

City-Site Problem Identification & Resolution of Issues Together (City-SPIRIT)

This report is a compilation of issues and recommended solutions developed by leaders in
in Simsbury, Connecticut



Community Relations Service
United States Department of Justice

In cooperation with

**Simsbury Public Schools,
and
Simsbury Community of Care**

Introduction

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Community Relations Service (CRS) was created by Title X of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. CRS assists state and local governments, private and public organizations, educational institutions, and community groups to resolve community-based conflicts stemming from issues related to race, color and national origin. In 2009, with the passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA), CRS's jurisdiction expanded to prevention of and response to violent hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. CRS's voluntary, confidential and impartial conflict resolution services aim to assist all parties involved in a conflict to improve communication, promote problem solving, improve collaboration and restore positive community relations.

As a conflict resolution agency, CRS recognizes the value of facilitating dialogue that assists communities to identify issues and address conflict. This experience led CRS to create the community leader-driven issues identification and problem solving process called "City-Site Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together" (City-SPIRIT). The City-SPIRIT process brings together diverse community leaders, city and county officials, law enforcement, ministerial leaders and other community leadership to identify and analyze issues impacting the community, as well as to develop solutions they deem most appropriate to resolve these issues. The process applies principles of collaborative problem solving, and community empowerment and engagement to help improve community relations.

This SPIRIT report reflects the issues identified by diverse community leaders and their recommended solutions. CRS's role in the SPIRIT process was to provide training and process expertise. Specifically, CRS provided: 1) facilitation training to volunteer facilitators; 2) and the issues identification and problem solving methodology. Please note that all information contained in this report was recorded word-for-word from the notes (flip charts) generated during the small-group breakout sessions, and only minor edits were made to ensure clear understanding of the communication. The services provided by CRS are conducted in confidence and without publicity, and CRS shall hold confidential any information acquired in the regular performance of its duties upon the understanding that it would be so held.

Overview and Methodology

At the invitation of Simsbury, CT community leaders, CRS met with city/county leaders, diverse community leaders and others to identify potential services and resources to support the community. Following these meetings, it was agreed upon that CRS would convene a SPIRIT Planning Group composed of city/county officials, diverse community leaders, ministerial leaders, advocates and other key community leaders. This planning group developed the SPIRIT process agenda and completed important logistical and planning tasks. CRS convened the SPIRIT Planning Group on March 28th, 2019.

Following the planning sessions, CRS provided facilitator training to ten facilitators who were chosen and vetted by the Simsbury Superintendent of Schools and the Simsbury Community of Care. The one-hour facilitation training provided volunteer facilitators with an overview of the SPIRIT process, including the process goals/objectives, facilitator roles, active listening and process logistics.

On May 16th, 2019, CRS facilitated a SPIRIT process in Simsbury, CT. The SPIRIT process began with introductions of the facilitators and a “welcome” by a member of the City Council of Simsbury, CT, the Simsbury Superintendent of Schools and several other prominent community leaders. Approximately 102 diverse community leaders from various sectors in the community including school educators, concerned parents, students of various ages, community activists, elected officials, law enforcement personnel, and school administrators participated in the process. The participants were each assigned a seat at a table with others who have the same basic interest. There were ten tables with ten participants assigned to each table. Each of the ten groups were initially tasked to work on the “issues identification” phase of the process. Community leaders were asked to identify strengths of the community, as well as areas of concern.

After the issues identification phase of the process, CRS and the volunteer facilitators led an issues prioritization process. Participants were asked to vote on the issues most important to them (see votes below). Each participant was given three stickers (dots) to place their votes. Following the voting process, which illustrated what issues received the most votes, i.e., priority issues, the solutions development/action plan phase of the process was facilitated. Community leaders were then randomly divided into ten groups to work on developing solutions and action plans.

Working with facilitators, community leaders used a five-step problem solving process to develop solutions and action plans. At the end of the process the SPIRIT Council was introduced to the larger group. The Council will meet in scheduled session(s) with the city/school district officials or their designee to follow-up on the SPIRIT process and may implement solutions/action plans developed during process. The Council may also work on other problem areas should they arise.

