

# AHRQ's Community Forum

## Using Deliberative Methods to Engage the Public

### Webinar

Moderator: Jill Yegian

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3:00 p.m. ET

[START]

#### **Introduction**

JILL YEGIAN: Thank you for joining us for this webinar on using deliberative methods to engage the public. I'm Jill YEGIAN with AHRQ's Community Forum Project.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality is doing a substantial amount of work in deliberative methods through the Community Forum Project and other venues, and today's how-to webinar is a direct result of this strong interest we have found.

The Community Forum is a three-year research initiative led by the American Institutes for Research. A major goal of this project is to advance the use of deliberative methods for obtaining input from members of the public on health-research topics.

We have planned presentations on several topics, with time for Q&A at the end. Please feel free to send in your questions via the chat feature located on the right side of your screen at any time during the webinar.

Please note that you have the option to send your questions as a private chat message to the host, Cailin Falato or a public message to everyone, which all participants will be able to see. You may also want to refer to the email that went out yesterday, which includes a screen shot that may be helpful.

We will be collecting your questions throughout the webinar and holding them for the Q&A session at the end.

A few comments on logistics. If you're having any technical difficulties during the webinar, you can also use the chat feature for technical support. Please send a private chat message to the host, Cailin Falato, or if you prefer to use your email, please email Jess Fernandez at [JFernandez@AIR.org](mailto:JFernandez@AIR.org).

Today's session is intended to provide practical guidance for those interested in using deliberative methods for obtaining meaningful public input inform their work.

As you know, deliberative methods convene members of the public or of a specific community to learn about and discuss a complex societal issue. The goal is to elicit more carefully considered public views than in traditional methods like opinion polling or even focus groups and ultimately to use this input to inform decisions.

We are pleased to present a terrific panel of leaders in the field, each of whom has extensive experience implementing deliberative methods in the real world. The topics they will be covering are listed here.

The first six -- goal setting, recruitment, designing a deliberative session, educating session participants, facilitation and synthesizing the outputs of deliberative sessions -- feature some of the key activities and issues to address in setting up a deliberative methods process to obtain public input.

The last topic will provide an overview of the deliberation experiment taking place as part of AHRQ's Community Forum Project.

I would like to provide you with a brief introduction to our four panelists now, and then a bit more information when each presenter begins. Jyoti Gupta is a senior public engagement associate at Public Agenda, a nonpartisan and

nonprofit public opinion research and public engagement organization.

Susan Goold is a professor of internal medicine at the Medical School, and a professor of health management and policy at the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan.

Julia Abelson is a professor of clinical epidemiology and biostatistics at McMaster University. She is also an associate member of the Department of Political Science and a member of the Centre for Health Economics and Policy Analysis.

Kristin Carman of the American Institutes for Research manages the deliberative methods component of AHRQ's Community Forum Project.

Now, I'd like to turn it over to Jyoti Gupta of Public Agenda to address the first topic, goal setting. Jyoti works on the management, development and implementation of public engagement programs across a range of disciplines including work on community college student success and social and environmental justice issues. Her experience in community health research has focused on increasing local capacity research to overcome health and economic disparities. Jyoti.

## Goal Setting

**Jyoti Gupta, MPH**  
***Public Agenda***

JYOTI GUPTA: Hi. Thank you, Jill. So this, as Jill says, this is Jyoti from Public Agenda, and Public Agenda is a non-partisan and non-profit organization. And our mission is to really strengthen our democracy by improving public problem solving which we pursue through opinion research, stakeholder and public engagement and strategic communication.

So my role in this first segment is to discuss the importance of setting a clear and attainable goal for your deliberation and to provide some guidance on how to go about defining that goal.

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So careful thinking from the beginning about not only what specifically you want to deliberate on, but also why you want to deliberate on the particular issue, why deliberation, in particular, is the right approach, what you see as the outcome of deliberation and how you will know if you achieved those outcomes, to answer these

question is among the first of the critical steps in your planning process.

And how you define your goals by answering these questions will help you to choose the right strategies and methodologies for engagement and will also encourage you to be clear and honest about what you can really expect to realistically be the outcome.

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So the graphic here represents just one framework for thinking about the different kinds of goals. It was developed by a colleague, a senior fellow at Public Agenda, Martín Carcasson, who is also director of the Center for Public Deliberation at Colorado State University.

And in this framework, the goals are broken down into first-order, second-order and third-order goals where they progress, really, from being sort of the most realistic to those requiring the most investment.

And one of the chief premises on the alignments framework is that it's always important to keep the third-order goal in your line of vision while still making sure that the actions and the lower-order goals connect to that vision.

So these are not mutually exclusive. They're really self reinforcing, and, in fact, you know, there really should be another arrow that goes from the third-order to the second-order and the third-order to the first-order goals, but focusing on the first- and second-order goals early on that can really help you to maximize the impact of your deliberative event or project.

So I use those frameworks here more as a way of organizing the different kinds of goals than to suggest that it's, you know, the only framework for thinking about the goals and deliberations.

So these first-order goals are mostly education. They're knowledge related, and they include, for organizers, facilitators and participants alike, sort of increased awareness for perspectives on a particular issue, generating new information, new ideas, increasing a sense of self efficacy or empowerment, improving community relationships, improving communication skills and improving group decision-making.

The second-order goals are mostly action related or action oriented. They include things like more and improved individual and collaborative actions, greater community empowerment, involvement beyond sort of the usual suspects or the folks who are oftentimes involved in the public-

input processes. Another goal falling under this category would be for decisions to be more legitimate and sustainable.

And then, finally, the third-order goal is the ultimate goal of deliberative practice, so improved community problem solving or can also say more deliberative democracy.

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So to help systematically think through this goal and the indicators of successful engagement and deliberation, we at Public Agenda often encourage engagers or organizers to think through a table very similar to this one which connects to how you envision the concrete actions leading to certain outputs and then how these outputs lead to short-, mid- and long-term outcomes.

I'm sure this kind of thinking is very familiar to many of you in creating logic models or planning models for programs and policies.

So, again, this kind of table emphasizes the importance of thinking up front about what you see as the end outcome while also still emphasizing how careful thinking about the

actions you're going to undertake, how they will help you move towards those later goals.

