THE CYNEFIN CO

COMMUNITY & HOUSING

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT SENSEMAKER® PULSE

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SENSEMAKER®

Community & Housing

Citizen Engagement & Democratic Innovation

This pre-designer SenseMaker® collector is part of our Citizen Engagement & Democratic Innovation programme. Citizen engagement is essential for a healthy and thriving democracy. Its philosophy is rooted in the idea that people are entitled to decision making power regarding decisions that impact their lives, beyond simply voting for a representative once every few years. Citizen engagement includes direct outreach to citizens, information campaigns, public meetings and consultation. Deliberative processes such as citizens' assemblies and citizens' juries are used for a more in-depth dive into political issues. SenseMaker® can be used instead of or in conjunction with these examples. Explore our range of case studies. We use the term 'citizen' as a catch-all for members of the public or a specific community, which may include people who do not have legal citizenship.

The Citizen Engagement & Democratic Innovation programme provides tools for collective sense-making in the areas of:

- Community development and youth work
- Civic engagement and democratic innovation
- Collaborative service/policy design and evaluation
- Housing/tenant engagement
- Futures and planning
- Shared learning and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange

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Pre-designed SenseMaker® Collectors

We have created off-the-shelf, pre-designed SenseMaker® collectors that enable quick, easy, and authentic data collection whoever and wherever you are! This document focuses on housing and community. Check out what the SenseMaker® Community & Housing collector looks like. You can add two additional questions of your choice and delete as many questions as you like; all included in the price. Some questions also have customisable options as indicated below.

Check out our other pre-designed collectors

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The Overview

Is your community thriving and connected? Or do people merely pass each other by on their commute to somewhere else? Or maybe there's energy for change but still things are stuck? Where and how we live has a big impact on our wellbeing, and there is now an emerging field of ecopsychology and urban planning research to back that up.

Housing is one of the most fundamental aspects of our daily lives. Whatever the situation in your community, our living situations and the surrounding environment could always be improved. Signifiers below are based on a series of projects and collaborations with social housing providers across the UK. The aim is to explore how people feel about their area, who is responsible and what needs to change.

CUSTOMISATION OPTIONS:

Within this package, you can delete as many questions as you like, and you can add two additional questions of your choice included in the price. Further edits will incur an additional fee. This is available in any language; we can provide the template and you provide the translation.

For more information, please contact: beth.smith@thecynefin.co

SENSEMAKER®

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DISCOVER MORE

SenseMaker® is key to our practice. The first and original distributed ethnographic approach to sense-making, it allows for large-scale capture of stories into a quantitative framework where the 'subject' becomes their own ethnographer. SenseMaker® combines the scale of numbers with the explanatory power of narrative.

Self-signification–allowing respondents to give meaning to their own experience–is key to SenseMaker®'s design because it avoids the epistemic injustice of third-party or algorithmic interpretation. Sophisticated visualisations of patterns, ideas, outliers, tendencies, threats, or opportunities are intuitively readable to anyone without the need for a background in data analysis. No barriers. No pre-requisite expertise required. Just curiosity.

SenseMaker® allows the powerful combination of vast amounts of data, with the rich context of narrative, based on the anecdotes of real people going about their real lives. Very importantly, SenseMaker® places the voices and interpretations of people at the centre, instead of privileging those in power.

1.1 If there was someone moving to your area, what would you tell them about where you live? (You can share something positive or negative)

