



BRIGHT LIGHTS, BOLD IDEAS:  
SHAPING THE FUTURE OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE



# Integrating Participants' Lived Experience from Photovoice to Co-design Strategies for Improving Access to Behavioral Health Services

Presented by:

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**NOTE: This is a self-paced, interactive session. Use pause prompts to reflect and engage.**



# Session Objectives

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Understand how Photovoice  
captures lived experience



Learn how to integrate  
Photovoice into co-design



Explore real-world examples and  
engage in interactive reflection

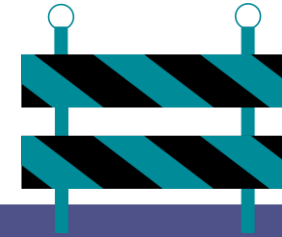
# Framing The Issue

## Why Focus on Behavioral Health Access?



### National Trends & Inequities

Behavioral Health Needs  
Unequal Access to Care  
National Provider Shortage

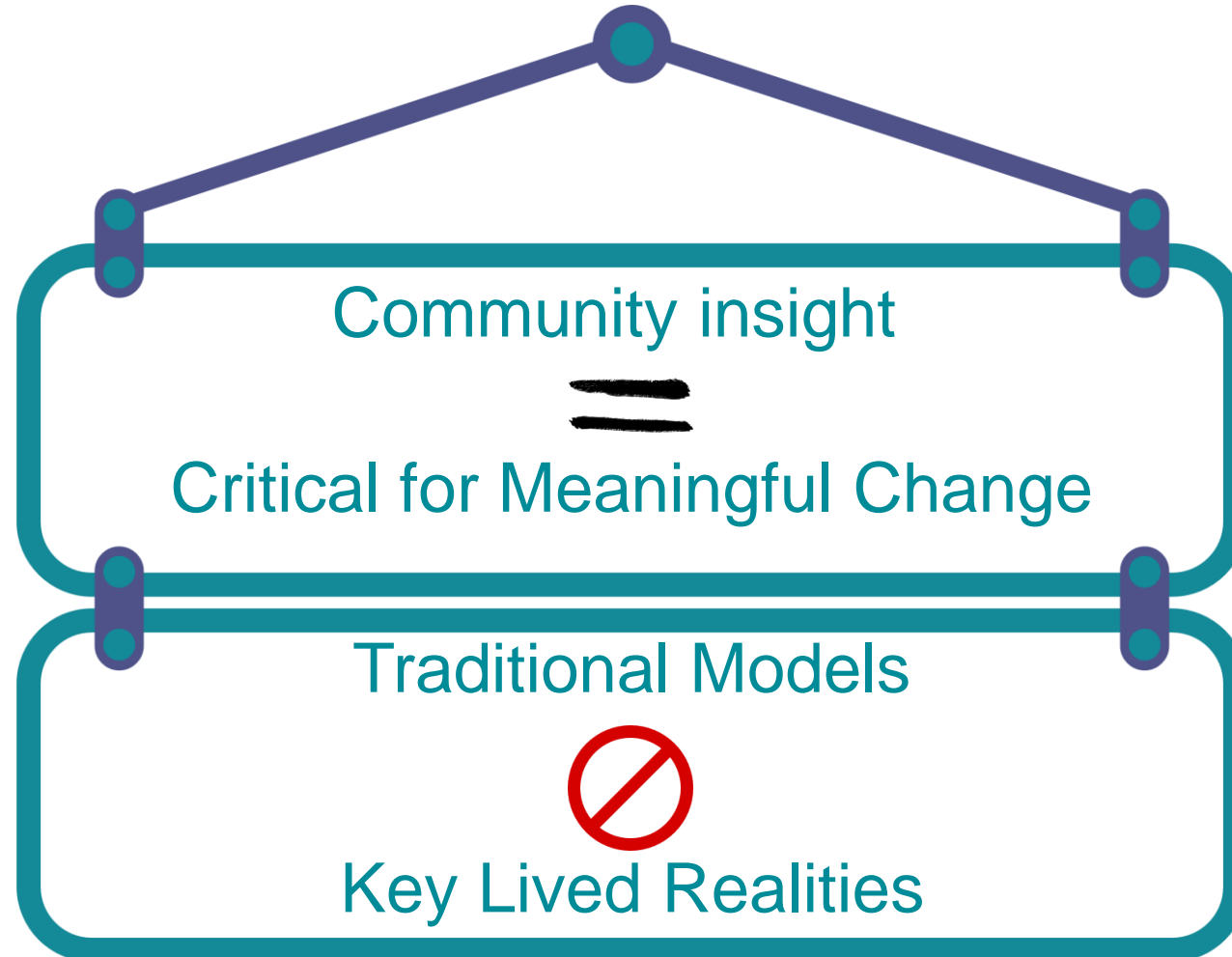


### Barriers in Local Systems

Stigma and Cultural Mistrust  
Limited Transportation Options  
Less Providers & More Waiting

# Framing The Issue

## The Case for Community-Led Design



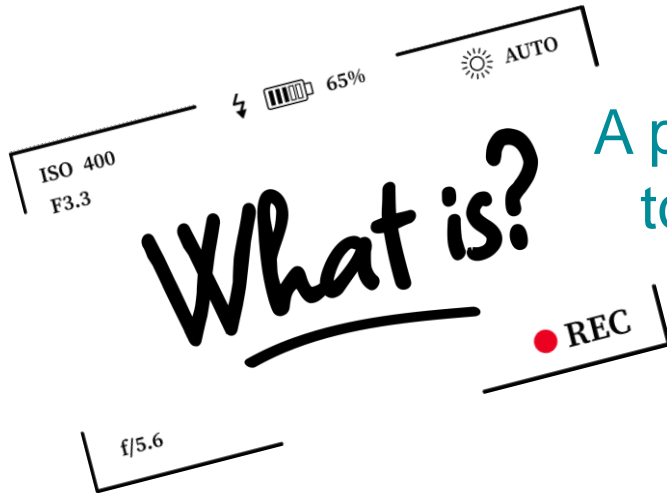


# What is Photovoice?

## Introduction to Photovoice



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A participatory research method that empowers individuals to capture their lived experiences through photography, using images and narratives to advocate for change.

- Developed in the 1990s by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris.
- Originated to help marginalized communities influence policy through photography.
- Rooted in Participatory Action Research, emphasizing shared power and lived experience.



# What is

# Photovoice?

## Goals of Photovoice



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**EMPOWERMENT**



**ADVOCACY**



**SYSTEMS CHANGE**



# What is Photovoice?

## Photovoice In Practice



**UK** College of  
Public Health

## PHOTOVOICE YMCA BLACK ACHIEVERS

On Saturday, February 24, 2024 at BCTC Newtown Campus, 30 participants from the YMCA Young Black Achievers took part in the PhotoVoice session as part of the Community Health Assessment (CHA) initiative.

