

# Collaborative sensemaking

A guide to sensemaking for facilitators  
leading workshops



The activity	The goal	Your role as facilitator	Time
<b>Introduction</b>	To make introductions and to explain the activity	<p>You should introduce the project's aims, the session's aims, and how the research material (or "data") was collected. Then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ask everyone to introduce themselves and to share their experience of the service</li> <li>explain the problem of individual bias and the benefits of doing this work in a group</li> <li>explain and request active informed consent {link to getting consent page}</li> </ul>	15 mins
<b>Data review</b>	To ensure everyone in the room has reviewed the research data	<p>Divide participants into groups of 3-4. Ask them to walk around the room, read all of the data and using sticky notes, mark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the items that seem most important</li> <li>similarities between items</li> <li>themes and patterns across items</li> </ul> <p>Ask each group to explain the thinking behind their conclusions</p>	20-30 mins
<b>Data theming</b>	To finalise and record themes in the data	<p>Keeping the participants in small groups, ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rearrange their sticky notes into clusters that match the themes they identified</li> <li>give each cluster a label that describes all the ideas behind each theme (for example 'residents seek housing near their jobs' rather than just 'housing')</li> <li>explain why they created their themes in the way they did</li> <li>if there is time, ask the teams to review each other's themes, to help test their logic</li> </ul> <p>If you suspect there are personal biases, incorrect assumptions or poor conclusions, you should gently challenge the teams yourself.</p> <p>People will have different views and they don't all have to agree. More important is that all opinions are recorded.</p>	30-40 mins
<b>Next steps</b>	To agree what happens next	<p>This stage depends on the type of research and how far the project has come, but you should agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how the findings of the session will be used</li> <li>if more or different research now needs to happen</li> <li>when the results of the session will be complete</li> <li>who will be responsible for writing them up</li> <li>when that person can present the results to the group</li> </ul> <p>Finally, thank everyone for their participation</p>	15 mins