Agenda

Simsbury, Connecticut May 16th, 2019

4:00pm - 5:00pm	Facilitator discussion/debriefing
5:00pm – 5:15pm	City/County and Community Leadership Overview
5:15pm - 5:30pm	SPIRIT Overview for Participants
5:30pm -6:30pm	Issues Identification and Prioritization
6:30pm -7:30pm	Report Out #1 and Working Dinner
7:30pm – 7:45pm	Voting and Prioritization
7:45pm -8:30pm	Problem Solving and Solution Development
8:30pm – 9:00pm	Report-Out # 2
9:00pm – 9:15pm	Closing Remarks by City/School Board and Community Leadership

SPIRIT Process

Step 1: Strengths

Approximately 102 diverse community leaders from various sectors in the community including school educators, concerned parents, students of various ages, community activists, elected officials, law enforcement personnel, and school administrators participated in the process. The participants were each assigned a seat at a table with others who have the same basic interest. There were ten tables with ten participants assigned to each table. Each of the ten groups was initially tasked to work on the “issues identification” phase of the process. The small group facilitators began the breakout session with introductions, ice breakers, and review of the ground rules, and worked with participants to identify the community’s strengths and areas of concern.

The following strengths were identified by community leaders:

Sycamore (Elected Officials)

- Beautiful
- Peaceful
- Welcoming
- Conducive to interactivity

3 Men and the Ladies (Concerned Parents)

- Sense of community
- New England community
- Freshness / openness
- Music/arts in schools
- Outstanding special education
- Graduation college ranks
- Safety
- volunteers

Straight Shooters (Law Enforcement)

- Library
- Safe
- Friendly
- Inviting
- Simsbury farms
- Downtown
- Schools
- Small town feel

SimsImpact (Community Activists)

- Close knit community
- Open to listen
- Comparatively safe

- Seems to want improvement

7 for Ed (Education Administrators)

- The arts
- The abundance of community building events
- Support for education
- The beautiful outdoors, parks
- The professionalism of the teachers

A Unique Perspective (Concerned Parents)

- Beautiful
- Nature
- Peaceful
- Safe
- Music and theater departments
- Intellectual
- Caring teachers

Students First (Teachers)

- Honest dialogue
- Family support
- Natural beauty
- Quaint
- Resourceful
- Friendly
- Entrepreneurial

The Kids Table (Student Leaders)

- Supportive silence
- Lack of authenticity
- Reactive vs proactive responses
- Curriculum supports ignorance
- Lack of support for diversity

Group 9 (Concerned Citizens)

- Beautiful
- Friendly
- Size
- Pride of place
- Embraces concept of community
- Facilities

Be the Change (Faith Based Community)

- Tolerance
- Safety
- Access to assistance
- Modesty

The following are areas of concern identified by community leaders:

Sycamore (Elected Officials)

- Broadening and generating community involvement
- More direct outreach to community members (especially younger members ,etc
- Over scheduled families, commitments etc. that prevent community members from fully engaging with their community
- How do we reach community members who want to be involved
- How do we provide choices for members to get involved
- Folks are in a bubble – don't really look outside the community
 - inability to relate to others
- Acknowledge were a white community who wants to reach all citizens
- Lack of front porches in homes/communities
- Neighbors don't necessarily know one another
- Difficult to make friends without kids
- You don't know what you don't know
- Expensive to live in
 - not affordable housing options
- The notion that "its not my problem"
 - lack of accountability for actions
- Assumption that people of color in Simsbury do not live here
- For seniors it's a hard place to live
 - lack of public transportation can led to isolation
- Assuming families are all the same race

3 Men and the Ladies (Concerned Parents)

- Diversity and inclusion efforts are missing the mark
 - language usage, honors classes under-representation
- Unconscious bias – address this!
- Disparity in how school incidents are addressed
 - Lack of accountability
- Culture of bullying unaddressed
 - Culture of drugs/alcohol unaddressed

Straight Shooters (Law Enforcement)

- Communication between diverse groups
 - Isolation of groups
 - Limited interaction
- Judgement
 - Color
 - LGBT
 - Religion
 - Disability
- Gossip

- Interaction on social media
- Lack of cross culture awareness and education
 - lack of interaction with diverse groups
- Still a stigma against white people and people of color dating or deep friendships people typically get defensive or offended quickly. Hard to have an open conversation
- Ongoing small stereotyping

SimsImpact (Community Activists)

- We live inside a bubble
- Lack of diversity
- Racial profiling
- Transportation / housing services
- White privilege / entitlement
- Lack of inclusivity
 - Internal judgement based on where one lives

7 for Ed (Education Administrators)