So the outputs or tangibles might be things like the number of workshops, the number of attendees and types of attendees, the notes that will be generated, new information that you expect will be generated, the types of reports or deliverables that will come out of it.

Short-term outcomes might be things like better understanding of the issue, identification of shared interests or common ground, acceptance of tradeoffs or tough decisions.

Mid-term outcomes might be things like actions that follow up on ideas that are generated during the deliberation or collaborations among stakeholders.

And then the long-term outcomes might be for policy-related changes or changes in health outcome, for instance.

And so once you've mapped out the ranges, potential outputs and outcomes from your engagement, then you can focus on the ones that you expect in the short-term as a direct result of the engagement and deliberation.

And, from here, you decide how are you going to determine if your engagement activities meet those goals. You might ask yourself and your team things like what will success really look like? How will we know when our intended outcome has been achieved?

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So having a clearly-defined purpose and plan up front and throughout can really be the difference between successful and disappointing engagement for both you, as the organizer, and for participants.

So when participants know why they're being asked to deliberate and how their deliberation will contribute to a greater goal, they can have more confidence in the usefulness and importance of their participation.

And if it's clear that the organizers have thought through these questions and planned the engagement accordingly, they can be a more -- they, meaning participants -- can be more trusting in the process. They can feel more encouraged to speak freely, thoughtfully and creatively without worrying about their ideas being criticized or their ideas not being used or have a value.

Listed here are really a variety of actions that organizers should think through and plan for before, during and as follow-up on forums, to set themselves and their deliberation up for success.

These, certainly are not comprehensive lists. There are certainly more planning considerations and under each of these bullets it could probably bullet out a whole slew of additional ones.

So, as you can tell, this slide contains far more information and detail than I can go into in a matter of seconds, but it really drives home this point that there are a number of things that organizers need to plan for in accordance with their goals during and at their forum, so that they can have a greater chance of success and a greater chance of meeting their goals.

And many of these points in these three columns will speak to recruitment and facilitation, all of which will be discussed later in this webinar.

So I'd like to turn it back over to Jill.

JILL YEGIAN: Thank you, Jyoti. At this point, we will hear brief comments on goal setting from Julia Abelson of McMaster University.

Julia's research interests include the design and evaluation of public engagement to inform health-system decision making, the analysis of the role of public values in health policy and the analysis of the determinants of health-policy decision making. Julia.

JULIA ABELSON: Thanks very much. Terrific presentation, and I just really have a couple of very brief comments to add at this point, one really on your first goal slide, the first-order, second-order, third-order goals.

Just to kind of consider the possibility that different parties involved in the deliberation may actually have different goals and may give higher or lower priority to those different goals. I'm thinking in particular of participants compared to the organizers or different sponsors or potentially those who will ultimately receive the output of the deliberations.

So just to keep in mind that there may be different goals held by different parties and sometimes negotiating that can be challenging.

The other one is just the idea that the goals of the sponsoring agency may also include increased accountability and transparency in really creating the conditions for a

legitimate decision-making process, you know, as a goal in its own right, which can also be quite important, aside from the more developmental-learning goals and more action-oriented goals. So those are the only comments I have at this point.

### **Recruiting/Selecting Participants**

**Susan Dorr Goold, MD, MHSA, MA**  
*University of Michigan*

JILL YEGIAN: Thank you, Julia. Next, we'll hear from Susan Goold from the University of Michigan. Susan studies the allocation of scarce healthcare resources, especially the perspectives of patients and citizens.

She worked on the allocation game, CHAT, Choosing Healthplans All Together, results of which have been published and presented in national and international venues. Susan.

SUSAN DORR GOOLD: Thank you, and thank you for having me at this webinar. I'm very excited about participating in it, and I've already learned something.

I wanted to first say that I was asked to speak on the recruitment and selection process, and one of the things

I'll talk about is various alternatives to random sampling, and to put that in perspective, I guess what I would first say is, well, why would you do random sampling?

And the reason, generally, for a random sample of participants in a project, whether it's a research or a policy project or whatever, is to have a proportionally-representative sample of the population you're interested in.

So, for instance, let's say you're interested in, you know, citizens of Michigan, okay? Then a random sample should get you a statistically-proportional sample that represents, in various ways, in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, you know, where they live, what they do for a living, et cetera, the population of the State of Michigan.

So I guess what I would say is -- next slide -- that there are -- So that's why you use a random sample in research processes, for instance, and sometimes that can be justified or preferred for policy projects as well, but not always.

First of all, you know, I call this substantive representation. It's a sort of a political-philosophy thing, and it's basically getting representation on the basis of the extent to which groups or folks with certain

experiences are affected by the decision you're talking about, the decision at issue.

For example, for setting healthcare priorities, you would want to have those with or at greater risk of serious chronic illnesses represented more than those who are healthy, because they are likely to be more affected by the decisions made when you're setting healthcare or health-system priorities.

So there's philosophical reasons for that, and I would say sort of political reasons; that is, proportional representation that you get from random sampling is not necessarily political representation, okay? It's not the same thing.

So I think it's important to, when you're thinking about selection processes and recruitment, to think about, you know, the political representativeness of your sample, not just the statistical representativeness of your sample, if you will.

And, furthermore, this is another argument sort of -- not against random sampling, per se, but something to think about in terms of whether or not you should use random sampling.

When you're using deliberative procedures, you're often gathering people, if not at the same time and the same place, at least at the same time, typically, or in some way that -- as soon as you put some kind of constraint on participation in that way, in terms of you have to be a certain place or you have to log in at a certain time or whatever it is, you automatically weaken the strength of your sort of statistical proportional representation of random sampling.

So, in other words, you don't even have good random sampling most of the time when you have some kind of a requirement that people get together and talk or dialogue in some way, communicate in some way. So that's another sort of, "why not random sampling".

Another argument is that representation, political representation -- and I would say that deliberative procedures -- should include adequate, even disproportionate, inclusion of those who tend to be poorly represented in policy decisions.

So one of the reasons I think that people turn to deliberative procedures is to get active, explicit or more public input on important policy decisions, and we have existing structures for public input on policy decisions.

