



# Guide to Listening Sessions for Men's Engagement

Listening sessions serve as a powerful and meaningful way to gather information from the experts themselves, in this case, campus men or those they interact with.

More specifically, the goal of listening sessions is to:

- 1 Develop relationships with diverse campus partners.
- 2 Create a pathway for men to contribute to and co-create knowledge alongside the CCRT.
- 3 Help men identify and unpack the cultural scripts and master narratives around manhood that contribute to the values, beliefs, and behaviors that create gender-based violence.
- 4 Highlight gaps in current programming and identify perspectives can enrich strategies to engage men effectively.



**GUIDE CONTENTS**

This guide will walk you through the fundamental basics of implementing a successful listening session for your Engaging Men initiatives by focusing on **six topics**:

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**RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS**



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## I RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS



- 1 Identify the audience** you want to learn from (e.g., coaches, professors, or students) and whether recruitment will be open or specific to a group on campus (e.g., fraternities). This will impact whether marketing materials are needed.
- 2 Identify roles for recruitment and facilitation** for the listening session amongst your CCRT. Consistency is important for building relationships and trust. Consider who on your team can build the best rapport and connection with the targeted participants. It is also important to consider choosing someone on your team who has great facilitation skills to facilitate the listening session.
- 3 Create marketing materials (if the session is public)** such as a flyer and social media posts with key information (i.e., location, date, time, purpose of the listening session, and incentives) and post them in areas where students gather.
- 4 Contact and coordinate with key stakeholders** on campus that have direct relationships and access to your desired participants. Explain your goals and why you reached out to them specifically. Ask them to lead and/or participate in the listening session as this motivates participants to attend.
- 5 Invite participants** preferably through direct personal contact rather than by just distributing the flyer and social media post. Encourage key personnel to also invite participants directly.



### QUICK TIPS

*Consider having food or even snacks at the listening session. Don't forget that being a college student means being busy and on a budget. If you can't pay for their time, at least provide them a meal. Make sure to add this detail to the flyer!*



## II DEVELOPING QUESTIONS



- 1 Build an opening statement** that explains the purpose of your listening session and the importance of participants' contribution. In the opening statement, also explain how consent works in this space and that even though they may consent at the beginning of the listening session to participate, they can withdraw their consent throughout if they feel that is best for them.
- 2 Identify what you want and need to learn** from participants. Perhaps you want to learn about the cultural scripts that deter men from engaging in gender-based violence work or how to best engage men for a certain project.
- 3 Collaborate with “insiders” to develop questions** so that topics and questions are as tailored and specific to the listening session group. These “insiders” could be students, faculty, or others that can provide insight into cultural norms & histories.
- 4 Start with one or two warm-up or icebreakers** that participants can answer easily. For example: “What is a key message you have received from a male figure in your family that impacts the way you view education?”
- 5 Consider the flow of the interview.** What questions should come first? Which questions most naturally transition best from the previous questions? The last question should provide some closure for the listening session and leave the respondent feeling empowered, listened to, or otherwise glad that they talked to you. Keep in mind that this facilitation guide is just that—a guide. You can deviate from your questions and follow a different order if you believe it will make the conversations go more smoothly. The best tip is to go with the participants' flow!

**II DEVELOPING QUESTIONS**



*(continued)*

- 6 Prepare a variety of questions** to receive different types of answers but consider prioritizing open ended questions rather than closed ended questions. For example, instead of asking participants this question: “Would you come to a bystander intervention meeting?”

**Consider the following types of questions:**

**Which types of questions will invite the information that you need for your Engaging Men initiatives?**

CLOSED-ENDED	OPEN-ENDED	STORY-BASED
<p>Was this program beneficial to you?</p> <p>Did you enjoy last week’s event?</p>	<p>In what ways has this program been beneficial or not engaging to you?</p> <p>Can you share more about what would have made last week’s event feel more useful?</p>	<p>Can you share a time when you felt supported by your peers?</p> <p>Can anyone share a time that they felt uncomfortable with a conversation you heard between men?</p>



*Try to move towards questions that offer more personal and qualitative information. Ask follow-up questions!*