- Students growing up in racial and ethnic isolation develop skewed ideas about race and culture
- There is a lack of diversity in the curriculum to assist educators with meaningful opportunities to develop cultural competency in students – People of Color need to be portrayed in a positive, successful light.
- We need to build the capacity of educators and parents to address inequities and confront stereotypes, biases and subverted racism
- Much more representation in teaching, staff, Department of Education, and police department. As students need opportunities to interact with all different kinds of human beings.
- Our schools and town need to be welcoming to all students and families. Key = all

Be the Change (Faith Based Community)

- Families are being separated because the housing units aren't big enough
- Federal restrictions on housing
- More resources for new Mainers regarding faith based organizations
- Financial resources and capacity building for Islamic centers
- Lack of education and understanding for Islamic cultures of Americans
- Fear of the Islamic culture/people and the Muslim community
- Preventative security measures in place especially during Friday prayers and holidays

Students First (Teachers)

- Hidden discrimination
 - Cultural inequity
 - Different expectations
 - Achievement gap
 - Lack diversity in leadership
 - Narrow curriculum
- Lack of connection
 - Don't talk about what is wrong
 - Indirect problem solving
 - How to get involvement
 - Not connected to seniors in community
- Response to changing demographics

- Fear diversity
- Lack knowledge of life outside Simsbury
- Unaware of perspectives
- Town identity crisis
- Assumptions of Simsbury
- Lack participation without financial resources
- Structure
 - Economic
 - Lack transportation

The Kids Table (Student Leaders)

- It starts early
 - In school and at home
 - Not teaching children to celebrate their differences
- Opportunity to be heard
 - Make more clubs available earlier
 - Raise awareness for clubs
- Segregation
 - Happens in subtle ways
- Asking for help
 - More role models in school who are people of color (people who look like us)

Group 9 (Faith Based Activist Community)

- Lack of education around race, diversity, history, white privilege, cultural sensitivity
- Dis-engagement from the broader community (Hartford problems aren't our problems) (part of the town "provincial mindset")
- Maintain the narrative – sweep problems under the rug (drugs, suicide, mental health, economic security)
- Lack of diversity – or is it hidden?
- Community feeling of self-righteousness, hypocrisy – use freedom movement (MLK) or 1 Think (ABS Couse) to calm the attitude "you should be happy to be here"

A Unique Perspective (Concerned Parents)

- Diversity heroes
- Start young – conversation
- Teachers and law enforcement diversity
- Extend the curriculum
 - Literature, history
- Community education
 - Expectation diversity and collaboration

Step 3: SPIRIT Council Selection and Issues Identification Small Group Report Outs

After the issues identification phase of the process, each small group was asked to select two community leaders to participate on the SPIRIT Council, along with two community leaders to act as alternates. The small groups were re-convened into the large, general session group. Each group, represented by the newly selected SPIRIT Council members, gave a short presentation on their

identified strengths and issues/areas of concern.

Step 4: Voting and Prioritization

After the small group report outs, each participant received three dots. The participants were asked to place one dot by the issue most important to them. The issues were then consolidated and prioritized based on participant votes.

The following are the consolidated votes by community leaders:

Issue/Area of Concern	Number of Votes
1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity	31
2. Supportive Silence	27
3. Diversity in curriculum	16
4. Representation in teaching, staff, Board of Education, police	16
5. People get defensive or offended quickly	14
6. Broadening and generating community involvement	13
7. Communication between diverse groups	13
8. Disparity in how school incidents are addressed	12

Step 5: Problem Solving and Solution Development

For the solution development phase, community leaders were asked to develop solutions for the top seven issues identified by participant votes. Participants were asked to stand at their grouped tables, count off from one to ten, and then move to the table with all the same numbers. This resulted in ten tables of randomly mixed participants. Each table was asked to resolve the top vote getting problem identified during the previous session. They were each then asked to address one additional problem from the remaining six top vote getting issues. During this phase of the process, community leaders utilized the five-step problem solving process to develop solutions and action plans.