1.2 Finish the following sentence: '"Living in my area is like...'

SIGNIFIER DESIGN

Signifiers are a general term for all of the different response formats that allow respondents to signify meaning. Most signifiers are connected, for example, the triads usually ask questions about the initial prompt.
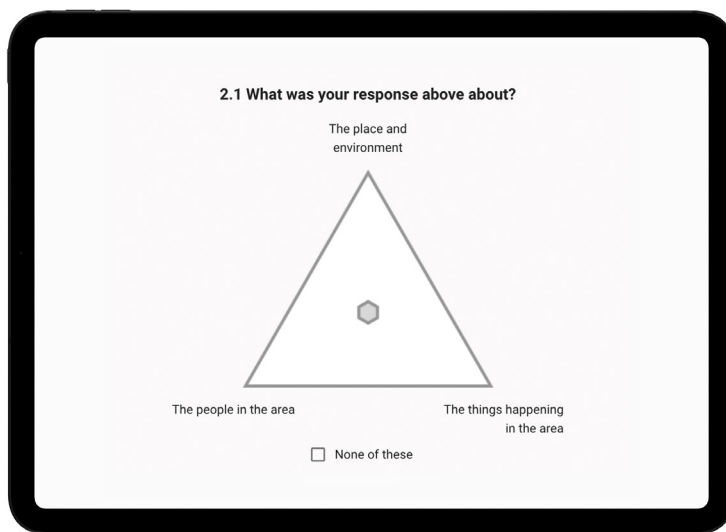Find out more about signifers.

PROMPTING QUESTION

The SenseMaker® prompting question is designed to place the respondent in context and encourage them to share the most resonant story that comes to mind. Open-ended, emotionally neutral, and indirect, the prompting question asks participants to reflect on an experience, share a perspective, or imagine how they'd feel in a specific situation. This creates a qualitative data bank of stories that help to contextualise and explain the quantitative patterns we observe, along with insights into potential interventions and localised, contextual solutions. The signifiers that follow after it are usually questions about this prompt.

After the initial prompt, participants are asked to give their story a title, hash tag or describe it in a few words. This leads to pithy responses that provide great insight into the crux of the story.
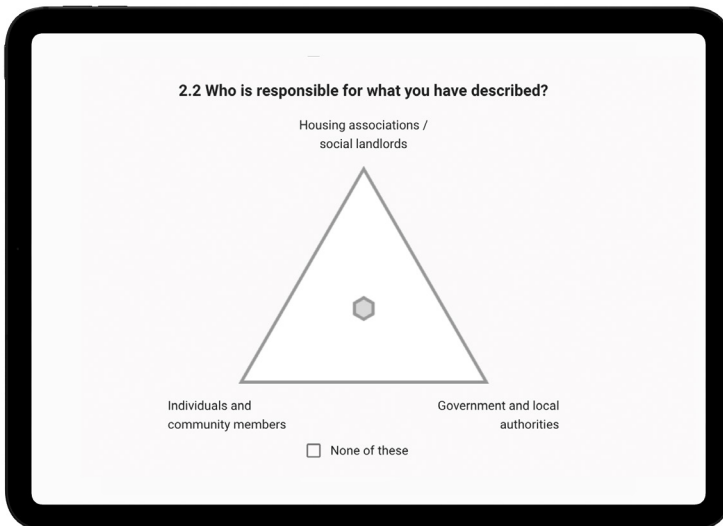
TRIADS

The story-teller is asked to drag and drop a ball onto a position on a triangle shape where they feel their story best sits between three interrelated concepts that are not mutually exclusive. Triads reveal how concepts relate to one another, and in relation to the story itself. The core concepts can be rewritten in more colloquial language to suit your community. The labels of the triads must be either all positive, all negative or all neutral so that it is less easy to game or gift the researcher with the 'correct' answer. This increases the cognitive load so that the end-user reflects more deeply on their response. For analysts, the resulting meta-data patterns are then backed up by descriptive stories as context, and the data can be statistically analysed.
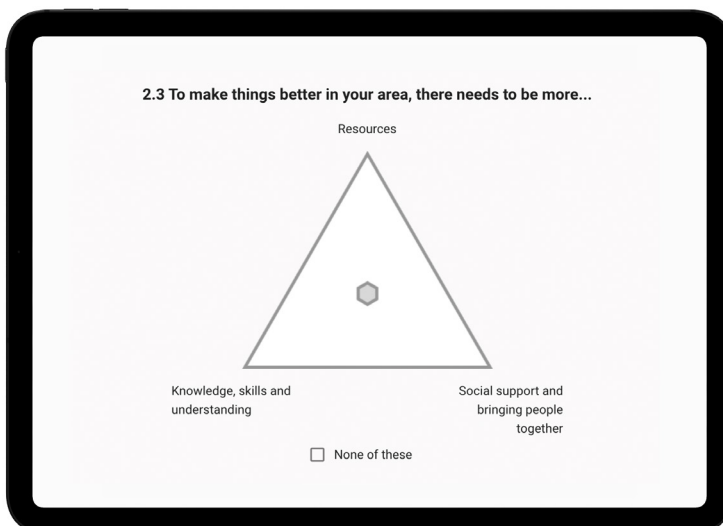
2.1 What was your response above about?