It's called voting -- okay? -- and lobbying and all that sort of thing.

And one of the things we know is that our political system and -- though I don't live in Canada, Julia, I suspect Canada's, too -- that some people have more representation than others in the standing political systems, and so deliberative procedures should try to compensate for that in some way by ensuring at least adequate if not even disproportionate representation of those who tend to have little voice.

So if you're trying to empower people, you're trying to give people more voice in policymaking, you want to make sure you're reaching out especially to those who tend to be poorly represented as is.

Next slide, please.

So another thing I would say is that deliberators chosen by socially-rooted groups -- so community-based organizations would be an example of this -- can add value to deliberative procedures. So that is if you are recruiting or sampling or going out and trying to get people to participate in your deliberations that going to socially-rooted groups of some kind can be a plus.

They have a defined constituency to whom they're accountable, and so they can feel a responsibility to represent, if you will, that constituency, so if you go to those socially-rooted groups.

And, you know, groups' organizing capabilities can also increase the power of individuals, and so just, you know, getting Joe Blow off the street is one thing. Getting Joe Blow who happens to be a member of a community-based organization related to -- I don't know. Let's see -- homelessness or something, you know, he's going to feel more responsibility toward the issue of homelessness and the people he knows who are homeless or whatever.

And also, you know, the sort of dialogue, the two-way dialogue that is part of a good deliberative procedure also helps to empower the group and the group is able to be more responsive to that.

Also, socially-rooted groups can bring knowledge and flexibility, so, for instance, again, Joe Blow off the street versus Joe Blow from, you know, a community-based organization related to, you know, kids in a particular neighborhood or something like that, that it may be... well, you know, I'm not sure about that. Let me go ask this person, or, I happen to know this person who does that or

whatever. So they can bring some additional knowledge and flexibility to decision making or to recommendations.

Next slide.

So one of the things that I've learned -- to some extent, the hard way -- is that if you want to have folks who tend to be poorly represented in traditional policymaking well represented in your deliberations, you need to compensate them for their time.

A project I was advising on, run by a public entity -- and I'm being purposely vague in a way -- was, you know, having deliberations about a particular issue for mostly lower-income residents of their community. And when I suggested that they make sure that there was payment for those who attended deliberative sessions, they said, Oh, no, we've got plenty of, you know, contacts and relationships in networks and stuff like that and it'll happen.

Well, it didn't, and they spent a lot of money doing the deliberations and then they had to back and spend it again, because when they took the results to the decision makers, the decision makers said, Wait, you don't have representation from the low-income people. You gotta go back.

So I think it's cheaper, in the long run, to compensate them for their time. I think it also honors their time. It honors their participation and allows folks who have job responsibilities, childcare responsibilities, transportation costs that may not be obstacles to some people, but would be obstacles to those who are less fortunate.

Diversity and heterogeneity. I don't have any data on this. I have no research proving this, but I can tell you that I'm not the only one who will usually say that in a deliberative group, however big that is -- and I know Julia is going to talk a bit about size and shape -- that if they're too much alike, then it's a little flat. It's not, generally speaking, as rich of a deliberative dialogue.

So the more different points of view -- And, you know, there is a little bit of tension, because if you're talking about -- I mean, if you're talking about abortion and you bring in, you know, the bishops and the -- I don't know. I'm trying to think of some important feminist person, you know, that's obviously, one spectrum, and you don't necessarily want that kind of tension and adversarial-type of group. But you do want diversity. You want different points of view. And so that's not just diversity about skin color or gender or age even. I mean, it really depends on what topic you're talking about.

So, for instance -- and, you know, most of my examples come from health and healthcare priority setting -- if you're talking about health and healthcare priority setting, people with illness experiences or people who have been uninsured or people who are in rural areas versus urban or suburban, for instance, they will bring different things to the table, different experiences and points of view.

So that's -- you know, it shouldn't just be sort of bread-and-butter demographic diversity. That may well be important, but, depending on the topic, you need to think about what kinds of -- what sort of diversity you want in your deliberative groups to enhance the dialogue and to make it a form of exchanging of ideas.

I mean, the whole idea behind deliberation is that people can, you know, present their point of view and hear from others and try to reason through differences.

JILL YEGIAN: Thank you, Susan. And we are going to turn it over to Jyoti for brief comments on recruitment.

Before we do that, I want to remind everyone to please feel free to send in your questions via the chat feature, that's located on the right side of your screen, at any time

during the webinar, and we'll gather those questions up and use them to inform to the Q&A at the end. Jyoti.

JYOTI GUPTA: Thank you. So I think that was great information from Dr. Goold, and a couple of her points or a few of her points are ones that, you know, I really wanted to underscore because they're ones that have come up in various contexts in Public Agenda's work in a multitude of communities.

So those three things are really kind of the value of over recruiting for particular groups that might be the least likely to come or show up at, you know, whatever your sort of deliberative event is.

The importance of working through known local entities. I think one of the questions that I've already seen in the chat has been about -- or maybe it was from last time -- about, you know, building trust and, you know, how do you plan to get to the representation that you want. And so, you know, working through local entities really does also serve to build trust among participants -- between participants and organizers. Excuse me. And thirdly, going the extra mile to get the diversity of participants you want.

And, third, Dr. Goold's last point about sort of how the diversity really enhances the deliberations because the encountering of perspectives that are not typically voiced and generating new ideas that are coming to the table or from voices that have typically been quieter.

A couple of other things I wanted to say very quickly, one about the importance of personal invitation in recruitment. And, you know, through flyers and postings and other multimedia, these are really effective ways to reach people who might normally attend, say, a public meeting or, you know, a town hall or something like this. And that's also really effective for generating a buzz, an excitement about an event, but they're not as likely to kind of get the unusual suspects, you know, maybe just people who haven't typically been involved in deliberative processes.

And then also I wanted to say that it's important to be aware that people might be reluctant to participate because of past experiences with engagements that have either been poorly organized or, you know, engagements that hasn't resulted in anything and were really clearly just a way to communicate about decisions that were already made, rather than to -- you know, rather than the purpose being to really seek meaningful input and collectively problem solve.