The YMCA Young Black Achievers recently engaged in a PhotoVoice session. This session centered around the history and techniques of photography. Due to logistical constraints, participants were unable to take cameras home and had a limited two-hour window for the session. Participants captured images of both the strengths and concerns of their community through photography. Following this, the group reconvened to collectively share their images and discuss their interpretations and the stories behind the captured images. Highlights of the session included active engagement and critical thinking among the participants. The main topics of discussion centered around:



**PHOTOVOICE PROJECT EXAMPLES**

We ask that participants submit photos showcasing strengths and concerns of our Lexington community. Each submission also includes a description of that strength or concern and how it could impact mental health, either positively or negatively.

**COMMUNITY STRENGTH**

"A refuge from the stress of urban life, Lexington-Fayette County has preserved much of the green space outside the city. Access is an issue, though, for many, who live in the urban core of our city."

**COMMUNITY CONCERN**

"Family and friends experience pain when losing someone to drug addiction."



**WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS!**

SCAN ME!

**PARTICIPATE IN PHOTOVOICE. SHARE YOUR PICTURES. TELL YOUR STORY.**

**PHOTOVOICE**

FINAL SESSION: ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

**UK** College of  
Public Health  
Center for Public Health Systems and Services Research

**PHOTOVOICE PROJECT**

EXPLORING MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH THROUGH PHOTOVOICE

**INTRODUCTION**  
Photovoice is a participatory method that follows these core principles:

- Goal 1: Records community strengths and concerns.
- Goal 2: Promotes critical dialogue among community members.
- Goal 3: Advocates for health-promoting policy change.