The place and environment

The people in the area   The things happening in the area

☐ None of these

Triad 1
Environment, Social, Activities:

We start off broad with this question by asking the respondents to say more about the focus of their story. It covers the physical environment, the social environment and activities or events within the area. This gives us key contextual information about what the respondent is focused on.

2.2 Who is responsible for what you have described?

Housing associations /
social landlords

Individuals and
community members

Government and local
authorities

☐ None of these

Triad 2
Responsibility:

This triad asks respondents where they believe the responsibility lies. This can be very insightful in order to explore why things might be stuck; often people can feel like responsibility lies with someone else and so they do not take action. This is a useful triad to filter with; we can then see the rest of the data through the lens of respondents who placed their marker at each corner of this triad.

2.3 To make things better in your area, there needs to be more...

Resources

Knowledge, skills and
understanding

Social support and
bringing people
together

☐ None of these

Triad 3
Improvements:

Here the triad explores what is needed to improve the area. This allows us to capture whether respondents perceive a lack of material resources, social connection or the know-how to improve their area. Thereby, we can hone in on where respondents believe time, energy and resources would be best spent. This question can provide insights into what needs more energy and attention, which can often be surprising or counter-intuitive.
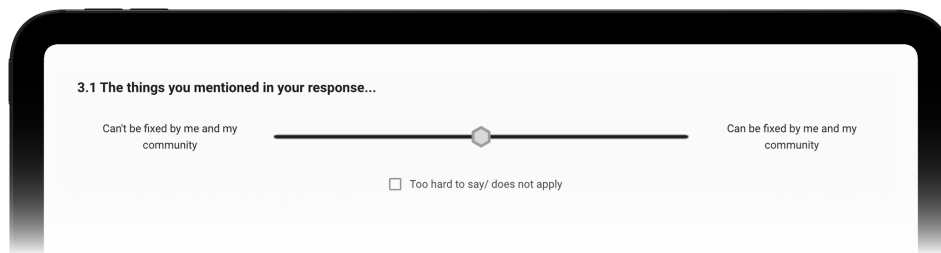
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DYADS

Based on Aristotle's Golden Mean, dyads are spectrums in which a concept or principle is taken to its two extremes. Dyads can be used for hypothesis testing because the hypothesis is disguised. The ends must be either both positive, negative or neutral—this prevents gifting or gaming because there is no obvious 'desired' response. In data analysis, the results are displayed as a histogram where you can observe patterns, distributions and deviations from the mean.
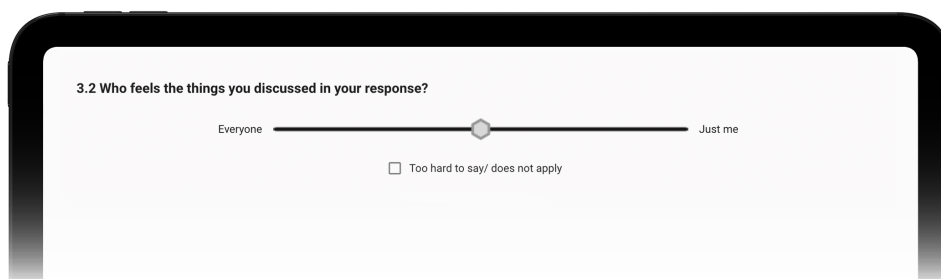
Dyad 1 - Agency:

This dyad reveals the degree to which respondents feel a sense of personal agency and collective agency within their communities. If agency is low, respondents will not be likely to have the initiative needed to be proactive. Hence, this would be a key area of intervention. Comparing stories from across this spectrum may reveal ideas about how to shift community members further to the right.