So recruiting can be extremely important not only to be clear, you know, about the specific goal of the deliberations, also about how the event will differ from other public-input processes that people may have participated in the past and communicating how the results are going to be used to improve certain policies or programs or initiatives -- well, improved or to inform or to develop and how this engagement and deliberation is going to really be special.

I think all of these things can really, at least, in our work have really shown to improve the recruitment effect.

### **Designing a Deliberative Forum**

**Julia Abelson, MSc, PhD**  
**McMaster University**

JILL YEGIAN: Thank you, Jyoti. Our third topic is designing a deliberative forum presented by Julia Abelson. Julia.

JULIA ABELSON: Thanks very much. So, as with any of these topics, but maybe this one in particular, there's far more substance and nuance to the topic than I could possibly cover in this very short presentation. So what I've tried

to do is pull out some of the key features that I think need to be considered in designing a deliberative forum.

But I've deliberately skipped over the education and facilitation components which I believe are key design features, but those are going to be addressed in other presentations.

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So the first comment that I will make is that deliberation comes in many shapes and sizes. There is no one size or one shape fits all design. And I think that's entirely appropriate, given all that you've heard so far about the importance of goal setting, of matching the method or the approach that you choose to take to the goals of the deliberative process.

So that all makes sense, but just to give you a sense of what's out there in terms of the different designs, in terms of length, they tend to range from one-day affairs, although some can be even, you know, a partial day, to several days in length, that's in terms of an individual deliberative event.

They may involve very small groups of, you know, about a dozen or so to several hundred or 1,000, depending on the

scale that we may be talking about. They may be organized as single events or have a longer duration where deliberations may take place over several weeks or months or perhaps maybe even institutionalized structures that relate to a particular decision-making body or government agency. So lots of different sort of moving parts here to think about.

I think, ideally, key design decisions should really be informed, as we've heard already, by the goals of your deliberation, but also thinking about the scale and complexity of the issues, right?

So, for example, is this primarily a local issue? Is it a state or is it a national issue? Does it affect a very small segment of the population or community? Does it affect, you know, an entire population or have universal application?

Similarly, we need to think about issues of timing and what stage in the decision-making or policy process you are in and when it might make most sense to think about developing a deliberative forum and using it. So we think about things like a time-limited issue, for which input is required to inform a decision immediately.

And I'm thinking of a case in Canada where the Public Health Agency of Canada needed to make some decisions about how to prioritize the allocation of some responses to an H1N1 pandemic -- right? -- a pandemic-flu planning issue.

So very quick time frames here, very short time frames here where decisions need to be made very, very quickly, and yet a very strong interest in having a good, solid, you know, comprehensive, deliberative process in place to inform that very strong sort of values-based, decision-making process.

So is it that time-limited stage that you are in or are we looking at potentially decision being taken further out -- right? -- where you actually have the benefit of having a set of meetings that might take place over several weeks or months or potentially even a panel that is sort of a standing panel that is asked to deliberate and to inform a structured process over a period of time? So those are some of the decisions that need to be taken.

And I think as important as it is for form to follow function -- right? -- we often hear that term -- often the realities of budget availability, of institutional requirements or constraints and even legislative mandates will dictate how a deliberative forum actually takes its shape. So I think that's something that we have to

recognize as well as those everyday realities that we're faced with.

Some general principles to keep in mind, particularly when you're deciding between, say, a time-limited or one-off event versus ongoing deliberation, you know, obviously, a one-time or ad-hoc deliberative event is going to provide far more limited opportunities for a group to gel and to engage in really high-quality deliberation, but I think with a lot of the evidence that we have from the literature in this field -- and it is growing -- is that with a very-clearly articulated purpose and very carefully-designed processes, they have been found to yield some very useful input that is, in fact, used.

They are not generally a good choice, though, for issues or organizations where a major decision is being taken that's high profile that will effect a very large group of people for which there is a range of views supported by different values -- right? -- and we're talking about major changes to service delivery or benefits programs, major, you know, priority-setting, resource-allocation decisions. And in these cases one might want to consider a design that has a longer timeframe.

As a rule of thumb, though, when we're looking at ongoing deliberative structures or panels, a rule of thumb of, you

know, no more than six to eight weeks between meetings, right? So we need to think about the frequency of those meetings to ensure that participants don't have to continue to re-immense themselves and relearn material that's covered in previous meetings.

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So a few more points, just on these three design features. As you're making major decisions about the overall structure of the forum in terms of the number and length of sessions, a few things to keep in mind.

Participants need adequate time to familiarize themselves with the issue -- right? -- that's being deliberated on. Their fellow deliberators, these are, you know, for the most part, people who have never met each other, meeting each other for the very first time and learning, you know, have a tall order placed on them to come together, bring themselves up to speed on an issue, often a very complex one with lots of, you know, technical information perhaps associated with it. Organizers or sponsors of the deliberation are also unknown to them. So lots of different people, lots of familiarizing that needs to take place.

But they also, most importantly, need to learn how to deliberate, and it is not, you know, a simple task, necessarily, that we all come to a meeting like this with those skills.

So by learning how to deliberate, I'm referring to developing the skills that are needed to be able to listen, to ask questions, to share viewpoints, both to supporting and dissenting, and really to challenge each other in a respectful and constructive manner, all of which are, you know, key elements or core elements of deliberation.

You know, I was asked to give a sense of what the time frame is for being able to learn how to deliberate, and, obviously, this can vary tremendously, depending on the experience people have with this kind of activity.

I think in my own experience I've seen this take from, you know, several hours up to a full day or even it happening, you know, and continuing to evolve over, you know, five meetings.

But I think that the idea here is the ability to provide the conditions for adequate deliberation has a great deal to do with the quality of facilitation, right? So, here, the facilitators become very, very important supports to

this process, and I know that'll be a separate section for discussion.

Some of the literature has recommended a two-day period, you know, with a sleep in between and time for internal deliberation, sort of thinking and mulling over on your own time when you're not with everybody else that that's a more realistic time frame to aim for, so that people can learn and apply these skills.

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As I've stated earlier, deliberation can occur over a very large or very small scale, again, depending on the goal of the initiative and the institutional or budgetary constraints.

