



## The Growing Evidence Base of Open Table

**Wraparound and Open Table:** Open Table processes draw from the extensive research base of Wraparound, an established evidence-based practice. The steps and procedures for both models are highly similar. Thus, the extensive research base for the Wraparound Process, which comes from 25 years of development and high levels of Federal funding for research, is directly applicable to The Open Table. These studies show that support, when tailored to the individual needs of consumers, with high levels of consumer voice and choice and backed by specific plans to address unmet needs, is effective in addressing complex long term needs central to living in the community, and to movement out of poverty.

**Evaluations of the Open Table Model** include:

**2013 – Return on Investment:** The City of Phoenix developed a Return on Investment (ROI) model to measure the economic impact of Tables on individuals and families being served. The City calculated that for every dollar spent on training staff and serving families, a 744 percent increase in family financial well-being was realized.

**2015 – Outcome Study on 2013 Graduates:** Dr. John VanDenBerg, a pioneer of the wraparound model and consultant to Open Table, developed and implemented a study of outcomes associated with 20 brothers/sisters that completed the table process. Key findings include:

- 95% of young adults/families remained in relationship with their Table members
- 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

**2016-A Study of Essential Open Table Model Features.** This study, designed by and carried out by researcher Dr. Michael Marks validated the earlier study by VanDenBerg, revealed the importance of brother/sister and table member relationship building, the changed views of table members of people in poverty, and key elements of character building occurring for table members as core intervention features. In addition, the study showed that the faith of most participants was deepened and the majority of both Table members and brothers and sisters were able to develop a shared purpose. 11 brothers/sisters and 16 Table members were interviewed for the study. Key findings include:

- **Table members bring intellectual and social capital as well as personal experiences.** 63% of table members noted that they utilized their community and faith connections to help the brother/sister meet his/her goals; 50% used skills from work or educational training; 44% shared personal experiences. Sharing experiences such as how they coped with their own poverty can be powerful for brothers/sisters to witness, and helped build mutuality.
- **Brothers/Sisters are receiving intensive individualized supports.** Findings corroborated the intensive and individualized nature of supports and services provided. 85% of participants identified examples of tangible aid/service (e.g., free or no cost auto maintenance; legal assistance) followed closely by examples of emotional social support (e.g., participation in family celebrations, sharing of meals, responding to crises) at 82%. At the same time, many brothers and sisters could offer reciprocal support back to Table members – the true basis of relationship.
- **Table members change views about poverty.** Table members gained valuable knowledge about the nature of poverty and its consequences. All but one table member participant told of a change in their preconceived notions of poverty resulting from table member involvement. This enhanced and more culturally competent view can spread to others in the faith community.
- **Table members are transformed.** 12 of the 16 table members (75%) articulated their own personal transformation including cultivating or enhancing character qualities. For some Table members, their sense of purpose was honed. Other traits noted included building or enhancing feelings of gratitude, increasing patience and compassion, developing curiosity about others and cultivating a sense of awe that people far less advantaged than themselves can thrive, be resilient, and in fact, have something to offer brothers/sisters as well as table members. Table members shared information back and forth with each other, increasing a sense of community for all concerned.
- **Table members and Brothers/Sisters are in relationships which endure.** Many Brothers/Sisters and Table members used descriptors such as “family” and “friends”, some noting “lifelong” in describing relationships. 100% of brothers/sisters and virtually all table members noted that they are either in contact or hope to be in contact after the table ends with most brothers/sisters identifying face to face contact.

**2016 – Post-Open Table Participant Faith Survey.** This study, developed with Open Table leadership and delivered by a D.C. area research firm, looked at crucial questions about the effects of Table involvement on participants.

- Most of those surveyed (84%) attended the faith community where the Table was hosted.
- Over 87% of those who participated experience some level of deepening of their faith because of participating on a Table
- For Christian participants, over 64% felt that their Table experience contributed to their understanding of the Gospels.
- Over 85% of Table participants regularly spoke with the family, other church members, and friends outside of church about their experience on their Table.

- Over 75% of Participants felt that the experience of serving on a Table had a large to moderate effect on their understanding of poverty in their community.
- Over 75% of Christian Participants felt that the experience of serving on a Table had a large to moderate effect on their relationship with Jesus.
- Over 75% of Participants planned to stay in regular contact with the Brother/Sister from their Table, and with other Table members.
- Over 75% of participants felt that their church should expand their Open Table ministry.

The conclusion of the post-open Table Participant Faith Survey was that serving on a Table had a profound experience on most Table members, which validated the conclusion of the separate study of Essential Open Table Model Features by Dr. Marks. The Faith Survey shows that discipleship is occurring in the faith communities, and that the potential of a faith community to grow and expand their mission is enhanced by Open Table.

**Next Steps:** The Open Table is working closely to document outcomes. We are developing ways of ensuring Tables have consistent practice of the model; looking at how many family and community members are effected by each graduate; developing small controlled studies of Brother and Sister outcomes; and doing more in-depth study of discipleship.