

Fishbowl Discussion: NIMBYs, YIMBYs, and increased density housing

Rebecca Shakespeare, for Faculty Fellows, Fall 2020

Lesson objective:

- Share, hear, and reflect on different perspectives on a topic
- Understand multiple perspectives in planning and public policy.
- Recognize and challenge own values about neighbourhood and exclusivity of access to place

What are the outcomes I hope to engender / yield?

- Everyone has a chance to speak
- Time can be spent focusing on listening, not just worrying about jumping in
- Participants observe the range of perspectives and reflect on the complexity and interrelatedness of idea

Identity check (1:30)

Take 1 minute and make a list of attributes about your living situation. What kind of home do you live in? A house? An apartment? A condo? Are you a homeowner, renter, or have a different housing arrangement? Do you only live in once place or sometimes in more than one place? Who do you live with? Who do you live near – who are your neighbours, do you know them, are they like you? I'll give you a minute to jot down your notes.

List attributes of your living situation.

Pick 4 people who are here to be in the fishbowl by listing every other zoom screen on my display, starting from the bottom right, until I get to 4. Put these names into the chat but don't hit send til after the introduction!

Mini-lecture:

Dense population possible with large apartments

Proximity & access to daily life

Where to put – nimby / yimby

These are examples of how people have a say in how their neighbourhood and nearby housing changes... and also informs who can live where they do.

Set up (2 minutes)

Fishbowl: A form of structured discussion

- *I picked 4 randomly – every other zoom square.*
- To focus on hearing multiple perspectives about new housing developments, we'll be doing a fishbowl conversation.

- For this fishbowl, 4 people will participate in a conversation about their answers to a guiding question.
- Everyone else will be charged with listening closely to the topics and perspectives raised, making notes on what is said.
- The fishbowl conversation will go on for 5 minutes, then the observers (everyone not in the fishbowl) will discuss what viewpoints they heard and what it was like to listen to a conversation.
- Throughout the activity, we'll have a few specific guidelines:
 - When you are ready to speak or contribute, put on your hat, glasses, or hold up your exciting object.
 - Try to limit your contributions to about 2-3 sentences, so everyone will have time to speak and be heard.
 - Finish your contribution by inviting someone to speak next – look for an indicator of who is ready to speak! Invite them into the discussion by saying “What do you think, [person]?”
 - If you have already spoken, count to 3 slowly before indicating you're ready to speak again.
- Put this into the chat:
 - Indicate you are ready to speak by putting on your hat or glasses or holding up your banner or object.
 - 2-3 sentences then pass the baton to someone who is ready to contribute.
 - Count to 3 before speaking again.
 - *Revision: Outer circle, jot down notes on themes or ideas you are hearing.*

Inner Circle (5 minutes)

The fishbowl conversation will focus around the question “Is it important for people to have a say about who lives near them?” Inner circle, you'll have a few seconds to think before we get started. Everyone who is not in the fishbowl, please turn off your video.

Other questions

- Is it important for people to have a say about who lives near them?
- What concerns would you have about a new large apartment building in your own neighbourhood?
- Does it matter what type of people would live in the large apartment building?
- What are benefits to having a new large apartment building?
- What things would you anticipate changing or not changing if new large apartment building was in your neighbourhood?
- How would a new apartment building impact your household?

Outer circle (5 minutes) – put Qs in chat

What did you hear from this inner circle? What topics or perspectives were raised?

Was it difficult to not respond to the fishbowl students' comments? Why or why not? If so, what kinds of comments did you want to respond to?

Did you hear anything from the fishbowl that surprised you?

Inner circle (think about/ written debrief)

How did it feel to share your feelings and perspective knowing that your peers were listening closely?

What do you wish you could have said more clearly/what point do you wish you could have made?

Did having an object make it easier for you to jump in

Everyone:

Look back at your notes on your own housing situation. Then consider this thought question:
How does your "housing identity" inform or complicate your beliefs about where others should live?