Whether you're going large or small-scale, you know, again, some things to keep in mind: Making sure that there are opportunities for small-group deliberation, even within a larger deliberative forum, to ensure that those principles of full and fair participation are in place.

And, really, again, we keep focusing on goals, but, again, the importance of establishing clear goals for both the small and large groups to avoid confusion and duplication of tasks. So often in a large deliberative forum you may

break off into smaller groups to take on some very specific tasks. Really important to be clear about what those small-group tasks are that are distinct from those being handled in the larger group, so that you're not simply doing the same thing over in the small group and the large group.

Goals for small groups can often involve working through a set of pre-circulated questions or weighing in on proposed options or recommendations. It's really critical to reinforce the goal, though, of articulating the values that underpin viewpoints that are shared, which I think are just as important as the actual position that someone might take on the issue, so really get up at values-based reasoning that is so important and so fundamental to deliberation.

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And, lastly, this whole issue of content and product of deliberation. And, really, by content, I'm not only referring to the issue or the topic, but, more importantly, to the substance -- right? -- and what do you want or expect to see as the product of that deliberation. Is it focused on eliciting values to inform a decision-making process, for example, or are you at the policy-option or evaluation stage where you would like to have some

deliberation on specific options or scenarios? Do you want to see concrete recommendations?

So trying, as much as you can, to be very clear up front about what it is that you want to see coming out of that deliberation, or perhaps you're interested in some combination of all of those things.

Critical for the content activities undertaken in the deliberation to be guided by those goals that are set out for it and to be aligned with the intended use of the output.

And really a point to be clear that you need to communicate that purpose over and over again to the participants, so that they're very clear. Often, they go off and get very excited about the tasks they're being asked to take on. They need to be reminded over and over again of what is the big -- you know, the larger purpose here, what are they being asked to bring back from their small groups and ultimately out of the deliberative process as a whole.

That's it for me for this section.

JILL YEGIAN: Terrific, Julia, really helpful presentation.

## **Educating Session Participants**

**Susan Dorr Goold, MD, MHSA, MA**  
*University of Michigan*

We head on. Planned to ask Susan to make a few comments, but we're getting really terrific questions and we do want to make sure that we're reserving enough time at the end for some substantial Q&A.

So, Susan, I think we'll ask you to move directly into the next section of the webinar, educating session participants.

SUSAN DORR GOOLD: Okay. Well, I'm going to take the privilege of saying everything Julia said was great.  
[Laughter].

But I would add one thing to what she said, and so this won't take much time at all, and that is that, you know, the amount of time, obviously can vary a lot, but I also would suggest that if you're talking about public deliberation that you need to think about -- and this sort of segues into my topic -- you need to think about what questions you're asking them, what tasks you're giving them, and that the more abstract those questions and tasks are the harder it will be for them to do it, to effectively deliberate.

And I think Julia effectively addressed issues about time for reflection of individuals and groups and all that stuff.

So next slide.

Okay. So deliberative procedures are informed democratic deliberation, typically involve and include informing and educating participants in some way.

The materials or the methods used for that need to be comprehensible to the people who are participating as deliberators, and engaging, which I think we probably don't give enough attention to sometimes.

We can measure perceived or actual changes in knowledge and understanding, and that is a good way, I think, of giving yourself a bit of a check; that is, okay, did they learn?

So the idea is to have informed democratic deliberation; that is, people should understand a topic, understand an issue and particularly a technical, complex issue.

You know, this could take time, but also it takes a lot of upfront work on the part of those who organize deliberations to make sure that the language used, the

materials used, you know, the methods, whatever, the media used that they are effective at teaching people about a topic in a way that is credible and independent.

Next slide.

-- independent and credible. This is so, so important to public deliberation, and it's not just about educational or informing materials and methods or information, but also how you describe a task, how a policy question is framed.

So we know there's been a lot of work looking at survey research, for instance, and, you know, it's how do you ask the question may influence a great deal what answer you get. And so there's a whole literature on, you know, survey research.

And I think, you know, this isn't always generally well understood, but it's, you know, if you see two different surveys that seem to have different results in terms of what the public thinks, you look at how the question is framed. And I think that's equally important, hasn't been studied enough, actually, in deliberative procedures, so how we describe the task, how we talk about the issue at hand, how questions are asked and answered.

And there are a variety of methods that have been used in deliberative procedures for informing and educating participants. One is what I call the so-called kind of conflicting-experts method. And I should say that it's not always conflicting experts. Sometimes it's experts talking sort of different aspects, but the reason the so-called conflicting experts are sometimes used is because you want your participants to see a variety of sides to a question or an issue, and if all they're hearing is the same stuff from people, then they may not be, I don't know, seeing kind of the whole spectrum of possibilities.

So and one of the things you need to do when you use expert testimony or presentations or whatever is, first of all, you need to control the language used in the -- or not control, but have oversight over the language used and the framing and also the complexity of that language, because it needs to be understood.

But you also want the participants to have the opportunity to ask questions and to ask tough questions, okay?

So one of the problems that I see with the use of conflicting experts is that this may then create the perception on the part of participants of sort of adversarial positions. So if you have Expert A says, you

know, black, and Expert B says, white, then they may throw up their hands and say there's no right answer.

Now, if they have good questions and if your experts aren't too end-of-the-spectrum that, you know, that may not be a problem, but I think it's something you needed to think about when you're thinking about how you're going to educate and inform your participants.

Pretesting, cognitive testing can be very useful with materials, with text, whatever is -- and that's, you know, fairly easy to do, fairly cheap to do, and I think really helps contribute to the quality of the information.

And, you know, we are experts [of a certain kind], and we create language of some kind, you know, that comes from a bit of your own perspective, and so if you take this out into the community with people very different from the ones who are creating it and organizing it, they may interpret that very, very, very differently, and that's the purpose of pretesting cognitive testing.

The other thing I think is useful to have and often quite easy to do during deliberative procedures is to make -- you have some open-ended discussion and briefing, but especially after any educational or information-processing

content. So did you have all the choices and information you wanted? Contacts for one or two.

