

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

On The Table 2017: Reducing Stigma Associated with Mental Health and Addiction

Why May 16th?

The Kennedy Forum Illinois partners with The Chicago Community Trust in the *On the Table* initiative, a regional civic engagement day that takes place May 16th, 2017. We are asking you to host your conversation on that day, or if not on that day, during that week. By hosting a conversations on that day, you'll be part of an exciting, statewide initiative with thousands of others.

What does a host do?

We want to make it easy for you! The first step is to pick a place and time on May 16 where you would like your invitees to gather for a conversation. Gatherings are typically about 90 minutes over a meal (but can be anytime and we recommend inviting 8-12 people). Ideas for facilitating and focusing the conversation can be found [here](#).

How do I sign up?

Follow this link to register: <https://onthetable.com/the-kennedy-forum/> You will enter your name, email, date, and time of conversation, as well as topic of conversation. If you aren't sure of your topic, we suggest using "The Kennedy Forum On The Table". You may login and edit this information at any time.

Where and when can I host a conversation?

You determine a location for folks to meet on May 16th at any time of day. The conversation can take place during a meal (but does not have to). It can be coffee and doughnuts, a picnic, pot-luck - whatever works best. The conversation can be at *any time of day* and *any location* you choose (e.g., home, workplace, restaurant, church). In some cases, it may be appropriate to host a virtual conversation. Meeting software such as GoToMeeting, Skype, or Google Hangouts can make this easy and fun.

Who do I invite to my conversation?

You are the host, you set the table. You decide who you would like to invite - friends and family, neighbors, colleagues, community members, etc. With conversation at the heart of this event, we recommend keeping it small - 8-12 guests at each gathering. We also strongly encourage you to have an individual at the table with personal experience with mental health or addiction challenges.

How should I invite my guests?

You can contact them via email, phone, text, social media, or face-to-face conversation. We have drafted a template email to get you started. We can work directly with you to draft specific language and discuss strategies to connect you with guests. [Click here for template language](#).

Do I have to Host my conversation on May 16th?

No, you don't have to host your conversation on May 16th. We want to find a date and time that is convenient for you and those participating in the conversation. If the day after, day before, or week before work better for schedules, we still want you to participate.

What should we talk about?

Within the general frame of mental health and addiction, you can determine if you would

like to have a specific focus. You can talk generally or hone in on a particular question. [Click here](#) for a downloadable discussion guides and general mental health conversation themes. For example, some possible topics might include:

- How do I/we experience mental health stigma and how can we address it?
- What can our school do better to detect, address and support students with mental health challenges?
- What can our company/workplace do to build a culture that supports those with mental health and addiction disorders?
- What is the new mental health parity law and how can we educate ourselves and others about their rights under the law?
- How can technology help improve access and care?
- How can we work together to make a difference?

The Kennedy Forum Illinois [conducted a statewide poll](#) on mental health. You may want to consider the results of this survey and ask your group, how can we move the needle on these numbers?

For more tips about how to open a dialogue with those you love and with those around you, please visit: <http://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk>

Can I host more than one conversation?

Yes – the more the better! When [registering](#), simply add the amount of people you will host over the course of the day. If you plan to host a large event at your institution, or many conversations throughout the day, simply add up the number of people you expect to participate.

How do I get my entire organization involved?

We encourage large scale efforts by people and organizations, whether it's school, church, workplace, or non-profit. The Kennedy Forum can help you plan for these conversations and help you find an appropriate topic of conversation. [Contact us for more information.](#)

How can I help spread the word and encourage others to host conversations?

We would love for you to help us spread the word! You can download a [host information packet here](#) (includes a host template letter) with more instructions.

How are you keeping track of hosting commitments?

When you [register](#), it helps us keep track. The registration system will track participants and The Kennedy Forum will internally track registrations, host commitments, conversation topics, time and location.

How will my contact information be used once I sign up to host or participate in a conversation?

Contact information submitted via the *On the Table* registration form will not be shared outside of The Kennedy Forum and The Chicago Community Trust. Hosts and participants will receive emails providing additional information, resources and opportunities to share stories, provide feedback and get involved. You can unsubscribe from these communications at any time.

How will the Chicago Community Trust track outcomes from the conversations?

Every *On the Table* host and participant will be asked to complete a short follow up survey that helps us learn more about the impact and outcomes of the conversations. The survey is anonymous, and your responses remain confidential. Only aggregate results will be shared publicly.

We encourage you and your guests to complete this survey - with a critical mass of conversations around mental health, we can demonstrate that this is an issue of importance to our State and gain important feedback about what is being done and what more we need to do. We ask that you [share guest email information](#) with us or share the surveys with your guests following the conversation.

What social media tags will be used for the event?

Twitter: @KennedyForum; @ChiTrust

Facebook: @KennedyForumIllinois

Hashtags include: #BreakTheSilence; #OnTheTable2017; #MentalHealth

Why are conversations about mental health so important?

Talking about mental health is both a means and an end. Conversations themselves help to fight stigma by increasing understanding, awareness, and acceptance. Discussions across stakeholders can help identify pathways to solutions and create new partnerships to drive progress.

Last May, more than 55,000 people participated in the *On the Table* conversations - generating new ideas, new partnerships, and new solutions. The *On the Table* initiative is a valuable opportunity for Illinoisans to gather in safe spaces with families, colleagues, friends and community members to talk about issues of importance to them and identify collaborative opportunities to make a positive difference. At The Kennedy Forum, we believe this is a perfect platform to support and encourage more dialogue—and more solutions—on issues related to mental health.

What happens after the conversation is over?

The work continues. The Kennedy Forum will contact you once the conversation is over with a short survey, information to stay involved, tips to fight stigma on a regular basis, and an opportunity to apply for The Chicago Community Trust's *Acting Up Awards*. The Awards affords all individuals and organizations who participated in On The Table to submit an application to receive a monetary award to complete an actionable task to benefit the community. [Contact us for more information.](#)

What is The Kennedy Forum Illinois?

The Kennedy Forum Illinois is a united campaign to end the stigma against mental health and substance use disorders. You can learn more about our work [here](#).

I need help! How can I reach someone at Kennedy Forum Illinois?

We are here to help you. Please feel free to contact [Kelly](#) or [James](#). We can help you identify possible discussion topics, match you with guests who are looking for conversations, provide you with resource materials, and support your outreach efforts.