The five-step problem-solving method

1. Identify the problem
2. Brainstorm possible solutions
3. Pick the best solution(s)
4. Develop a plan of action and implement the solution
5. Follow-up on the success of the implementation

The following solutions were developed by community leaders:

GROUP #1

Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution

- **Civil Service – everyone has a mandated training**
- **Leaders organize a team**
- **Educators, students, police, Board of Education**
- **Make it quality, good training**
- **Make it personal**
- **Make it appropriate for the audience**
- **Make it a coordinated campaign - Library, town hall, school system**
- **Dir. Henry L. Gates**
- **Finding the strengths – in the school districts or curriculum**
- **Share it and learn from it**
- **Finding and focusing on common ground**
- **Curriculum that includes group opportunities to work toward a unified goal**
- **Transportation for students that do not live in Simsbury**
- **Address concerns in school**
- **Resurrect programs to connect families**

2. Diversity in curriculum

Solution

- **Starting the conversation:**
 - **Review historical perspective**
 - **Roll it out consistently**
 - **Hire a vendor**
- **Teams of educators – going to the Board of Education**
- **Curriculum to educate the educators**
- **Curriculum purge – literature, media, videos**
- **Recognize the sensitivities**
- **Input from both families to engage in communication to help with transportation - meet somewhere**
- **Connect with families**
- **Before school program – providing opportunities for kids from the CREC program – provide a safe, welcoming space**
- **Community Cultural Night – some schools are doing this**
- **Community wide partnering with schools**
- **Which could send a positive message, including it with another established activity like school fairs**
- **Review curriculum to find out what are the opportunities for diversity and inclusion**
- **Curriculum purge, especially in literature and media**
- **Training for educators leaders, town, students and parents**

GROUP #2

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a district-wide initiative to make this happen• Re-look and audit of curriculum• Are all groups represented?• Process to push out the results of this work to people who don't interact with the schools• School libraries police force & town employees, business community, churches, pre-schools• Bring the issue to where the people are. For example: sports• Police involved in the delivery of the curriculum• What is produced is objective, consistent, and transferable• Strategies so that it actually gets to everyone• Fostering conversations and common language across lots of groups• Fits every angle –every leader of every group• Adopt curriculum to create a SPIRIT code• Here are 6 things we do “code of conduct” or SPIRIT code• Capture peoples stories or share on SCTV and in other ways• Mandatory - imbedded in curriculum• As part of the effort, reward the business, etc. for adopting/practicing the code of conduct• Big Idea: 2 levels of education<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ School curriculum○ Outreach to other organizations and citizens and groups in town• Part of the work in the school systems = opportunities for students who are different from one another to get t do things together• Opportunities for student to be in like groups so they don't have to be isolated and speak for everyone (for example, all black students)

2. Under-representation in teaching staff, Board of Education, police

Solution

- **Set goals for recruitment but make this a group of people – don't just try to get 1 – 2 students**
- **Partnerships with colleges**
- **Go to teachers colleges before they graduate – recruit**
- **Consider interim baby steps in schools so students see and have representative opportunities**
- **Get outside help from firms that help with minority recruitment**
- **Research reasons more small number of minorities in the applicant pool or teachers, police and Board of Education**
- **For Board of Education, reach out to people who participate in conversations like this**

GROUP #3

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what's needed at every level • Identify community stakeholders • Recurring themes that get carried throughout all three educational levels (elementary through high school) • Create trips/opportunities for students to see and learn about other communities (exchanges) • Create timeline for curriculum and checklists that demonstrate learned competencies • Teacher exchange program with Simsbury –Hartford school systems • Peer mentoring at all levels (upper kid positively mentors younger kid) for example: high school senior with high school freshmen • Family matching program that mirrors the ABC program (requires community commitment and involvement) • How to incentivize community (get buy-in) • Leadership must lead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Within school district (administrators, teachers, etc. ○ Within coaching staff (extra-curricular) ○ Task force / committee committed to the issues ○ Board of Selectmen

2. Supportive Silence

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration must take the lead and set standards and enforce policies • Teachers must “time in” not disengage or run from issues • Specific guidelines with consequences set by administration and a timeline for resolution • Increased support for teachers who step up to address issues and support students • Crating a student advocate / student support person / ombudsperson for the schools who has a direct relationship and impact with the school administration

- **The number of positions depends on the number of students and needs**

GROUP #4

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start early = critical • Training for teachers – develop cultural competence • Communication: diversity trainer – bridge gap between teacher and student once per month in small groups • Love your fellow person • Diversity training for students • Community conversations: mix up the groups and have a curriculum • Barriers: teachers worry about hurting feelings of young children. Teachers face pushback from home • Teachers make judgment • Students don't see enough black folk in their homes so they rely on stereotypes • Elitism: talk not about color but our humanity • Need relational aspect. Not just about formal education • Personal connections: have to work to create these in a predominantly white town • Assemblies • Both big physical groups and medium and small groups • Talk from the pulpit • Early and often • Boys and girls clubs, churches, sports teams • Bring people together – share food and music • Team of leaders • Consistent message, then you can move it. Expect resistance • Art – careful with reference to Black Art and music and poetry • Students as part of Simsbury SPIRIT Council • Petitioning administration |
|---|