So there are ways of finding out if, in fact, people had concerns about independence and credibility, if they felt like they had adequate information, and these things can be measured. And I would encourage you to do that, because I think, otherwise, after the fact, you could be accused of - - and this has happened. We know this happens -- in presenting results of deliberations, you'll say, Well, yeah, but, you know, was it -- Did they think they got everything they needed or did they think there was bias or that sort of thing? And if you could say, Here, look. I asked them and they said no. So I think that can be -- or they mostly said no. Okay? Then I think that can be very useful.

Next slide.

JILL YEGIAN: So thank you very much.

SUSAN DORR GOOLD: -- much it for the education and informing.

## Facilitation

**Jyoti Gupta, MPH**  
**Public Agenda**

JILL YEGIAN: Yes, thank you, Susan. Jyoti, we're going to turn it over to you for facilitation. And I'm going to ask that you keep your comments relatively brief, because we do have some terrific questions that we want to get to.

JYOTI GUPTA: Absolutely, and I've noted a couple of the questions, and, hopefully, I can cover a couple of them in my remarks here.

So as has already been mentioned, you know, quality facilitation is so critically important to the success of deliberations and to the sustainability of the solutions that are developed through that deliberation.

You know, facilitators have to be credible, and they also have to create environments that allow others to be candid and critical. So they serve as motivators. They serve as a guide through deliberations, as questioners, bridge builders, peacemakers, really, and as taskmasters.

And one of the questions that's already come up is, you know, what about the concerns that diversity will make it more difficult, that there will be too many moving parts? And this is a common and legitimate concern and one that we

often respond to by saying, Congratulations, you know, if you have a lot of moving parts or conflict or people responding to each other and the conversation is really robust, you know, that means you have people who care about the issue and people who think it's worth their time to participate and this is where, you know, the conditions are ripe for a great facilitator.

So next slide.

On the most basic level the task of the moderator or facilitator, rather, is to make sure that participants understand what they're there to discuss, understand there are ground rules for participation and just stay reasonably focused and on schedule.

And beyond this, you know, they've worked to make conversations participatory, constructive and productive.

So, here, I lay out some of the key practices of an effective facilitator. I won't go into these very much as I think they're fairly self explanatory. You know, feel free to jot in a question if anything looks a little confusing, and also go back to the slides that are posted later.

So we can go on to the next slide here. That's fine.

And I'm actually going to skip this slide, in the interest of time, and I will just say that these are sort of six key moves or choices that a facilitator has at his or her disposal when facilitating a dialogue to keep the dialogue productive, inclusive, and on track.

And Public Agenda and a number of other organizations, too, have a host of facilitation training materials that can kind of go into each of these skills in more depth.

So the next slide, please.

So getting back to kind of the nuts and bolts of planning, engagement and deliberation, there are a few key planning questions as they relate to facilitation that I want to highlight, and the first I have here is who will you ask to facilitate the deliberation?

And so you have to think pretty critically about, you know, who do your facilitators represent? Are they reflective of populations that you want to have participating in the deliberations? Are they able to balance their role as an expert or as an insider? And, along these lines, how many facilitators will you need to make sure that you can spark the kind of lively and fruitful dialogue that you want?

The second question here is how will facilitators be trained? And there was also a question that came up about, you know -- What was the question? Let me see if I can find it. About training people who are used to doing focus groups, but not necessarily deliberative dialogues, and, as I said, there are some great resources.

One is a book by Sam Kaner, a workbook called Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making. So that's a great print resource.

But depending on your chosen methodology, you know, you likely will need different kinds of training. You might need to consider whether facilitators sort of need general facilitation skills or whether they need to be trained specifically in using a specific kind of deliberative discussion guide, for instance.

And then, third, what are the expected facilitation tasks and responsibilities and how will these contribute to the ultimate goals of deliberation?

So, again, depending on your approach, facilitators might need to take on -- they might need to take their own notes. They might need to work with a recorder. They might need to be involved in collecting things afterwards or summarizing themes, doing some kind of report out.

And so facilitators do best, we have found at least, when they know their role, when there's role clarity and they're given clear guidance and perhaps some talking points.

You know, they are the participants' connection to the deliberative event, to the organizer. They represent the organizers, and, as such, they should really know what they're doing to build the confidence and trust of participants.

So I apologize for going through that a little quickly, but I do want to leave some time for questions, so I'll turn it back to you, Jill.

## **Synthesizing the Outputs of Deliberative Forum**

**Julia Abelson, MSc, PhD**  
**McMaster University**

JILL YEGIAN: Thank you, Jyoti, and not only did you do a beautiful job getting through that expeditiously, but you answered a question on the way. That was fantastic.

So our last topic on the practical aspects of deliberative methods is synthesizing outputs, and Julia is going to lead us through that. Julia.

JULIA ABELSON: Okay. This will be quite short, I believe, because there actually hasn't been a lot of attention given to this part of the deliberative process, which I think is quite interesting, given how important it is -- right? If you think about the fact that all of that careful design work, facilitation, et cetera, leads one to a set of outputs, figuring out how you synthesize those outputs from a deliberative process is pretty darn important.

So I have a couple of things that I'll share with you in terms of strategies that have been used. Actually, a colleague of mine from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, has actually been thinking a little bit about these issues, Kieran O'Doherty, so some reference to his thinking on this particular issue.

Next slide, please.

So, first of all, back to my first set of slides where I talked about the importance of linking the goals of your deliberation to that intended use of the output. That's where this comes into play, right? Not only important to ensure that the results or output are useful in decision making, but also to build and maintain that trust among participants.

Next slide.

So two strategies that I have seen in the literature, you know, there may be other ways of thinking about this, for sure, but this idea of internally-driven synthesis, which Kieran O'Doherty talks about, this idea of an explicit product of deliberation, so it's basically built into or incorporated into the deliberation, right?

This is, you know, easier said than done, because it actually requires real skilled facilitation and adequate time, right? We keep talking about the time needed for all this reflection. Well, adequate time is needed for this all-important synthesis component.

So I think that's the key message there, that you, you know, ideally you'd like to be able to build this right into your deliberation, because this is what gives participants that sense of ownership -- right? -- that they've really contributed to the creation of that output of deliberation.

Next slide, please.

