

Considerations before hosting a town hall

This is a time to stay connected. As we return to our standard practices and think about getting together, social gatherings to strengthen and further build community are the most appropriate trauma-informed practices to opt for.

Before holding a town hall, consider the following questions:

- What is your goal or desired outcome for hosting a town hall?
- Will you be able to address misinformation shared during the meeting?
- Do you have experience in trauma-informed events and communication?

If the answer to the last two questions is no, consider not hosting a town hall.

Considerations:

1. If your purpose is to **inform** and emphasize the campus safety measures the university is implementing, consider amplifying university messaging through your channels.
 - For important updates, information on resources and FAQs on campus safety and related matters, visit msu.edu/emergency.
2. If the purpose of hosting an event is to **restore a sense of community**, a town hall is not the most appropriate method of fulfilling that purpose.
 - A more effective option is to organize social gatherings with non-alcoholic beverages and food where people are invited to get together and have the space to talk and connect. Be explicit that this type of event will not involve sharing specific information about safety or MSU's response to the violence we experienced – instead, it provides an opportunity to be together in community. While it is not a space designed for group counseling or processing trauma, you can and should find ways to engage counselors for your event should individuals need that additional support.
3. If the purpose is to provide a platform for people to **voice their concerns** and feel heard, consider these questions:
 - Can you meet the needs expressed in town halls and provide solutions? Can you address people's informational and psychological needs?
 - Are you authorized to talk through these campus safety messages?

If the answer to most of these questions is no, it is best to hold off and consider holding a community-building event, as indicated in number 2, rather than a town hall. Sending out surveys also is not recommended at this time.

For additional questions and communications counsel, please reach out to VP and Spokesperson Emily Guerrant at emilyg@msu.edu or Deputy Spokesperson Dan Olsen at olsenda2@msu.edu.