**METHODS**  
Over a four-week period seven community members captured photos and participated in group discussion surrounding the strengths and challenges of our community health in Montgomery County. At the end of the four weeks, the group decided which strengths and challenges are most important in their lived experience.

**STRENGTHS**  
Our community provides access to a wide variety of health and social services through our inclusive resource hubs and partners:

- Farmers Market Pavilion
- Gateway Regional Arts Center
- Montgomery County Library
- Du Bois Community Center

"You would not expect a thriving arts center in a small, Eastern KY county. GRAC gives our community the opportunity to see, appreciate, and create art."

**CHALLENGES**  
We can strengthen our community through intentional planning to develop pivotal connection points, improve sidewalks and walkability to ensure equitable access to resources, and provide affordable housing.

"Lack of sidewalks or condition of sidewalks is not something I would typically notice because I am almost always driving instead of walking, but when I tried to view the community with a wider lens, I started to see that there are walkability and access issues all over the county."

**WHAT'S NEXT?**  
You're next! If you'd like to contribute to the Montgomery County Photovoice Project scan the QR code and submit your photos and stories.

THANK YOU TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS FOR THEIR INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS PROJECT AND COMMUNITY.

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62-2371  
CHD.org



# Photovoice Results

## From Discussion to Data



### Strengths

- Public art and murals
- BCTC campus
- The faith community
- Public libraries as mental health infrastructure
- Access to the arts
- Community spaces for creative expression
- Innovative group therapy and grief support
- Harm reduction and recovery resources
- Accessibility of mental health services
- Parks and access to natural environments
- Outdoor amenities
- LexTran and mail service
- Farmers' markets
- Access to food options
- Remembering/forgetting local history
- Support for migrant and refugee communities
- Inclusivity challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community
- Limited awareness reduces use of behavioral health resources

### Concerns

- Gun violence
- Substance use disorder
- Disinvestment in BIPOC communities
- Gentrification and lack of affordable housing
- Homelessness
- Lack of housing
- Uncared-for buildings and landscapes
- Bullying and vandalism
- Litter and neglected public spaces
- Social isolation, especially in rural areas
- Lack of mental health professionals and limited hours of operation
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of access to services
- Lack of healthy food options
- Competing daily demands
- Apathy or not knowing how to help
- Stigma surrounding grief
- Immigrant grief and cultural barriers
- Misunderstanding and isolation in grief
- Inadequate response to hidden or invisible disabilities





# Photovoice Results

The logo for NACCHO 360. It features the word "NACCHO" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font. Below it, the number "360" is displayed in a larger, bold, teal font. The zero is replaced by a circular graphic composed of eight colored segments (green, blue, purple, yellow, grey, dark blue, orange, and light green) arranged in a ring, with a small white arrow pointing clockwise from the top right segment.

