

RUNNING A VISIONING SESSION: FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Hello! Are you interested in creating an intergenerational community center at your settlement house? These are spaces that intentionally bring together community members of all ages. They offer regular programs building on the resources all generations have to offer and benefit participants of all ages.

Generations Connect, an initiative of United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), helps settlement houses make intergenerational program approaches a core practice. This guide is part of a series of tools to support organizations embarking on the multi-year and iterative process of developing an intergenerational community center. Browse them all here: unhny.org/intergenhub

What is a Visioning Session?

Visioning sessions bring a group of people together to imagine what a successful future could look like for your all-ages community center.

Why run a Visioning Session?

These sessions help leadership, staff, and community members collaboratively develop a north star that you are all working towards together. All-ages community centers are ambitious projects, and can take years to develop. As you work towards your goal, visioning sessions can inspire and help build ownership among staff and participants for the future center. In the context of our nonstop workdays and all the different tasks pulling at our attention, it can be a real challenge to “think big” and imagine into the future. This visioning session is designed to be a moment to step back and think creatively in order to generate energy, ideas, and direction.

Who should participate?

Leadership, staff, and/or community members.

When should we do it?

You might want to do a visioning session with different groups at different moments in your process of developing an all-ages community center. Consider doing a visioning session with leadership early in the process. Once staff has completed some all-ages programming, then you can do a staff visioning process. Community members are also great to vision with, once they've experienced some intergenerational programming. Don't forget, developing an intergenerational community center is an ongoing, iterative process, and you can use this tool more than once along the way, with the same participants, or new ones.

Time needed 1 hr 10 minutes to 2 hrs

Number of people 5 - 15 participants; 1 to 2 facilitators

- Materials**
- Tracing paper (either individual sheets or a roll)
 - Markers
 - Tape
 - Pens and pencils
 - Printouts of black-and-white print-outs of photos of your community center space on letter-sized paper (1 per participant)
 - Printouts of "Senses Worksheet" (1 per participant)
 - Printouts of "Activity Worksheet" (1 per participant)
 - Optional: A way to play some music

BEFORE YOU START

Photograph your space

A few days before you host the visioning, take photos of a space or two in your center that feel important to the future of your intergenerational community center (e.g. an entranceway or a meeting space.)

- Try to take it without too many people in it
- Take it from far enough away so that you can see as much of the space as possible
- Choose a space that isn't already very specialized (i.e.: don't use a kitchen or a bathroom!)

Print materials

Print out enough copies of the photo or photos so that each participant will have one. For example, if you took photos of two spaces, and you have 10 participants, you can print 5 of one space and 5 of the other.

- If you can, increase the contrast of the photo on your phone or in a design program on the computer (like Photoshop) before printing. It's OK if you can't! This is optional.
- Print the photo in black and white
- In the print settings, choose "fit to print" so that the printer automatically shrinks your image to fit regular letter-sized paper

Set up the space the day of the visioning

- The goal is to create a calm and fun space that feels like a break from participants' everyday routine. Consider bringing music and conduct the session in a space where people can focus (don't conduct the session in a community space with lots of other things going on).
- You want to have 4 separate stations or tables where folks can sit down and take their time to do the activity at their own pace. Think of it sort of like a science fair.
 - On one table, tape down the photos on the corners. Set out tracing paper and markers.
 - On the second table, spread out the Senses Worksheet and pens and pencils.
 - On the third table, spread out the Schedule Worksheets and pens and pencils.

FACILITATING THE VISIONING SESSION

Introduce the goal of the visioning and the activities

5 minutes

- Tell participants that you are working on turning your settlement house into an all-ages community space and you have brought them together to help develop the vision collectively of what you'd like the future of the center to be like.
- Give background on why your settlement house believes doing intergen is a good idea, and what the benefits will be.
- Let them know there are three stations they can rotate through. They don't have to complete each station, but should get to at least two. They have a half hour for these activities. Let them know you'll update them on timing every ten minutes or so.

Introduce each station

5 minutes

- Drawing station: It's 2030. Your job is to draw how the space has transformed. What do you see happening? What visual cues do people see so they know what the center is about? Don't worry about making it perfect, stick figures are fine, just get your ideas out. Just use the markers, not the pens and pencils.
- Senses station: Imagine it is 2030. Follow the prompts on the "Senses Worksheet" to answer questions about what the all-ages center is like in the future.
- Activities station: Imagine it is 2030. Design activities for the day for your center in the future. Focus on what makes it particularly amazing at bringing different ages together.

Rotate through activities

30 minutes

- Give participants a chance to rotate through the stations. You can play music to encourage a creative and chill atmosphere.

Gallery Walk

25 minutes, or more, depending on number of participants

- As a group, go from station to station and ask a few people to share their work.
- At the end of the gallery walk, ask what commonalities people are hearing across the visions.
- As participants share their thoughts, take notes on post-its summarizing the key points of what is different about the center in 2030.

Close the session

5 minutes

- Thank participants for their time building up this collective vision of the all-ages center.
- Gather contact information. These visioning sessions are a great way to identify possible members of the team who will make this vision a reality.
- If you sense someone is especially enthusiastic and engaged, talk to them one-on-one and ask them how they might want to be a part of the team and continue to bring them into future opportunities related to your all-ages community center.

ACTIVITIES

What is the activity?	What generations are involved?	Who is leading it?	What makes it especially intergenerational?