3.1 The things you mentioned in your response...

Can't be fixed by me and my community   ———○———   Can be fixed by me and my community

☐ Too hard to say/ does not apply

Dyad 2 - Shared Feelings:

Believing that you are the only one who cares about a particular issue is a key factor in determining whether you will act on it or not. If respondents feel alone in their experience, they will not be likely to act. While if they feel like everyone shares the same experience, their sense of responsibility may be diluted and so they wait for others to act. This suggests there may be a sweet spot in the middle in which respondents feel propelled to act.

3.2 Who feels the things you discussed in your response?

Everyone   ———○———   Just me

☐ Too hard to say/ does not apply

OPEN QUESTIONS

Open questions allow respondents to input their thoughts and ideas in a free-form way. We include them at this point in the collector in order to capture any outstanding, exploratory issues.

4.1 Name one good things about where you live

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

4.2 Name one thing that is NOT so good about where you live

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

4.3 What could YOU do to make things better where you live?

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

4.4 What could other people do to make things better where you live?

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

MCQs

Multiple choice questions (MCQs) allow respondents from an array of different options. They are suitable when there is a limited number of possible responses to a question. We can set how many response options they can choose, e.g., "Choose your top 3" or "Tick all that apply".

MCQs can be used to filter the rest of the data. For example, in our data dashboard, with a few clicks, we can see only the data from specific genders or age groups or a characteristic relevant to your topic. This is really useful to dig deeper into why certain groups might experience things differently, debunk assumptions about how people feel about their experiences, or to create profiles on particular geographical areas, and to identify 'more stories like this, less like that' (the underlying principle of vector theory of change).
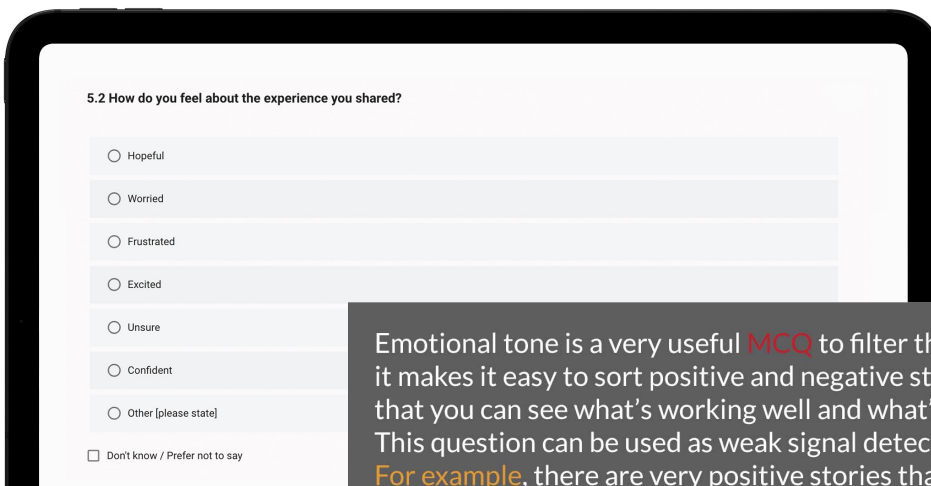
MCQ 1 - Importance:

5.1 How important is the story you describe in relation to your life?

○ Not all all

○ Somewhat important

○ Very important

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

MCQ 2 - Emotional tone:

5.2 How do you feel about the experience you shared?

○ Hopeful

○ Worried

○ Frustrated

○ Excited

○ Unsure

○ Confident

○ Other [please state]

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

Emotional tone is a very useful MCQ to filter the data; it makes it easy to sort positive and negative stories so that you can see what's working well and what's not. This question can be used as weak signal detection. For example, there are very positive stories that occur rarely, we can decipher why and a course of action to address it.