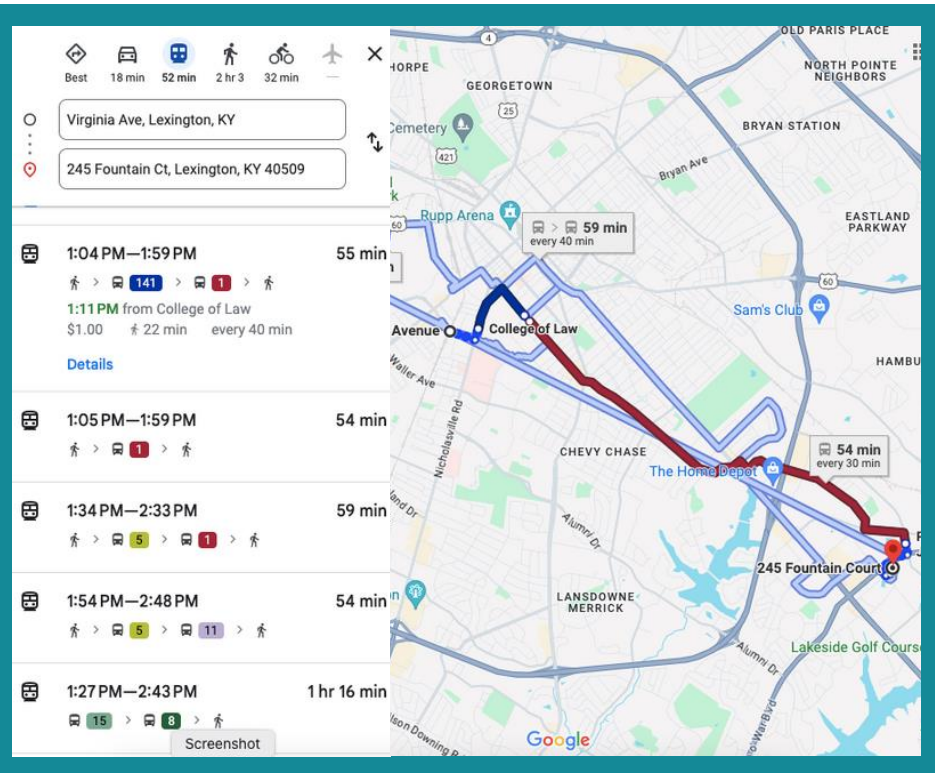


# What is Photovoice?

## Photovoice In Practice



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### INTERACTIVE PROMPT:

Pause and jot  
down: How would  
you title these  
photos and  
captions? What  
are your  
takeaways?







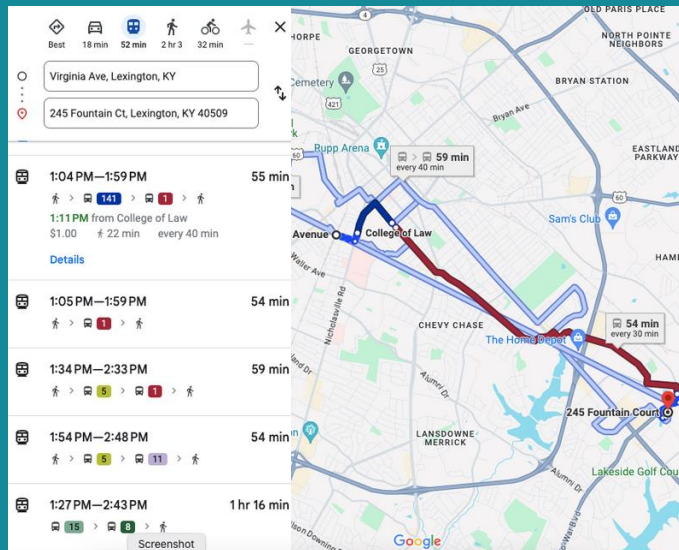
# What is Photovoice?

## Photovoice In Practice



#NA360

### Transportation Barriers to Behavioral Health



Lexington's public transportation service... may involve long commute times and navigating several bus routes... which may not be feasible for those who have little time, mobility issues, or lack of access to technology to navigate the routes.

### Doors to Recovery



These doors lead to places where AA and other anonymous recovery meetings are held... They are also the scariest doors anyone can walk through... There shouldn't be a "wrong door" to treatment. Let's open the doors to all.

# Real-World Example

## Photovoice In Practice



### INTERACTIVE PROMPT:

1. Pause and take out your phone.
2. Find a picture that holds meaning for you.
3. Ask yourself these questions...

- What does this photo represent to you?
- How does this image relate to your health, well-being, or access to care?
- What would you want others—especially decision-makers—to understand from this photo?

Send us your  
picture!

