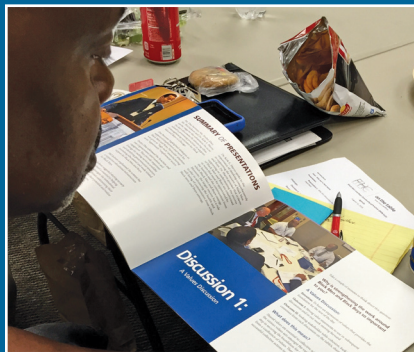


February 2017

# CHICAGO BLACK MEN & BOYS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (BMB CoP)




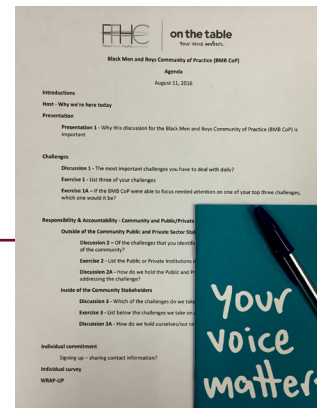
On May 10, 2016 The Chicago Community Trust convened residents across the Chicago area for the 3rd Annual “On the Table” conversations.

The Black Men and Boys Community of Practice (BMB CoP) project were invited to host a number of these conversations with black men and young black men. The BMB CoP reached out to partnering organizations that hosted participants that were struggling with success (e.g., unemployment, returning citizens). The hosts facilitated several conversations with groups ranging in size from half-a-dozen to thirty participants.

What follows, are comments from participants in the various discussions, both on and after May 10th.

## Discussion 1: The most important challenges you have to deal with daily...

	What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<b>SOCIAL EMOTIONAL/ WELL BEING</b> (Emotions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining optimism and hope</li> <li>• Getting back into society and life management</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Emotions / Anger Issues</li> <li>• Conflicts within myself, inner peace</li> <li>• Emotional / Physical fitness—Being emotionally fit where my child is concerned</li> <li>• “Wake up before I die” not “Die before I wake”</li> <li>• Overcoming the feeling of powerlessness</li> <li>• Overcoming rejection</li> <li>• Acknowledging my true feelings</li> <li>• Pessimism (staying optimistic)</li> <li>• Walking in God’s purpose</li> <li>• Trust in God / Faith struggle</li> <li>• Self-forgiveness—wrestling with the challenge of paralysis</li> <li>• Serenity prayer / Why? / Knowledge from God that I’m not in control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping a level head</li> <li>• Being assertive</li> <li>• Bad sleeping habits</li> <li>• Communications without profanity</li> <li>• Getting up for school</li> <li>• Ability to fit in, by picking on others</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Life responsibilities stressing you out as a High School student</li> <li>• Trust issues</li> <li>• Attitude problems</li> <li>• Procrastination</li> </ul>
<b>SAFETY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying alive</li> <li>• Gun violence</li> <li>• Going to the store with my son</li> <li>• Access to guns</li> <li>• From home to school, certain areas you can’t walk into</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety in community</li> <li>• Getting home safely</li> <li>• VIOLENCE</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT</b> (Relationships/ Community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police brutality</li> <li>• Parental Involvement</li> <li>• Lifestyle choices (right-way or wrong-way)</li> <li>• Family relationships (fatherhood, role model, women)</li> <li>• Systematic separation of the family</li> <li>• Inability to dismantle institutional racism</li> <li>• Rights of fathers</li> <li>• Living situation—Two families, one household... how do I get a house for my kids</li> <li>• Relationship challenges—Challenges with my children</li> <li>• Balancing the needs of my child versus my wife, the child’s step-mother</li> <li>• Being ready to parent my son</li> <li>• Being a Black Man—Seeing all the negative while trying to stay positive</li> <li>• Being the leader of my family in the midst of danger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father issues</li> <li>• Family holding things over my head</li> <li>• Not seeing my mother during the week</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Trying to get out of my community</li> </ul>
<b>EMPLOYMENT/ EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the right decisions for “quick money.”</li> <li>• Background scrutiny—unsure of the impact of criminal background</li> <li>• Gaining consistency in employment</li> <li>• Compensation not equal to my love of work</li> <li>• Dishonest employment</li> <li>• Work discouragement</li> <li>• Searching for job with suspended license</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding my vocabulary</li> <li>• Motivation for education</li> <li>• Motivation to keep a job</li> <li>• Finding a job; Making money legally; Finding a hustle</li> <li>• Transportation / bus fare</li> <li>• Employment to help family</li> </ul>
<b>OTHER</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following probation</li> <li>• Staying out of jail</li> <li>• Staying out of gangs</li> </ul>



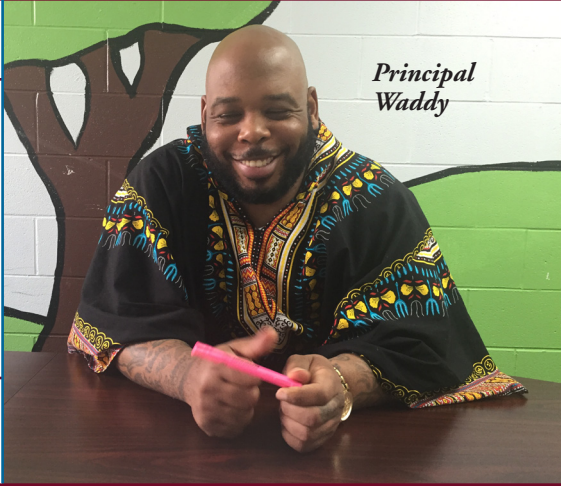
Exercise 1A: If the BMB CoP were able to focus needed attention on one of your top three challenges, which one would it be?



