NPR Listening Party Kit: April 2016

Pick a story, gather friends and spark thoughtful conversation through a shared listening experience.
Our featured story this month comes from NPR’s newest podcast from co-host of All Things Considered, Kelly McEvers. Each episode takes a story from the news and goes deep.

Embedded digs into some serious topics. Our conversation catalysts are designed to help guide your conversation - and tips from Kelly on the art of the interview will help you open people up and take your discussion to the next level.

If you’re new to this, our guide materials help you bring your listening party to life.
April: Embedded
Inside A Small Brick House At The Heart Of Indiana's Opioid Crisis
Episode One

‘Inside A Small Brick House At The Heart Of Indiana’s Opioid Crisis’

Host: Kelly McEvers
on Embedded
Time: 34 min 32 sec
### Episode One
‘Inside A Small Brick House At The Heart Of Indiana’s Opioid Crisis’

**Host:** Kelly McEvers  
**On:** Embedded  
**Time:** 34 min 32 sec

- Which character in the story did you respond to most strongly? What did she or he stir in you?

- Did you learn anything that surprised you? Did the reporting affect your perceptions of addiction in any way? Describe.

- Do you have any personal stories relating to addiction - whether your own or someone you love - that you're comfortable sharing?

- A public health crisis like this one is nuanced and complex. Did the piece spur any thoughts or ideas about what we as a community could or should be doing better?

- We would have missed this story had there not been an HIV crisis accompanying the addiction crisis. What’s happening now in your town that you think everyone is missing?

- Finally, what do you think of the storytelling itself? The podcast gets really up close with people’s personal stories. How did it feel listening? Was it too graphic or intrusive? Not revealing enough?
5 TIPS ON HOW TO INTERVIEW LIKE A PRO

with Kelly McEvers

Award-winning journalist, Kelly McEvers, hosts NPR’s All Things Considered and Embedded

1. Be honest. Tell the interviewee the purpose of the conversation. From “This will be heard by millions of people on the radio!” to “It’s just us — let’s come up with some solutions to these problems.”

2. Share something about yourself. One of my favorite interviewers is Mark Maron, who talks about his own personal life when he’s interviewing. Rather than a technique, it’s an honest exchange. I share, you share.

3. Sometimes the best question can be, “And then what happened?” If someone is telling a story, let them tell it!

4. Don’t freak out if there’s silence. People need time to think. Let a thought sit for a moment. Let a heavy moment be heavy. Let the conversation breathe.

5. This might sound crazy, but cry if you need to. If something a person is saying makes me cry, I don’t try to hide it. It’s not like they’re going to be mad at you for crying.
How to Host an #NPRLivingParty
WHAT IS A LISTENING PARTY, ANYWAY?

Bring together friends for a fun, refreshing social experience that’s usually solitary: listening to radio stories.

At an NPR Listening Party, great audio storytelling gives you and your crew the chance to take a break from screens, listen together, and go deeper with thoughtful discussion and stories of your own.

It’s easy. All you have to do is:

• Pick a story
• Gather friends in a cozy place
• Hit airplane mode, listen and discuss!

Each month, our themed toolkit offers a section of stories curated to help spark discussion and includes conversation catalysts.

Show us how you #HostYourOwn #NPRLearningParty and together we can spread the mission of public radio for a more informed, engaged, and empathetic world.
HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Pick a day and time.

Weekend brunch works great, as do weekday evenings. Consider other events happening in your community already and schedule around them so you don’t have to compete. We recommend carving out about 90 minutes for the whole event.

2. Pick a venue.

We recommend hosting at your house to keep things cozy and casual. But if you have other ideas or access to an intimate space, go for it! Ideally, aim to keep the group no larger than 20 people so that everyone gets a chance to speak.
3. Send your invite.

You can use email, Facebook, or whatever you like. Please include the NPR Generation Listen logo or feel free to use our invite graphic. Have fun with it! A day or two before the Listening Party, send your guests a reminder to be on time and include any key information about arriving to / parking at your home, etc.

4. Choose a story or podcast.

Think about what will connect with the friends you’ve invited. You can choose one longer piece, or pair a couple of shorter segments. Generally aim for no longer than 45 minutes. Stories with a bit of tension or controversy make for a more lively discussion. Listen ahead of time and prepare some conversation starters to kick off your discussion. Also, consider which friends may have some interesting ideas to contribute based on subject matter expertise.
5 Prep the space.

Coziness is key. You want people to settle in - kind of like watching a movie. Put out lots of pillows and blankets. Keep the lighting soft. If possible, arrange seating into a circle, which will help conversation flow. It’s a good idea to have a focal point for folks to settle their gaze on (it may feel strange at first to not be looking at a screen). We also recommend setting out paper and pens so people can take notes and/ or doodle while they listen.

6 Mind the details.

Identify the device you plan to play the story from ahead of time. Make sure it’s fully charged and notifications are off. You may consider downloading the piece if your Internet is spotty. Make sure your speakers are powerful enough for everyone to hear with no problems. Oh, and stock up on some light snacks and drinks for folks to munch on.
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<th>QUICK CHECKLIST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Set date + time</td>
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<td>☐ Send invite</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Pre-listen to story</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Jot down a few discussion-starting questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Create a cozy feel where you’re hosting:</td>
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<td>☐ Arrange seating in a circle if possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Pillows, blankets, comfy chairs</td>
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<td>☐ Soft lighting</td>
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<td>☐ Pre-download story or make sure you have solid Internet connection</td>
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