**WE WANT YOUR  
PHOTOS!**

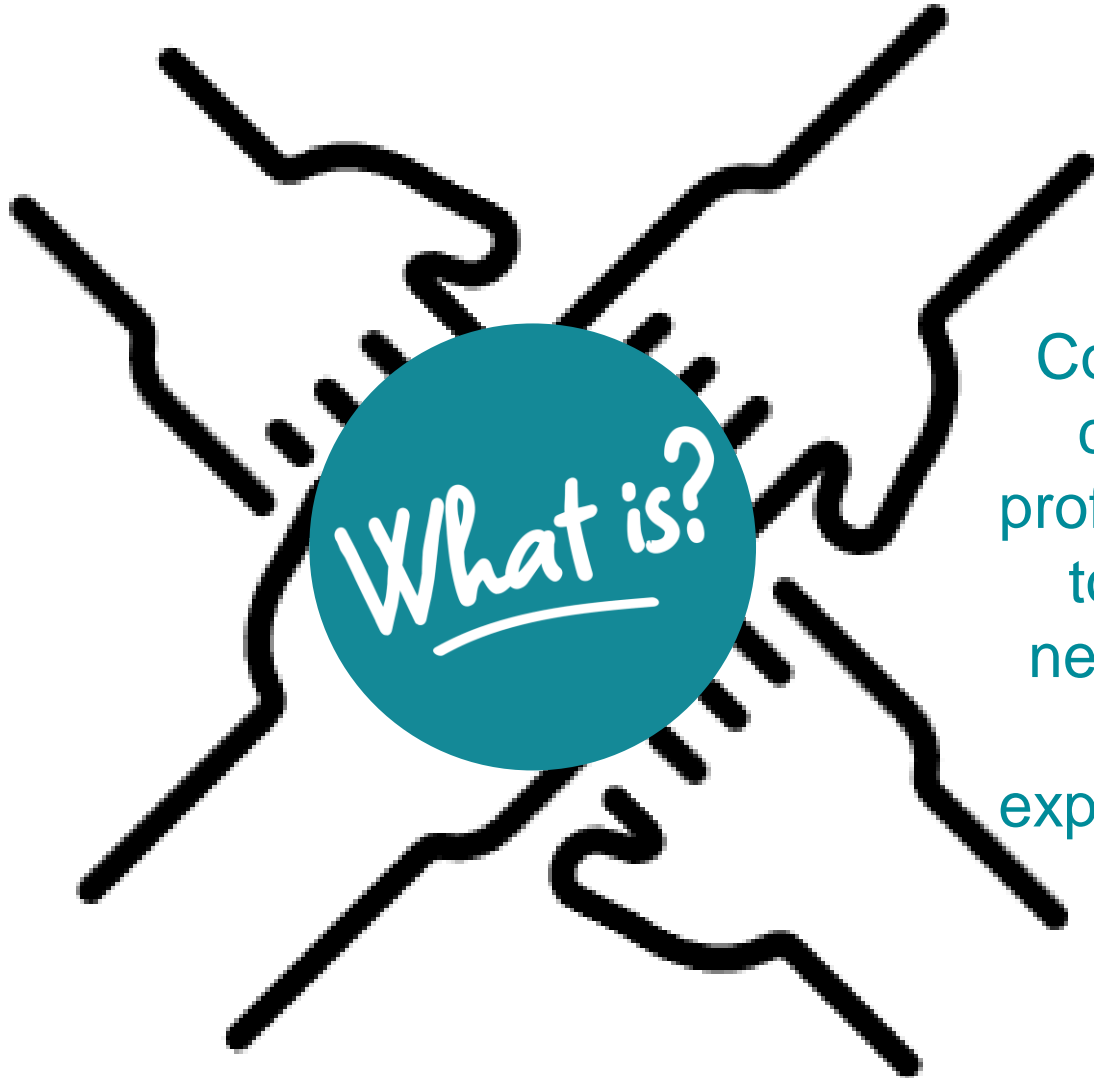
SCAN ME!