MCQ 3 - Voice:

5.3 Who should hear what you've said? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ No one, just me
- ☐ Other residents
- ☐ Housing associations
- ☐ Local authorities / councils
- ☐ Regional government
- ☐ National government
- ☐ Business and industry
- ☐ Everyone
- ☐ Other (please state)

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

MCQ 4 - Staying:

5.4 How likely are you to stay living in this area?

- ○ Very likely
- ○ Likely
- ○ Not sure
- ○ Unlikely
- ○ Very unlikely

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

- ○ Other [please state]

☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

MCQ 5 - Generations:

5.5 As far as you know, how long has your family lived in this area? (Including yourself)

- ○ 1 generation
- ○ 2 generations
- ○ 3 generations
- ○ 4 generations
- ○ 5 generations or more
- ☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

MCQ 6 - Postcode:

5.6 What is your postcode?

- ○ BS1
- ○ BS2
- ○ ...
- ☐ Don't know / Prefer not to say

MCQ 7 - Length in area:

6.1 How long have you lived in this area?
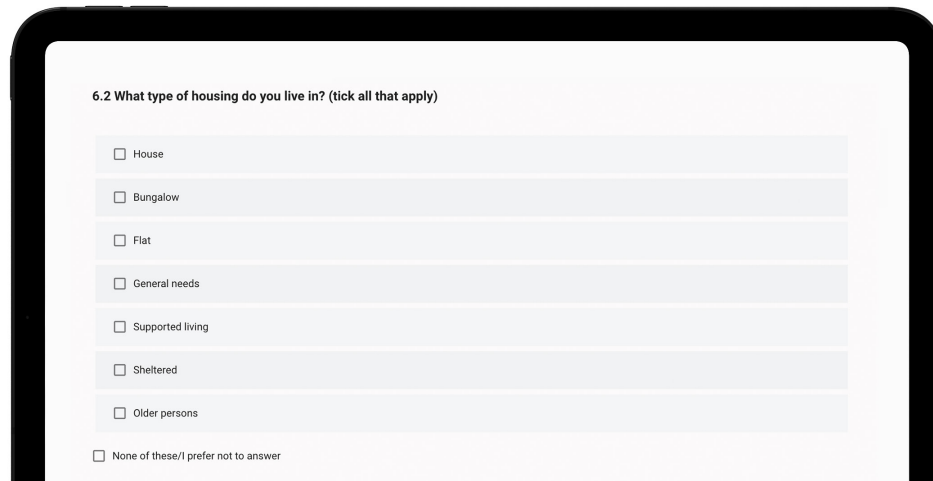
- ☐ Under 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 5 years
- ☐ 5 to 10 years
- ☐ 10 years plus
- ☐ I prefer not to say

MCQ 8 - Type of housing:

6.2 What type of housing do you live in? (tick all that apply)

- [ ] House
- [ ] Bungalow
- [ ] Flat
- [ ] General needs
- [ ] Supported living
- [ ] Sheltered
- [ ] Older persons
- [ ] None of these/I prefer not to answer

MCQ 9 - Relationship to house:

6.3 Are you...

- [ ] A social housing tenant
- [ ] In private rented accommodation
- [ ] Home owner
- [ ] None of these/I prefer not to answer

Demographics

Demographics are questions about people's personal characteristics and identities. We have included a wide range of demographic questions, and we encourage you to only keep the ones that are necessary. You can change these questions to fit your context.

Check out our wide range of demographic signifiers.

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Read more on SenseMaker® options and FAQ's

Learn more about our Citizen Engagement & Democratic Innovation Programme

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