2. Diversity in curriculum

Solution

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at what is currently being taught. Conduct an audit. Audit group to include people and experts from the outside |
|---|

- **Classroom library and school library must be conscious**
- **Courses in high school about inequalities**
- **Give them the institutional space and support for these**
- **Message given the content is important**
- **Top down from the Board of Education**
- **Strategy is a three pronged approach:**
 - **Grass roots aspect – relational. People getting to know and interact with people different from themselves. Gatherings in homes and churches**
 - **Top down aspect – Board of Education (curriculum)**
 - **Student activism. Cohort of students in Simsbury SPIRIT group who have the support and the resources of the rest of the group.**
- **Bridge differences through churches**
- **Get together: Harford and Simsbury**
- **School counselors and support staff take on a broader scope – look at behavior data**
 - **Audit supports to help open choice success**
 - **Audit supports for diversity of activities**
 - **Counseling**
 - **Academics with teachers**
 - **College acceptances, etc.**
 - **Benchmark successful role model etc.**
 - **Districts, states, countries**

GROUP #5

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine an expert resource to partner with Simsbury for a curricular audit as well as community audit to start to know what we do not know and fill in the gaps • Denote financial resource to audit - This group needs a number • Share this experience with six people • Offering programs, systems, and opportunities for Stigma Releasing and safe conversations • Empowering students and adults with language to use to “speak up” in multiple situations both in conflict and to reinforce positively. For example: “We Don’t Do That Here.” • Reaching back out to all members here tonight to share with six people what they learned and where we would like to go as a community • Trojan community challenge in announcements daily • Share the “learn” • Simsbury Community Challenge – Share your “proof” of meeting the challenge through social media

2. Supportive Silence

Solution

- Define as “Condoning through inaction”
- Administrators create a system to address when teachers and staff choose to stay silent (accountability)
- Revamp of website / handbook / regarding what is acceptable or not.
- Training for teachers, administrators, staff regarding how to address issues
- Trojan code – community appreciate, include, speak up, say something
- “Place” behavior with interpersonal behavior (safety between people)
- Teaching explicitly what language and behavior is okay and what is absolutely not (hate speech vs first amendment rights, etc)
- Use the empathy approach “this is how it will impact someone”

GROUP #6

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution

- Summer reading list
- Outreach to early childhood education centers
- Family talking points (material provided) “the don’ts” follow up in classroom
- Town wide campaign with a positive slogan to build interest. Table at all town events. SWAG. Cool stuff. Run alongside the 350th anniversary. SCTV – community chats. Social media. Utilize public banners
- “its cool to be curious”
- “embrace differences”
- Images of multicultural hugging
- “embracing differences in Simsbury”

2. Disparity in how school incidents are addressed

Solution

- Zero tolerance. What is the educational / teaching response
- All staff education (bus drivers, maintenance, etc.) on diversity
- Teach all staff how to refer to students for behaviors and how to respond in the moment
- No divisive clothing that is distracting to the educational process
- Include this area to be addressed in evaluations
- Restorative model
 - Students make amends with the person they hurt
 - Facilitate conversations between students who engaged in a physical altercation
 - Research essay for using the “n” word

- All club leaders and sports captains to engage in diversity training and learn how to respond
- Equip people with the education
- Social workers / guidance to push in to classrooms to assist in classroom discussions
- Engaging and educating all students on issues of diversity and incorporate all students to work towards positive culture

GROUP #7

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution

- Banners on main street of diverse Simsbury residents
- Conduct curriculum audit
- Start early – be more diverse in selection of read aloud books
- Bring in outside sources to provide trainings related to race and other ‘isms’
- Display flags of countries people are from
- Create safe culture to acknowledge what one doesn’t know
- Dialogues among students and School Resource Officers. Goal is better understanding of each other. Relationships matter
- Conversations among students
- Adopt a sister school
- Create culturally inclusive events – approach the POC at events and welcome them
- Welcoming committee

2. People get defensive or offended quickly

Solution

- *Group 7 did not have sufficient time to adequately address this issue, so they concentrated on their primary issue.