# From Insight to Action

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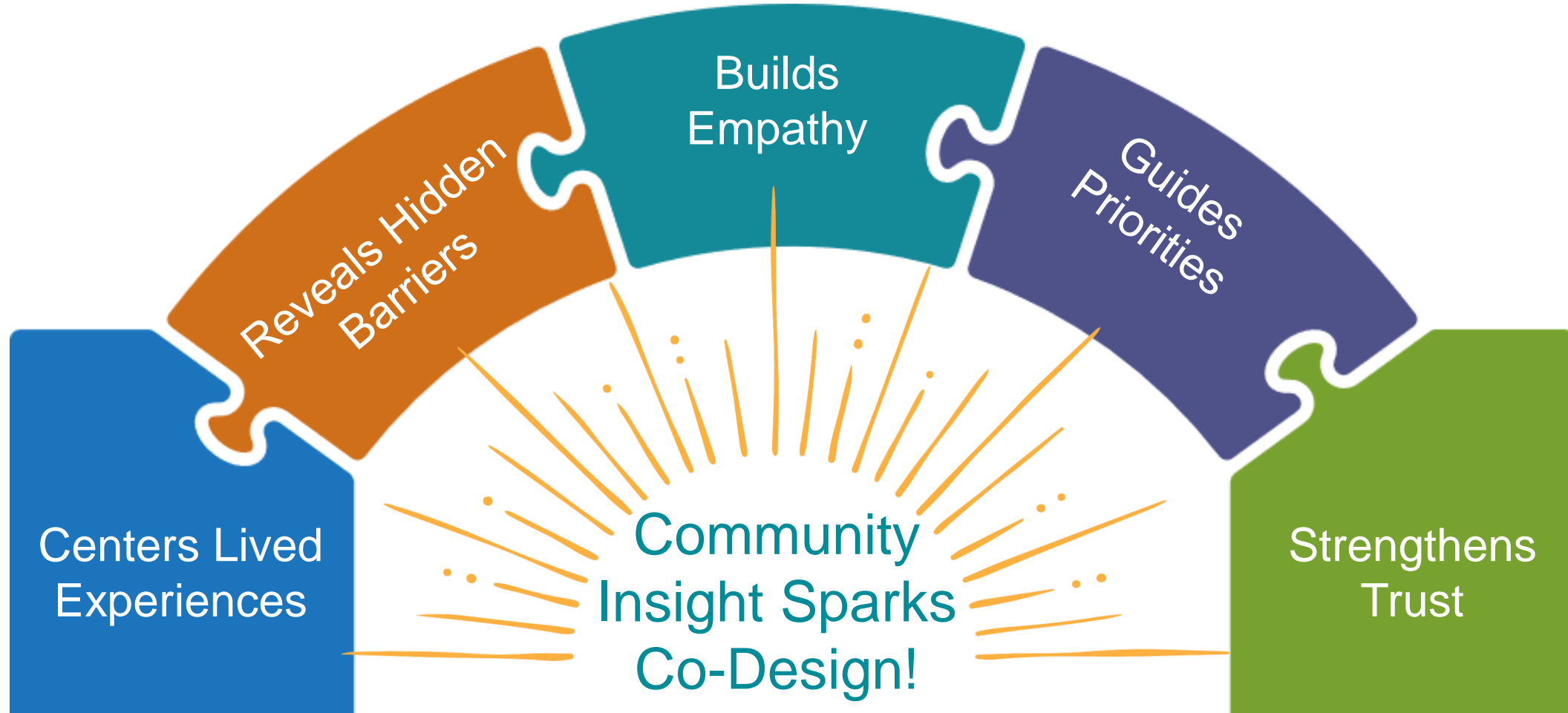
## What is Co-Design

Co-design is a collaborative process where community members, stakeholders, and professionals work together as equal partners to design solutions that meet actual local needs. It emphasizes shared power, mutual respect, and the integration of lived experience to create more effective, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes.