The other way of tackling this, which I've also seen, is an externally-driven process where, in fact, the product

follows the deliberation. In fact, there's not very much emphasis given to the synthesis or the production of that output in the deliberative event itself, but it's actually taken on by perhaps a specialist who is hired by the organizers to produce a comprehensive synthesis in the form of some kind of report, typically.

This removes the synthesis activities and control, really, over the outputs from participants. And I think, you know, while I understand it from a kind of making the best use of your time in deliberation and really making sure that that expertise is brought in at the end to produce that report, I think it does have its problems, its down sides, particularly around this issue of not having an opportunity to vet and really give participants a sense of that ownership.

So my proposal really is to think about a combination of both, so that you do build some synthesis work into the deliberation itself, but potentially also have someone actually sit in who is going to be responsible for producing that report, but who will also make sure that it is vetted or ratified by the participants prior to it moving on to the next stage. And there are examples where that kind of a model is being used.

So I'll stop there.

## **Deliberative Methods Experiment**

**Kristin L. Carman, PhD**  
***American Institutes for Research***

JILL YEGIAN: Great. Thank you, Julia. Before we turn to the Q&A portion of the webinar, we'll hear from Kristin Carman of the American Institutes for Research. Kristin coleads a team of over 50 health services research professionals conducting research on issues in healthcare quality, access, financing, comparative-effectiveness research and consumer engagement. Kristin.

KRISTIN CARMAN: Thank you. I wanted to kind of briefly touch on our experiment that we've planned and how we hope to inform the field of practice public deliberation. I'm going to do this somewhat quickly, so we'll go to the background of this project.

So this really started in August in 2010, and the community formed a project around public deliberation as an experiment that's a randomized controlled trial comparing five distinct deliberative methods to each other to a control of education only.

We spent the first year-and-a-half of the project going through an extensive formative process that involved an

extensive literature review of public deliberation. Some of you have asked questions about some of the background on this, and we did a long literature review of this.

We also did a tremendous amount of focus groups and cognitive interviewing to inform our educational materials in framing.

We also relied on a technical expert and panel which Julia Abelson is a member and many other individuals.

So the goals of our experiment are really to expand the evidence base on public deliberation. Heard a lot of questions here today, but we're really focusing on which features of public deliberation are most impactful and also techniques for evaluating public deliberation.

And then, secondly, and as importantly, to obtain public input on the topic of the use of evidence in healthcare decision making.

Thinking about this topic in a little more detail, it's very closely aligned and relevant to our comparative effectiveness research portfolio, which is really, in part, about encouraging the use of evidence in healthcare decision making.

This topic also addresses some fundamental and outstanding tensions in healthcare and policy, something else that should sound relevant based on this conversation.

And, in this case, we're going to be asking participants to weigh the dilemma of preserving individual providers' and patients' autonomy and discretion over their choices versus an imperative for societal intervention around the adoption and use of evidence.

There's also lots of questions about the roles of individuals in oversight and regulation, but that's really at its core.

I won't spend too much time on the experiment. Julia did - - and others did a great job of describing how methods can differ, but we have five deliberative methods and each of these has key distinguishing features, so the methods vary in terms of size. They vary in length from very short amount of time -- two hours to 2-1/2 days -- their mode -- are they online, in person, some form of hybrid? Our facilitation styles are also being very varied from quite active to somewhat more passive. How we use experts is also being varied.

We have the goal of holding 76 groups with almost 1,300 participants in four locations. These were based on

diversity and the ability to access some clear priority populations, including age and Medicare beneficiaries, African Americans, not-urban residents and bilingual Latino individuals. We are also looking for diversity on a range of characteristics, including education.

Just to note, in terms of our evaluation, we're going to be doing a pre- and post-intervention survey to figure out if knowledge and attitudes and other things change. And we're also going to ask those who participate in the post-intervention survey to assess their experiences with the deliberative experience.

We're also going to be spending a lot of time talking about what Julia was dealing with which is sort of a qualitative analysis of all of this and what did participants actually say when they deliberated on this topic.

This slide shows you some of our key outcomes of interest, so I'm not going to say too much about them.

I just want to go to the last slide, explain to you next steps, because I think you'll all be interested in this. So where are we? Well, we're in the process of planning for our very ambitious implementation period that is occurring this summer and running through the fall of 2012.

We're going to be analyzing all of this data in the spring and early summer of 2013. Our literature review, which I mentioned, I hope you will please look for a piece based on this within the next few months.

We're also going to be discussing our evaluation approaches in the academy health panel about mixed methods this year in June. And, finally, a report of the findings from the experiment will be completed in the late summer of 2013.

### **Questions and Answers**

JILL YEGIAN: Thanks, Kristin. At this point, we will move into the question-and-answer portion of the webinar. A number of you have already submitted questions through the chat feature. Please feel free to continue to submit questions you would like the panelists to address and we'll get to as many as possible in the time we have remaining.

I do want to note before we get started with the first set of questions that the slides will be available on the Effective Healthcare Program website of AHRQ, and we will notify all of the participants when they'll be available, and we expect that to occur within the next few weeks.

So getting to the first set of questions, this first one is perhaps most relevant for Susan, but, of course, everyone feel free to chime in, Julia and Jyoti.

What about differential compensation? No worry that the groups get stacked with people who get paid versus those who do not? Can paying some people make the process appear rigged?

SUSAN DORR GOOLD: Can you hear me? I want to make sure I effectively unmuted.

JILL YEGIAN: You did.

SUSAN DORR GOOLD: Okay. Okay. Good. I saw that question earlier, of course, and was very interested in it. And I would say that there are a number of ways -- a number of things that could lead people to perceive that a deliberative -- a particular deliberation exercise or group or whatever is rigged. And although, you know, paying some people and not others might be one way, it could also be sort of the tyranny of expertise.

So, for instance, you know, many, many moons ago, Oregon did their Medicaid priority-setting project, and they had sort of open community meetings to talk about this, et cetera. I mean, this was groundbreaking work, by the way.

I'm not criticizing the fact that they did it, because they set the stage, really.

But the people who showed up were the people who cared the most and the people who had the resources to get there and be there and cared enough to get there and be there.

Now, in some cases, that was a lot of healthcare professionals, not surprisingly. In some cases, it was particular patient interest groups and stuff like that.

