. Ever notice how some questions and statements keep the conversation going while others seems to fall flat, stopping a conversation in its tracks? Part of the reason that this occurs is because some questions are phrased in a helpful way, inviting more interaction, while other questions are less helpful, and do not have the same invitation.

Interviewing requires the use of questions, or statements, that encourage the interviewee to keep talking and tell you about their needs, desires, and ideas. Below are some ideas for how to ask questions that help keep the conversation going.

Helpful questions/statement	Unhelpful questions/statements
Open <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invites speaker to open up to provide more information or clarify what was said • Seeks lengthy answers • Suggests encouragement and curiosity 	Closed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits answers to “yes” or “no” or other 1-2 word answers • Suggests a lack of interest in understanding more • Does not offer encouragement
Asks “what” or “how” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks understanding of motivation and reasoning • Suggests openness 	Asks “why” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks understanding of motivation and reasoning • Suggests blame or judgment
Brief, few in number, and asked 1 at a time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to understand • Know which question to answer • Keeps the focus on the interviewee 	Long, too many, and asked at same time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to understand • Don’t know which question to answer • Focus remains on the interviewee
Well-timed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrains from interrupting the flow of the interviewee • Moves conversation forward in a logical way 	Poorly time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrupts interviewee • Makes flow of conversation difficult to follow

No question is inherently helpful or unhelpful. With a bit of rewording, a seemingly unhelpful question can become a good question. For instance, you intend to create opportunities for physical fitness on the site that you are designing. The design team has been considering both a boxing gym and a swimming pool but you do not know what the community would like. One way to ask the question is as follows:

We hope this site will promote physical fitness. Which would you like more – a boxing gym or a swimming pool?

There are a few things unhelpful with this question. It is closed—the interviewee may only answer with “boxing gym” or “swimming pool.” It also does not solicit their ideas about what fitness means to them or what they would like to see in terms of fitness opportunities. For this person, they may not be interested in either of these options. The question only solicits which of the design team ideas they like more, not actually solicits their ideas.

Another way to word the question is as follows:

We hope this site will promote physical fitness. What is your favorite way to stay fit?

This question opens the door for all the ideas that the interviewee has about physical fitness. With strategic prompts to draw out more information about the who, what, where, and when of their favorite fitness activities, the interview would offer a wealth of new information about how to design for physical fitness, much of which is likely to go well beyond boxing and swimming.

Practice

Below are questions/statements that are worded poorly. Reword them to get at the same content but in a way that will keep the interviewee actively engaged.

1. Can you explain to me why you don't want this re-entry facility next to your neighborhood?
2. Do you want trees? How about flowers? What do you think of water features?
3. Do you think that you would use a meditation garden?
4. Some of us want windows all around the dialogue room so every participant has a view outside. Others just want windows in the door so there is privacy. What do you think?
5. You said earlier that walking into the old building was usually negative. Why did you feel that way?

Sample answers

There are many ways to reword the above questions. Below are just some ideas.

1. Tell me more about your concerns about the location of the re-entry facility.
2. What role does nature play in your life?
3. Tell me about spaces that you find contemplative or meditative.
4. Imagine you were creating a room where two people in conflict with each other could talk. How would you design that room?
5. You said earlier that walking into the old building was usually negative. What was it that caused you to feel that way?