# From Insight to Action

## Bridging The Gap

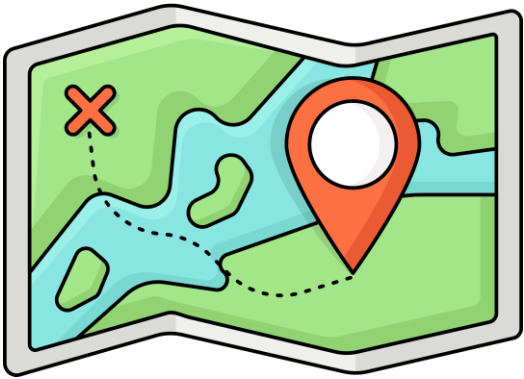






# Co-Design Methods

## Tools for Collaboration



**Journey Mapping**



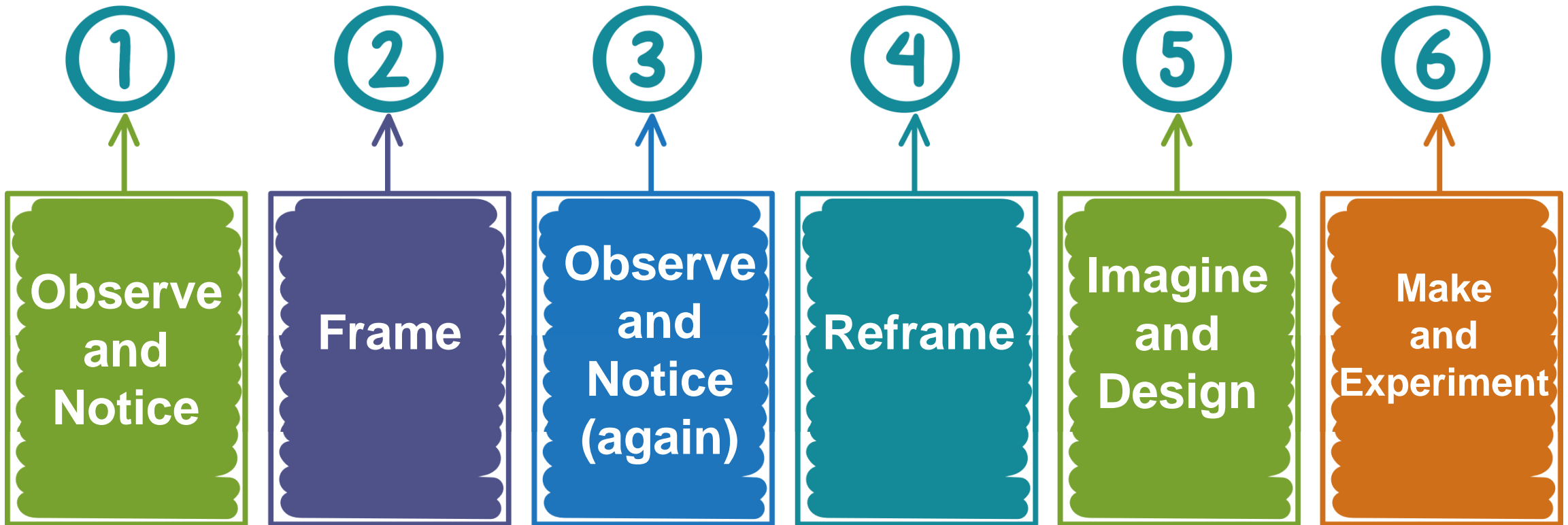
**Empathy Interviews**



**Prototyping**

# Co-Design Methods

## The Six Steps of Co-Design





# Measuring Impact



## Meeting Participant Surveys

**Meeting Satisfaction** - 96% Productive or Very Productive

**Comfortable Environment**- 90% Comfortable Sharing Opinions



Meeting  
Attendance  
Growth

329.41%





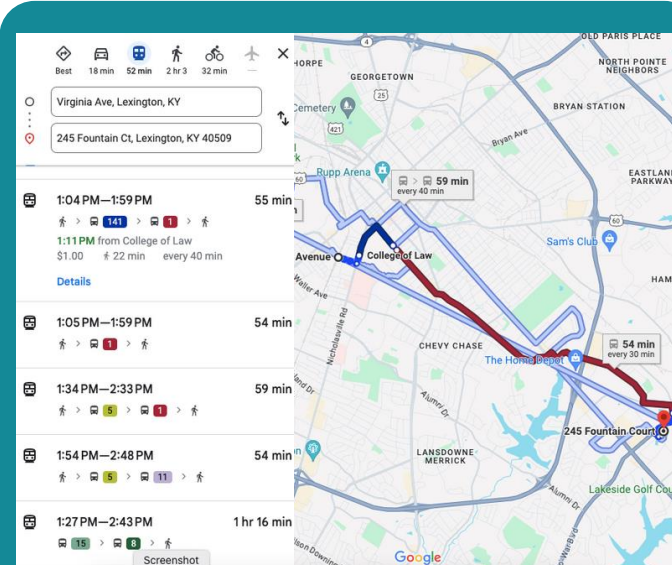
# Solo Co-Design

## Guided Exercise

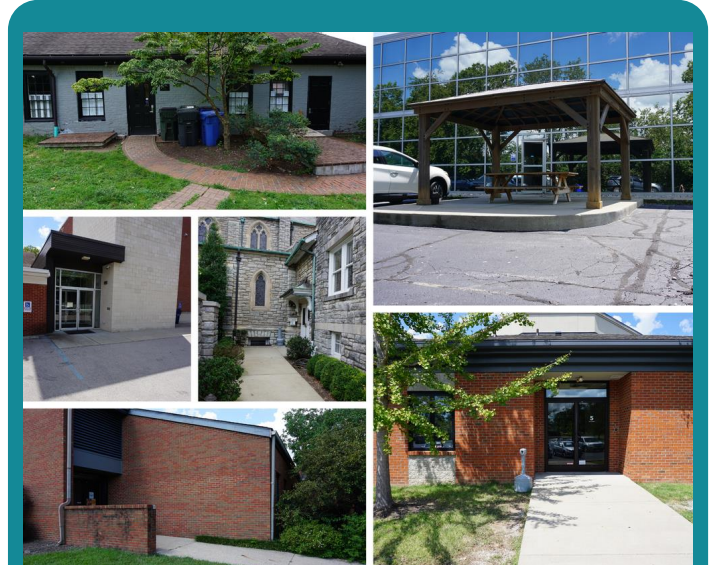
### INTERACTIVE PROMPT:

Pause this screen.

Using these two  
issues, sketch a  
solution to address  
any challenges.



Lexington's public transportation service... may involve long commute times and navigating several bus routes... which may not be feasible for those who have little time, mobility issues, or lack of access to technology to navigate the routes.



These doors lead to places where AA and other anonymous recovery meetings are held... They are also the scariest doors anyone can walk through... There shouldn't be a "wrong door" to treatment. Let's open the doors to all.



