



The Open Table Model

Congregations, or community organizations use the Open Table model to create relationships to transform the lives of individuals and families who are experiencing serious life challenges. Open Table works with individuals in poverty, with veterans, with individuals on probation, with individuals experiencing mental health or drug challenges, with survivors of human trafficking, and other populations.

Open Table Mission

The Open Table model, trains faith, government, business, non-profit and other sectors to work together to transform the intellectual and social capital and personal networks of their members and employees into tools individuals and families experiencing poverty can use to develop and implement plans to have better lives.

Through Open Table, communities move from transactional responses to poverty and life challenges to transformational solutions.

While people join Tables to help others, they soon realize their spiritual and/or individual purpose are transformed by the reciprocal relationships they create. Through Open Table, relationship is mutual: friendship, healing, purpose and transformation given by each other for each other. Open Table believes in human potential and the Open Table model allows people to give lives of meaning to each other.



Luzerne-Wyoming Counties System of Care Initiative

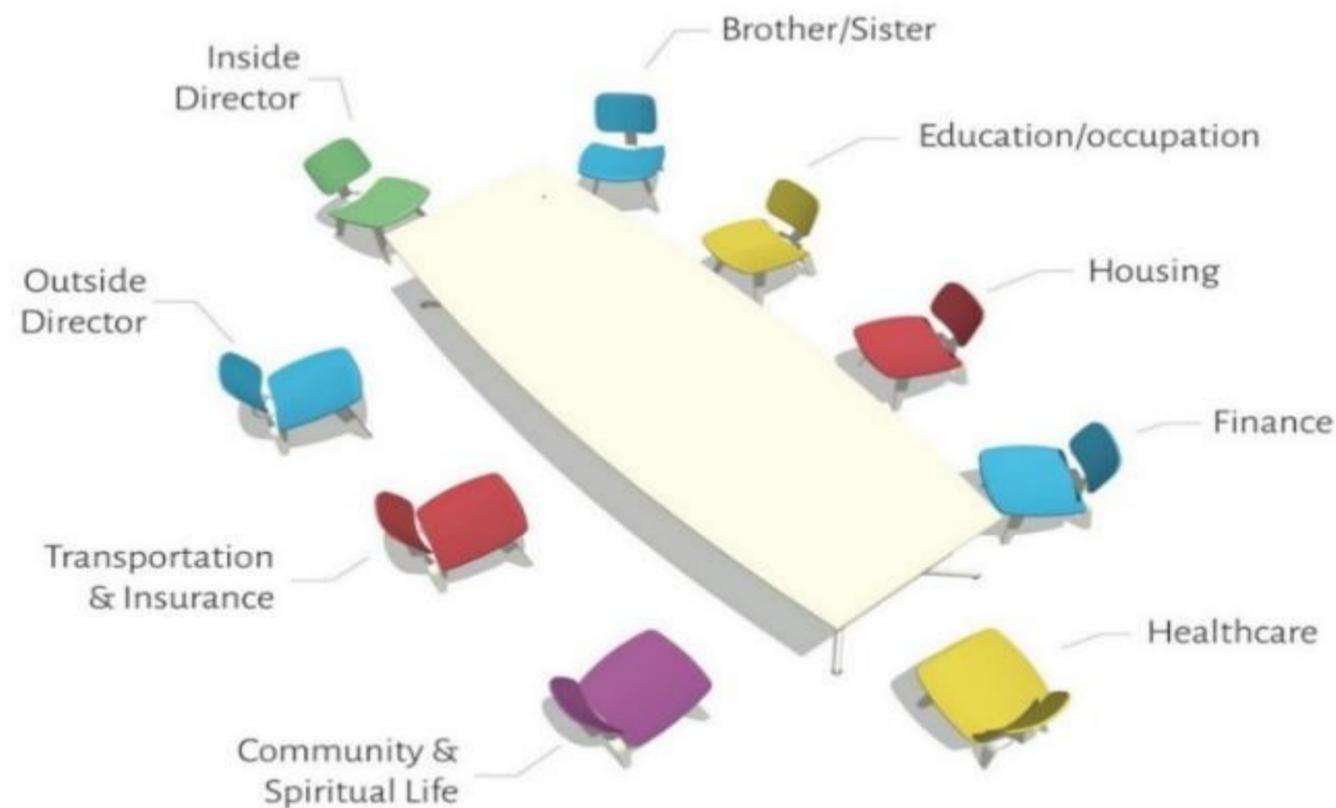
Evidenced-Informed Model

The Growing Evidence Base of Open Table.

A study of 2013 graduates of Open Table found that:

- 95% of young adults/families remained in relationship with their Table members after two years.
- 85% of the graduates had a better job and/or were in a college or technical school after their Table experiences ended.
- 95% of respondents reported that they were optimistic about their future ability to be self-supported

The Open Table Model



Contact Information

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Theory of Change

1. **Relationship.** Open Table is about a faith community being in direct relationship with those in poverty. The relationships between Table members and the Sister and/or Brother is at the heart of the effectiveness of the model, and the ability of the Sister and/or Brother to establish long lasting relationships with their Table and with other members of the community is crucial to success.

2. **Faith and a shared purpose.** Through a shared purpose, a faith community builds a powerful understanding of the human potential of each and every individual, and of how to actualize true love for each other through mutual and humble service. Through expression and deepening of their individual faith/spiritual perspectives, Table members and Sisters/Brothers affirm and deepen their own sense of wholeness, and of their connected humanity and shared purpose on the Table.

3. **A Safe Place.** A community creates Tables as a way of understanding that community and personal judgment may have contributed to poverty. We have to create a safe place for a community and Tables to recognize that poverty is not about character but rather about experience. We have to create a safe place to support a Sister/Brother as they move out of poverty. The safe place is free from blame and shame, moves at the own pace of the Sister/Brother, and is based on the Sister's/Brother's own definition of success, culture, and support.

4. **Transformation and Reconciliation.** Transformation occurs when a community is released from preconceived notions of poverty, people in poverty, and poverty solutions, including transaction-based interventions. We understand the mutuality which is built through being in direct, face to face, and long term relationship with those in poverty. As the community moves into mutual, direct relationship to those who are in poverty, reconciliation between races, social groups, and families begins to occur and transformation builds a mutual community sharing of an abundance of heart, spirit, and of intellectual and social capital. This shift forever abandons the paternalistic, dependent model of change and reveals the opportunity to be healed by each other.

5. **Local determination and ownership.** The Open Table model provides a foundational, consistent, tested, and proven process for addressing poverty, and provides training for communities. However -- exactly how the community of business, non-profits, government and faith sectors form into a local movement, how expansion, focus on populations, and how the effort and scope proceeds are all locally determined and managed as part of a community vision of their system of care under a shared purpose. Faith communities are the implementers of Open Table at the Sister/Brother level and make final determinations at the model level.