I think you need to be able to balance that out with those who might not have the wherewithal or even the perceived high interest level in participation. And, furthermore, I would say that, you know, the kind of deliberation that I do is usually at the small-group level, so that's a little bit easier to address that question because I can have some groups paid and some groups not paid.

Although, generally speaking, what I usually do is I pay everybody and I have refreshments for everybody. And it's just that that means that people aren't left out because they otherwise wouldn't come or wouldn't be able to come.

So, generally speaking, hopefully, budget-wise I'm able to do that, but generally try to make sure that we have

compensation for all participants. People who don't want to take it, that's fine, too. They can give it away.

JILL YEGIAN: Thank you, Susan. Julia, is there a problem with people getting to know each other and moving to a consensus just as a function of the group dynamic?

JULIA ABELSON: Well, first of all, I would say that the goal of deliberation is not necessarily to achieve consensus, right? I think working towards collective problem solving is actually quite different from that very tall order of achieving consensus. So you may have sort of general agreement on principles or values, but you may have, you know, a minority viewpoint that's actually documented on the record. So I wanted to make that point first.

The getting-to-know-each-other part, so when I think about the range of different kinds of deliberative projects that I've been involved with, I've seen lots of different things happen.

I mean, I guess, generally speaking, people who agree to come to these things are pretty motivated. They, you know, have agreed. They may have been selected through -- could be a random sampling, it could be through many of the other approaches that Susan described, but, in fact, to get them

in the door, you know, they're pretty motivated. So they are generally keen to actually begin, as soon as they can, to work together.

I think it's, again, back to facilitation and structure and, again, the questions or goals that you have for that deliberation that really dictate, you know, how these individuals are going to be working together and how they move fairly, you know, expediently towards the work that they need to get done.

So that's, you know, my attempt at a response to that one. It's not an easy question, and it's also not easy to explain some of these things. You almost need to be there to see it, in some respects. I know that isn't necessarily an answer that is all that welcome, when you're trying to figure this out ahead of time, but you kind of do need to see how these processes unfold to understand what actually happens in real time.

JILL YEGIAN: That's very helpful, Julia, including your differentiation between consensus and what may be the objective of the deliberative exercise.

Jyoti, one that may be well suited for you, how do facilitators claim and deploy their authority and power? This seems central in moving the process forward.

JYOTI GUPTA: Sorry. I think I -- Can you hear me?

JILL YEGAIN: We can hear you. Go ahead.

JYOTI GUPTA: Oh, okay. Okay. I'm sorry. Your voice was breaking up when you were reading the question. Can you just read it one more time?

JILL YEGIAN: Sure. Sorry about that. How do facilitators claim and deploy their authority and power? This seems crucial to move the process forward.

JYOTI GUPTA: That's a really interesting question, and there certainly is kind of a constant sort of power dynamic in deliberation and particularly in the small-group setting. And I think that, you know, first of all, I think sort of the framing for whatever the deliberation is, you know, that comes first, and really being clear up front about what the role of the facilitator is to begin with in the small-group setting. I think that that sort of sets the stage for how the person asking the questions -- about how power is deployed.

But the facilitation is really a very nuanced and -- a nuanced skill and almost an art, and so, you know, being able to sort of take control, you don't necessarily want to

take control over the conversation, but you have to find the opportunities, you know.

For instance, when a speaker who is going on and on, when she stops to breathe, you know, being able to jump in there and take a minute to connect people's thoughts is being opportunistic about, you know, opportunities to kind of steer the conversation back. I hope that helps.

JILL YEGIAN: That's very --

JYOTI GUPTA: I absolutely agree with Julia. These are difficult questions, and it's so hard to talk about them in the abstract. Oftentimes, in facilitator training, for instance, you can't have a training without doing the hands-on facilitation.

JILL YEGIAN: Well put. Yes. No, the audience is not throwing you guys softballs, that's for sure.

JYOTI GUPTA: [Laughter].

JILL YEGIAN: So let's maybe try and fit in one more question before we wrap up. Jyoti, maybe you want to give this one a shot: Are there goals for participants that, in your experience, are more engaging and meaningful?

JYOTI GUPTA: Hum. That's a great question. I think it absolutely depends on the population, on the target population. I think that, you know, issue learning sometimes is less interesting. I think that the goal -- We've often found that people are very natural. Oftentimes, they very quickly want to jump to how do we solve a problem. And so I think, you know, sort of the goal of coming up with different levels of action oftentimes can be a really exciting goal for participants.

And so what I mean by different levels of goals is, you know, sort of what are the low-hanging-fruit kinds of actions that people can take? What are the actions that people might need more support or collaboration, but are motivated to sort of take part in? And, then, what are those actions that feel like, you know, they cannot be achieved or they cannot be worked toward until, you know, there's external resources or some kind of policy change? So I think the goal of generating actions, tangible actions is oftentimes one that's really motivating.

JILL YEGIAN: That's terrific, Jyoti, thank you very much.

SUSAN DORR GOOLD: I have a slight caveat on that as well, if that's all right. I raised my hand, but I don't know if that's okay. This is Susan.

JILL YEGIAN: Yes, Susan, we have about, you know, 15 seconds for your last comment.

SUSAN DORR GOOLD: Oh, okay. Just kind of reiterating what I said earlier about making the questions a little bit more concrete. If you ask people to deliberate on what the fair distribution of limited healthcare resources, they're going to go, Huh?

But if you ask them whether we should pay for this drug or that drug, they'll be able to tackle it.

JYOTI GUPTA: Um-hum. I think, yes, being very clear about the ask and the questions, the big questions is very important. I agree.

JILL YEGIAN: Very well put, Susan. That's a very concrete example of how to make it very tangible and more accessible for the participants. So thank you for that.

At this point, it is my pleasure, on behalf of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in the Community Forum Project, to thank both the presenters, for sharing their experience and their expertise, and all of the participants for listening and for those fantastic and difficult questions.

We will be in touch with the link to the slides as soon as they are available, which will appear on AHRQ's Effective Healthcare Program website. So please feel free to visit the website, which has a number of resources available now and will have additional ones, including these slide decks and other links soon.

Thank you very much for joining us today. Bye-bye.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**