### III FACILITATING DISCUSSION



- 1 Begin by introducing yourself and humanizing yourself.** What brought you to this work? What brought you to this campus? What brought you to this particular listening session?
- 2 Explain how you and your team intend to use the information** gathered in this space. Let them know that their identity will be protected and pseudonyms can be used if their insight is used in any project, presentation, and/or publication.
- 3 Ask and receive consent whether verbally or written.** If you decide to voice record the sessions make sure to let them know and inform them that you will not use the recordings and that you will delete their voice recordings once your sessions are transcribed.
- 4 Allow for silence** and do not ask more than one question at a time. Silence is a normal part of processing. Do not rush to another question because you think that they don't have anything to say because they are taking a minute to think and respond.
- 5 Ask follow-up questions** and reflect back what you hear. This helps participants feel seen and allows for deeper information to be gathered. Consider drawing on your own experience. This also gives them examples. But remember, centering yourself too much can negatively impact the listening session so don't overshare!
- 6 Read the room and encourage diverse participation.** If one participant is talking and you notice another participant is nodding their head in agreement ask them to add anything. For example, you can say "I noticed you were nodding your head, do you want to add anything else?"



### III FACILITATING DISCUSSION



(continued)

- 7 Go with the flow!** Remember you can veer from the interview guide and follow the participants' lead.
- 8 End with appreciation and next steps.** Offer your contact information in case they have questions. Take this time to invite them to upcoming events!



#### QUICK TIPS

*Optional: Share flyers about upcoming Engaging Men events or planning sessions. Share campus resources such as the counseling center's information.*

### IV PROCESSING LESSONS & NEXT STEPS



- 1 Transcribe** the listening session and delete the voice recording.
- 2 Identify themes** by collaborating with your team.
- 3 Integrate themes into your strategy** by discussing messages, topics, and lessons from the session. Consider how to apply these lessons into your programming, events, and leadership development.
- 4 Consider contacting some of the participants** to invite them into your initiative and/or to verify that your interpretations of what they shared with you are accurate and appropriate. Share with them what your team has created based on their insight and ask them for feedback. Make sure to compensate them for being key informants.



## V LISTENING SESSION SAMPLE QUESTIONS



### 1 Experiences with existing programming

- Have you ever attended an event for Sexual Assault Awareness Month? What inspired you to go to the event?
- What did you think about the orientation sessions about sexual assault prevention? What did you like? Dislike?
- What has your experience been like of the yearly mandatory full-athletics trainings (what have you learned & what hasn't worked)? Why?

### 2 Identifying Harmful Norms, Barriers to Allyship, and Opportunities

- Are there any topics that come up with your [insert student group, e.g., teammates] that are difficult or uncomfortable to address, particularly around relationships, parties, or language?
- Have you ever had conversations with your peers about sexual assault? Or about how to make your [insert student group] a safer environment?
- How are sexual assault and harassment spoken about on your team? (Athletics-specific)
- How are women and women's teams (or athletes) spoken about on your team? (Athletics-specific)
- Who do you think sets the culture of what's acceptable and not in your social circles or student group? Can you share an example?
- Do you feel men on campus are respectful of LGBTQ+ people? Why or why not? Can you share an example?

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**V LISTENING SESSION SAMPLE QUESTIONS***(continued)***3 Identifying Personal Experiences and Connections to DVSA**

- Do you have any personal stories or know others with stories about sexual harassment or sexual assault?
- Have you felt supported with your mental health by your friends on campus? Why or why not?
- How does it feel being an LGBTQ+ student on campus?
- Who are the men in your life that you respect the most? Why?

**4 Feedback on Key Topics, Messaging, and Current Events**

- What do you think about the term “ally?” What about “toxic masculinity?”
- What do you think the stereotypes about men are? Do you think they are true? Where do they come from?
- How do you feel about [insert current event or topic about masculinity such as: Andrew Tate; How the NFL handles sexual misconduct; or MeToo]?

**5 Brainstorming Programming**

- Are there topics about relationships, mental health, or what men can do to stop violence that you would like to see events on campus about?
- What more could student groups do on campus to take a stand against emotional or physical abuse in relationships?
- If you attended an event about what men can do to prevent sexual assault, who would you like to see lead the discussion? Why?
- Who are the men on campus that you respect the most? Why?
- What types of events, workshops, or training would help men on campus build healthy masculinity? What would get men interested in these events?

**VI FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS****We do not have funds to pay participants to attend the listening session. What other incentives can we offer?**

You can offer food, a letter of recommendation, and if you are working alongside specific professors, you can see if offering extra credit is an option.

**How many participants should we invite?**

Ideally, you want to conduct a listening session with a group of 5-15 people. Smaller groups tend to allow participants more opportunities to share.

**Should I record the listening session?**

It is recommended to record listening sessions via a voice recorder to allow you to be as present as possible. All too often, facilitators miss important moments of connection because they were too busy writing notes. Recording the session will allow you to come back to the details later! (remember that if you do, you have to receive consent)