GROUP #8

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution

- **More diverse field trips**
 - **Gospel choir**
 - **Unified sound**
- **Rotary park events – celebrate what is different**
- **Mandatory cultural classes**
 - **Not just in class, podcasts, etc**
- **Sports cultural competencies**
- **Teachers need to be accountable**
- **Teachers need cultural training**
- **Teachers need to be held accountable if you turn your back on racism/sexism, you are guilty**
- **Administrators need to follow through**
- **Team approach – admin – teachers-parents-students**
- **The Laramie show should have been mandatory for all students**
- **More opportunity for all community, not just the school to learn**
- **Take the village approach**
- **Take ownership of the mistake**
- **Cultural festival (citywide cultural night)**
- **Embrace all beliefs/celebrations**
- **Curriculum review**
- **Start early**
- **More diverse teachers**
- **Remove staff that condone racial climate by “sitting in silence”**

2. Generating Community Involvement

Solution

- **Lack of support teachers and para-professionals which means no good options**
- **Teachers are not feeling supported and feel disenchanting with job**
- **Cultural exchange, progressive dinner**
- **Protected students who are not held to the same standard based on grades, parents, talents must stop**
- **“Simsbury Neighbors Unite!” Facebook – parents bullying = poor role models**
- **Year of cultural diversity**

GROUP #9

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution

- **Curriculum audit/review with an equity lens. Initial focus on 5 core subjects K-12**
 - **change, tools similar to expand equity, literacy, change iceberg theory of culture, implicit bias training**
- **Cultural fair district wide – like a science fair for each grade**
- **Parent workshop series on how to navigate issues of race, equity – the day to day conversations that come up and how to competently deal with them**
- **Diversity is diverse: intentional lesson planning with instructional strategies that support the marginalized student**
- **How is instructional planning and implementation evaluated?**

2. How can communication between diverse groups be improved?

Solution

- *** Group 9 did not have sufficient time to adequately address this issue, so they concentrated on their primary issue**

GROUP #10

1. Lack of education around diversity, race, history, white privilege, and cultural sensitivity

Solution

- **Create an equity council for the schools to include community representatives, student representative and parent representatives**
- **Implementing more cultural diversity in schools meals**
- **Connect with community activities and community organizations to engage in awareness around race, diversity, history, privilege, etc.**
- **Open a panel discussion on Simsbury TV on the above issues**
- **Employing teachers and police of color**
- **Becoming a diverse community**
- **Allowing students and the community to understand that you are committed to the process**

2. People get defensive or offended quickly

Solution

- **Reach out to faith based and different community groups to move the conversation**

- **Create safe environments where people can have the conversations**
- **Open conversations in safe places explaining the foundations of these issues. The structural foundations and pieces of racism**

Step 6: Solution Development Small Group Report Outs

Following the solution development phase, the small the groups were supposed to re-convene into the large, general session group so that each group could give a short presentation on their specific recommendations and implementation strategies to address the issues identified. Unfortunately, the large number of groups and presentations made it impossible to do the final brief outs within the allotted time. The lead facilitator instructed the groups to draft and submit their solutions, and CRS would compile them into a SPIRIT Report which would then be delivered back to the event organizers for distribution.

Step 7: SPIRIT Council

The process ended with positive exchanges between all participants. Simsbury leadership requested volunteers for the Simsbury SPIRIT Council, including alternates, and committed to follow-up meetings and implementation of several solutions developed by the community leaders. Community leaders and SPIRIT Council members will utilize steps four and five of the recommended “Five-Step Problem Solving Process” i.e. developing a “plan of action” to maximize success and solution implementation.

SPIRIT Council Members	
Straight Shooters	Donna Cambpell Chris Kelly
3 Men and the Ladies	Curtis
SimImpact	Sharon Thomas Lloyd Hue Robichaud
Be the Change	Joan Nicole Grace Lee Madison Allen
Kids Table	Amoya Ansley Amina Carrigton Calh Hue Michael Krisky
7 for Education	Angella Griffin
Table 9	Deacon Art Miller

	Maxien Robinson-Lewin
A Unique Perspective	Peerma Vyas Robyn Ampadu Jack Knall Mrs. Garfield
Team Sycamore	Tara Todd Nick
At Large Requests to be on the SPIRIT Council	Carol Clark-Flannagan Gene Ott Heather O'Connor Tanesha Grant Jenna Caulfield Margaret Girgenn Sara Robotham Brandon Rothschild Meg Evans Ainsley Thompson Diana Yeisley Curtis Looney Todd Kushman Chief Boulter

Step 7: Resources and Next Steps

At the request of community leadership and pending available resources, CRS will provide facilitation services to the SPIRIT Council and city/school board leadership during the first action planning sessions.

CRS Contact:
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