

Green Partners barriers and benefits discussion guide

Identifying barriers and benefits to environmentally friendly actions

Directions

This discussion is recommended for those who are trying to influence environmental behaviors. This document can be found at: hennepin.us/greenpartners

Focus your discussion on the one or two actions that you plan to focus on during your project. Use the questions below as a guide and tailor the discussion to your audience. Keep the conversation on point, dig deep, and guide folks in identifying what is really holding them back from taking action. Past project leaders have found that initial responses are not always reflective of the actual barriers people perceive and experience. Take your time to uncover what the biggest barriers really are for your audience. Take notes on your discussion to inform your project activities.

Discussion guide

Introductory remarks

Thank you for joining me today. We are leading an environmental action project and we are asking community members like you about your experience with _____ (*fill in the blank with action you will focus on during your project*). This discussion will help us create a project that addresses real concerns and challenges in our community. We also want to learn what motivates you to take action on this topic.

Discussion questions

1. Do you currently _____ (*fill in the blank with one action you will focus on during your project*)?
2. If yes, why did you start? Why do you continue? What are the benefits of taking this action?
3. If not (or not always), what are the barriers? What makes it hard to do, or hard to do all the time?
4. What would need to change in your household to make it easier?
5. What would need to change in your community to make it easier?

Post discussion reflection (for project leaders)

1. How many people participated in the discussion?

2. Who participated in the discussion? Do they reflect the audience you are trying to reach?
3. What age groups participated in the discussion
 - a. Adults
 - b. Youth
 - c. Youth and adults
4. What barriers to taking action did your participants bring up most often during the discussion?
5. Based on what you heard and the barriers and strategies chart, what strategies will you focus on or add to your plan for this project?
6. What else did you (the project leader) learn during your discussion that you will use in your project?

Barriers and strategies chart

What you may hear	Barrier	Strategy
"I've been meaning to do that."; "That sounds interesting."	Lack of motivation — value action	Commitment
"That sounds hard."; "I'm not interested."	Lack of motivation — don't value	Social norms, Modeling, Incentives
"I always forget to do that."; "I can't remember how to take action."	Forget to act	Prompts
"How does that work?"; "What happens when I take that action?"	Lack of information	Communication, Social diffusion
"I'm afraid I'm going to do it wrong."	Lack of skills; anxiety	Let people try an activity, Social diffusion
I can't take that action."; "I don't have that service."	External barriers	Make it easy to act: infrastructure, tools, supplies