# Solo Co-Design

## Co-Design Solution Example

### Access to Care

Improve access to healthcare and social services by increasing resource awareness and fostering local policy advocacy.

### **Objective 2:**

Mental Health Advocacy and Engagement

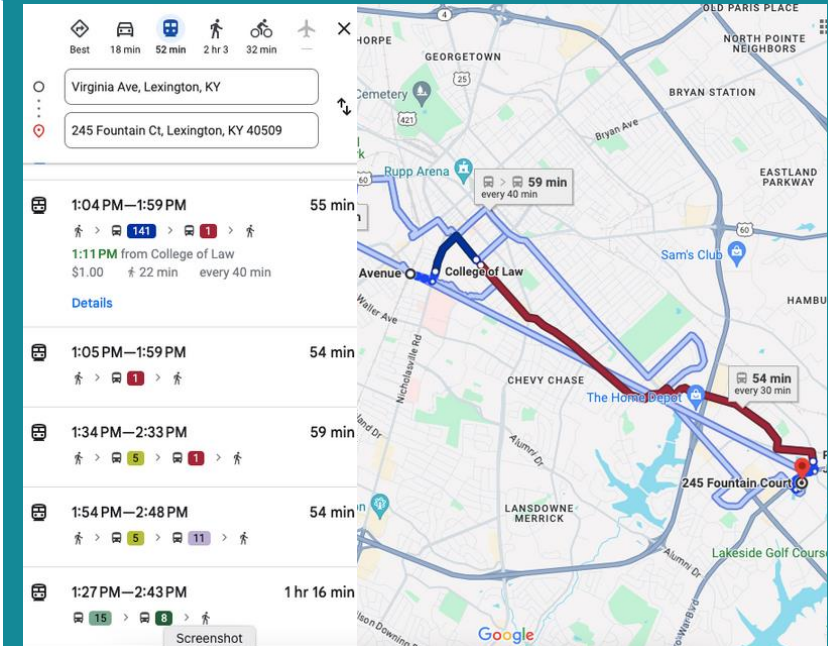


### Access to Care

Improve access to healthcare and social services by increasing resource awareness and fostering local policy advocacy.

### **Objective 3:**

Transportation Access to Care





# Conclusion

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Lived experience is expertise.

Photovoice builds empathy and insight.

Co-design turns insight into action.

Behavioral health access improves when we listen.

Power-sharing fosters trust.

**Centering lived  
experience to create  
equitable, community-  
driven solutions for  
access to behavioral  
health services.**





# Resources

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A photograph of a large, yellow steel truss bridge spanning a body of water under a clear blue sky. A blue banner is overlaid on the image.

## Bridging Voices

**A Toolkit for Community  
Health Co-Design**



**Templates, examples,  
resources!**



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# Thank you!

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