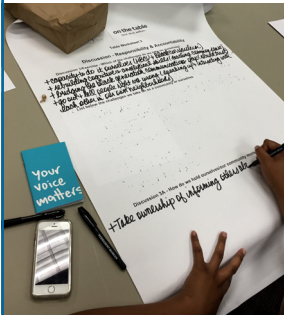
What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...

- Money
- Leaving my community
- Father issues
- Procrastination
- Finding a job
- Building my vocabulary
- Following probation
- Obeying the law

Discussion 2: Of the challenges that you identified, which do we need help with from outside of the community?

	What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<b>SOCIAL EMOTIONAL/ WELL BEING</b> (Emotions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better communications about the community</li><li>• Veterans Administration Hospitals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jobs</li><li>• Schools</li><li>• Programs to help youth</li><li>• VIOLENCE</li></ul>
<b>SAFETY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Police brutality</li></ul>	
<b>SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT</b> (Relationships/ Community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lifestyle choices</li><li>• Staying out of trouble</li><li>• Systematic separation of the family</li><li>• Parenting classes</li><li>• State support for fathers</li><li>• Alderman / Alderwoman—need to be connect to the Youth</li><li>• Politicians (legislation)</li><li>• Systemic racism</li></ul>	
<b>EMPLOYMENT/ EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unions (access to apprenticeship)</li><li>• Employment opportunities</li></ul>	

Exercise 2: List the Public or Private Institutions identified to help with the challenge:

What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DCFS</li><li>• Legislators, State Representatives, Aldermen</li><li>• DHS</li><li>• University</li><li>• Community Programs (Arts &amp; Humanities)</li><li>• City Hall, Universities / Colleges</li><li>• Local / Well resourced churches</li><li>• Chicago Black Celebrities / Athletes</li><li>• Philanthropic / Funding organizations, Civic organizations</li><li>• Social Impact Organizations focused on Community Building &amp; Education</li><li>• Fortune 500 Businesses</li><li>• Local / Regional / National Businesses</li><li>• Cook County Corrections</li><li>• Veterans Affairs</li><li>• Chicago Public Schools</li><li>• Fraternal organizations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mayor</li><li>• Police</li><li>• Board of Education (CPS)</li></ul> 

Facilitator capturing participants comments

## Discussion 2A: How do we hold the Public and Private Stakeholders more accountable to addressing the challenge?

What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protest if necessary</li> <li>• Reinforce the issues</li> <li>• Strike</li> <li>• Organize meetings regularly</li> <li>• Encourage voting on a regular basis</li> <li>• Develop a public report card</li> <li>• Video and pictures</li> <li>• Organize money, resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students rallying together to confront CPS Officials</li> <li>• Voting in a new Mayor and Politicians</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Community interaction with teens</li> <li>• Walking the streets (Foot Patrol)</li> <li>• Firing “Dirty Cops”</li> </ul>

Inside of the  
Community  
Stakeholders

## Discussion 3: Which of the challenges do we take on ourselves?

What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take ownership of the Community</li> <li>• Mentoring others</li> <li>• Giving back</li> <li>• Create Community events</li> <li>• Have discussions with the Youth about being / doing better</li> <li>• Being a voice for the Youth</li> <li>• Educating ourselves (academically, mentally)</li> <li>• Educating each other (resources, systems)</li> <li>• Challenge to succeed—not let down others, especially if “privileged”</li> <li>• Wake up—Involvement (calls, voice, more)</li> <li>• Stop “blowing off our youth” / respect / affirm</li> <li>• Be the change you want</li> <li>• Responsible (we’re being observed)</li> <li>• Community activists</li> <li>• Lack of respect</li> <li>• Leadership, being the example, not act</li> <li>• What are you doing right now?</li> <li>• Preparing individuals to be more employable</li> <li>• Equipping individuals with tools and skills for employment</li> <li>• Civic involvement at state level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence</li> <li>• Motivation for education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rather work than learn</li> <li>– Motivated to make money</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interacting with my father</li> <li>• Being more assertive</li> <li>• Less of a procrastinator</li> <li>• Getting up on time</li> <li>• Making money legally</li> <li>• Expanding my vocabulary</li> <li>• Following probation</li> <li>• Avoiding gangs</li> </ul>

## Exercise 3: List below the challenges we take on as a community or ourselves:



### What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>• Community:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Jobs</li> <li>– Gangs</li> <li>– Transportation to school</li> <li>– Safety in the community</li> <li>– Food</li> <li>– Violence</li> </ul> | <b>• Ourselves:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Food</li> <li>– Violence</li> <li>– Building relationship with parents &amp; siblings</li> <li>– Changing attitude</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Discussion 3A: How do we hold ourselves / our community more accountable?

What Black Men ages 25 and older said...	What Young Black Men ages 16–24 said...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a report card system</li> <li>• Use social media (campaign launch)</li> </ul>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <b>• Ourselves:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Self control</li> <li>– Not being lazy</li> <li>– Be a man of your word</li> <li>– Making good choices</li> </ul> </td> <td> <b>• Community:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Confront community officials</li> <li>– Jobs</li> <li>– Create businesses</li> <li>– Violence</li> <li>– Police ourselves</li> <li>– Check ourselves</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<b>• Ourselves:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Self control</li> <li>– Not being lazy</li> <li>– Be a man of your word</li> <li>– Making good choices</li> </ul>	<b>• Community:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Confront community officials</li> <li>– Jobs</li> <li>– Create businesses</li> <li>– Violence</li> <li>– Police ourselves</li> <li>– Check ourselves</li> </ul>
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### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: