Advocacy In Human Services: Tools to Change Our World

Advocacy in Human Services: Tools to Change Our World

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LICENSE AND ATTRIBUTIONS

This textbook was created for HUMAN 1170: Role of Advocacy in Human Services at the College of DuPage with funding from the Faculty OER Support Grant.

Advocacy is the vehicle by which underserved and marginalized populations can be given a voice. Effective advocacy serves to inform people about their rights and how to exercise them effectively. Advocacy can also empower people to confront the biopsychosocial challenges they may struggle to overcome on their own – obstacles such as unemployment, economic/social status, physical or mental health issues, lack of educational resources, systematic oppression and social injustice.

The material in this book has been compiled from several sources, with an emphasis on The Community Toolbox. *The Community Tool Box is a free, online resource for those working to build healthier communities and bring about social change. It offers thousands of pages of tips and tools for taking action in communities* (https://ctb.ku.edu/en/about-the-tool-box). Relevant material has been extracted from this authoritative resource for our academic purposes.

PART I
OVERVIEW

CHAPTER 1 - OUR MODEL FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

Learn how to utilize and navigate the Community Tool Box, an internet-based resource for building healthier communities.

Building healthier cities and communities involves local people working together to transform the conditions and outcomes that matter to them. That work demands an array of competencies, such as community assessment, planning, mobilization, intervention, advocacy, evaluation, and marketing successful efforts. Supporting this local and global work requires widespread and access to skills-building resources. This section describes a free, online resource for building healthier communities called the Community Tool Box.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://cod.pressbooks.pub/humanservices/?p=49#oembed-1

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX?

BACKGROUND.

Our mission is to promote community health and development by connecting people, ideas, and resources.

We began this work in 1994, focused on developing practical information for community building that both professionals and ordinary citizens could use in everyday practice — for example, leadership skills, program evaluation, and writing a grant application. The emphasis was on these core competencies of community building, transcending more categorical issues and concerns, such as promoting child health, reducing violence, or creating job opportunities.

We developed a broad and evolving Table of Contents and started writing, one section at a time. Today,

there are more than 340 sections online and more than 7,000 pages of text — available in English, Spanish, and partially in Arabic and Farsi.

AUDIENCE.

The audiences for this site include:

- People doing the work of community change and improvement (community leaders and members)
- People supporting it (intermediary organizations such as public agencies or university-based centers)
- People funding it (governmental institutions, foundations, and others).

ATTRIBUTES.

Building healthier communities is hard work, requiring frequent adjustments to emerging opportunities and barriers. To be a resource for community work, a "tool box" would exemplify the following attributes:

- Its content needs to be **comprehensive**. Since effective community members and practitioners need a variety of skills, sections of the Tool Box would have to reflect a broad array of core competencies (e.g., skills in conducting listening sessions, organizing focus groups, leading meetings, group facilitation and recording).
- The information needs to be **easily available** on demand, and in particular readable, printable, and downloadable from one location.
- The information must be **useful**, providing step-by-step guidance that the reader can apply directly in practice.
- The tone of the material should be **friendly and supportive** of users who may lack sufficient knowledge or feel uncertain about what to do.
- Forums or exchange mechanisms should be available to **connect people** who have relevant experience that can help facilitate applications and adjustments in diverse contexts and situations.
- An on-line resource should help **reduce inequalities**, or certainly not increase them. By being (nearly) universally available and free through the World Wide Web, our tools may help reduce inequities in local capacity for community change and improvement.
- Since there is such high turnover among people and projects, the tools should help build **capacity** for continuous learning among old, new, and emerging generations of those doing the work.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CORE CONTENT.

A conceptual framework or model for building healthier communities guides choices for core content in

the Community Tool Box. Based on earlier conceptual models, this framework outlines a dynamic and iterative process with six phases, and related competencies, associated with facilitating community change and improvement:

- Understanding Community Context (e.g., assessing community assets and needs)
- Collaborative Planning (e.g., developing a vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans)
- Developing Leadership and Enhancing Participation (e.g., building relationships, recruiting participants)
- Community Action and Intervention (e.g., designing interventions, advocacy)
- Evaluating Community Initiatives (e.g., program evaluation, documentation of community and system change)
- Promoting and Sustaining the Initiative (e.g., social marketing, obtaining grants).

Both science-based practice and experiential knowledge inform choices for content development for the Community Tool Box. Ongoing research by members of the Tool Box team, and many others throughout the world, suggest key factors or components of successful efforts to bring about community change and improvement (e.g., leadership, having a targeted mission, action planning).

Promising practices from this emerging science base, and ongoing input from community leaders and practitioners, is used to focus content development on core competencies (e.g., building leadership skills, creating a vision and mission, developing an action plan). Similarly, research and practice in behavioral instruction helped identify structural elements of the how-to sections or learning modules (i.e., what, why, how-to steps, etc.).

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Learn about values, principles, and assumptions that guide community health and development efforts.

- ## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY VALUES, PRINCIPLES, AND ASSUMPTIONS?

- ## CORE VALUES OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

- ## CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

- ## ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

The work of community health and development is both science and art. On the one hand, it grows from the lessons of experience learned by community activists and professionals trying to create systems, programs, interventions, and policy that improve the lives and health of everyone in communities. On the other hand, it stems from the passion for social justice, equity, and fairness that leads people to work to create healthy communities where all citizens, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances, have what they need.

The commitment to community doesn't arise out of nowhere. It comes from and is guided by values, principles, and assumptions that spring from our backgrounds and cultures, from our experiences, and from our conscious decisions about what is right. These values, principles, and assumptions shape our vision of the world as it should be, and motivate us to try to make it so.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework for the chapters that follow.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY VALUES, PRINCIPLES, AND ASSUMPTIONS?

The terms *values, principles*, and *assumptions* are sometimes used as if they all mean the same thing – the underlying truths on which we base our dealings with the world. In fact, although they are all "truths" to some extent, they are different in meaning and substance. Although we realize how similar they are, we'll try to consider each of the three. Understanding the difference can help us sort out when we're operating on facts or well-examined experience, when we're applying moral or ethical rules or judgments, and when we're responding to emotion or bias or unexamined "knowledge" that may not be accurate.

> All of these – facts and experience, morality, ethics, bias, emotion, "common knowledge" – can be legitimate reasons for action in some circumstances. (It's hardly logical to be non-violent in the face of racist police armed with clubs and vicious dogs; the moral imperative for those in the *Civil Rights Movement* was more important than facts and experience in that situation.) The importance of knowing the difference is understanding your own motivation, and acting accordingly.

VALUES

Values are our guidelines for living and behavior. Each of us has a set of deeply held beliefs about how the world

should be. For some people, that set of beliefs is largely dictated by a religion, a culture, a peer group, or the society at large. For others, it has been arrived at through careful thought and reflection on experience, and is unique. For most of us, it is probably a combination of the two. Values often concern the core issues of our lives: personal relationships, morality, gender and social roles, race, social class, and the organization of society, to name just a few.

PRINCIPLES

Principles are the fundamental scientific, logical, or moral/ethical "truths" arising from experience, knowledge, and values on which we base our actions and thinking. In the case of the Community Tool Box team, they are the underpinning of our understanding of community health and development, the truths that shape both our reasons for doing the work, and the work itself.

Scientific and logical principles are derived from experience and experiment, from knowledge (which itself comes from experience and experiment on the part of someone else), from logical analysis, and/or from theory. They as are objective – as free of bias, untested assumptions, etc., and as firmly based on provable fact or reasoned analysis – as they can be, and are considered true until proven otherwise. They include the physical and other laws by which the universe operates, and their extensions into the sphere of human action (If you run into a tree at 70 miles an hour, you'll probably be seriously injured or killed. If you drive your car when you're drunk, you don't have much judgment or control, making it much more likely that you'll hit that tree at 70 miles an hour. Principle: *Don't drive drunk*.)

Scientific and logical principles are typified by such statements as "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction" (Newton's Third Law of Motion). Such principles are either verifiable by observation – a cannonball shooting out of a cannon drives the cannon itself back in the opposite direction, consistent with Newton's Third Law – or are supported by all the evidence available – thousands of dinosaur fossils, various chemical and geological dating systems – and are "theories" only in the sense that they can't be fully proven because of the impossibility of traveling back in time or across interstellar space.

Moral and ethical principles are where values come in. These principles grow out of deeply held beliefs and values, and are often the principles upon which community work is founded. Devotion to democratic process, to equity and fair distribution of resources, to a reasonable quality of life for everyone, to the sacredness of life, to the obligation of people to help one another – these all come not from logic or scientific experiment, but from a value system that puts a premium on human dignity and relationships.

One of the clearest statements of moral/ethical principle is that of the American Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson (with Benjamin Franklin's help) in 1776: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness..."

This statement is actually a good demonstration of how values and principles form a loop, with principles based on values. Jefferson and Franklin may have held these "truths" to be self-evident (i.e., so obvious that

they don't have to be explained or supported), but, the certainty of the American founding fathers had to do with their values, not with any scientific proof that they were right.

At the same time, people may hold the same principles, but interpret them through different value systems. Two individuals may both believe, for instance, that all humans are created equal. For one, this may mean that she has a duty to try to gain equity for all. For the other, it may mean that since everyone starts out equal, anyone who doesn't achieve or do well is at fault for his failure, and therefore deserves no help or respect.

> Even scientific principles are, in some sense, based on values. The use of the scientific method, the adherence to empirical evidence (i.e., evidence actually observed or experienced), the willingness to believe the evidence even when it conflicts with religious or cultural assumptions – these are all characteristics of a value system that puts a high priority on logical and scientific thinking.
>
> Some people subscribe to different values, which place much more importance on religious or cultural traditions than on the work of science.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions are the next level of truths, the ones we feel we can take for granted, given the principles we have accepted. If we accept, for instance, that life is an "unalienable right" – a right of every human being that cannot be taken away – then we will usually assume that killing another person is wrong, or at least that we don't have the right to do it.

Assumptions are often unexamined. They are the facts or beliefs that we don't question, because we "know" they're accurate, even though they may not be. Most of us have been in situations where we've had to face the consequences of our incorrect assumptions.

It is nevertheless true that we all bring assumptions to what we do, and the Community Tool Box team is no exception. We hope our assumptions are based on carefully thought out principles, however, and try to reevaluate them to make sure we aren't operating on false premises.

What follows are some of the core values, principles and assumptions on which the Community Tool Box is based. The lists are not meant to be comprehensive, and are not necessarily in order of priority.

CORE VALUES OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

We'll start with values, because, as we've explained, they're usually the basis for the work we do. Our values are a reflection of the way each of us sees and addresses the world.

Although values can and do change as people grow and learn, there are some basic values that most people hold: the need to protect and preserve human life, for instance, or the responsibility of adults to care for children. These and a number of other values are held by the majority of people in most societies, and are often the foundation of laws and social norms.

Here are some of the values behind the Community Tool Box:

Everyone has a right to a decent quality of life. This is a core value for most people involved in community health and development. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, a policy statement issued by the World Health Organization-sponsored First International Conference on Health Promotion (Ottawa, Canada, 1986), embodies this value. It states that the prerequisites for health in a community are peace, shelter, enough food, adequate income to support individuals and families, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity.

Everyone is worthy of respect and equal consideration. Treating people with respect and consideration doesn't mean you can't disagree with them, or even fight against what they're trying to do. Rather it means that you should approach them as equals who think they're right, rather than labeling or treating them as evil or stupid.

Any community work or research should have the ultimate aim of being useful in improving people's lives, particularly the lives of those most in need and/or least powerful. There's no point to research or action in health and community work unless it contributes to the quality of life in the community and/or the world. Knowledge is hugely important, but it doesn't matter much if you don't do anything with it.

Due to inherent biases we all have, some understood and some we are aware of, it is essential for us to continually increase awareness of our biases and to ensure they do not contradict the higher order values previously discussed, such as ensuring all people are respected.

Fairness demands that everyone affected by research or by an issue – all stakeholders – should have the opportunity for either direct participation or representation in planning, implementing, and analyzing the resulting research or intervention. Community work, in whatever field, should be about creating new situations with the people affected, not about doing things *for* or *to* them.

This work isn't about power, but about the public good. Therefore, power and leadership, to the extent that it doesn't entirely compromise the purpose of the work, should be shared as much as possible.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

Principles, as we've described, are the essential truths on which we base our work. They're different from values, in that values are a reflection of what we deeply believe and feel: principles are a reflection of what we think. Although the reasoning behind them may – and usually does – grow out of our value system, they are generally practical, and aimed not at guiding our overall thinking and behavior, but at putting them – and our values – to work in the real world.

"Fair" doesn't mean that everyone gets the same thing; it means that everyone gets what they need. This implies that equity involves making sure that those with less have enough for their needs, and aren't ignored or exploited by those with more money or power.

Community work is far more likely to be successful if it involves all stakeholders from the very beginning. This is the principle that derives from the value concerning the fairness of involving everyone

affected by an issue. It's stated as a principle because it is a practical statement: planning, intervention, and evaluation all simply go better if there is input and participation by everyone involved. This participatory process results in more ideas, more widespread support, the possibility of avoiding errors because of ignorance of community history or past performance, and ownership of the resulting action by everyone affected.

Leadership from within the community should be encouraged and nurtured. Positive community change is more likely to occur, and more likely to continue, if it is built from within. The leaders for this work should come from the community, because they know the community so well, because they have the credibility that community membership brings, and because they have so much interest in success. It is also a matter of fairness – it is only right that people should control their own fates. For outsiders to impose solutions and leadership may be effective in the short term, but it hinders the community's ability to develop and evolve.

Community work takes careful planning at every stage of the process. Assessment and issue identification, strategic planning, implementation, evaluation, and maintenance of effort all have greater chances of success with collaborative planning. This principle is reflected in the large number of sections that discuss planning.

Evaluation is absolutely necessary, and useful in many ways, although probably most useful as a tool for improving your effort. It can show where changes are needed, pinpoint problems and strengths, suggest additional action, and provide accountability. A *formative evaluation* – one that carefully examines the process and content of your effort, compares it to what was supposed to occur, and analyzes the results of what you did in light of how you could improve on it – can tell you whether parts of the process or the goals need to be changed in order for the effort to become more effective. A summative evaluation – one that simply decides whether you did well or not, essentially focusing only on accountability – is far less helpful. A summative evaluation can often stop an effort in its tracks, when all it needs to become successful is a relatively minor change in execution.

Outcomes matter. While fingerpointing and handwringing over failures to meet goals may not be particularly helpful, it's important to remember the reason you're doing this work in the first place. You should be constantly doing your best both to adapt your effort for greater effectiveness and to keep your ultimate goal in sight.

Time is of the essence. Always allow enough time for things to happen, both in your planning and in your implementation. That means factoring in how long it actually takes to get an effort or program started:

- Recruiting a participatory planning team
- Developing a plan
- Getting the people, the space, the equipment and materials, and whatever else is needed in place
- Finding funding or other resources
- Carrying out the actual work
- Designing, implementing, and analyzing an evaluation
- Making the changes suggested by the evaluation, and then doing it all again

Allowing enough time also means allowing time in your effort for the desired results to occur. In some public health programs, for instance, it may take years to know whether a particular method of prevention has been truly successful. Even in many programs that policy makers see as quick fixes, results may not be forthcoming as fast as they'd like. Programming in the time to get the job done can be frustrating, but it's crucial to success.

> Legislators may see an employment training program as a simple matter of unemployed people learning a particular skill – similar to taking a course for a set number of weeks. But policy makers often don't realize that not only do different people learn at different rates, but that some participants may never have held a job, and don't understand the basics of getting along with supervisors and coworkers, or even of getting to work on time every day. Teaching all the basics in addition to the job skill in question may take a great deal longer than policy makers intend, but will be more effective in the long run.

Don't bite off more than you can chew. Aim high, but be honest with yourself and others about what you can actually do, and how much time it will take.

Make sure that your funding and other resources are adequate for what you're trying to do. Trying to carry out a project without the resources you need is a recipe for failure. It makes far more sense to scale back your intentions, or to allow more time to get what you need than to go into an effort ill-equipped to carry it off.

Community action should take place at the level and time to make it most effective. The level of community action refers to where the action is aimed. You may be planning action to benefit a particular group, but your effort might be more effective if aimed at policy makers, or at some other group or individual whose actions affect the group you're concerned with.

By the same token, your effort should occur at the best time for it to have the desired effect. This may mean coordinating it with regular legislative procedures (the issuing of a state budget, for instance), with a particular season (timing a fundraising effort for homeless families to coincide with the winter holidays), with a similar national or international effort (e.g., National Literacy Day), or with current events as they develop. (You'd want to campaign to save an open space when its possible development first came to light, so as to give your effort enough time to rally public opinion and get the facts out.

If you wait till the bulldozers are already pushing down trees, it's too late.)

Community intervention should be replicable and sustainable. For an intervention to be "replicable," it has to be able to be repeated successfully in other places and/or with other participants. The basic elements of the intervention should be effective – perhaps with some adaptation to a different community or population – anywhere, and you should be able to explain exactly how it works, so that someone else can set it up and run it in another situation. That means you have to understand the intervention's elements clearly, and know what it is that makes it successful. Since the formula often involves a combination of theory, philosophy, interpersonal approaches, politics, and methods, you have to pay careful attention to and document and evaluate what you're doing, if you want someone else to be able to do it as well.

For an intervention to be sustainable, you have to be able to continue to operate it for the long term. That includes not only carrying on the work effectively, but also finding the financial and other resources necessary

to keep it going, building community support, providing ongoing training for both new and continuing staff, and constantly evaluating and trying to improve what you're doing.

That leads to the next principle:

Community work is never done. Whatever your work involves – whether a community intervention, an advocacy campaign, a one-time community action to accomplish a particular goal, the founding of an organization, or the establishment of a self-sustaining community initiative – your task isn't done when you've reached your initial goal. If you don't work to maintain what you've done, or assure that others are doing so, it will fall apart. To really bring about change in a community, you have to keep at it indefinitely.

Don't lose sight of your vision, your principles, and your values in the struggle to get things done. It's often tempting to take any funding that's available, or to change what you're doing in order to be eligible for resources. Sometimes, it might seem that altering your purpose will make it more palatable and less controversial, and will make your life easier. When these possibilities arise, it's crucial to review what your vision, mission, and ultimate goals are. If these need to change because of changes in circumstances or community needs, then they should. But if the motivation for change conflicts with your values or your vision – or the reason you're doing the work in the first place – it has to be rejected. The integrity of your cause and your organization is worth far more, and will contribute far more to your effort, than any short-term financial or public relations gain.

The real goal of community work is positive social change. The ideal, in most cases, is to improve the quality of life for a particular group, or for everyone, in the community. This often means changing some fundamental aspects of the way the community thinks or functions – its attitude toward domestic violence, for instance, its commitment to education or to environmental preservation, its consumption of alcohol or unhealthy food, or its concept of social justice. If you can help the community change its attitudes and behaviors in positive ways, it will become a better place for everyone to live.

CORE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

As we've explained, assumptions are the ideas we take for granted. They're not the same as values, because they often stem from logical – or what we believe is logical – reasoning, rather than from deeply held beliefs. They differ from principles in that they don't usually form the basis of our thinking and action, but guide how we respond to our principles.

It's almost impossible to list all our assumptions, simply because we're not aware of many of them. They're so deeply ingrained in our thinking, we don't even realize that they're assumptions: they seem like truths. With that in mind, we'll try to list some of the most important assumptions behind the work of the Community Tool Box.

Just about everyone wants what's best for the community. People may disagree both on the definition of what's best, and on how to get there, but their goal is usually similar: to live in a community that's as good as it can be in as many ways as possible. If we start with that assumption, it becomes easier to establish common

ground, and to begin to work together. Demonizing those we disagree with is easy and often satisfying, but it leads nowhere. Assuming instead that others want many of the same things we do can lead to cooperation on some issues, and can at least start a dialogue on others. That's far better, both practically and otherwise, than two factions stuck in opposition, with no chance for movement.

Once people understand others' circumstances, they're usually willing to help. In the quest for equity in a community, we often come up against attitudes that seem mean and unfeeling. In many cases, however, these attitudes are the result of people in different circumstances having little contact with one another. If you know no one on welfare, it's easy to assume that welfare recipients are all lazy and don't want to work. When you're actually faced with the realities of their lives, however – mostly single mothers living on desperately little money, even in the states where the system is most generous; often lacking all but the most basic skills, and sometimes even those; and faced with losing health care and having to pay much of their income for child care if they go to work – it becomes more difficult to see them so negatively.

If people are treated with respect, they usually respond the same way. Whether you're dealing with participants in an intervention, with opponents, or with allies, treat them as you'd wish to be treated. The Golden Rule is generally a good guideline, not only morally and ethically, but practically.

Coalitions, partnerships, and collaborations are built one relationship at a time. It may be relatively easy to bring a number of people and groups together around an issue, but getting them to stay and work together is another matter. The relationships that they build with one another are the glue that can make that happen.

Tip O'Neill, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, used to say that all politics was local. What he really meant was that all politics was personal, that alliances are built relationship by relationship. That's as true for community activists as it is for Congressmen.

People have to believe something is possible before they'll work to make it happen. This is the reason that a shared vision is so important in community work, but it also hold true on the individual level. Students, for instance, have to believe they can learn before they'll put in the concentration and effort needed to do so. If they become too discouraged, the task looks impossible, and it's easier to give up than to risk continual failure.

An individual or community has to be able to imagine the future in order to make it happen. If there's no belief in the possibility of change, there's likely to be no change.

People working together are better off and more successful than people working alone. They'll have more ideas, develop more capacity to get things done, and feed off one another's energy in order to keep the effort moving. If it's possible, concerted action is almost always more effective in the long run than one person or organization going it alone.

The world isn't perfect; this work is necessary to create positive social change and make it a better place for everyone.

IN SUMMARY

Underlying every section of the Community Tool Box are the values, principles, and assumptions that the Tool Box team uses to guide its work. These have to do largely with the fundamental dignity and worth of all people; the ability of – and necessity for – communities to solve their own problems and produce their own leaders; the ethical and practical necessities of health and community work; and the need for positive social change.

This section is meant to help Tool Box users understand the perspective of the Community Tool Box, and perhaps make clearer some of what's presented there. It's also meant to help users think about their own values, principles, and assumptions, to make them conscious, to examine them, and to continue to hold them up to scrutiny as they do this often difficult and incredibly important work.

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Print Resource

Fawcett, S. *Some Values Guiding Community Research and Action*. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 24, no.4 (1991), pp.624-636.

Section 1-2: Some Core Principles, Assumptions, and Values to Guide the Work

Learn about values, principles, and assumptions that guide community health and development efforts.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY VALUES, PRINCIPLES, AND ASSUMPTIONS?**

- **CORE VALUES OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX**

- **CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX**

- **ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX**

The work of community health and development is both science and art. On the one hand, it grows from the lessons of experience learned by community activists and professionals trying to create systems, programs, interventions, and policy that improve the lives and health of everyone in communities. On the other hand, it stems from the passion for social justice, equity, and fairness that leads people to work to create healthy communities where all citizens, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances, have what they need.

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VALUES

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Scientific and logical principles are typified by such statements as "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction" (Newton's Third Law of Motion). Such principles are either verifiable by observation – a cannonball shooting out of a cannon drives the cannon itself back in the opposite direction, consistent with Newton's Third Law – or are supported by all the evidence available – thousands of dinosaur fossils, various chemical and geological dating systems – and are "theories" only in the sense that they can't be fully proven because of the impossibility of traveling back in time or across interstellar space.

Moral and ethical principles are where values come in. These principles grow out of deeply held beliefs and values, and are often the principles upon which community work is founded. Devotion to democratic process, to equity and fair distribution of resources, to a reasonable quality of life for everyone, to the sacredness of life, to the obligation of people to help one another – these all come not from logic or scientific experiment, but from a value system that puts a premium on human dignity and relationships.

One of the clearest statements of moral/ethical principle is that of the American Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson (with Benjamin Franklin's help) in 1776: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness..."

This statement is actually a good demonstration of how values and principles form a loop, with principles based on values. Jefferson and Franklin may have held these "truths" to be self-evident (i.e., so obvious that they don't have to be explained or supported), but, the certainty of the American founding fathers had to do with their values, not with any scientific proof that they were right.

At the same time, people may hold the same principles, but interpret them through different value systems. Two individuals may both believe, for instance, that all humans are created equal. For one, this may mean that she has a duty to try to gain equity for all. For the other, it may mean that since everyone starts out equal, anyone who doesn't achieve or do well is at fault for his failure, and therefore deserves no help or respect.

> Even scientific principles are, in some sense, based on values. The use of the scientific method, the adherence to empirical evidence (i.e., evidence actually observed or experienced), the willingness to believe the evidence even when it conflicts with religious or cultural assumptions – these are all characteristics of a value system that puts a high priority on logical and scientific thinking.
>
> Some people subscribe to different values, which place much more importance on religious or cultural traditions than on the work of science.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions are the next level of truths, the ones we feel we can take for granted, given the principles we have accepted. If we accept, for instance, that life is an "unalienable right" – a right of every human being that cannot be taken away – then we will usually assume that killing another person is wrong, or at least that we don't have the right to do it.

Assumptions are often unexamined. They are the facts or beliefs that we don't question, because we "know" they're accurate, even though they may not be. Most of us have been in situations where we've had to face the consequences of our incorrect assumptions.

It is nevertheless true that we all bring assumptions to what we do, and the Community Tool Box team is no exception. We hope our assumptions are based on carefully thought out principles, however, and try to reevaluate them to make sure we aren't operating on false premises.

What follows are some of the core values, principles and assumptions on which the Community Tool Box is based. The lists are not meant to be comprehensive, and are not necessarily in order of priority.

CORE VALUES OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

We'll start with values, because, as we've explained, they're usually the basis for the work we do. Our values are a reflection of the way each of us sees and addresses the world.

Although values can and do change as people grow and learn, there are some basic values that most people hold: the need to protect and preserve human life, for instance, or the responsibility of adults to care for children. These and a number of other values are held by the majority of people in most societies, and are often the foundation of laws and social norms.

Here are some of the values behind the Community Tool Box:

Everyone has a right to a decent quality of life. This is a core value for most people involved in community health and development. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, a policy statement issued by the World Health Organization-sponsored First International Conference on Health Promotion (Ottawa, Canada, 1986), embodies this value. It states that the prerequisites for health in a community are peace, shelter, enough food, adequate income to support individuals and families, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity.

Everyone is worthy of respect and equal consideration. Treating people with respect and consideration doesn't mean you can't disagree with them, or even fight against what they're trying to do. Rather it means that you should approach them as equals who think they're right, rather than labeling or treating them as evil or stupid.

Any community work or research should have the ultimate aim of being useful in improving people's lives, particularly the lives of those most in need and/or least powerful. There's no point to research or action in health and community work unless it contributes to the quality of life in the

community and/or the world. Knowledge is hugely important, but it doesn't matter much if you don't do anything with it.

Due to inherent biases we all have, some understood and some we are aware of, it is essential for us to continually increase awareness of our biases and to ensure they do not contradict the higher order values previously discussed, such as ensuring all people are respected.

Fairness demands that everyone affected by research or by an issue – all stakeholders – should have the opportunity for either direct participation or representation in planning, implementing, and analyzing the resulting research or intervention. Community work, in whatever field, should be about creating new situations with the people affected, not about doing things *for* or *to* them.

This work isn't about power, but about the public good. Therefore, power and leadership, to the extent that it doesn't entirely compromise the purpose of the work, should be shared as much as possible.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

Principles, as we've described, are the essential truths on which we base our work. They're different from values, in that values are a reflection of what we deeply believe and feel: principles are a reflection of what we think. Although the reasoning behind them may – and usually does – grow out of our value system, they are generally practical, and aimed not at guiding our overall thinking and behavior, but at putting them – and our values – to work in the real world.

"Fair" doesn't mean that everyone gets the same thing; it means that everyone gets what they need. This implies that equity involves making sure that those with less have enough for their needs, and aren't ignored or exploited by those with more money or power.

Community work is far more likely to be successful if it involves all stakeholders from the very beginning. This is the principle that derives from the value concerning the fairness of involving everyone affected by an issue. It's stated as a principle because it is a practical statement: planning, intervention, and evaluation all simply go better if there is input and participation by everyone involved. This participatory process results in more ideas, more widespread support, the possibility of avoiding errors because of ignorance of community history or past performance, and ownership of the resulting action by everyone affected.

Leadership from within the community should be encouraged and nurtured. Positive community change is more likely to occur, and more likely to continue, if it is built from within. The leaders for this work should come from the community, because they know the community so well, because they have the credibility that community membership brings, and because they have so much interest in success. It is also a matter of fairness – it is only right that people should control their own fates. For outsiders to impose solutions and leadership may be effective in the short term, but it hinders the community's ability to develop and evolve.

Community work takes careful planning at every stage of the process. Assessment and issue identification, strategic planning, implementation, evaluation, and maintenance of effort all have greater

chances of success with collaborative planning. This principle is reflected in the large number of sections that discuss planning.

Evaluation is absolutely necessary, and useful in many ways, although probably most useful as a tool for improving your effort. It can show where changes are needed, pinpoint problems and strengths, suggest additional action, and provide accountability. A *formative evaluation* – one that carefully examines the process and content of your effort, compares it to what was supposed to occur, and analyzes the results of what you did in light of how you could improve on it – can tell you whether parts of the process or the goals need to be changed in order for the effort to become more effective. A summative evaluation – one that simply decides whether you did well or not, essentially focusing only on accountability – is far less helpful. A summative evaluation can often stop an effort in its tracks, when all it needs to become successful is a relatively minor change in execution.

Outcomes matter. While fingerpointing and handwringing over failures to meet goals may not be particularly helpful, it's important to remember the reason you're doing this work in the first place. You should be constantly doing your best both to adapt your effort for greater effectiveness and to keep your ultimate goal in sight.

Time is of the essence. Always allow enough time for things to happen, both in your planning and in your implementation. That means factoring in how long it actually takes to get an effort or program started:

- Recruiting a participatory planning team
- Developing a plan
- Getting the people, the space, the equipment and materials, and whatever else is needed in place
- Finding funding or other resources
- Carrying out the actual work
- Designing, implementing, and analyzing an evaluation
- Making the changes suggested by the evaluation, and then doing it all again

Allowing enough time also means allowing time in your effort for the desired results to occur. In some public health programs, for instance, it may take years to know whether a particular method of prevention has been truly successful. Even in many programs that policy makers see as quick fixes, results may not be forthcoming as fast as they'd like. Programming in the time to get the job done can be frustrating, but it's crucial to success.

> Legislators may see an employment training program as a simple matter of unemployed people learning a particular skill – similar to taking a course for a set number of weeks. But policy makers often don't realize that not only do different people learn at different rates, but that some participants may never have held a job, and don't understand the basics of getting along with supervisors and coworkers, or even of getting to work on time every day. Teaching all the basics in addition to the job skill in question may take a great deal longer than policy makers intend, but will be more effective in the long run.

Don't bite off more than you can chew. Aim high, but be honest with yourself and others about what you can actually do, and how much time it will take.

Make sure that your funding and other resources are adequate for what you're trying to do. Trying to carry out a project without the resources you need is a recipe for failure. It makes far more sense to scale back your intentions, or to allow more time to get what you need than to go into an effort ill-equipped to carry it off.

Community action should take place at the level and time to make it most effective. The level of community action refers to where the action is aimed. You may be planning action to benefit a particular group, but your effort might be more effective if aimed at policy makers, or at some other group or individual whose actions affect the group you're concerned with.

By the same token, your effort should occur at the best time for it to have the desired effect. This may mean coordinating it with regular legislative procedures (the issuing of a state budget, for instance), with a particular season (timing a fundraising effort for homeless families to coincide with the winter holidays), with a similar national or international effort (e.g., National Literacy Day), or with current events as they develop. (You'd want to campaign to save an open space when its possible development first came to light, so as to give your effort enough time to rally public opinion and get the facts out.

If you wait till the bulldozers are already pushing down trees, it's too late.)

Community intervention should be replicable and sustainable. For an intervention to be "replicable," it has to be able to be repeated successfully in other places and/or with other participants. The basic elements of the intervention should be effective – perhaps with some adaptation to a different community or population – anywhere, and you should be able to explain exactly how it works, so that someone else can set it up and run it in another situation. That means you have to understand the intervention's elements clearly, and know what it is that makes it successful. Since the formula often involves a combination of theory, philosophy, interpersonal approaches, politics, and methods, you have to pay careful attention to and document and evaluate what you're doing, if you want someone else to be able to do it as well.

For an intervention to be sustainable, you have to be able to continue to operate it for the long term. That includes not only carrying on the work effectively, but also finding the financial and other resources necessary to keep it going, building community support, providing ongoing training for both new and continuing staff, and constantly evaluating and trying to improve what you're doing.

That leads to the next principle:

Community work is never done. Whatever your work involves – whether a community intervention, an advocacy campaign, a one-time community action to accomplish a particular goal, the founding of an organization, or the establishment of a self-sustaining community initiative – your task isn't done when you've reached your initial goal. If you don't work to maintain what you've done, or assure that others are doing so, it will fall apart. To really bring about change in a community, you have to keep at it indefinitely.

Don't lose sight of your vision, your principles, and your values in the struggle to get things done. It's often tempting to take any funding that's available, or to change what you're doing in order to be

eligible for resources. Sometimes, it might seem that altering your purpose will make it more palatable and less controversial, and will make your life easier. When these possibilities arise, it's crucial to review what your vision, mission, and ultimate goals are. If these need to change because of changes in circumstances or community needs, then they should. But if the motivation for change conflicts with your values or your vision – or the reason you're doing the work in the first place – it has to be rejected. The integrity of your cause and your organization is worth far more, and will contribute far more to your effort, than any short-term financial or public relations gain.

The real goal of community work is positive social change. The ideal, in most cases, is to improve the quality of life for a particular group, or for everyone, in the community. This often means changing some fundamental aspects of the way the community thinks or functions – its attitude toward domestic violence, for instance, its commitment to education or to environmental preservation, its consumption of alcohol or unhealthy food, or its concept of social justice. If you can help the community change its attitudes and behaviors in positive ways, it will become a better place for everyone to live.

CORE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

As we've explained, assumptions are the ideas we take for granted. They're not the same as values, because they often stem from logical – or what we believe is logical – reasoning, rather than from deeply held beliefs. They differ from principles in that they don't usually form the basis of our thinking and action, but guide how we respond to our principles.

It's almost impossible to list all our assumptions, simply because we're not aware of many of them. They're so deeply ingrained in our thinking, we don't even realize that they're assumptions: they seem like truths. With that in mind, we'll try to list some of the most important assumptions behind the work of the Community Tool Box.

Just about everyone wants what's best for the community. People may disagree both on the definition of what's best, and on how to get there, but their goal is usually similar: to live in a community that's as good as it can be in as many ways as possible. If we start with that assumption, it becomes easier to establish common ground, and to begin to work together. Demonizing those we disagree with is easy and often satisfying, but it leads nowhere. Assuming instead that others want many of the same things we do can lead to cooperation on some issues, and can at least start a dialogue on others. That's far better, both practically and otherwise, than two factions stuck in opposition, with no chance for movement.

Once people understand others' circumstances, they're usually willing to help. In the quest for equity in a community, we often come up against attitudes that seem mean and unfeeling. In many cases, however, these attitudes are the result of people in different circumstances having little contact with one another. If you know no one on welfare, it's easy to assume that welfare recipients are all lazy and don't want to work. When you're actually faced with the realities of their lives, however – mostly single mothers living on desperately little money, even in the states where the system is most generous; often lacking all but the

most basic skills, and sometimes even those; and faced with losing health care and having to pay much of their income for child care if they go to work – it becomes more difficult to see them so negatively.

If people are treated with respect, they usually respond the same way. Whether you're dealing with participants in an intervention, with opponents, or with allies, treat them as you'd wish to be treated. The Golden Rule is generally a good guideline, not only morally and ethically, but practically.

Coalitions, partnerships, and collaborations are built one relationship at a time. It may be relatively easy to bring a number of people and groups together around an issue, but getting them to stay and work together is another matter. The relationships that they build with one another are the glue that can make that happen.

Tip O'Neill, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, used to say that all politics was local. What he really meant was that all politics was personal, that alliances are built relationship by relationship. That's as true for community activists as it is for Congressmen.

People have to believe something is possible before they'll work to make it happen. This is the reason that a shared vision is so important in community work, but it also hold true on the individual level. Students, for instance, have to believe they can learn before they'll put in the concentration and effort needed to do so. If they become too discouraged, the task looks impossible, and it's easier to give up than to risk continual failure.

An individual or community has to be able to imagine the future in order to make it happen. If there's no belief in the possibility of change, there's likely to be no change.

People working together are better off and more successful than people working alone. They'll have more ideas, develop more capacity to get things done, and feed off one another's energy in order to keep the effort moving. If it's possible, concerted action is almost always more effective in the long run than one person or organization going it alone.

The world isn't perfect; this work is necessary to create positive social change and make it a better place for everyone.

IN SUMMARY

Underlying every section of the Community Tool Box are the values, principles, and assumptions that the Tool Box team uses to guide its work. These have to do largely with the fundamental dignity and worth of all people; the ability of – and necessity for – communities to solve their own problems and produce their own leaders; the ethical and practical necessities of health and community work; and the need for positive social change.

This section is meant to help Tool Box users understand the perspective of the Community Tool Box, and perhaps make clearer some of what's presented there. It's also meant to help users think about their own values, principles, and assumptions, to make them conscious, to examine them, and to continue to hold them up to scrutiny as they do this often difficult and incredibly important work.

Print Resource

Fawcett, S. *Some Values Guiding Community Research and Action*. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 24, no.4 (1991), pp.624-636.

CHAPTER 2 - OTHER MODELS FOR PROMOTING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Section 2-1: Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities

Learn how to use this framework for an inclusive, participatory process for improving quality of life and creating a healthy community.

- **WHAT IS HEALTHY CITIES/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?**

- **WHY USE HEALTHY CITIES/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?**

- **WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN HEALTHY CITIES/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?**

- **HOW DO YOU USE HEALTHY CITIES/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?**
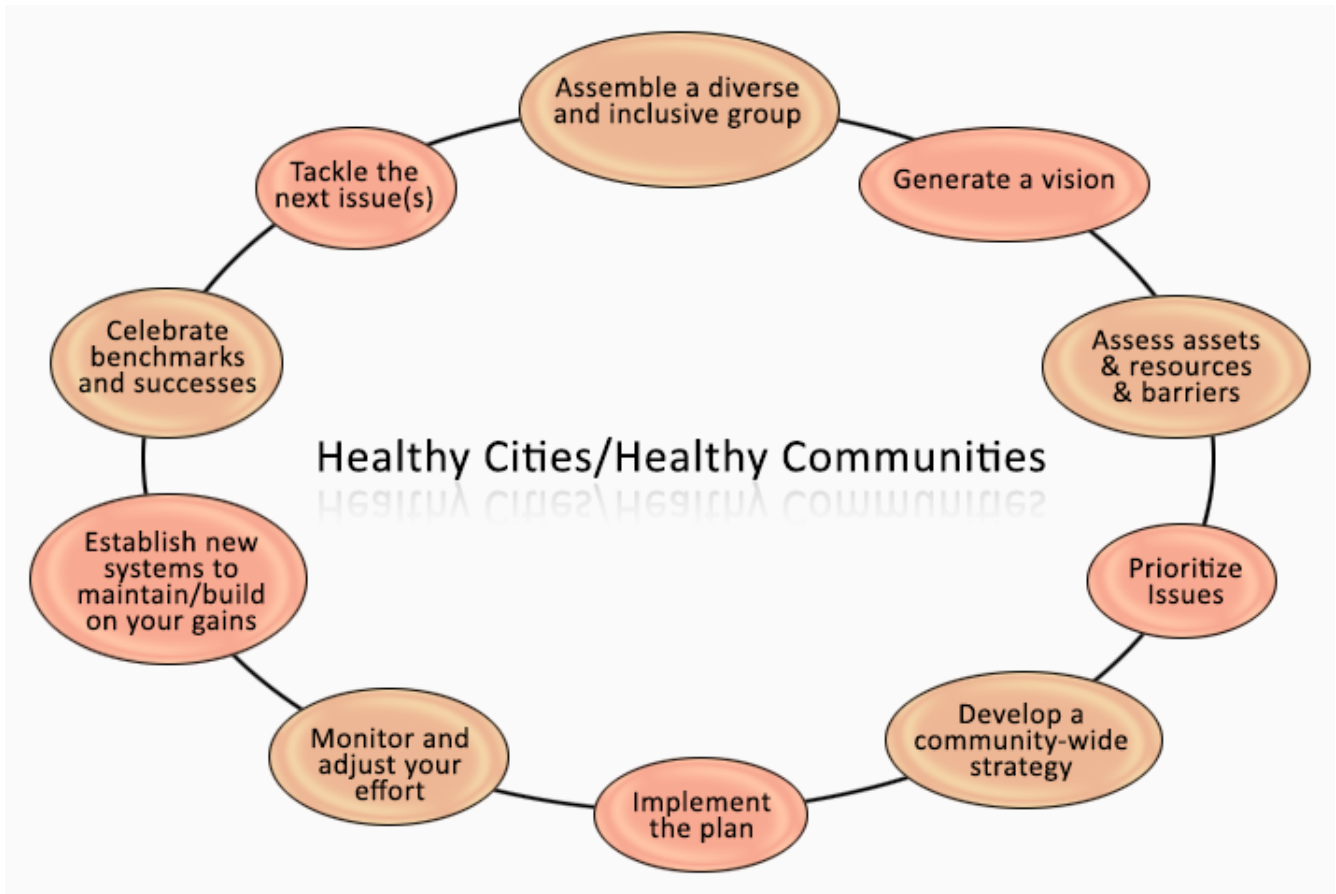
One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://cod.pressbooks.pub/humanservices/?p=22#oembed-1

In this video, Tyler Norris, Vice President of Kaiser Permanente Center for Total Health, discusses the meaning

and impacts of community health. "What is a healthy community? What is healthy, and what is a community?" He asks. In this section, we will explore the concepts of defining, creating, and promoting healthy communities.

WHAT IS HEALTHY CITIES/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?

Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities is a theoretical framework for a participatory process by which citizens can create healthy communities. In 1985, at a conference in Toronto organized by Trevor Hancock, Len Duhl spoke about his long-held conviction that health issues could only be effectively addressed through an inclusive, community-wide approach. Ilona Kickbusch, a World Health Organization (WHO) official who was attending the conference, brought the idea back to her superiors at the WHO European office in Copenhagen. Within a matter of weeks, Duhl and Hancock had been hired as consultants to help WHO and Kickbusch start a Healthy Cities movement in Europe. A year later, the attendees of a WHO conference in Ottawa drafted the Ottawa Charter, the "Constitution" of Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities. In the years since that first conference, the concept has spread to hundreds of large and medium-sized cities on all continents, and has also been used in smaller municipalities and rural communities in both the developing and the developed world. It is now the standard way in which the WHO addresses community health, and it encompasses other community issues as well.

A healthy community, as we discussed above, is one in which all systems work well (and work together), and in which all citizens enjoy a good quality of life. This means that the health of the community is affected by the social determinants of health and development – the factors that influence individual and community health and development.

So, what does the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities model look like? Unlike PRECEDE/PROCEED, it has no flow chart or diagram, largely because its process may be totally different in different communities.It's a loosely-defined strategy that asks citizens and officials to make becoming a healthy community a priority, and to pursue that end by involving all community members in identifying and addressing the issues most important to them.

We have created an informal logic model in order to connect you to your Community Tool Box resources that can support your effort to implement Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities.

Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities rests on two basic premises:

A comprehensive view of health. As we've been discussing, a comprehensive view of health takes in all the elements of a community's life, since they affect both individual health and the health of the community itself. The Ottawa Charter lays out the prerequisites for health in communities:

Peace. This can be interpreted to cover both freedom from warfare, and freedom from fear of physical harm.

> During the Vietnam War, young black men on the streets of their home neighborhoods in the U.S. were statistically more likely to be killed by gunfire than were young black soldiers in combat. Those home neighborhoods weren't at peace, by anyone's definition.

Shelter. Shelter adequate to the climate, to the needs of the occupants, and to withstand extremes of weather.

Education. Education for children (and often adults as well, as in the case of adult literacy) that is free, adequate to equip them for a productive and comfortable life in their society, and available and accessible to all.

Food. Not just food, but enough of it, and of adequate nutritional value, to assure continued health and vigor for adults, and proper development for children.

Income. Employment that provides an income adequate for a reasonable quality of life, and public support for those who are unable to work or find jobs.

A stable ecosystem. Clean air, clean water, and protection of the natural environment.

Sustainable resources. These might include water, farmland, minerals, industrial resources, power sources (sun, wind, water, biomass), plants, animals, etc.

Social justice. Where there is social justice, no one is mistreated or exploited by those more powerful. No one is discriminated against. No one suffers needlessly because she's poor or ill or disabled. All are treated equally and fairly under the law, and everyone has a voice in how the community and the society are run.

Equity. Equity is not exactly the same thing as equality. It doesn't mean that everyone gets the same things, but that everyone gets, or has access to, what he needs.

If all of these factors are considered, then health must extend far beyond medical treatment to all aspects of community life.

A commitment to health promotion. Health promotion differs from the more familiar medical models of treatment and prevention. Both of these look at health from a negative point of view: there's something wrong or potentially wrong, and the medical expert will step in to fix it or head it off. Health promotion looks at it from a positive point of view: you can take positive steps to improve and sustain your well-being.

Health promotion – and we'll use the term here to mean the promotion of healthy communities as well as healthy individuals – is a key both to the thinking behind the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities concept, and to actually developing healthy communities. It calls for a commitment on the part of all sectors of the community, particularly government, to promote community health by:

Building healthy public policy. Communities can establish policies that foster the health of the community. According to the Ottawa Charter, such policies are "coordinated action that leads to health, income, and social policies that foster greater equity." Thus, smoking bans in restaurants, local tax policies that encourage businesses to create jobs, training for police and youth workers to help them communicate with youth and curb youth violence, and strong environmental ordinances might all be seen as healthy public policy. Community support of such policy produces an atmosphere that makes it easier for policy makers to make the right choices, because they know the public is behind them.

> Like all elements of a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities strategy, healthy public policy is about a great deal more than simply fostering individual health – it's about public policy that fosters a healthy society. That means equity, health for all, and attention to such things as supportive environments (see below).
>
> Len Duhl talks about the fact that most public policy doesn't deal with real needs, but rather with concerns of economics and power. For public policy to be healthy, it has to reflect reality, rather than what policy makers

want to see, or what will get them elected. Objectivity leads to public policy that benefits everyone, not just the influential few.

Creating supportive environments. Community environments run the gamut from the physical to the social to the economic to the political. Some supportive environments can be created by laws or regulations, some by community effort, and some only by changes in attitude (which may or may not be influenced by social and other pressures). Some examples:

The natural environment. Laws and regulations that restore and/or preserve clean air and water; preservation and creation of open space, natural beauty, and wilderness; restrictions on the use and disposal of toxic substances; conservation of natural resources, including plants and animals. All of these can enhance health and reduce stress, provide an aesthetic experience, and affect community life for the better.

> The Peak to Peak Healthy Communities Project, based in Nederland, CO, is working on renovating parks and creating a transportation link from downtown to trails and natural areas outside the city.

The built environment. People-friendly design of buildings and spaces (human scale, with pedestrian passageways, gathering places, views, attractiveness, etc.); handicap access; preservation of historic and cultural heritage; cleanliness; safety (lighting, building and bridge design, long views, traffic patterns, bans on the use of toxic materials); good public transportation; traffic-free paths to encourage walking, jogging, and bicycling.

> For example, a city that builds or designates traffic-free walking and bike paths will probably see more of its citizens walk and bicycle to work and on errands than one where walking and biking are difficult and dangerous. Davis, California, for instance, has encouraged bicycling since 1960, when it became the first city in the US to paint bike lanes on its streets. It has been able to discontinue its school bus service, because it's so easy for children to bike, walk, or skate to school on its miles of car-free bike paths.

The economic environment. A healthy economic environment is one where there is work for everyone capable of working, where workers are treated as assets (see directly below) and are paid a living wage, where there is equal economic opportunity for all, where those who can't work are supported, and where money doesn't buy political power or immunity from the law.

> Bethel New Life, a faith-based, grass roots initiative in the Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago, started out to rehabilitate derelict housing in the area, using "sweat equity" – i.e., the labor of local residents, who could then exchange their work for part of the cost of the home they had rebuilt. Now, Bethel employs more than 300, mostly local residents, in housing, employment training and job placement, economic development, cultural, family support, and community development programs. Its board is drawn almost wholly from the community, and its programs are responses to voiced community need. Bethel continues to try to build assets and bring greater economic stability to the West Side of Chicago.

The work environment. The work environment should be a source of stimulation, rather than stress. Respect for employees, good safety precautions and procedures, firm rules forbidding harassment or abuse, adequate pay and/or other compensation, humane and fair production expectations and treatment – all contribute

to work environments that nurture creativity and enthusiasm, and improve, rather than detract from, both production and workers' quality of life.

The leisure environment. The work and home environments can provide time for leisure. The community can provide recreational and cultural opportunities to use in that leisure time: museums, parks and beaches, cultural and sports events, libraries, etc.

The social environment. A healthy community encourages social networks, provides gathering places where people from all parts of the community may mingle, nurtures families and children, offers universal education and other services, strives to forster non-violent an healthy behavior, invites familiartity and interaction among the various groups that make up the community, and treats all groups and individuals with respect.

> The North Quabbin Community Coalition, in north central Massachusetts, was concerned, among other things, with the high incidence of child physical and sexual abuse in the area. A task force on the issue eventually developed into Valuing Our Children, a parent education and family life program, that has trained large numbers of area parents as "parent educators," and that provides services to area families.

The political environment. In a healthy community, all citizens have a say in how and by whom their community is governed, and have easy access to the information necessary to understand political situations and to make informed political decisions. Political decisions, opinions, and speech are protected. Citizens feel they have the power in the community – that they own it, and can and should control its direction.

Strengthening community action. Communities can encourage and strengthen community action in at least three ways: The first involves encouraging and fostering grass roots planning and action. When issues are identified and addressed by the people affected by them, as well as by others concerned, two things happen: the issues are more likely to be resolved successfully, and the people involved learn how to use their own resources to take charge of their lives and their communities. A second way of strengthening community action is through a commitment from government, community leaders, and other decision makers to encourage action by passing legislation conducive to it, lending public support to it through the media and other communication channels, and including members of all segments of the community in the conception, planning, and implementation of any community initiative. The third is by decision makers and the media ensuring a free and accurate flow of necessary information about the community and community initiatives to all citizens, and providing everyone in the community with learning opportunities about issues and about the quality of life in general.

The latter two of these methods are really top-down conceptions where government and others in power "let" citizens share in the decision-making process. While community members – particularly those with less experience in planning and running projects, or with less education – often need support to learn some necessary skills, the drive for change can and should come from them to begin with. There is a big difference between officials organizing an initiative and inviting citizens to join, and officials approaching citizens with a request to participate in envisioning and organizing an initiative.

Developing personal skills. Healthy communities aid their citizens in gaining the skills necessary to address

health and community issues, by providing education and information in school, home (through the media and other sources), work, and community settings. Courses, workshops, billboards and posters, TV and radio ads, newspaper articles, mailings, fliers, community meetings, presentations in social clubs and churches, the use of electronic technology – all might serve to help citizens understand an issue, and make decisions about it.

> The education referred to here doesn't relate only to health and wellness issues and life skills (e.g., parenting). In fact, it could, and does, apply to all learning that touches on topics related to the life of the community – political, social, environmental, and economic issues, for instance. Furthermore, the encouragement and accessibility of lifelong learning is a mark of a healthy community.

Reorienting services. To be useful to a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities strategy, health and other human and municipal services have to change from an individual- and treatment-centered point of view to one that is community-centered and focuses on the promotion of a healthy community.

> It's not only a matter of reorienting health services, but one of reorienting all services to work together toward the goal of a healthy community. Any community issue has to be viewed through the lenses of both the individual and the community. It takes a village not only to raise a child, but to pull families out of poverty, to create employment, to improve mental health, to stop violence, to safeguard the natural environment, and to create a just and equitable society.

WHY USE HEALTHY CITIES/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?

There are a number of reasons to consider using the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities framework in planning and implementing community action:

- **Community perspective**. Virtually all health and community issues are affected by (or are the direct result of) economic, social, political, and/or environmental factors that operate at the community level. If you don't deal with those factors, the chances are slim that you'll be able to resolve the issue you're concerned with.
- **Participatory planning and community ownership**. Planning that includes those who will be directly affected by or benefit from any community initiative is more likely to reflect the real needs of the community than planning done only by one group. Furthermore, the participatory nature of the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities framework means that citizens themselves create initiatives and goals for the community. Those initiatives and goals are theirs – not imposed by those in power or by outside "experts". As a result, their commitment to the process and to the goals makes them far more likely to support and work for the outcomes they've chosen.
- **Range of ideas**. Citizen participation leads to the presentation and consideration of a greater range of ideas and possibilities, and is therefore more likely to hit upon effective goals and actions.
- **Knowledge of the community**. Citizen participation taps the community's wisdom about its own

history, relationships, and conflicts, and can thus steer initiatives around potentially fatal pitfalls.

- **Community-wide ties**. Involving all segments of the community encourages interaction across social, economic, and political lines. Those ties strengthen the community as a whole, change people's perspectives for the better, increase community-wide cooperation, and can positively transform how the community works.

- **Achievable and measurable goals**. Although Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities' ultimate goals are wide and long-term, each goal is achievable in a manageable amount of time, and its successful achievement can be demonstrated. Each success sets the stage for enthusiasm for the next initiative.

- **Identification and use of community assets and resources**. A Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities initiative depends to a large extent on human, institutional, organizational, environmental, and other assets and resources already available within the community. Through identifying and using these, communities learn that they can create their own positive change, and reshape themselves in the ways they want to.

- **Community commitment to the long-term process**. Because of the participatory nature of the process, and because it requires recruiting more people at each new phase, it builds an ever-expanding core of people with varied skills, talents, and experience committed to the ideal of building a healthy community and improving the quality of life for everyone. That's important for sustaining the work indefinitely.

- **Community self-image.** Through the use of the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities process, the community comes to think of itself as a healthy community, and is concerned with maintaining that image through addressing issues as they come up. Perhaps more important, it is brought to look at the larger picture as well. Holding out an ultimate goal of a totally healthy community, whether attainable or not, keeps everyone working toward it, and means that planning goes on as a matter of course. The healthy community ideal becomes embedded in the self-image of the community, and people understand that they can take their fate in their own hands and work to improve it. The process itself thus becomes an important element in the definition of a healthy community – one in which citizens work together to identify and solve problems, create and consolidate assets, generate improvements, and raise the quality of life for all.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN HEALTHY CITIES/ HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?

The easy answer to this question is everyone in the community, and that's in fact the ideal. In a perfect world, everyone everywhere would participate in some way in creating a healthy community. In the real world, while it's important to try to involve all sectors of the community, you have to work to involve some particular people and groups if your effort is to be successful. Crucial participants include:

- **Elected and appointed officials**. Although a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities initiative should not be top-down, it needs the commitment and backing of those with the power to make things happen. Officials can use the media to publicize the effort, pass laws and regulations (and enforce those already existing) that reinforce it, and throw the weight and resources of government behind it. Without official support, a community-wide effort is more likely to fail.

- **Those most affected by the issue**. A sure recipe for failure is to try to impose an intervention or initiative on a population "for their own good." All too often, "experts" – often people who have no real knowledge of the group or its issues – formulate plans that might make perfect sense on paper, but make no sense at all in the actual situation for which they're proposed. The participation of those affected in identifying the issues to address, developing action plans for addressing them, and implementing and overseeing those plans is absolutely crucial to the success of a Healthy Communities initiative. (This is equally true when the group concerned is the whole community.)

There are, unfortunately, many instances of a group resisting and short-circuiting well-meaning changes because they weren't part of the planning. The author experienced one as a teacher in Philadelphia, which had, at the time, an innovative and progressive school superintendent. He tried to institute reforms that probably would have improved the lives of teachers students in the system, but he did it without conferring with them. As a result, the teachers simply ignored directives from the central office, the reforms failed, and the superintendent was gone within three years.

- **The people who will actually administer and carry out the initiative, or whose jobs or lives will be affected by it.** It is both unfair and unwise to expect organization staff, community employees (police, firefighters, Department of Public Works personnel, etc.), business people, and others to throw themselves into carrying out an initiative they had no part in devising. It may have elements that ignore the realities of their jobs or their lives, or that make things harder than necessary for them, and they may be the only people who have the information to understand that. In addition, they may regard it as just another foolish imposition to be gotten around, and do as little as possible to make it effective.

- **All the agencies and groups that will need to cooperate and to coordinate their activities in order to implement a community-wide effort**. Both the ways in which these groups will work together, and which of them will have responsibility for what have to be part of the planning for any community-wide initiative. Without their full participation, there's no guarantee that they'll work together at all, let alone that the methods for their doing so will be simple and efficient.

- **Community opinion leaders**. These are the people whose opinions others trust, and who lead the community by adopting new ideas and pulling others with them. They are seen as level-headed, smart, and serving the best interests of the community. Some may be current or former members of the groups already listed, and others may be clergy, credible institutional or business people (college presidents or faculty, CEO's), or just average citizens who are known for their integrity and common sense.

If you can gain the participation of members of all these groups, it is more likely that everyone else will follow. If you can't get people from all these groups to buy in at the outset, an alternative is educating them about the process and persuading them to join it, while you continue to recruit other participants. Ultimately, the combination of education and your momentum will bring in those who were initially reluctant. That may take time and patience, but it's worth the effort – it can easily mean the difference between a successful long-term Healthy Community movement and a dead-on-arrival, failed attempt at one.

HOW DO YOU USE HEALTHY CITIES/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES?

Because the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities framework is just that – an intellectual framework, rather than a prescription – there is no step-by-step instruction for employing it. It is meant to be adapted to the different needs of different communities. There are, however, necessary components of any Healthy Cities/ Healthy Communities initiative:

- **Create a compelling vision based on shared values**. As with virtually any process that involves planning – and particularly participatory planning – the first step is to create a vision that defines the effort to be made. That vision may be broad ("A community that is truly just and equitable") or more specific ("A community where every potential worker in the community can find employment that offers a living wage and acceptable working conditions"). Whatever the case, the vision must be compelling – one that motivates people to work for its realization. It must be founded in those values that they hold in common, and must be widely shared and recognized as legitimate and desirable.(Proclaiming Your Dream: Developing Vision and Mission Statements.)

  In Orlando, Florida, the Healthy Community Initiative began with meetings of a few influential people. As they learned about healthy communities, the convened a group of about 160, representing all sectors of the city's population – citizens of all races and economic levels, organizations and institutions, city government, other groups – to hash out a vision. That group, in turn, conducted citizen focus groups and public meetings to hear and understand citizens' concerns. Ultimately, they drafted a vision, based on their own discussions and the input of hundreds of others from all walks of life, that contained 14 statements about what Orlando should be. That vision became the foundation of the initiative.

- **Embrace a broad definition of health and well-being**. Health must be seen as not merely the physical health of individuals, but the creation and nurturing of those factors leading to health named in the Ottawa Charter (peace, shelter, education, income, food, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity). A truly healthy community encompasses – or works toward – all those elements and more.
- **Address quality of life for everyone**. The key word here is "everyone." A Healthy Cities/Healthy

Communities initiative should be aimed at improving the quality of life for all groups and individuals in the community, not just those in a particular target group or those who began the initiative.

- **Engage diverse citizen participation and be citizen-driven**. Initiatives should be originated, planned, and implemented with the full participation of citizens from all racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups and all walks of life. Citizens themselves, rather than a government agency or experts of some sort, should be the force behind both the direction and the implementation of any community initiative.

- **Seek multi-sectoral membership and widespread community ownership.** All sectors of the community – government, the business and non-profit communities, health care, education, faith communities, cultural institutions and the arts, target populations, and ordinary citizens – should be represented in an initiative, and the community should feel that it created the initiative and owns it.

In many places in this and other sections of the Community Tool Box, we refer to "ownership" of an initiative or intervention or organization. In most cases, what we mean is that those who take part in creating and/or running such an endeavor feel that it belongs to them. It was their idea, and they therefore see themselves as not only supportive of it, but responsible for it.

True ownership can rarely, if ever, be attached to actions or ideas that are imposed, by others who "know better" or have more power. It comes from within, from the feeling that you've made a choice based on your best judgment. That's why the inclusion of people from all sectors of the community is so important to a successful Healthy Cities/ Healthy Communities process. At the end, perhaps after a lot of argument and soul-searching, participants feel that they've had a hand in creating something important that will result in better lives for everyone in the community. There's no substitute for that feeling to ensure their doing all they can to make their creation work.

- **Acknowledge the social determinants of health and the interrelationship of health with other issues (housing, education, peace, equity, social justice*).*** The research on the social determinants of health points to three overarching factors:
  - *Socioeconomic equity.* For developed countries, the economic and social equality within the society or a given community is a greater determinant of death rates and average lifespan than the country's position with regard to others. The size of the income gap between the most and least affluent segments of the society or community is tremendously important, and determines to a large extent whether people get what they need.
  - *Social connectedness.* Many studies indicate that "belonging" – whether to a large extended family, a network of friends, a social or volunteer organization, or a faith community – is related to longer life and better health, as well as to community participation.
  - *Sense of personal efficacy.* This refers to people's sense of control over their lives. People with a higher sense of efficacy tend to live longer, maintain better health, and participate more vigorously in community affairs and politics.

Like the Ottawa Charter, the World Health Organization, in its publication The Solid Facts, recognizes the need to break these factors down into more manageable pieces. It lists ten factors that affect health and life expectancy, and advocates addressing each within a coherent program that looks at all of them within a society. These ten factors are:

- The social gradient (equity)
- Stress
- Early life
- Social exclusion (the opposite of social connectedness)
- Work
- Unemployment
- Social support
- Addiction
- Food
- Transport

- **Address issues through collaborative problem-solving**. Given a diverse group, there are bound to be disagreements and conflicts. These should be viewed as opportunities, rather than roadblocks, and people should be encouraged and helped to work together to reach creative solutions.
- **Focus on systems change.** To be successful, a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities initiative has to be active, rather than reactive. It's not enough to "fix" a problem: your goal is to eliminate the causes of that and other problems and improve the long-term quality of life in the community in the process.

In order to address causes, you have to concentrate not on individual problems, but on improving and changing systems – the ways in which the community operates, and the attitudes, assumptions, and policies behind them. That includes identifying, using, and strengthening the assets the community already possesses, as well as changing the systems that pose problem

- **Build capacity using local assets and resources**. *All communities, no matter how troubled, have great real and potential strengths.* These vary from community to community, but could include:

Individuals with the talents, skills, leadership, and passion to work to change the community for the better.
Individuals, businesses, and foundations that can provide material resources – money, space, etc. – to a community effort.

- Institutions – libraries, schools, hospitals, houses of worship – that have the capacity to act as both resources for and agents of change.
- Community-based and other organizations whose mission is to work for the betterment of the whole community.
- Governments and individual government officials that can add both official support and legal and

regulatory power to an initiative.

- Human resources – the skills and work ethic of the community's work force, for example.
- Natural and other environmental resources – open space, clean air and water, wilderness, fisheries, historic sites or buildings, housing stock.
- Perhaps most important, the potential for all these individuals, groups, and resources to be joined in a coordinated pursuit of a common vision.
- At least some of these and other assets already exist in virtually every community – usually to a far greater extent than most citizens realize until they start looking for them. They must be identified and included in a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities effort.
- **Measure and benchmark progress and outcomes**. Whatever you're doing, whether it's a PR campaign or a complex behavioral intervention, you have to monitor and evaluate it in order to be sure that it's effective. That means setting objectives – benchmarks – to indicate your progress along the road to your goal, and defining clearly the outcome you're aiming for. Regularly monitoring what you're doing is crucial, because it allows you to spot problems or inadequacies in goals, methods, procedures, communication, etc. and correct them before they derail your initiative entirely. Even more important, regular monitoring allows you to change what you're doing to respond to changes in circumstances and community needs, so that you're always addressing current reality. Communities are dynamic: they develop and change, sometimes in short periods. Your initiative has to be dynamic, too, especially if you expect it to continue for the long term.

IMPLEMENTING A HEALTHY COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

How do you actually put these components together to create a healthy community? There's no one way to do that – it depends on your community, the issues you want to address, and the ideas and capacities of the groups and individuals that participate in the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities process. There are, however, some basic procedures that, at least in outline, should be common to any Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities initiative.

- **Assemble a diverse and inclusive group**. To begin a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities initiative, people from all parts of the community have to come together to hammer out a vision. That group, as we've been saying throughout this section, should be representative of everyone in the community, so that whatever it decides will be seen as legitimate by just about everyone, and will be owned by the community.

Someone has to start the process. That may be a charismatic or persistent individual, an organization, a coalition, or a government office or agency. Whoever it is should be simply a convener, and not necessarily

expect to lead over the long term. Leaders should be chosen by the group itself as it forms, and they should be collaborative (Collaborative Leadership.)

> This is not to say that a Healthy Communities effort doesn't need leadership. Quite the contrary – leadership and structure are necessary for any successful effort. But leadership should be collaborative and arise from the community. The leader may be an individual, or two, or a larger group. Whatever the situation, the leadership should be one of an equal among equals, and decision-making should be the province of the whole group. That's how a participatory process works.

It is assumed that all the other steps listed here will also be carried out by an inclusive group, and that all sectors of the community – including those affected and individual citizens – will be represented and have decision-making power. The group may change from step to step or over time, but should remain inclusive and participatory.

- **Generate a vision**. A vision of how the community should be, based not on a single issue, but on values shared among all participants and on a high quality of life for everyone in the community, is needed to motivate and inspire participants and to guide the initiative over the long term. Generating such a vision may take time and a great deal of discussion, but it's absolutely necessary for a successful effort.
- **Assess the assets and resources in the community that can help you realize your vision, and the issues that act as barriers to it.** Placing assets first is not just an accident here. A Healthy Cities/ Healthy Communities initiative is best served by looking at the community through a positive lens, and asking first what's right with it, rather than what's wrong with it. The initiative then becomes an exercise in community health promotion, instead of the treatment of a diseased community. Taking a positive perspective affects for the better the attitudes of everyone involved, the community's self-image, and the perception of whether or not realizing your vision is possible. By the same token, it's important to be honest and clear-eyed about issues and problems in the community. Once they've been identified, they have to be acknowledged and understood, so they can be addressed at some point in the process.
- **Choose a first issue to focus on.** The best way to sink a long-term initiative is to try to accomplish all your goals at once. It's vital to choose one issue – or in some cases, perhaps, two or three – to attack, and to make it one that can be resolved, so that your first effort leads to success.

> What the issue is doesn't matter, except in that it must be one chosen by citizens as important to them, and must be one that is specific enough to be resolvable. Len Duhl talks about the process in a 1993 interview by Joe Flower in Healthcare Forum Journal.
> The first thing that happens when the Healthy Cities program develops in a new place is that some persons assume the responsibility of bringing together all segments of the community to deal with the issues: the business community, the government, the voluntary sector and the citizens themselves. ...
> Then there are "vision workshops" in which people are asked, "What kind of city do you really want?" My personal surprise is that the clearer I am about what a Healthy City program is, the less likely a community is to

develop it. The fuzzier I am in what a Healthy City is, "A Healthy City is what you want to make it," the greater the odds are that they will start.

The various participants define the program. All I say is that you have to start someplace. You have to begin to look at it in an ecological and systemic way. You have to involve people. You have to start thinking of values of equity and participation. Beyond that, you can start wherever you want.

Some cities start on the environment, on pollution, on smoking, seat belts and the quality of life index. Some have government operations, some have newspapers, big organizations, housing. Barcelona linked it to the Olympics. Glasgow linked it to developing itself as the cultural capital of Europe. It is being done every way.

- **Develop a community-wide strategy, incorporating as many organizations, levels, and sectors as possible**. Here's where Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities differs most from many logic models and other methods that are clear on exactly how to go about planning and carrying out an initiative. Rather than offering a step-by-step process, HC might use any participatory planning process that incorporates a community-wide approach and that looks at all the possible areas that might affect the issue chosen. Thus, you might use VMOSA, PRECEDE/PROCEED, or some variant, or a less structured process – whatever seems appropriate and works for your community.

It is important, however, that your plan result in a community-wide, multi-pronged approach. If your focus is on youth violence, for instance, it should involve some sort of action or supportive function by local government, parents and parent advocates, schools, law enforcement, the court system, welfare, agencies that deal with youth and families, physical and mental health services, Family Planning, the media, adult literacy (dropouts), and potentially or formerly violent youth and their victims. All of these groups and individuals should be working together as a team, each referring youth to other appropriate services or agencies among them, and all coordinated and collaborating in their operation. The focus should be on changing the systems that make a problem possible, or that present barriers to the ideal the community is working toward.

- **Implement the plan.** Once again, this should involve a community-wide effort. Any oversight of the implementation should include a broad range of individuals and groups, representing a cross-section of the community.
- **Monitor and adjust your initiative or intervention**. Once you've implemented your plan, it's crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of both your process (Are you doing what you set out to do?) and your results (Are you reaching your benchmarks? Are you having the planned effect on the issue?) If an evaluation gives unsatisfactory answers to any of these questions, you can revisit the issue, determine the reasons your plan isn't working well, and change it accordingly.
- **Establish new systems that will maintain and build on the gains you've made**. Once you've reduced youth violence, for example, you still have to do whatever is necessary to make sure it doesn't rise again, and that it continues to decline. (What's the ultimate goal here? Is there an acceptable level of youth violence?) That may mean setting up new organizations or programs, working to change or cement changes in community attitudes and procedures, redesigning school curricula, working regularly

with the media – whatever it takes to sustain progress.

- **Celebrate benchmarks and successes**. Public celebration of achievements not only energizes those who have been working toward them, but informs the community that the drive toward a healthy community is moving forward successfully. It helps to establish the idea of a healthy community in the public mind, and to build a foundation for the continuation of the initiative.

- **Tackle the next issue(s).** The ultimate goal here is the development of a truly healthy community, which translates to improving the quality of life for everyone in the community. After your first success, it's time to use your momentum to address another (or more than one other) issue. That may be the removal of a barrier to a healthy community, or it may be the creation of a necessary element of a healthy community. In either case, it means sustaining citizens' commitment to an ongoing and long-term process, the end result of which is a community controlled by its residents, where all systems work toward the public good.

IN SUMMARY

The health of a community, like that of an individual, depends on far more than freedom from pain or disease. Health, or its lack, for a community is the result of a large number of factors, often intertwined, that span the social, economic, political, physical, and environmental spheres. Virtually any community issue has an effect on, and is affected by, the overall health of the community as a whole, and therefore should be approached in a community context. Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities provides a philosophical framework for an inclusive, participatory process aimed at raising the quality of life for everyone, and creating a truly healthy community.

Two basic premises underlying the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities concept are a comprehensive view of health and community issues, covering a broad range of factors that contribute to a healthy community; and a commitment to the active promotion of a healthy community, rather than the "treatment" of problems. By addressing the social and other determinants of health and community issues (including the Ottawa Charter's list of peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity), and by creating appropriate policy and environments, encouraging social action, providing personal skills, and reorienting services to a more wide-ranging approach, communities can foster citizen empowerment and equity.

REASONS FOR ADOPTING THE HEALTHY CITIES/HEALTHY COMMUNITIES APPROACH INCLUDE:

- Its community perspective, leading to a more effective approach to issues.
- Community ownership of any effort, resulting from community participation in its development and implementation.

- The broad range of ideas gained from a participatory process.
- Its access to citizens' knowledge of the community, helping to avoid pitfalls caused by ignorance of community history and relationships.
- The forging of community-wide and ties that cross economic, social, racial, and other lines.
- Participatory planning leading to solutions that reflect the community's real needs.
- The adoption of achievable goals, leading to success.
- The identification and use of community assets and resources which both take advantage of what already exists, and teach the community what it can do with its own considerable resources.
- The fostering of community commitment to the process of building a healthy community.
- The creation of a healthy community self-image.

While a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities process should involve everyone, some particularly important participants include local government and officials; those affected by the issue(s); those who will actually administer and implement the initiative, or whose lives or jobs will be affected by it; any organizations that will be expected to work together; and opinion leaders.

There are 10 important components of a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities process:

1. Create a compelling vision based on shared values.
2. Embrace a broad definition of health and well-being.
3. Address quality of life for everyone.
4. Engage diverse citizen participation and be citizen-driven.
5. Multi-sectoral membership and widespread community ownership.
6. Acknowledge the social determinants of health and the interrelationship of health with other issues (housing, education, peace, equity, social justice).
7. Address issues through collaborative problem-solving.
8. Focus on systems change.
9. Build capacity using local assets and resources.
10. Measure and benchmark progress and outcomes.

Although there is no one step-by-step procedure for a Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities initiative – both the content and the structure of the process depend upon your community's needs, and, particularly on community decisions – there is, given the ten components above, a reasonable way to approach it in most cases.

- Assemble a diverse and inclusive group.
- Generate a vision.
- Assess the assets and resources in the community that can help you realize your vision, and the issues that act as barriers to it.

- Choose a first issue to focus on.
- Develop a community-wide strategy, incorporating as many organizations, levels, and sectors as possible.
- Implement the plan.
- Monitor and adjust your initiative or intervention.
- Establish new systems that will maintain and build on the gains you've made.
- Celebrate benchmarks and successes.
- Tackle the next issue.

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Online Resources

(The goal in choosing sites here has been to offer a few that give background or general information on Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities, and a few that are the sites of specific programs. Nearly every Healthy Cities site seems to have its own web page, and these can easily be found by searching "healthy cities" and/or "healthy communities.")

Bethel New Life, a grass roots, church-based urban development effort in the Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago. A bottom-up initiative that grew organically over many years, responding to the voiced needs of the community. Most staff and board members are community residents.

Mesa County, CO: **A case study of community transformation**. A grass roots effort that involved the whole community and grew into the Civic Forum; and a more top-down community health assessment.

Community Partners, Inc., an organization deeply involved in the Healthy Communities movement.

Essential State Level Capacities for Support of Local Healthy Communities Efforts, by Peter Lee, Tom Wolff, Joan Twiss, Robin Wilcox, Christine Lyman, and Cathy O'Connor.

Greater Orlando Healthy Communities Initiative. A very top-down effort, started by current and former Junior League presidents, the newspaper editor, the mayor, and other prominent citizens. They involved the community with the help of a consultant.

The Healthy Communities Program in Aiken, South Carolina. A "model" program, focused on infant mortality. A top-down effort, it nonetheless involves the community in planning and input, and has been highly successful not only at reducing infant mortality, but at providing other needed services, many not directly related to health.

Healthy Cities information from WHO Denmark, the godfather of the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities movement.

The Healthy Cities initiative of Illawarra, Australia.

Healthy People in Healthy Communities, a guide from the US Dept. of Health and Human Services.

The International Healthy Cities Foundation.

Links to numerous articles on Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities from the Change Project. Includes interviews with **Len Duhl and Ilona Kickbusch** by **Joe Flower** from the Healthcare Forum Journal.

The **Ottawa Charter.**

The Peak to Peak Healthy Communities Project, Gilpin County, Colorado.

The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Healthy Communities

WHO information on Healthy Cities

Print Resources

Norris, T. (2002). *America's Best Kept Secret: The Healthy Communities Movement.* (Reprint by Healthy Communities Massachusetts from the National Civic Review, introduction, Spring, 1997.) Pan American Health Organization. Healthy Municipalities and Communities: Mayors' Guide for Promoting Quality of Life. Washington, DC.

Public Health, Vol. 115, Nos. 2 and 3 (March/April & May/June, 2000): Focus on Healthy Communities., Vol. 115.

Wilkinson, R., & Michael M. (1998) eds. *The Solid Facts: Social Determinants of Health.* World Health Organization: Copenhagen.

Section 2-2: Ten Essential Public Health Services

Learn about the Ten Essential Public Health Services, and how to assure them in your community's public health infrastructure.

THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

To protect and promote the health of all people in all communities

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being.

Assessment

Assess and monitor population health

Investigate, diagnose, and address health hazards and root causes

Communicate effectively to inform and educate

Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships

Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws

Utilize legal and regulatory actions

Enable equitable access

Build a diverse and skilled workforce

Improve and innovate through evaluation, research, and quality improvement

Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health

Equity

Assurance

Policy Development

Created 2020

Before you read this section's information about the Ten Essential Services, we invite you to take a quiz. Answers are provided at the bottom of this page. See how well YOU do!

(1).As you read the front page of the local paper, you notice an alarming article about an outbreak of "disease X" in your community. You read on to learn about the scientifically established cause of "disease X", and precautionary measures for avoiding exposure.

This valuable information was published as a front-page story because:

a. The local football team lost its game last night

b. The front-page columnist is on vacation

c. State and local health officials and their staff have worked for weeks to gather data, conduct laboratory and statistical tests, generate hypotheses, and collaborate with the media to alert and educate the public about "disease X" as effectively as possible.

(2).On your way into the local grocery store, you notice a flier advertising a toll-free hotline number for enrolling uninsured children in a federally funded health insurance program.

This insurance program is being offered because:

a. The federal government has a budget surplus and is looking for a way to spend it

b. A leading telephone company offered the state health department a great deal on 1-800 numbers

c. Public health professionals have documented the numbers of uninsured children in their states, and worked with federal and state policymakers to institute outreach and "wrap around services" that assure the universal provision of health care.

(3).While shopping in the local mall, you come across a group of nurses offering free blood pressure and cholesterol screenings.

The nurses are offering these screenings because:

a. They need to moonlight

b. They enjoy people watching at the mall

c. They are public health nurses dedicated to community health promotion, including the prevention of heart disease

(4).You and your sweetheart share a romantic dinner at your favorite restaurant. Not only is the meal delicious – you do not get food poisoning!

This enjoyable experience has been brought to you by:

a. The restaurant management

b. Your local health department

c. A joint effort of the restaurant management and your local health department

(5).In an urban area, prevalent liquor stores are slowly being replaced by grocery stores. The mass transit system has been re-routed to guarantee store access to urban residents without vehicles.

This change in the community's planning and development is probably a result of:

a. The Department of Transportation needing to increase revenue

b. The liquor storeowners deciding that they weren't doing enough business and moving elsewhere.

c. A collaborative effort of citizens, public health professionals, city planners, and local government officials who share the common goal of preventing substance use and alcoholism among members of their urban community.

(Answers: 1. c; 2. c; 3. c; 4. c; 5. c)

What, besides the same answer, do the quiz scenarios above have in common? They are real life, everyday examples of some of the Ten Essential Public Health Services that public health professionals strive to deliver in the counties and states that they serve.

This Tool Box section will teach you what the Ten Essential Public Health Services are, and illustrate the function of those Services in public health. When you have completed the tool, you will be able to identify under which Essential Service public health activities in your community are implemented. More importantly, we hope that you will understand how the synergy of efforts within all ten Essential Service areas can contribute to the health of your community's populations.

To help you get started with identifying how the Ten Essential Public Health Services are reflected in day-to-day public health activities, Table 1 below matches five of the Ten Essential Public Health Services with their corresponding quiz scenarios.

Table 1: Examples of How Essential Services Are Reflected in Day-to-Day Public Health Activities

Quiz Scenario	Essential Public Health Service Implemented
Informing the public about an epidemiological outbreak investigation in the community	"Investigate, diagnose, and address health hazards and root causes"
Promoting enrollment in a federally subsidized health insurance program	"Enable equitable access"
Health education and health promotion to prevent heart disease	"Communicate effectively to inform and educate"
Maintenance of a sanitary restaurant environment for public well-being	"Utilize legal and regulatory actions"
Shaping health policy, city planning, and transportation routes to create an environment that fosters positive health behavior	"Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws"

We hope that you want to read on and learn more. But before we discuss each of the Essential Services, we will visit the broader concept of defining the purpose and function of public health.

WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH?

As you probably concluded from the quiz scenarios, public health is everywhere – it is a part of the infrastructure that keeps our communities safe and healthy.

Depending on which resource you read, you will find varying definitions of the mission of public health. However, the most current and widely accepted mission definition is:

"Promote physical and mental health, and prevent disease, injury, and disability."

Public health services may go unnoticed within a community because they are often (but not always) preventive versus reactive. For example, which community service are you more likely to notice – an environmental health specialist inspecting the safety of a local university's food service establishments, or a fire truck speeding down the street with its lights and sirens on?

Despite having a relatively 'low profile' status, public health services play a key role in assuring the health and well being of communities. Throughout the 1900s, the average lifespan of persons in the United States increased by more than 30 years. According to an article by Bunker, Frazier, and Mosteller (1994), 25 years of this are attributable to advances in public health.

WHO IS THE TYPICAL PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL?

There really is no "typical" public health professional. The public health workforce in the United States consists of approximately 500,000 individuals with diverse professional training and experience.

• Some are nurses, physicians, or laboratory technicians by training.

- Some are educators, nutritionists, or social workers by training.
- Some are biostatisticians or epidemiologists.
- Others are economists or lawyers.
- Community-based or "grassroots" workers might include concerned parents, grandparents, or civic leaders who volunteer their time.

How do all of these people with a unified purpose but different skills work together successfully to carry out the mission of public health? They have a logic model to consult: the Ten Essential Services of Public Health.

The Ten Essential Services of Public Health differ in some ways from other logic models presented in Chapter 2 of the Tool Box. Other logic models discussed incorporate prescribed processes (e.g., from planning to implementation to evaluation) diagrammed in a flow chart that can then be applied to one priority goal like teen pregnancy prevention. In contrast, there is no prescribed order of implementation for the Ten Essential Services—no flow chart, and no one specific outcome that results from implementing all ten Essential Services. Rather, the Ten Essential Services have the potential to create a comprehensive infrastructure that can provide a supportive context for any public health priority in a community.

Although the more prescriptive logic models may be narrow in scope once applied to one goal, they can also undertake a comprehensive approach within a community. For example, a planning phase might involve stakeholders from non-public health sectors of the community, in an effort to foster the most supportive context for change. This is not unlike the impact of the Ten Essential Services.

You may be wondering,

"Why do people need a logic model for direction if they are already working towards the same mission?"

Because of their diverse backgrounds, some professionals have been trained to follow different paradigms (models) in their specialties. One example is the "medical model" versus the "public health model." The most significant difference between the two models is that public health activities focus on entire populations, while clinical activities focus on individual patients. Table 2 below summarizes key differences between the paradigms that are typically used to train clinical and public health professionals.

Table 2: Public Health versus Medical Models of Professional Training

Public Health Model	Medical Model
Primary focus on population	Primary focus on the individual
Public service ethic, tempered by concerns for the individual	Personal service ethic, conditioned by awareness of social responsibilities
Emphasis on prevention and health promotion for the whole community	Emphasis on diagnosis, treatment, and care for the whole patient
Paradigm employs a spectrum of interventions aimed at the environment, human behavior and lifestyle, and medical care	Paradigm places predominant emphasis on medical care

The **Ten Essential Public Health Services** provide a common ground for professionals trained in either paradigm, as well as grassroots workers and non-public health civic leaders, so they can work collaboratively towards fulfilling the public health mission:

"To promote physical and mental health, and prevent disease, injury, and disability."

Now that you have a better understanding of public health, let's talk about the origin, purpose, and function of the Ten Essential Public Health Services.

WHAT ARE THE TEN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES?

From 1988 to the early 1990s, the recognized "core functions" of public health were:

- Assessment
- Policy development
- Assurance

In 1993, with a new presidential administration and federal and state attempts to reform the health care system in the United States, public health leaders decided to set forth a more detailed and utilitarian consensus statement that would "speak with one voice" to public health professionals, the general population, and the policymakers who would shape health care reform.

Public health leaders worked to define a more detailed logic model of core public health functions. The end result was a consensus statement that included the Ten Essential Public Health Services, adopted in 1994.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE TEN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES?

- The Ten Essential Public Health Services are really about actualizing the public health paradigm that we presented in Table 2. Let's review the key principles involved:
- A primary focus on the population
- A public service ethic, tempered by concerns for the individual
- An emphasis on prevention and health promotion for the whole community
- The paradigm employs a spectrum of interventions aimed at the environment, human behavior and lifestyle, and medical care

The theme of *prevention* is the most powerful element in the implementation of the Ten Essential Public Health Services.

- Through prevention, countless injuries, illnesses, and even chronic diseases can be avoided.
- Through prevention, lives can be saved.
- Through prevention, health care cost can be contained.
- Through prevention, individuals, their families, and their communities can benefit from the population-based reach of the Ten Essential Public Health Services.

It is important to not only implement but also monitor—or track, assess, and modify, as needed—the Ten Essential Public Health Services. With data or other information about the Services' costs or expenditures, implementation, and impact, monitoring can contribute to informed policy decisions about public health program development and funding at local, state, and national levels.

HOW ARE THE TEN ESSENTIAL SERVICES USED IN COMMUNITY PRACTICE?

On the pages that follow, each Essential Service is discussed in order from 1 to 10. Each discussion includes a definition of the Service and some examples of national or community practice. Keep in mind that the Services do not necessarily need to be implemented in the "1 – 10" sequence, or even independently.

The Ten Essential Services are independent yet complementary goals for communities to work toward. You should actually strive to implement the services simultaneously in your community as a means of carrying out the mission of public health. However, you may find that you identify with only one or two in terms of your role in your community's public health initiatives as you read through this section.

Essential Service #1: **Assess and monitor population health.**

Public health surveillance—the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of health related data—is at the core of this Essential Service.

Essential Service *#1* encompasses public health activities such as:

- Identification of threats to health and assessment of health service needs;
- Timely collection, analysis, and publication of information on access, utilization, costs, and outcomes of personal health services;
- Attention to the vital statistics and health status of specific groups that are at higher risk than the total population; and
- Collaboration to manage integrated information systems with private providers and health benefit plans.

National level, population-based surveillance systems administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) include:

- The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System;
- National Vital Statistics System;
- National Health Interview Survey; and
- Cancer registries;

You can access CDC data electronically at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. You may not immediately think to use national level data when working at the community level. However, national level surveillance data can provide trend data to use as a benchmark as you assess health status measures (e.g., the number of children immunized prior to entering preschool) in your community. Prior to investing resources and time in a program, it is often necessary to conduct a needs assessment. Community data collected via a needs assessment can be compared to existing data at the national level. If you discover that your community actually has an excellent rate for a health status measure as compared to 75% of the states in the country, you may shift your prevention program priorities to a different measure or target population!

If you do not have the time or resources to conduct your own needs assessment, you can search for community level data in resources including:

- State-level 'report cards' on maternal and child health indicators (see the federal Title V Information System with data for all U.S. states and territories).
- School health reports; and
- Law enforcement agency surveillance, such as the number of DUI arrests

Essential Service #2: **Investigate, diagnose, and address health hazards and root causes.**

Essential Service #2 encompasses public health activities such as:

- Epidemiologic identification of emerging health threats;
- Public health laboratory capability using modern technology to conduct rapid screening and high volume testing;
- Active infectious disease epidemiology programs; and
- Technical capacity for epidemiologic investigation of disease outbreaks and patterns of chronic disease and injury.

At the national level, the United States Department of Health and Human Services oversees the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). The Agency's overall function is to "serve the public by using the best science, taking responsive public health actions, and providing trusted health information to prevent harmful exposures and disease related to toxic substances."

Via grants and cooperative agreements, ATSDR provides funding and technical assistance for states to identify and evaluate environmental health threats to communities, as well as educate the communities about health risk or other findings.

At the local level, public health laboratories provide diagnostic testing, disease surveillance, applied research, laboratory training and other essential services to the communities they serve. Laboratory work is diverse, yet accomplished by highly trained and skilled professionals.

Public health laboratory professionals and epidemiologists are the ones working behind the scenes on the issues that you hear about in the news. These include: newborn screening; Lyme disease; West Nile virus; food borne illness outbreak investigations; and bio-terrorism threats. The Association of Public Health Laboratories was founded by state and territorial public health laboratory directors serving communities across the United States. You may want to visit this website to learn more about the public health laboratory expertise and services available in your own community.

Essential Service #3: **Communicate effectively to inform and educate.**

You have probably come across—and even participated in— health promotion and social marketing efforts in your community.

Essential Service #3 encompasses public health activities such as:

- Social marketing and targeted media public communication (e.g., Toll-free information lines);
- Providing accessible health information resources at community levels (e.g., free, mobile health screening initiatives);
- Active collaboration with personal health care providers to reinforce health promotion messages and programs; and
- Joint health education programs with schools, churches, and worksites (e.g., stress reduction seminars; parenting support groups for enhancing mental health; and health fairs).

You may have noticed national media campaign advertisements on television, billboards, or even posters or

fliers in your doctor's office. Some examples include the "Back to Sleep" campaign to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or the anti-substance use campaign, "Just Say No."

Many national awareness weeks also relate directly to public health efforts. The American Public Health Association, headquartered in Washington, D.C., actually sponsors a "National Public Health Week" each spring. You can find additional information, and links to free tools and resources for National Public Health Week. You may decide to sponsor an event such as a fun run or health fair to raise public health awareness in your own community!

Essential Service #4: **Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships.**

These activities represent a comprehensive approach to community health, in which professionals and even entire sectors of a community collaborate to plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and subsequently modify activities, and repeat the process as needed.

Essential Service #4 encompasses public health activities such as:

- Convening and facilitating community groups and associations, including those not typically considered to be health-related, to undertake defined preventive, screening, rehabilitation, and support programs; and
- Skilled coalition-building ability in order to draw upon the full range of potential human and material resources in the cause of community health.

This is not unlike the **PATCH** logic model – the **Planned Approach to Community Health**

Included in the PATCH strategy are five elements that are fundamental to the success of any community health promotion process:

- Community members participate in the process.
- Data guide the development of programs.
- Participants develop a comprehensive health promotion strategy.
- Evaluation emphasizes feedback and program improvement.
- The community capacity for health promotion is increased.

You can read about a similar process for mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve health problems in the Community Tool Box's Community Action Guide: A Framework for Addressing Community Goals and Problems.

The overall goal of action planning is to increase your community's ability to work together to affect conditions and outcomes that matter to its residents—and to do so both over time and across issues of interest.

As your community works towards a broad vision of health for all, creating supportive conditions for change requires comprehensive efforts among diverse sectors of the community. These include health organizations, faith communities, schools, and businesses. Representatives of each sector come together to form

a **community coalition**. Your community coalition can strive to influence systems changes—programs, policies, and practices that can enhance or detract from the community's capacity to be a supportive environment for healthy living.

Essential Service #5: **Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws.**

Because state and local public health programs are often funded at least in part with Federal dollars, accountability is often a key issue. Public health programs therefore document progress towards positive change in health behavior or health status indicators. For example, the Federal Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, which imposes a $3 state match for every $4, requires annual reporting of "performance measures." Some of those are state-negotiated to allow for flexibility in tracking health behavior or health status indicators that are unique to a state's populations. Data such as these can be presented to policymakers to document the value or effectiveness of a program. Those data can also be used for continued program planning and modification.

Essential Service #5 encompasses public health activities such as:

- Leadership development at all levels of public health;
- Systematic community-level and state-level planning for health improvement in all jurisdictions;
- Development and tracking of measurable health objectives as a part of continuous quality improvement strategies;
- Joint evaluation with the medical health care system to define consistent policy regarding prevention and treatment services; and
- Development of codes, regulations, and legislation to guide the practice of public health.

Active Living by Design is a national program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and is a part of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health. The program establishes and evaluates innovative approaches to increase physical activity through community design, public policies, and communications strategies. The program funds community partnerships to develop, implement and sustain collaboration among a variety of organizations in public health and other disciplines, such as city planning, transportation, architecture, recreation, crime prevention, traffic safety and education, and key advocacy groups. Collaborators focus on land use, public transit, non-motorized travel, public spaces, parks, trails, and architectural practices that advance physical activity.

One example of an Active Living by Design initiative is: "Obesity and The Built Environment: Improving Public Health through Community Design." You can learn more about this and other initiatives by visiting Active Living by Design.

Essential Service #6: **Utilize legal and regulatory actions.**

While you may not always be conscious of how public health regulations have influenced your community environment, think about some of the things that you see or experience when you visit restaurants. You may have noticed a framed certificate hanging on the wall, with "Sanitation Grade A." This certificate is a result of

local health department inspections to assure that the restaurant is in compliance with food storage, handling, and preparation regulations.

While at that same restaurant, you may also notice a sign that says, "No smoking." This may be a direct result of a statewide law that was designed to improve the environmental health conditions in your community.

If you have school-aged children and have had to prepare them for entrance into the public school system, you know that the full series of immunizations is required. Immunizations are required for school-aged children in the United States because when widespread immunizations are in place, we all benefit from what is referred to as "herd immunity." When a group of people (e.g., an entire community, state, or nation) is immunized against an infectious disease, it makes it more difficult for the disease to spread and cause an epidemic.

Essential Service #6 encompasses public health activities such as:

- Full enforcement of sanitary codes, especially in the food industry;
- Full protection of drinking water supplies;
- Enforcement of clean air standards;
- Timely follow-up of hazards, preventable injuries, and exposure-related diseases identified in occupational and community settings;
- Monitoring quality of medical services (e.g., laboratory, nursing homes, and home health care); and
- Timely review of new drug, biologic, and medical device application.

Essential Service #6 may be implemented in your community as a result of either state or federal legislation. Not only can you take on a leadership role in your community to assure that public health regulations are enforced; you can be a catalyst for change by identifying and prioritizing new issues, and sponsoring new regulations through public health advocacy.

Essential Service #7: **Enable equitable access.**

Essential Service #7 encompasses public health activities such as:

- Assuring effective entry for socially disadvantaged people into a coordinated system of clinical care;
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate materials and staff to assure linkage to services for special population groups;
- Ongoing "care management;"
- Transportation services;
- Targeted health information to high risk population groups; and
- Technical assistance for effective worksite health promotion/disease prevention programs.

The implementation of this Essential Service is inherently linked to the social, economic, and political climate in communities, states, and the nation. To assure the provision of health care when it is otherwise unavailable,

the United States federal government funds two "safety net" programs: **Medicaid** and the **State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)**.

Medicaid is the largest source of funding for medical and health-related services for people and families with low incomes and resources. This program became law in 1965, and is jointly funded by the federal and state governments (including the District of Columbia and the Territories) to assist states in providing medical long-term care assistance to people who meet certain eligibility criteria.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 created a new children's health insurance program called the **State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)**. SCHIP is a state administered program, and each state sets its own guidelines regarding eligibility and services for children up to age 19 who are uninsured. Families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid may still be able to qualify for SCHIP.

To learn more about the Medicaid and SCHIP programs and how they can benefit members of your community, please visit: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The availability of programs like Medicaid and SCHIP is not sufficient. Public health professionals also have to provide outreach services to the populations in need of these programs. Outreach might include:

- Consumer education about the existence of a program;
- Assistance with applying for a program;
- Linking enrollees to related health programs (for example, pregnant women, infants, and children under the age of 5 enrolled in Medicaid also qualify for the Federal Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children—WIC, and vice versa);
- Physically transporting clients to the medical services that they need.

Culturally and linguistically appropriate materials are a critical component of outreach efforts in a country in which many immigrant languages are spoken. Public health professionals can use decennial census data or community level needs assessments to determine how many and which languages are spoken in a geographic region. To provide outreach and other services in a culturally competent manner, public health professionals can apply guidelines developed by the National Center for Cultural Competence. The Center produces publications that teach people how to adapt health promotion materials already developed and written in English.

Essential Service #8: **Build a diverse and skilled workforce.**

Essential Service #8 encompasses public health activities such as:

- Education and training for personnel to meet the needs for public and personal health service;
- Efficient processes for licensure of professionals and certification of facilities with regular verification and inspection follow-up;
- Adoption of continuous quality improvement and life-long learning within all licensure and certification programs;

- Active partnerships with professional training programs to assure community-relevant learning experiences for all students; and
- Continuing education in management and leadership development programs for those charged with administrative / executive roles.

There are many opportunities for certified education, training, and continuing education in public health. The Association of Schools of Public Health is a membership organization of the 27 accredited schools of public health that prepare people for a public health profession. The accrediting body, an independent agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, is the Council on Education for Public Health.

Continuing education opportunities abound at professional conferences and in professional journals. Furthermore, the advent of the Internet has brought new access to continuing education through the availability of online certificate and other training programs. These distance-based programs—particularly the ones offered through accredited schools of public health—offer an invaluable alternative to the sometimes-prohibitive costs and time commitment of travel for state and local public health professionals.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sponsors many training and continuing education opportunities on site and in the accredited schools of public health across the country. One example is **Academic Centers for Public Health Preparedness (A-CPHP)**. These centers work together to improve the capacity of the front line public health and health care workers to quickly respond to bioterrorism, infectious disease outbreaks, and other public health threats and emergencies. The network of Centers represents a unique partnership between the schools of public health, the Association of Schools of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and representatives from state and local public health agencies, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

Other programs meet the education and training needs of rising public health professionals while simultaneously enhancing workforce capacity in the field. One example is the Federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau's Graduate Student Internship Program, which places Maternal and Child Health graduate students in state health departments for summer internships via a competitive process for both health departments and students.

Essential Service #9: **Improve and innovate through evaluation, research, and quality improvement.**

Evaluation helps public health professionals continually refine or revise program approaches in future years of funding. Furthermore, evaluation data provide information about the relative costs and effort for tasks so activity and budget adjustments can be made.

Essential Service #9 encompasses public health activities such as:

- Ongoing evaluation of health programs based on analysis of health status and service utilization data, to assess program effectiveness and to provide information necessary for allocating resources and reshaping programs.

The process of evaluation helps public health professionals and their collaborators assess the success of community health initiatives. Evaluation normally requires that data be collected and analyzed. Surveillance data from Essential Service #1 can be used for this purpose. For example, because surveillance efforts are often (but not always) annual, your community could access retrospective and current or "baseline" data before planning a public health initiative.This baseline data could then also be used to document the health behavior or health status outcome measure(s) of interest both before and after implementation of the initiative.

> Evaluation plans and concepts are addressed in several chapters and sections of the Community Tool Box. These include:
> > Chapter 36–39, all of which fall under the broad topic,"Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives"

Essential Service #10: **Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health.**

In order to implement the 10th Essential Service, state and local health department staff might carry out health services research via many different efforts including:

- Continuous linkage with appropriate institutes of higher learning and research;
- An internal capacity to mount timely epidemiologic (e.g., outbreak investigations) and economic analyses (e.g., cost-benefit studies); and
- An internal capacity to conduct needed health services research (e.g., survey design; conducting interviews and facilitating focus groups; conducting clinical trials; and accessing and using public records).

This list of research activities further illustrates the need for skills-specific training and education prescribed in Essential Service number 8. For example, anyone can create a survey and interview a group of people. However, there are prescribed methods for creating an "instrument" that collects information that can be summarized into a coherent and even statistically significant conclusion about a population of interest. Local health department staff may have had formal academic or on-the-job training in questionnaire design, survey methodology, or biostatistics. Some staff may even be "specialists" who can be called upon to complete complex data analyses for research purposes. However, both generalists and specialists in the local health departments contribute to the base of knowledge and experience that are critical to maintaining an internal capacity to conduct needed health services research.

Even when local health department staff have adequate training, a strain on staffing capacity or limited resources may prompt collaboration with other "specialists." Within the public health community, it is not difficult to find examples of health departments working with neighboring universities to conduct research and identify solutions. One example is the **Association of Schools of Public Health's Academic Health Departments** (AHD) grant program. The AHD program fosters collaboration among local health departments across the country and 14 neighboring universities that house accredited schools of public health.

The exchange of student and other resources can enhance the capacity of local health agencies to function as "learning organizations," thereby enhancing the success of community health efforts.

Another example of linkages with institutes of higher learning is the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice. Housed within the non-profit Public Health Foundation in Washington, D.C., the Council has a mission to "Improve public health practice and education by fostering, coordinating, and monitoring links between academia and the public health and healthcare community, developing and advancing innovative strategies to build and strengthen public health infrastructure, and creating a process for continuing public health education throughout one's career."

Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems can be accomplished many different ways. One way is via economic analyses to assess the "cost benefit" or the "cost effectiveness" of a program.

A **cost-benefit** evaluation assesses only one program, and focuses on the cost-to-outcome ratio, with the "outcome" having a dollar amount attached to it. Example: For a program that invests in prevention, the amount spent per client on prevention would be compared to the amount saved in averted health care costs per client (e.g., "For every $2 that we spend on diabetes management education, we save $4 in hospitalization costs.").

A **cost-effectiveness** analysis can be used with one or multiple programs with the same objectives, to relate the cost of a program approach to specific measures of a program's objectives. Those measures may or may not have a monetary value attached to them (e.g., an outcome measure for an education program may be standardized test scores).

Online Resources

- **American Public Health Association**
- **Association of Schools of Public Health**
- **Association of State and Territorial Health Officials**
- **Environmental Council of the States**
- **Essential Public Health Services.** Public Health Foundation (2002)
- **The Essential Services of Public Health.** American Public Health Association (2003)
- **National Association of County and City Health Officials**
- **National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors**
- **National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors**
- **Programs in Brief** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2003)
- **Public Health Code of Ethics** (Issue Brief) American Public Health Association
- **Public Health Foundation**
- **Publich Health Quality Improvement Exchange (PHQIX)** allows people to submit short explanations of their initiatives and observations/lessons-learned.
- **United States Public Health Service**
- **What is Public Health?** Association of Schools of Public Health (2003)

GUIDE FOR ENHANCING CORE FUNCTIONS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

1. Assess and monitor population health.

- **Analyzing Community Problems**
- **Assessing Community Needs and Resources**
- **Collecting Information About the Problem**
- **Conducting Concerns Surveys**
- **Conducting Focus Groups**
- **Conducting Interviews**
- **Conducting Needs Assessment Surveys**
- **Conducting Public Forums and Listening Sessions**
- **Conducting Surveys**
- **Determining Service Utilization**
- **Developing a Plan for Assessing Local Needs and Resources**
- **Developing Baseline Measures of Behavior**
- **Identifying Community Assets and Resources**
- **Understanding and Describing the Community**

2. Investigate, diagnose, and address health hazards and root causes.

- **Adapting Community Interventions for Different Cultures and Communities**
- **Analyzing Community Problems**
- **Analyzing Problems and Goals**
- **Analyzing Root Causes of Problems: The "But Why?" Technique**
- **Collecting Information About the Problem**
- **Conducting Interviews**
- **Defining and Analyzing the Problem**
- **Designing Community Interventions**
- **Developing an Intervention**
- **Ethical Issues in Community Interventions**
- **Identifying Targets and Agents of Change: Who Can Benefit and Who Can Help**
- **Identifying Strategies and Tactics for Reducing Risk**
- **An Introduction to the Problem Solving Process**
- **Understanding Risk and Protective Factors: Their Use in Selecting Potential Targets and**

Promising Strategies for Interventions

3. Communicate effectively to inform and educate.

- **Arranging a Press Conference**
- **Arranging News and Features Stories**
- **Communicating Information about Community Health and Development Issues**
- **Creating Brochures**
- **Creating Fact Sheets on Local Issues**
- **Creating Newsletters**
- **Creating Posters and Fliers**
- **Creating a Website**
- **Conducting a Social marketing Campaign**
- **Developing a Plan for Communication**
- **Developing Creative Promotions**
- **Handling Crises in Communication**
- **Implementing a Social Marketing Effort**
- **Making Community Presentations**
- **Our Model of Practice: Building Capacity for Community and System Change**
- **Preparing Press Releases**
- **Preparing Guest Columns and Editorials**
- **Preparing Public Service Announcements**
- **Reframing the Issue**
- **Some Lessons Learned on Community Organization and Change**
- **Talking About Risk and Protective Factors Related to Community Issues**
- **Using Paid Advertising**
- **Using E-mail Lists**

4. Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships.

- **Attracting Support for Specific Programs**
- **Changing Policies to Increase Funding for Community Health and Development Initiatives**
- **Community (Locality) Development**
- **Creating Objectives**
- **Developing an Action Plan**
- **Our Model of Practice: Building Capacity for Community and System Change**
- **Our Evaluation Model: Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives**

- **Working Together for Healthier Communities: A Framework for Collaboration Among Community Partnerships, Support Organizations, and Funders**
- **Developing a Plan for Getting Community Health and Development Issues on the Local Agenda**
- **Developing an Ongoing Board of Directors**
- **Developing Strategic and Action Plans**
- **Developing Successful Strategies: Planning to Win**
- **Identifying Action Steps in Bringing About Community and System Change**
- **Maintaining a Board of Directors**
- **Marketing the Initiative to Secure Financial Support**
- **Obtaining Feedback from Constituents: What Changes Are Important and Feasible?**
- **Organizational Structure: An Overview**
- **An Overview of Strategic Planning or VMOSA (Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, Action Plan)**
- **Proclaiming Your Dream: Developing Vision and Mission Statements**
- **Promoting Adoption of the Initiative's Mission and Objectives**
- **Promoting Coordination, Cooperative Agreements, and Collaborative Agreements Among Agencies**
- **Social Action**
- **Sustaining the Work or Initiative**
- **Strategies for the Long-Term Institutionalization of an Initiative: An Overview**
- **Strategies for Sustaining the Initiative**
- **Welcoming and Training New Members to a Board of Directors**

5. Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws.

- **Advocating for a Change**
- **Conducting a Petition Drive**
- **Conducting a Public Hearing**
- **Developing a Plan for Advocacy**
- **Encouraging Involvement of Potential Opponents as well as Allies**
- **Filing a Complaint**
- **General Rules for Organizing for Legislative Advocacy**
- **Identifying Opponents**
- **Lobbying Decisionmakers**
- **Overview: Getting an Advocacy Campaign Off the Ground**
- **Recognizing Allies**

- **Survival Skills for Advocates**
- **Understanding the Issue**
- **Using Personal Testimony**
- **Writing Letters to Elected Officials**
- **Writing Letters to the Editor**

6. Utilize legal and regulatory actions.

- **Adapting Community Interventions for Different Cultures and Communities**
- **Building Leadership**
- **Capturing What People Say: Tips for Recording a Meeting**
- **Coalition Building I: Starting a Coalition**
- **Conducting Effective Meetings**
- **Creating and Maintaining Coalitions and Partnerships**
- **Developing a Plan for Building Leadership**
- **Developing a Plan for Involving Volunteers**
- **Strategies for Community Change and Improvement: An Overview**
- **Social Action**
- **Using Principles of Persuasion**
- **Designing Community Interventions**
- **Developing a Community Leadership Corps: A Model for Service-Learning**
- **Developing a Plan for Increasing Participation in Community Action**
- **Developing Facilitation Skills**
- **Developing Training Programs for Volunteers**
- **Developing Volunteer Orientation Programs**
- **Establishing Micro-grant Programs**
- **Ethical Issues in Community Interventions**
- **Identifying Strategies and Tactics for Reducing Risks**
- **Identifying Targets and Agents of Change: Who Can Benefit and Who Can Help**
- **Involving Key Influentials in the Initiative**
- **Involving People Most Affected by the Problem**
- **Making Personal Contact with Potential Participants**
- **Methods of Contacting Potential Participants**
- **Promoting Neighborhood Action**
- **Promoting Participation Among Diverse Groups**
- **Recruiting Volunteers**
- **Servant Leadership: Accepting and Maintaining the Call of Service**

- **Training for Conflict Resolution**
- **Understanding Risk and Protective Factors: Their Use in Selecting Potential Targets and Promising Strategies for Interventions**
- **Writing Letters to Potential Participants**

7. Enable equitable access.

- **Developing Multisector Collaborations**
- **Identifying Opponents**
- **Increasing Participation and Membership**
- **Overview: Getting an Advocacy Campaign Off the Ground**
- **Promoting Coordination, Cooperative Agreements, and Collaborative Agreements Among Agencies**
- **Recognizing Allies**
- **Survival Skills for Advocates**
- **Understanding and Describing the Community**
- **Understanding the Issue**
- **Applying for Grants**

8. Build a diverse and skilled workforce.

- **Building Leadership**
- **Building and Sustaining Commitment**
- **Building and Sustaining Relationships**
- **Building Relationships with People from Different Cultures**
- **Capturing What People Say: Tips for Recording a Meeting**
- **Conducting a Workshop**
- **Conducting Effective Meetings**
- **Collecting Information About the Problem**
- **Conducting Needs Assessment Surveys**
- **Conducting Surveys**
- **Designing a Training Session**
- **Delivering a Training Session**
- **Defining and Analyzing the Problem**
- **Developing a Community Leadership Corps: A Model for Service-Learning**
- **Developing and Communicating a Vision**
- **Developing a Management Plan**

- **Developing a Plan for Staff Hiring and Training**
- **Developing a Plan for Building Leadership**
- **Developing Facilitation Skills**
- **Discovering and Creating Possibilities**
- **Enhancing Cultural Competence**
- **Generating and Choosing Solutions**
- **Healing from the Effects of Internalized Oppression**
- **Influencing People**
- **An Introduction to the Problem Solving Process**
- **Learning From and Contributing to Constituents**
- **Learning How to Be a Community Leader**
- **Making Decisions**
- **Multicultural Collaboration**
- **Promoting Coordination, Cooperative Agreements, and Collaborative Agreements Among Agencies**
- **Providing Supervision for Staff and Volunteers**
- **Providing Support for Staff and Volunteers**
- **Putting Your Solutions into Practice**
- **Servant Leadership: Accepting and Maintaining the Call of Service**
- **Transforming Conflicts in Diverse Communities**
- **Understanding Culture and Diversity in Building Communities**
- **Understanding People's Needs**

9. Improve and innovate through evaluation, research, and quality improvement.

- **Behavioral Surveys**
- **Choosing Evaluators**
- **Communicating Information to Funders for Support and Accountability**
- **Conducting Interviews with Key Participants to Analyze Critical Events**
- **Constituent Survey of Outcomes: Ratings of Importance**
- **Developing an Evaluation Plan**
- **Establishing Formal Communication and Requesting Participation**
- **Evaluating the Initiative**
- **A Framework for Program Evaluation: A Gateway to Tools**
- **Gathering Data on Public Opinion**
- **Gathering Information: Monitoring Your Progress**
- **Gathering and Using Community-Level Indicators**

- **How to Conduct Research: An Overview**
- **Measuring Success: Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiative**
- **Our Evaluation Model: Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives**
- **Providing Feedback to Improve the Initiative**
- **Rating Community Goals**
- **Rating Member Satisfaction**
- **Reaching Your Goals: The Goal Attainment Report**
- **Understanding Community Leadership, Evaluators, and Funders: What Are Their Interests?**

10. Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health.

- **Adapting Community Interventions for Different Cultures and Communities**
- **Assessing Community Needs and Resources**
- **Conducting Public Forums and Listening Sessions**
- **Collecting Information About the Problem**
- **Designing Community Interventions**
- **Developing a Plan for Assessing Local Needs and Resources**
- **Developing Multisector Collaborations**
- **Identifying Targets and Agents of Change: Who Can Benefit and Who Can Help**
- **Identifying Strategies and Tactics for Reducing Risks**
- **Understanding and Describing the Community**
- **Understanding Risk and Protective Factors: Their Use in Selecting Potential Targets and Promising Strategies for Interventions**
- **Promoting Coordination, Cooperative Agreements, and Collaborative Agreements Among Agencies**

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Print Resources

American Public Health Association (June 2003). *The Guide to Implementing Model Standards*. This resource includes discussion of PATCH implementation along with other model standards for community health development, such as the Assessment Protocol for Excellence in Public Health.

Association of Schools of Public Health (2003). *The Population Approach to Public Health.*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999). *Ten Great Public Health Achievements—United States, 1900 – 1999.* Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, April 02, 1999: 48(12); 241-243.

The remaining nine links will take you to the web pages of organizations that served on the Public Health Functions Steering Committee, which adopted the Ten Essential Public Health Services in 1994.

United States Department of Health and Human Services (1989). *Making Health Communication*

Programs Work: A Planner's Guide. Bethesda, MD: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, Office of Cancer Communications, National Cancer Institute.

Wholey, J., Hatry, H., & Newcomer, K. (Eds.) (1994). *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Section 2-3: Some Lessons Learned on Community Organization and Change

Learn from those who have come together to address issues and bring about community-level improvements.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?

Community organization is the process of people coming together to address issues that matter to them. Community members developing plans for how the city can be a place where all its children do well. Neighbors joining in protests to stop drugs and violence in their community. Members of faith communities working together to build affordable housing. These are all examples of community organization efforts.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF COMMUNITIES THAT ORGANIZE?

Community organization can happen in the variety of contexts that define "community."

SHARED PLACE

People come together who share a common geographic place such as a neighborhood, city, or town. For example, local residents might come together to address neighborhood concerns such as safety, housing, or basic services. Problem solving through community-based organizations (CBOs), neighborhood associations, and tenants — organizations are common forms of place-based practice.

SHARED EXPERIENCE

Community organizing also occurs among people who share an experience, such as a shared workplace or shared experience with disabilities or health disparities. Those who share a common identity may organize around issues, such as discrimination, that are barriers to achieving common goals.

SHARED INTEREST

Organizing frequently occurs among those who have concerns about the same issues such as jobs, housing, child well-being, or education.

WHAT ARE SOME MODELS OF PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?

Should community organization be about collaboration among people sharing common interests or confrontation with those in power? This is a false dichotomy that ignores the context of the work. Several models of practice emerged in various contexts of community organization work (Rothman, 1995).

SOCIAL PLANNING

Social planning uses information and analysis to address substantive community issues such as education, child development, or environmental health. For example, planning councils or task forces engage (usually) professionals in setting goals and objectives, coordinating efforts, and reviewing goal attainment.

Social planning might occur in a context of either consensus or conflict about goals and means. For example, information about high rates of adolescent pregnancy, and factors that contribute to it, may help communities focus on the goal of preventing teen pregnancy, and even decisions about using controversial means such as sexuality education and enhanced access to contraceptives. Use of social planning helps build agreement on common results.

SOCIAL ACTION

Social action involves efforts to increase the power and resources of low-income or relatively powerless or marginalized people. For example, advocacy organizations, such as those for disability rights or tobacco control, often use social action approaches. They might arrange disruptive events — including lawsuits, sit-ins, or boycotts — to draw attention and focus to their concerns by those in power.

Organizers create events, such as a protest or strike, that those in positions of power (such as employers) can avoid or stop by coming to an agreement. For example, people with disabilities might stop picketing a business when it modifies policies that discriminate against people with disabilities. Or, a tobacco company might avoid a lawsuit by tobacco control advocates by eliminating advertising directed at minors. Social action tactics are used in lots of situations involving conflicting interests and imbalance in power; they usually take place when conventional negotiations aren't working.

LOCALITY DEVELOPMENT

Locality development is another way to get people to work together. It is the process of reaching group consensus about common concerns and collaborating in problem solving. For example, local residents in urban neighborhoods or rural communities may cooperate in defining local issues, such as access to job opportunities or better education, and in taking action to address the concerns.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS OR COALITIONS

There are many hybrid models that combine elements of the three approaches. For example, community partnerships or coalitions combine elements of social planning and locality development when people who share common concerns, such as child well-being or substance use, come together to address them. The goal of many coalitions is to change community conditions — specific programs, policies, and practices — that

protect against or reduce risk for these concerns. These models, and their variations, may be implemented at local, state, regional, and even broader levels.

WHAT ARE SOME LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND CHANGE?

The following summaries come from lessons learned from various experiences with community organization practice. The lessons are organized by broad topics related to the work of community organization and change.

The lessons come through experience within:

- Understanding (and affecting) community context
- Community planning
- Community action and mobilization
- Understanding (and addressing) opposition and resistance
- Intervention and maintenance of efforts
- Promoting community change
- Influencing systems (or broader) change
- Achieving community-level improvements

UNDERSTANDING (AND AFFECTING) COMMUNITY CONTEXT

High profile commissions and reports create conditions for experimentation and optimism about public problem solving.

For example, during the 1960s, the U.S. President's Commission on Juvenile Delinquency helped spawn innovative efforts such as those of Mobilization for Youth in New York City. Similarly, in the early 1990s, a national level task force on infant mortality helped launch a multi-site demonstration program known as Healthy Start. High-profile studies such as this help set the public agenda by highlighting what should be addressed and how. Prominent reports frame the dominant explanations for societal problems. For example, a report could focus attention on poverty as a "root cause" of many societal problems or infant mortality as a pressing issue. It might also feature a promising alternative solution, such as equal access to health care or legal assistance, as an innovative way to address social problems.

You might need to use more than one model of community organization practice to fit the variety of contexts in which community work is done.

For example, social planning or locality development strategies may fit a context of consensus about common purpose such as working together to reduce violence. By contrast, the strategy of social action, with its disruptive activity and related conflict, may be more appropriate in a context of conflicting interests, such as organizing for decent wages or safe conditions in the workplace.

Crosscutting issues are good contexts for community organization practice.

Some community issues, for example, neighborhood safety or substance use, affect the majority of people who share a common place. They also offer a solid basis around which a critical mass of local people can work together. When community organization efforts involve people from diverse backgrounds of income and power — such as educational or public health improvements that affect people across social class — substantive change is a lot more likely to happen.

Community organization can't always be separated from politics or controversy.

Consider the case of people coming together in a rural community to address issues of toxic waste and environmental pollution. Public debate may focus on both the economic interests of affected businesses, and the health concerns of local residents. It's typical that when two parties are on opposite sides of an issue, neither will get everything they want. Inevitably, a resolution is going to involve politics: the art of reconciling or balancing competing interests.

Poor people can make substantial gains (or losses) during periods of tumultuous change, and related realignment of political parties.

Would there have been a Civil Rights Act of 1964 without rioting and a realignment of the Democratic Party? Political parties want to avoid mass protest or any unorganized behavior if it's at all possible, by changing (or appearing to change) policies, programs, and practices related to voiced concerns. Since mass protest is something those in power try to avoid, it's an important means by which poor people — with otherwise limited resources — can achieve power and influence.

Strategies used in community organization should match the times.

In times of turmoil, organizing protests and strikes by the people affected by the issues can yield maximum gains. By contrast, in the long times between periods of disruptive actions, community organization might use less conflict-oriented approaches, such as locality development or collaborative partnerships, to define and pursue common purposes.

Mass protest and grassroots community organization can work together.

When public protests and other forms of disruption increase, so do the grassroots organizations that address prevailing issues. For example, protests regarding pro-life (anti-abortion) interests were associated with increases in local organizations supporting this and other related causes. When public concern declines, so does organizing at the grassroots. Although protest nourishes organization, the reverse does not hold. Organization doesn't produce protest — it may even retard it (as when agencies may avoid controversy to protect their funding).

Community organizations form when people are ready to be organized.

Although organizations may exist to promote interest in an issue, such as child hunger, little will happen until a significant number of people care about the issue and feel that their actions can make a difference. A big challenge is figuring out when your issue matters to enough people who share a common place or experience, so they can be organized around the issue.

Institutions that want to avoid conflict and controversy may be a difficult base for community organization work.

Consider the case of a school-community initiative to prevent adolescent pregnancy or HIV/AIDS. Although schools are well positioned to deliver information and health services to youth, school officials often oppose providing sexuality education or enhanced access to contraceptives for those who choose to be sexually active. So, human service agencies and educational institutions that rely on public funding may be bad choices for lead agencies in community organization efforts that are likely to draw opposition.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Societal and community problems are evidence that institutions are not functioning for people.

Much of the framing of societal problems in the 1980s and 1990s focused on the personal attributes of those immediately affected. For example, stated "causes" of high rates of youth crime may highlight the values and behavior of youth and their families such as "poor anger control" or "bad parenting." Such analyses rarely emphasize the contribution of broader environmental conditions, such as availability of jobs or chronic stresses associated with low income, and the institutions responsible for them. In addition to individual responsibility, public institutions — such as schools, business, religious organizations, and government — should be held accountable for widespread problems in living.

It's essential to set realistic goals for community organization efforts.

Community-based initiatives often overpromise, particularly with grantmakers. Setting unrealistic objectives — for example, to reduce academic (school) failure by 50 percent in the next two years — sets the group up for perceived failure. Organizations should carefully assess the feasibility of their proposed aims.

If we set only modest goals, we will probably achieve less.

Although goals ought to be achievable, they should also be challenging. Objectives can be overly modest. For example, an overly modest goal might be to reduce rates of school failure (now at 80 percent) by 10 percent within three years. Insufficiently challenging objectives may not bring forth the necessary effort, resources, and degree of change needed to address the community's concern.

Social planning can engage experts (and local people) in helping address societal problems, particularly when there is consensus on the issue.

We can advance locally valued purposes by engaging technical experts and local people in defining problems and solutions. Outside experts, such as university-based researchers or public officials, can assist local people in obtaining and interpreting data, facilitating the process of setting priorities, and identifying promising alternatives. But planning can go beyond the traditional roles of facilitating coordination and communication among agencies to identifying environmental conditions to be changed.

Locality development or self-help efforts can also assist in addressing community issues.

Local people have the experiential knowledge to come together to define local issues, such as neighborhood safety or jobs, and take action in addressing them. Such self -help efforts have their roots in the settlement house

movement in urban neighborhoods. They are guided by respect for the autonomy of local people to decide (and act on) what matters to them.

Local control can hinder collaboration at broader levels of planning.

Planning at higher levels than the neighborhood, city, or town may be necessary to address the broader conditions that affect community organization efforts. For example, the growing concentration of poverty in the urban core, a result of regional planning decisions and other broader policies, is a structural issue that affects community development efforts within inner-city neighborhoods. Although it's desirable for community building, strong local control may hinder the broader planning and coordination necessary to address local issues.

COMMUNITY ACTION AND MOBILIZATION

Each individual has the capacity for self-determination, self-help, and improvement.

A basic assumption of community organization is that people most affected by local concerns, including those labeled as "clients" of agency services, can do something about them. This "strengths" perspective highlights people's assets and abilities, not their deficits and limitations. While it acknowledges personal and community competence, it also recognizes the importance of environmental supports and barriers that affect engagement in community life. For self-determination efforts to be successful, we must create opportunities for working together, and increase the positive consequences of community action.

You can't do it by yourself.

Addressing what matters to local people — good health, education, and jobs, for example — is beyond any one of us. The idea of "ecology" — interactions among organisms and the environment — helps us see community action as occurring within a web of relationships. Community life is enhanced when individual strengths are joined in common purpose — an expression of the principle of interdependence. We are interconnected: each of us has a responsibility to make this a world good for all of us.

Strong leaders are present in even the most economically deprived communities.

Authentic leaders — those who enable constituents to see higher possibilities, and pursue them together — are among us. Yet, they may not always be acknowledged by those in authority. When doing community organizing in low-income public housing, I found that a simple question helped in "discovering" local leaders: "Who do children go to when they are hurt and an adult isn't home?" Such questions help us discover the "servant leaders" among us: those who "lead" by addressing the interests of their "followers."

Community practitioners should never get used to the terrible conditions they see in their community work.

Those doing community work, particularly in low-income communities, are exposed to horrible things: children in uncaring and unhealthy environments; adults without adequate food, clothing, and shelter; and other conditions essential for a decent life. Practitioners should avoid becoming desensitized about how they feel about what they see and hear. Disclosing experiences and feelings to colleagues is one way to help support

each other. Community activists must also decide how to use those feelings — such as anger about conditions in which some people live — to energize and sustain their work.

People's beliefs and values enable them to stay committed.

To make a difference, those doing community work must be in it for the long haul. People's values, such as fairness or respect for the dignity of others, help sustain their efforts. For instance, a personal or family history of discrimination — a common experience for many racial and ethnic minorities — may incline us to embrace the value of social justice and to work for equality of opportunity.

The work of community organization is like that of a "secular church."

Faith communities and religious institutions help shape our beliefs about what is right and good, such as our responsibility to care for others. Community-based organizations, such as a homeless coalition or tenants-rights organization, call us to serve the common good — things beyond ourselves. As such, they enable us to devote our lives to higher purposes, while working in this world.

Community practitioners have few opportunities to reflect on the work.

Those doing the work of community building are often consumed by its demands. For example, leaders and staff of community-based organizations rarely take time to consider the lessons learned about community action, barriers and resources, or other features of their work. Personal reflection journals and periodic group retreats help leaders and groups to reflect on and review the initial purposes and recent directions of their organizations. As such, they promote "praxis" — the joining of understanding (theory) and action (practice).

Responding to events and opportunities to build community often takes us beyond what we know.

Community practice is largely an art form. Effective intervention is shaped more by trial and error than by tested general statements about the conditions under which specified interventions (the independent variable) effect desired behavior and outcome (the dependent variables). Yet, attention to the conditions that matter to local people — crime, drug use, and poverty, for example — cannot wait for the findings of research trials. We must be decisive in the face of uncertainty, even when the scientific evidence for a chosen course of action is inadequate.

UNDERSTANDING (AND ADDRESSING) OPPOSITION AND RESISTANCE

Societal problems sometime serve the interests of those in power.

For example, a regulatory policy that permits environmental polluters to go unpunished serves the economic interests of businesses that pollute, and those elected and appointed officials who may benefit from campaign contributions or bribes. Similarly, the existence of drugs and violence may indirectly benefit elected officials since they often gain public support when they rant against perpetrators of drugs and violence. When those in authority oppose community action efforts (or ignore appeals for substantive intervention), there may be a disconnect between the public interest (common good) and the private interests of those with disproportionate influence.

Racial and ethnic tension and controversies have disrupted and destroyed many community organization efforts.

Race and ethnic differences matter in this work. For instance, most African Americans share a common history of discrimination based on race, such as being followed more closely in a store or being ignored by cabs in a city. When you are part of an ethnic minority, people may assume they can think and speak for you, even if they have given no evidence that they care about you. Accordingly, understandable distrust of the "other" (the majority culture) may breed conflict that disrupts reciprocity and collaboration among people of different races and cultures.

Social action tactics, such as disruptive protest, have many detractors.

Participating in (or supporting) protest can be dangerous, especially for those who remain in the community. For example, following a school boycott launched by residents of a low-income public housing project, it was my friend Myrtle Carter, a welfare mother and visible leader, who was subjected to police harassment. She was arrested and jailed for a minor parking violation while we outside organizers who were also part of the effort experienced only small inconveniences. Activists using protest tactics should expect those in power to retaliate, even by establishing criminal penalties for particularly effective disruptive actions such as strikes.

Less in-your-face social action approaches can produce a strong political base from which to make change.

For example, the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) appeared to be relatively effective in attracting support (and avoiding opposition) for their causes. Consistent with the "I Ching" and other statements of Eastern philosophies, less direct or forceful actions may be less likely to beget opposition and adverse reaction.

Opposition and resistance may come in many forms.

An analysis of the advocacy literature suggests different ways in which change efforts might be blunted. These include deflecting attention from the issue, delaying a response, denying the problem or request, discounting the problem or the group, deceiving the public, dividing and conquering the organization, appeasing leadership with short-term gains, discrediting group members, or destroying the group with slur campaigns through the media. Skilled practitioners can help group members recognize (and avoid or counteract) sources and modes of opposition.

Community organizations may respond to opposition with appropriate counteractions.

Consider the case of local welfare officials (the opposition) who discount claims of a disability rights group that people with disabilities are being denied assistance unfairly. To counteract this opposition, disability advocates might document the number and kinds of cases denied, and use media advocacy about the consequences of denying eligibility to arouse public concern. Depending on the nature and form of opposition, appropriate counteractions may include reframing the issues, turning negatives into positives, going public with opponents' tactics, concentrating the organization's strength against the opponents' weakness, and knowing when to negotiate.

Opposition to change may be like an onion.

Advocates should expect multiple layers of opposition and resistance to community and system change.

For example, community organizations working for better schools may face resistance initially from school board officials; later, from local principals; and still later, from teachers. Peel off one layer, and another form of resistance or opposition may be there to protect vested interests.

INTERVENTION AND MAINTENANCE OF EFFORTS

The strategy of community organization should fit the situation.

The broad and specific means of intervention should match the ends, and the context. For example, social planning — using technical information often with the guidance of outside experts — may assist in defining goals when people share common interests. Similarly, locality development — featuring self-help efforts of local people — may be appropriate for reducing a particular problem, such as substance use or neighborhood safety, around which there is widespread agreement. In contrast, social action — with its disruptive tactics and related conflict — may be needed in contexts of opposing interests such as in reducing discrimination or disparities in income or power.

Using multiple strategies usually has an advantage over any single strategy.

Some initiatives — for instance, a campaign for school reform — get stuck using one preferred means of action, such as collaborative planning or disruptive tactics, even when the goals or conditions shift. By invoking only one strategy, the organization's actions may be easier to ignore and the benefits of complementary approaches may go untapped. For example, the threat of disruptive tactics (social action) may make support for self-help efforts (locality development) more likely. Flexibility in strategy, and use of multiple means, may enhance community efforts and outcomes.

Being in two cultures promotes creativity.

Some community practitioners operate in more than one system of influence. For example, those who combine research and practice must respect the influences of both academic disciplines and members of community-based organizations. Being open to different audiences helps integrate disparate ideas, discover novel solutions, and transform practice.

The work of community organization takes time, and follow-through.

Mobilizing people for action requires substantial time and effort. Making the calls and personal contacts to bring about a change in school policy, for example, cannot be done solely by volunteers. The stimulation and coordination of community work, like any other valued work, should be paid for. Without salaries for community mobilizers or organizers, follow-through on planned actions is rare.

External support may be both a necessity and a trap for community organizations.

Community organization efforts seldom are maintained without external resources. Yet, financial support usually has strings attached. For example, accepting money from foundations or the government may restrict advocacy efforts. Although often a necessity, outside resources may come at the price of compromising the group's goals or available means of action.

Community organizations often fade away.

When the issue that a community organization was formed around begins to fade, so may the organization. For example, a taxpayer rights organization may dissolve when its goal of blocking a particular public expenditure, such as a school bond issue, is resolved. Organizations that endure after the issue subsides may lose members unless they reinvent themselves to address other emerging issues.

Organizations need small wins.

"Small wins" are shorter-term, controllable opportunities that can make a tangible difference. For example, a good neighborhood organizer might work for improved trash pickup or more streetlights to provide (literally) visible benefits of group action. Without the small victories, community organizations won't retain current members — or attract new ones.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY CHANGE

The central ideal of community organization practice is service.

Practitioners' interests should always be lower on the list than the interests of those of the people served. Yet, when disciplines, such as social welfare or public health, market training for "professionals" in the work of community organization, they risk creating professions in which the practitioners benefit more than the clients. Professions that certify people — and not promising practices or demonstrably effective methods — may emphasize the interests of professionals (or guild interests), and not those experiencing the problems.

Community organization must go beyond the process of bringing people together.

For some practitioners, dialogue among representatives of different groups is a sufficient "outcome" of community development efforts. Yet, local people who come together to address what matters to them are usually interested in going beyond talk, and on to action and achieving results. Community organization efforts should bring about tangible benefits such as community change, problem solving, and furthering social justice.

The primary need is not for individuals to adjust to their world, but for environments to change so people can attain their goals.

Much framing of societal problems focuses on the deficits of those most affected. For example, prominent labels for causes of academic failure might include "poor motivation" (of youth) or "poor monitoring" (by parents). Alternatively, analyses of academic failure might address such environmental conditions as "few opportunities to do academic work" (in schools) and "limited opportunities for employment" (following school). Community health and well being are private and public matters, calling for both individual and social responsibility.

Community-based organizations can function as catalysts for change.

Effective community organizations transform the environment: they alter programs, policies, and practices related to the group's mission. For example, a disability rights organization might modify policies regarding employment discrimination against people with disabilities or establish new job training programs that

accommodate people with different impairments. In their role as catalysts for change, community organizations convene others, broker relationships, and leverage resources for shared purposes.

INFLUENCING SYSTEMS (OR BROADER) CHANGE

The level(s) of intervention should reflect the multiple levels that contribute to the problem.

Consider the typical interventions for most societal problems. For example, job training to address unemployment or drug awareness programs to counter substance use, is typical of initiatives trying to change the behavior of those with limited power who are closest to the "problem," for instance, low-income adults (unemployment) or youth (substance use).

When used alone, service programs and targeted interventions, such as for so-called "at risk" adults or youth, may deflect attention away from more root causes, such as poverty and the conditions of opportunity that affect behavior at a variety of levels. Resolution of many societal issues, such as crime or unemployment, requires changes in decisions made by corporate and political decisionmakers at levels higher than the local community.

Systems change does not occur simply by reporting felt needs to appointed or elected officials.

For those with higher economic or political status, simply expressing a concern may have influence on decisions that affect them. A variety of traditional means is available to such groups as a way of exerting influence; they include petitioning, lobbying, influencing the media, supporting political candidates, and voting in large numbers. These means are largely unavailable to those most affected by many societal problems, however, such as children and the poor. Marginalized groups lack the resources to exert influence in conventional ways.

The great power of social movements is in communicating a different vision of the world.

Marginalized groups use the drama of protest — and the conflict it provokes — to display realities not widely regarded as important. For example, the media may cover a strike and related protests by farm workers or coal miners, and the violence it often evokes from owners, the police, or others in power. Media coverage helps convey the story of the conditions faced by the protesters, and the unfairness of the action (or inaction) of businesses or institutions that are targeted. The dramatic nature of protest and related conflict can help politicize voters who, through enhanced public support of the positions of marginalized groups, can exert influence on those in power.

Community organizations should seek changes within their power to manage.

Since ignoring is likely and retaliation is possible, small organizations with limited power should avoid seeking fundamental changes in the system. For example, a single grassroots organization in a low-income neighborhood may not be positioned to effect systems changes such as altering the priorities of grantmakers who support work in the community. But, small and scrappy organizations may succeed in bringing about community change when their bulkier counterparts do not.

Community and broader systems change can be brought about through collaboration.

Collaboration involves alliances among groups that share risks, resources, and responsibilities to achieve their common interests. For example, local community-based organizations interested in the well being of children can link with each other to create local programs (e.g., mentoring), policies (e.g., flextime to be with children after school) and practices (e.g., adults caring for children not their own).

Additionally, broader partnerships with grantmakers, government agencies, and business councils can affect the conditions in which change occurs at the community level. An example is altering grantmaking programs to support collaborative work or promoting child-friendly business policies through industrial revenue bonds or new corporate policies. Collaborative partnerships help bring about community and system change when they link local people to resources and institutions at the multiple levels in which change should occur to address common interests.

ACHIEVING COMMUNITY-LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS

Societal problems often reoccur.

Consider the problem of gang violence that occurred after World War II and reoccurred in the 1990s. Broad social conditions — wide disparity of income, weak social ties, and related mistrust of others — appear to affect the likelihood of societal problems such as increased death rates, infant mortality, and perhaps youth violence. Improvements achieved in one era may need to be reestablished by future generations that must again transform the environmental conditions that support the reoccurrence of societal problems.

Most community efforts "chip" away at the problem.

The majority of community interventions do not match the scale of the problem. For example, a community effort may prepare 10 unemployed people to compete for only one available job, or may create 100 jobs in a community with thousands of unemployed. We often make small changes in a context that remains unchanged.

Real change is rare.

Significant improvements in community-level outcomes are highly unusual — such as cases of reducing rates of adolescent pregnancy or academic failure by 50 percent or more. Yet, in requests for grants, community-based organizations often promise (and grantmakers expect) statements of objectives that indicate significant improvements as a result of only modest investments over a short time. We should not perpetuate myths about what most interventions can actually accomplish.

Development of community leadership may be a positive byproduct of even a "failed" community effort.

Although an initiative may not produce statistically significant changes in community benchmarks or indicators, it may develop new leaders or build capacity to address new issues in the future. For instance, a public health initiative that produces only modest reductions in rates of adolescent pregnancy may develop the capacity to produce changes that matter, such as four years later when the group switches its efforts from adolescent pregnancy to child well-being.

Community documentation and evaluation must help us see what is actually achieved by community

initiatives, including evidence of intermediate outcomes (e.g., community and system change) and other indicators of success or "failure" (i.e., community capacity over time and across issues).

Optimal health and development for all people may be beyond the capacity of what communities can achieve, but not beyond what they should seek.

Most community-based efforts, such as those to create healthy environments for all our children, will fall short of their objectives. Yet, justice requires that we create conditions in which all people can make the most of their inherently unequal endowments. Support for community initiatives should be guided by what we must do for current and future generations, not by what limited gains we have made in the past.

IN SUMMARY

The fundamental purpose of community organization — to help discover and enable people's shared goals — is informed by values, knowledge, and experience. This section outlined lessons learned from the experiences of an earlier generation of community organization practitioners (each with an average of over 40 years of experience). The insights were organized under broad themes of community organization practice.

Community organization often has a bottom-up or grassroots quality: people with relatively little power coming together at the local level to address issues that matter to them. For example, grassroots efforts may involve planning by members of a neighborhood association, protests by a tenants' organization, or self-help efforts of low-income families to build local housing.

Yet, community organization may also function as a top-down strategy, such as when elected or appointed officials — or others in power — join allies in advancing policies or resource allocations that serve their interests. Bottom-up and top-down approaches to community organization may work in conflict, such as when appointed officials conspire to make voter registration of emerging minority groups more difficult. Top-down and bottom-up efforts may also work in concert, as when grassroots mobilization, such as letter writing or public demonstrations, help support policy changes advanced by cooperative elected or appointed officials working at broader levels.

Community organization strategies may be used to serve — or hinder — the values and aims of particular interest groups. Consider the issue of abortion: those organizing under the pro-choice banner may use protest tactics to advance policies and practices that further individual freedom (a woman's "right" to choose whether to have an abortion). Alternatively, those working on the pro-life side may organize to seek changes consistent with the value of security and survival (an unborn child's "right" to life). Depending on our values and interests, we may support or denounce the use of similar disruptive tactics by proponents or opponents of the issue.

What is the relationship between personal values and qualities — and the experiences and environments that shaped them — and the work of community organization and change? Personal background, such as a basic spirituality or a history of discrimination associated with ethnic minority status, can predispose

a practitioner to support particular values, such as social justice or equality, consistent with the work of community organization.

What qualities and behaviors of community organizers, such as respect for others and willingness to listen, help bring people together? Many of these attributes and behaviors — including clarity of vision, capacity to support and encourage, and tolerance of ambiguity — are similar to those of other leaders.

How do we cultivate such natural leaders, and nurture and support their work in bringing people together? Further research may help clarify the relationship between personal qualities and behaviors, such as those of the "servant" or "servant leader ," the broader environment that nurtures or hinders them, and the outcomes of community organization efforts.

Finally, leadership in community work may begin with a few good questions:

- What is desired now, in this place, by these people?
- What is success?
- Under what conditions is improvement possible?
- How can we establish and sustain conditions for effective community problem solving? over time, and across concerns?
- How would we know it?

Imagine a "living democracy" — large numbers of people, in many different communities, engaged in dialogue about shared concerns and collective action toward improvement. Perhaps these lessons — inspired by reflections of an earlier generation of community organization practitioners — can help us better understand and improve the essential work of democracy: people coming together to address issues that matter to them.
Contributor
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Online Resources

Chapter 5: Theories in the "Introduction to Community Psychology" explains the role of theory in Community Psychology, the main foundational theories in the field, and how community psychologists use theory in their work.

Chapter 15: Community Organizing, Partnerships, and Coalitions in the "Introduction to Community Psychology" describes how and why communities organize, bottom-up and top-down approaches to community organizing, and the cycle of organizing.

Theory In Community Organization: People Have the Power! is a downloadable PowerPoint presentation that elaborates about theory in community organization.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVOCACY AND ADVOCACY COMPETENCIES IN HUMAN SERVICE PROFESSIONS

https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/assets/Journal/journal-of-human-services_fall-2013.pdf

PART II
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER 3 - ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Learn how to develop a plan for community assessment to guide efforts to better understand community needs and resources

Developing a plan for identifying local needs and resources can help changemakers understand how to improve their communities in the most logical and efficient ways possible. This section provides a guide for developing and implementing a plan to assess the needs of communities and the resources available to them.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY NEEDS AND RESOURCES?

Needs can be defined as the gap between what is and what should be. A need can be felt by an individual, a group, or an entire community. It can be as concrete as the need for food and water or as abstract as improved community cohesiveness. An obvious example might be the need for public transportation in a community where older adults have no means of getting around town. More important to these same adults, however, might be a need to be valued for their knowledge and experience. Examining situations closely helps uncover what is truly needed, and leads toward future improvement.

Resources, or assets, can include individuals, organizations and institutions, buildings, landscapes, equipment — anything that can be used to improve the quality of life. The mother in Chicago who volunteers

to organize games and sports for neighborhood children after school, the Kenyan farmers' cooperative that makes it possible for farmers to buy seed and fertilizer cheaply and to send their produce directly to market without a middle man, the library that provides books and Internet access to everyone, the bike and walking path where city residents can exercise — all represent resources that enhance community life. Every individual is a potential community asset, and everyone has assets that can be used for community building.

WHY DEVELOP A PLAN FOR ASSESSING LOCAL NEEDS AND RESOURCES?

There are really two questions here: The first is Why assess needs and resources? Answers include:

- It will help you gain a deeper understanding of the community. Each community has its own needs and assets, as well as its own culture and social structure — a unique web of relationships, history, strengths, and conflicts that defines it. A community assessment helps to uncover not only needs and resources, but the underlying culture and social structure that will help you understand how to address the community's needs and utilize its resources.
- An assessment will encourage community members to consider the community's assets and how to use them, as well as the community's needs and how to address them. That consideration can (and should) be the first step in their learning how to use their own resources to solve problems and improve community life.
- It will help you make decisions about priorities for program or system improvement. It would obviously be foolhardy to try to address community issues without fully understanding what they are and how they arose. By the same token, failing to take advantage of community resources not only represents taking on a problem without using all the tools at your disposal to solve it, but misses an opportunity to increase the community's capacity for solving its own problems and creating its own change.
- It goes a long way toward eliminating unpleasant surprises down the road. Identifying needs and resources before starting a program or initiative means that you know from the beginning what you're dealing with, and are less likely to be blindsided later by something you didn't expect.

The second question is: Why develop a plan for that assessment? Some reasons why you should:

- It allows you to involve community members from the very beginning of the process. This encourages both trust in the process and community buy-in and support, not only of the assessment, but of whatever actions are taken as a result of it. Full community participation in planning and carrying out an

assessment also promotes leadership from within the community and gives voice to those who may feel they have none.

- An assessment is a great opportunity to use community-based participatory research, further involving community members and increasing community capacity.
- A good plan will provide an easy-to-follow road map for conducting an accurate assessment. Planning ahead will save time and effort in carrying out the process.
- A planning process will give community members the opportunity to voice their opinions, hopes, and fears about the community. Their idea of priorities might be different from those of professionals, but they shouldn't be ignored.

It may be important to address the community's priorities first, in order to establish trust and show respect, even if you don't believe that those priorities are in fact the most important issues. Building relationships and credibility may be more important at the beginning of a long association than immediately tackling what seems to be the most pressing need. Among other things, community members' priorities may be the right ones: they may see underlying factors that you don't yet understand.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR ASSESSING LOCAL NEEDS AND RESOURCES?

As we've discussed, the assessment process benefits greatly when there's full participation from community stakeholders. Among those who should be involved:

- *Those experiencing needs that should be addressed*. It's both fair and logical to involve those who are most directly affected by adverse conditions. They know best what effects those conditions have on their lives, and including them in the planning process is more likely to produce a plan that actually speaks to their needs.
- *Health and human service providers*. These individuals and organizations, especially those that are community-based, often have both a deep understanding of the community and a strong empathic connection with the populations they serve. They can be helpful both by sharing their knowledge and by recruiting people from marginalized populations to contribute to the assessment.
- *Government officials*. Elected and appointed officials are often those who can help or hinder a community change effort. Engaging them in planning and carrying out an assessment helps to ensure that they will take the effort seriously and work to make it successful.
- *Influential people*. These can can include individuals who are identified as leaders because of their positions — college presidents, directors of hospitals and other major organizations, corporate CEOs — because of the prestige of their professions — doctors, professors, judges, clergy — or because they are known to be people of intelligence, integrity, and good will who care about the community.

- *People whose jobs or lives could be affected by the eventual actions taken as a result of the assessment*. These include teachers, police, emergency room personnel, landlords, and others who might have to react if new community policies or procedures are put in place.
- *Community activists*. People who have been involved in addressing policy or issues that could come up in the course of the assessment have a stake in planning the assessment as well.
- *Businesses, especially those that employ people from populations of concern*. The livelihoods of local business owners could be affected by the results of the assessment, as could the lives of their employees.

WHEN SHOULD NEEDS AND ASSETS BE IDENTIFIED?

Identifying needs and assets can be helpful to your organization at almost any point in your initiative. If your group has a specific goal, such as reducing teen pregnancy, identifying local needs (better communication between parents and teens, education programs, etc.) and resources (youth outreach programs, peer counselors) related to the issue can help you craft a workable, effective goal. On the other hand, if your organization is more broad-based — if you're dedicated to helping the health needs of under-served people in your city, for example — identifying assets and needs can help you decide which aspect of the problem to tackle first.

ASSESSMENTS OF RESOURCES AND NEEDS SHOULD BE DONE REGULARLY THROUGHOUT YOUR INITIATIVE:

- Prior to planning the initiative. This gives coalition members, community leaders, and those being served an idea of how to improve their circumstances.
- During implementation of an initiative. It is important to make sure that you are on target not only at the beginning and the end of a project, but also during its implementation. If car companies only did quality checks on the steel before the parts are constructed and the paint job after it rolled off the line, you might not be inclined to trust the engine. Identifying needs and assets during the life of the initiative helps you use your own resources well, and ensures that you're addressing the right issues in the right way.
- On an ongoing basis. During monitoring and evaluation, either ongoing or after the completion of a project, it is important to celebrate successes and to learn from setbacks to further community development.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP A PLAN FOR ASSESSING LOCAL NEEDS AND RESOURCES?

The best way to assess needs and assets is by using as many of the available sources of information as possible. "Possible" here depends on how easy the information is to find and collect, and what your resources — mostly of people, money, and time — will support. Developing a plan will allow you to take these considerations into account and use the results to determine goals, devise methods, and create a structure for a community assessment that will give you the information you need to conduct a successful effort.

The following guidelines, while they are laid out in a step-by-step order, may often turn out in practice to take a different sequence. You may find yourself carrying out two or more steps at once, for example, or switching the order of two steps.

Recruit a planning group that represents all stakeholders and mirrors the diversity of the community

Try to be as inclusive as you can, so that the group is diverse and truly representative of the community. You may have to work particularly hard to persuade people from groups that are generally not offered seats at the table — low-income people, immigrants, etc. — that you actually want their participation, especially if they've been burned by insincere offers in the past. It's worth it to take the time and effort, however, in order to get a real picture of all aspects of the community.

A truly representative planning group is not only more likely to come up with a plan that produces an accurate assessment, but is also a signal to community members that they are part of the process. They are more apt to trust that process and support whatever comes out of it.

Now is also the time to think about whether the planning group will also oversee the assessment. That arrangement often makes the most sense, but not always. If the planning group won't be the coordinating body, then part of its planning should determine who ought to be part of that group, and how to assemble it.

Another important determination at this point is whether the planning group and those who will actually conduct the assessment — contact informants, construct surveys, facilitate public meetings, gather data, and report on and evaluate the assessment process — will need training, and if so, how much and of what kind. Many people that haven't had a great deal of formal education, belong to groups that are often denied a voice in community affairs, or belong to a culture other than the mainstream one don't have the meeting and deliberation skills that many middle-class citizens take for granted. They might need training and/or mentoring to learn how to contribute effectively to a planning group. In addition, many people may need training in data collection methods, evaluation, and other areas important to the assessment process. Whatever training is needed has to be not only anticipated but planned out, so that it gets done in a timely and useful way. Now is the time to start thinking about it.

Design an evaluation process for the assessment, including the development of the plan

Why is this step here, at the beginning of the planning process, rather than at the end? The answer is that evaluation should start at the beginning of an effort, so that you can monitor everything you do and be able to learn from and adjust any part of the process — including planning — to improve your work. That's the purpose of evaluation: to make your work as effective as possible.

Decide why you want to conduct the assessment

There are a number of reasons why you might want to conduct a community assessment of needs and resources, among them:

The reasons for an assessment will affect from whom and how you gather information, what is assessed, and what you do with the information you get. It's obviously important to start planning with a clear understanding of what you're setting out to do, so that your plan matches your goals.

- Determining how to address the needs of a particular underserved or neglected group.
- Conducting a community health assessment in order to launch a public health campaign or combat a particular disease or condition.
- Exploring how to steer the activities of a coalition of service providers or government agencies.
- Understanding community needs and resources as a guide to advocacy efforts or policy change. You can't make credible policy recommendations without knowing about current conditions and the effects on them of current policy.
- Assessing the impact, intensity, and distribution of a particular issue, to inform strategies for approaching it. This may involve breaking the issue down still further, and investigating only a part of it. Rather than looking at the whole issue of violence, for instance, you might want to focus on domestic violence or youth violence or violence among teenage girls.

Determine what data is already available

The chances are that a good deal of information about the community already exists. Resources:

It's important that make sure that whatever data exists is timely. The chances are that if it's more than six months to a year old, it's out of date and no longer accurate. Even census data, which is extensive and generally reliable, is a snapshot of a particular time. Since a full census is a once-a-decade event, census information may be as much as ten years out of date. There are updates in between, but only to selected categories, and not every year.

- Federal government statistics, such as census and public health data. In the U.S., much of this information can be found on the websites of the U.S. Census, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Department of Health and Human Services.
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps provides important health-related rankings and data for nearly every county in each U.S. state.
- Assessments or studies conducted by local or state/provincial governments or government agencies.
- Assessments or studies conducted by other organizations. Hospitals, human service providers, Chambers of Commerce, and charitable organizations may all conduct community assessments for their own purposes, and may be willing — or even eager — to share their results.
- Studies conducted by researchers connected to local universities.
- What you already know about the needs and assets of the community. The caution here is to realize that what you think you know may either be wrong, or may conflict with the opinions of community members. You should be ready to accept the facts if they conflict with your opinion, or to consider, as we've mentioned, the possibility of yielding to the community's perception of its own needs.

Figure out what other information you need

This is the time to finalize the questions you'll ask your informants, as well as the questions you hope to answer with the assessment. Those questions will depend on your purposes. In most cases, you'll want to find out what is important to members of populations of concern or those who might benefit from or be affected by any action you might take as a result of the assessment. You will probably also want to hear the opinions of the people who serve or work with those people — doctors, human service staff and administrators, teachers, police, social workers, advocates, etc.

In addition, it will probably be helpful to look at some community level indicators, such as:

- The number of and reasons for emergency room or clinic visits.
- The number of places to buy fresh produce in various neighborhoods.
- The percentage of motor vehicle accidents and traffic stops involving alcohol.
- The number of teen births in the community in the past year, compared to those in other similar communities, in the state or province (or country) as a whole, and/or in past years.

Before you start, take careful stock of your resources — people, money, skills, time — to be sure you can do all you plan to. An assessment can be conducted with volunteers and lots of (free) legwork, or it can require statistical and other expertise, professional consultation, and many paid hours. Don't plan an assessment that you don't have the resources to carry out.

Decide what methods you'll use for gathering information

Much of the rest of this chapter is devoted to methods of gathering assessment data. Some general descriptions:

Each community is different, and so you might use any one or any combination of these and other methods detailed in this chapter, depending on what you're looking for and who can help.

- *Using existing data*. This is the research you might do to unearth the information in census and other public records, or to find information that's been gathered by others.

- *Listening sessions and public forums*. Listening sessions are forums you can use to learn about the community's perspectives on local issues and options. They are generally fairly small, with specific questions asked of participants. They can help you get a sense of what community members know and feel about the issue, as well as resources, barriers, and possible solutions. Public forums tend to be both larger in number of participants and broader in scope than listening sessions. They are gatherings where citizens discuss important issues at a well-publicized location and time. They give people of diverse backgrounds a chance to express their views, and are also a first step toward understanding the community's needs and resources. A good public forum informs the group of where the community is and where the members would like to go.

- *Interviews and focus groups*. These are less formal than forums, and are conducted with either individuals or small groups (usually fewer than ten, and often as few as two or three.) They generally include specific questions, but allow room for moving in different directions, depending on what the interviewees want to discuss. Open-ended questions (those which demand something more than a yes or no or other simple answer), follow-ups to interesting points, and a relaxed atmosphere that encourages people to open up are all part of most assessment interviews. A focus group is a specialized group interview in which group members are not told exactly what the interviewer wants to know, so that they will be more likely to give answers that aren't influenced by what they think is wanted.

- *Direct, and sometimes participant, observation*. Direct observation involves seeing for yourself. Do you want to know how people use the neighborhood park on weekends? Spend a few weekends there, watching and talking to people. If you regularly join a volleyball game or jog through the park with others, you're a participant observer, becoming part of the culture you want to learn about.

- *Surveys*. There are several different kinds of surveys, any or all of which could be used as part of a community assessment. Written surveys may be sent to people in the mail, given out at community events or meetings, distributed in school, or handed to people on the street. People may also be surveyed by phone or in person, with someone else writing down their spoken answers to a list of questions. Many kinds of surveys often have a low return rate, and so may not be the best way to get information, but sometimes they're the only way, or can be given in situations where most people complete them.

- *Asset Mapping*. Asset mapping focuses on the strengths of the community rather than the areas that need improvement. Focusing on assets gives the power back to the community members that directly experience the problem and already have the resources to change the status quo. If the changes are made by the community and for the community, it builds a sense of cohesiveness and commitment that makes initiatives easier to sustain.

Decide whom you'll gather information from

For the same reason that you've put together a planning group that represents all the different sectors of the community concerned or involved with the assessment, you should try to get information from as broad a range of people and groups as possible. The greater the variety of people that supply your data, the better perspective you'll have on the real nature, needs, and resources of the community.

Who the people concerned with your particular assessment are, however, depends on your particular focus and purposes. If you're concerned with domestic violence, you'd certainly want to include those directly or indirectly exposed to it, as well as emergency room personnel and police, in your data gathering. If you're concerned with preserving open space, you might look to include both environmentalists and developers. That doesn't mean you wouldn't want the opinions of a variety of others, but simply that you'd try to make sure that the people with the most interest and knowledge — and often the most to gain or lose — could have their say. You wouldn't want to miss valuable information, regardless of the opinions of the informant.

This brings up an important point. Your plan should make sure that the assessment includes the opportunity for all points of view to be aired. You may not like what some people have to say, but if you don't know that there are people with differing opinions, you only have half of the information you need.

Decide who will collect data

Will you use a participatory research process, whereby community members gather data themselves or in collaboration with professionals? Will you hire an individual or a group to gather information? If you choose neither of these, then who will do the work of interviewing, surveying, or carrying out whatever other strategies you've chosen to find information?

These are important questions, because their answers can affect the quality and quantity of information you get. Individuals in the community may be more willing to be interviewed and/or to give honest and detailed answers to people they know or can identify with, i.e., other community members. Participatory researchers may need training to be able to do a good job. You may need an experienced researcher to put together a survey that gets at the issues you're most concerned with. A combination of several types of data gatherers may work best. It's worth spending some time on this issue, so that you can assemble the crew that's right for your community and your plan.

Decide how you'll reach your informants

In order to get information from people, you'll have to contact them. There are many ways to do that, and you'll probably want to use several of them. In general, the more personal the approach, the more effective it will be. Some of the most common:

- *Posting requests on one or more local websites or on social media sites* (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- *Choosing people at random* (e.g., from the phone book) to receive written or telephone surveys.
- *Mailing or emailing surveys* to one or more lists. Many organizations are willing to share lists of members or participants for purposes like this. Some will mail or email surveys under their own names, so that people receive them from an organization they're familiar with, and might be more willing to complete and return them than if they apparently came to them randomly.
- *Stopping people in a public place to ask them to fill out or, more commonly, give verbal answers to a short survey*. You may have had the experience of being asked your opinion in a shopping area or on a busy sidewalk. People are somewhat more willing to answer questions in this way than to fill out and return a mailed or emailed survey.
- *Putting up posters and distributing flyers in public places* (supermarkets, laundromats, bus stops, etc.) and/or sending them to specific organizations and businesses.
- *Using the media*. This can involve holding press conferences and sending out press releases, placing PSA's (public service announcements) and stories in various media, or paying for media advertising.
- *Direct appeal to existing community groups*. Either a member of the planning team or a leader or member of the group in question might make an appeal at a club meeting, a religious gathering, or a sports event for volunteers to participate in a survey, an interview or focus group, or a larger meeting.
- *Personal approach*. Members of the planning group might recruit friends, colleagues, neighbors, family members, etc. by phone or in person. They might also ask the people they recruit to ask others, so that a few people can start a chain of requests that ends up with a large number.

Decide who will analyze the data and how they'll do it

Once you've collected the information, you have to analyze it to see what it means. That means identifying the main themes from interviews and forums, sorting out the concerns of the many from those of the insistent few, understanding what your indicators seem to show, comparing community members' concerns with the statistics and indicators, and perhaps a number of other analytical operations as well. Some of these might involve a knowledge of statistics and higher math, while others may require only common sense and the ability to group information in logical ways.

If you've engaged in a participatory research process, the community researchers should also be involved in analyzing the material they've found. They might do this in collaboration with professionals from local

organizations, with consulting academic researchers, or with a paid consultant. If you've decided to hire an individual or group to conduct the assessment, then they'll probably conduct the analysis as well.

In either case, the methods used will probably depend on such considerations as how "hard" you want the data to be — whether you want to know the statistical significance of particular findings, for example, or whether you'll use people's stories as evidence — how much you think you need to know in order to create an action plan, and what kinds of data you collect. Chapter 37, although its title concerns evaluation, is actually about research methods, and contains a lot of good information about how to approach the choice of methods.

Plan whatever training is needed

We've already discussed the possible need for training. Now is the time to decide what, if any, training is needed, who should be involved, and who will conduct it. In order to keep members of the planning group on an equal footing, it might make sense to offer the training to everyone, rather than just to those who are obviously not highly educated or articulate. It is probably important as well that the training be conducted by people who are not members of the planning group, even if some of them have the skills to do so. The group will function best if everyone feels that everyone else is a colleague, even though members have different backgrounds and different sets of skills and knowledge.

Decide how you'll record the results of the assessment and present them to the community

Depending on your goals and what's likely to come out of the assessment, "the community" here may mean the whole community or the community of stakeholders that is represented on the planning committee. In either case, you'll want to be able to explain clearly what the assessment found, and perhaps to engage people in strategizing about how to deal with it. That means you'll want to set out the results clearly, in simple, everyday language accompanied by easy-to-understand charts, pictures, and/or graphs. Your report doesn't have to be complicated or to use technical language in order to be compelling. In fact, the more you can use the words of the community members who contributed their concerns and experiences, the more powerful your report will be.

How will you communicate the results to the community? With the availability of PowerPoint and similar programs, you have the opportunity to create a professional-looking presentation that you can use in a number of ways. It could be presented as a slide show in one or more public meetings or smaller gatherings, posted along with a narrative on one or more social media sites (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) and/or on your website, run as a loop in a public place, such as a local library, or even broadcast on community access TV. Furthermore, it could be used by a number of people without each having to fetch and carry large and cumbersome equipment or signboards and the like.

Decide who will perform what assessment tasks

The group should make sure everyone has a role that fits her skills, talents, and, to the extent possible, preferences. It should also make sure that all necessary tasks are covered. If more people need to be recruited — as data gatherers, survey mailers, phone callers, etc. — that recruitment should be part of the plan. The point of having a plan is to try to anticipate everything that's needed — as well as everything that might go wrong — and make sure that it has been arranged for. Assigning tasks appropriately is perhaps the most important part of that anticipation.

Create a timeline

Work out what should happen by when. How long will you spend on preparing for the assessment — contacting people, training interviewers and/or group facilitators, preparing and printing surveys? How long will you gather information? How long will you take to analyze the data and write up a report? Each phase of the assessment should have a deadline. That creates benchmarks — checkpoints along the way that tell you you're moving in the right direction and have gotten far enough along so that you'll finish the assessment on time with the information you need.

Present the plan, get feedback, and adjust it to make it more workable

Once the plan is done, it should be presented to at least a sample of those who will be asked for information and those who will have responsibilities for parts of the assessment. This will allow them to consider whether the plan takes the culture of the community into account, and is likely to make data collection and analysis as easy as possible. As a result of their feedback, you can adjust parts of the plan to make them more acceptable to the community or more workable for the assessment team.

Now you can celebrate the completion of the plan, but it's not an occasion for resting on your laurels

There's a lot of work ahead as you conduct the assessment, analyze the data you get from it, and make and implement action plans based on that analysis. It's important to have benchmarks built into the assessment plan and the action plans that follow, so you can keep track of your progress. But it's also important to hold your long-term vision in view, and to keep moving toward it until the community becomes what all its members want it to be.

IN SUMMARY

Needs and resources are really two sides of the same coin. In order to get a comprehensive view of your community, it is important to look at what you have and what you need. With these things in mind, you can have a positive impact on the problem you wish to address. Understanding the community's needs and assets will also help your organization clarify where it would like to go and how it can get there.

Contributor

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Online Resources

The **Action Catalogue** is an online decision support tool that is intended to enable researchers, policymakers and others wanting to conduct inclusive research, to find the method best suited for their specific project needs.

Best Practices for Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Strategy Development: A Review of Scientific Methods, Current Practices, and Future Potential is a report of proceedings from a public forum and interviews of experts convened by the CDC.

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Ranking the health of nearly every county in the nation, the County Health Rankings help us see how where we live, learn, work, and play influences how healthy we are and how long we live. The Rankings & Roadmaps show us what is making residents sick, where we need to improve, and what steps communities are taking to solve their problems. The health of a community depends on many different factors – ranging from individual health behaviors, education and jobs, to quality of health care, to the environment, therefore we all have a stake in creating a healthier community. Using the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, leaders and advocates from public health and health care, business, education, government, and the community can work together to create programs and policies to improve people's health, reduce health care costs, and increase productivity.

Community Assessment Tools. A companion piece to Communities in Action: A Guide to Effective Service Projects. Publication by Rotary International.

Community Assessment Toolkit: Nutrition and Physical Activity. A Tool kit to help with community assessment on a specific topic from the Vermont Dept. of Health Fit & Healthy Vermonters program.

Community Needs Assessment – participant workbook from the CDC.

Conducting a Community Needs Assessment – Strengthening Nonprofits: A Capacity Builder's Resource Library.

Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic – This crowd-sourced document was initially directed at ways for how to turn fieldwork that was initially planned as using face-to-face methods into a more 'hands-off' mode. It provides an alternative source of social research materials if researchers decide to go down that path.

HealthEquityGuide.org is a website with a set of strategic practices that health departments can apply to more meaningfully and comprehensively advance health equity.

Improving Health Equity Through Improving Data in Community Health Needs Assessments from Community Psychology.

Preparing for a Collaborative Community Assessment. From the Iowa State University Extension.

Road to the Community Plan shows a collaboration between the Macalester-Groveland Community Council (MGCC) and the City of Saint Paul to create a road map that illustrates key steps as a guide for communities to reference as they embark on their community plan process. This document is a tool intended to offer best practices and insights to guide the conversation between district councils and their respective communities as they develop their own unique approaches to the community plan.

Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) Workbook: Needs Assessment from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Behavioral Health Administration.

Print Resources

Fawcett, S., et al. (1980). *Concerns report handbook: Planning for community health*. Lawrence, KS: Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development, University of Kansas.

Fawcett, S., et al. (1992). *Preventing adolescent pregnancy: An action planning guide for community-based initiatives*. Lawrence, KS: Work Group for Health Promotion and Community Development, University of Kansas.

Foster, D. (1994). *Community assessment*. Amherst, MA: AHEC/Community Partners.

Healthcare Forum Leadership Center, National Civic League (1994). *Healthier communities action kit*. San Francisco, CA: Healthcare Forum.

Michigan Community Health Assessment. (1994). *Forum I handbook: Defining and organizing the community*. Lansing, MI: Author.

Minkler, M. (1997). *Community organizing and community building for health*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers.

Moore, M. (1994). *Community capacity assessment*. Albuquerque, N. M.: Children, Youth and Families Department.

Murphy, Frederick. (Ed.) (2013). *Community Engagement, Organization, and Development for Public Health Practice*. New York: Springer.

Wikin, B., Altschuld, J. (1995). *Planning and conducting needs assessments: A practical guide*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

CHAPTER 4 - GETTING ISSUES ON THE PUBLIC AGENDA

Learn how to develop and execute a plan for raising awareness about an issue and getting the issue onto the public agenda.

Often, community members are unaware of serious issues facing their communities. In these cases, it is crucial to raise awareness, gain community support, and put the issue on the local agenda. This section discusses how to plan for informing people in a community about an issue and persuade them of its importance.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL AGENDA?

The local agenda refers to whatever a community sees as necessary to address.

Road repair, or public building maintenance, may be unrelated to health and community services, while other matters, such as local financial support for child care, needle exchange programs, public-private cooperation to stop youth violence, have everything to do with them.

Raising awareness and engaging the public, officials, and policy makers is not a simple matter. Depending upon how much they already know, there are several steps to go through, and each takes time.

Bring awareness to the issue.

Citizens and officials in the community may not know the issue exists, or may believe it couldn't exist in their community. The first step in getting it addressed is raising public consciousness about it.

The director of an adult literacy program often spoke to community groups about the work of his organization. He would invariably begin his presentation by asking how many people in the audience knew an adult who couldn't read or write very well, or at all. Sometimes one or two people, but more often none, would raise their hands. His next comment would be, "I guarantee that a majority of you are mistaken."

After reciting the standard excuses that adults use to mask their reading, writing, or math difficulties, he'd ask again. How many people now thought they might know someone who had difficulties in those areas? This time, half the hands in the room would go up. Often, after a presentation, or sometimes weeks or months later, people

would approach him to say that they had had no idea how widespread literacy problems were in their region, or how many people they actually knew who struggled with reading.

Agenda-setting is essentially a competition for a limited resource: attention.

As James W. Dearing and Everett M. Rogers point out in *Agenda-Setting* (1996), proponents of specific issues are constantly competing to gain the attention of the media, the public, and the policy makers. Dearing and Rogers also point out that scarcity of attention is a factor in agenda-setting. In one national study, researchers gave individuals a chance to name as many "important issues" as they wished-and most named only four or five. So if the public agenda (the concerns of average citizens) contains a limited number of items, agenda-setting is a "zero sum" game: In order for one issue to appear the agenda, it must push another off.

Therefore, if people in your community and the local media are currently focused on incidents of teenage drug use, you'll have to work doubly hard to get adult literacy on the radar screen.

Ensure understanding of the issue and its importance.

Awareness of an issue is only the beginning. People may understand that it exists, but not understand its implications. They may feel that it doesn't really matter, that it only affects a few people or places far away, or that there's really no proof of its effects.

The next step is to explain the issue clearly; whom it affects and how it works, where it is encountered, and what the significance is. If provided good information, citizens and public officials will realize that the issue is serious.

In his presentations, the adult literacy program director spoke about the effects of literacy issues on the community as well as on those who struggled with them. The loss to the community, he explained, was as great as the loss to the affected adults themselves. People with literacy problems were often working in low-skilled, poorly-paid jobs, resulting in a lower community tax base. Local employers were less able to be competitive, because they couldn't find workers with the skills to quickly learn new procedures or new jobs. Fewer and less-informed voters meant fewer community decisions based on good information and consideration of the alternatives available. And, perhaps most telling of all, the children of those with low skill levels often had difficulty in school, perpetuating the pattern.

Once people understood these aspects of the issue, they were much more likely to take it seriously, and to ask whether it was a problem in their own community.

Generate concern about the issue.

Once people are aware of and understand issues, the next step is to foster concern about them. This involves making sure that people understand how issues affect them directly or indirectly, and play out in their communities. It's when they realize their own link to the issue that they'll begin to see it as something that's not only serious, but that needs to be addressed locally.

Even once they perceived it as an important issue, most people still weren't ready to put adult literacy at the top of their lists of problems to attend to. They needed the sense that it actually affected them in some way.

The adult literacy program director handled this in two ways. First, he had fact sheets prepared, which he distributed not only at presentations, but at every opportunity – through personal contact, community bulletin

boards, businesses, etc. These informed citizens of the extent of the problem both in the state and in the local area, an extent far beyond what most would have estimated.

His other strategy was to arrange talks by current and former learners in the program. In a particularly effective presentation to the Chamber of Commerce, a local man told how he had graduated from high school – in the same class as many of those in the room – unable to read or write, and how he had hidden his problem from everyone, even his wife, for years. He at last, at her urging, sought help, and learned to read. When he described how stupid and worthless he had felt for so many years, and what it meant for him to be able to do something as simple as go to a restaurant and order what he wanted from the menu, much of the room was in tears.

This learner's talk brought the issue home to the Chamber members. It was no longer "out there," but rather a concern for their community, and a personal concern for many of them, who had known this man most of their lives. *Now* it was on their agenda.

Get the issue on the local agenda.

What does this mean? It can mean many things, including literally placing the issue on the local agenda, in the form of a bylaw (potential or actual), regulation, referendum, or policy statement, which is the ultimate goal.

- *Influence public opinion*. Public opinion is an essential factor in setting the local agenda. Issues become items on the local agenda when they reach a certain level of public consciousness, and the community starts to consider them worthy of attention. Stories about them will start to appear in the media, speakers and programs that refer to them will be sponsored by mainstream institutions and organizations (service clubs, churches, universities), and ordinary citizens will talk about them in their daily conversation. Once it's clear that the public is concerned about these issues, politicians and other officials will take notice.

- *Affect unofficial public policy*. Policy, as discussed by the Community Tool Box, is usually referring to the laws or regulations that formally structure how particular issues are considered and handled. Much of the time, however, especially at the local level, the policy that structures public affairs is informal, and depends on the assumptions, pressures, biases, and influences that form the opinions of elected and appointed officials. Economic development may be a priority as much because the mayor's cousin is out of work as because it's what is most important for the community. Official support for homeless shelters or adult literacy may stem less from bylaws or regulations, and more from public pressure or officials' personal acquaintance with people who struggle with these problems. Affecting this informal policy is a large part of getting an issue on the local agenda.

- *Change individual responsibility*. A final aspect of getting an issue on the local agenda is getting it on the agendas of most individual community members. A recycling program won't work unless householders are committed to it, either out of belief in the need for a cleaner environment, or because it saves them money. Successfully eliminating youth violence may depend on many adults in the community – parents in particular – changing their own attitudes toward violence. When a community reaches a critical mass of individuals taking responsibility for an issue, that issue is on the local agenda.

Thus, getting a health or community development issue on the local agenda means helping the community see the issue as important enough to take action, and making sure that a sense of responsibility for the issue is assumed by the public at large, elected and appointed officials, and each individual citizen.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO GET ISSUES ON THE LOCAL AGENDA?

Any time is a good time to promote community health and development, but certain conditions make the job easier.

When an important issue surfaces that needs to be addressed immediately. The discovery that the town water supply is tainted by leakage from long-buried gasoline tanks is the perfect time to get a discussion of water pollution and water supply on the local agenda. The advantages are that the issue must be dealt with *now,* and that it won't go away without some permanent way of addressing it. There's no better time to raise an issue.

When an already-troublesome issue reaches critical proportions. A small child becomes a casualty in a drive-by shooting; a homeless person freezes to death in a doorway on a bitter winter night; a factory closes and the local unemployment rate skyrockets. In circumstances like these, it often becomes easier to get a particular issue into the public consciousness. Everyone hopes not to have to reach this point before people pay attention, but changing people's perceptions is difficult. Sometimes it takes a crisis to make getting your issue on the local agenda possible.

When an external source calls attention to your issue. A new government commission report, a *New York Times* article about a particular problem or community, a presidential remark, a book by a respected author, a mention on Oprah – any of these can make your issue hot, and make it a good time for you to bring it to the attention of people in your community.

When new information reveals or underlines a serious issue. A university study or government report may alert the community to the fact that it harbors a very high number of cases of an unusual cancer. This information may open the way for an investigation of its possible environmental causes and a plan for action.

When political conditions make it easy or appropriate. In an election year, for instance, there are two reasons why it may be possible to call attention to issues and get them discussed.

- Politicians up for election or re-election are eager to please constituents and show their concern, and may be willing to take up your cause as a campaign issue.
- Additionally, in many localities, you can put your issue on the ballot.

Even in non-election years, a well-publicized political event or situation may help put your issue in the spotlight.

In many places, a question about an issue can be brought directly to the voters in a **referendum.** This is a direct vote of the people, which may be **binding** – i.e. if it's passed, it will become law – or **non-binding** – it simply acts as an indication of the will of the people.

The mechanism for placing a referendum on a local or state ballot is usually an **initiative petition.** This is a petition that needs either the signatures of a set number of registered voters, or the signatures of a set percentage of registered voters. In a small town, this may mean gathering as few as a hundred signatures; in a large city, it may mean tens of thousands.

A referendum is usually phrased as a question on the ballot. It may ask voters whether they favor a course of action, whether they approve a particular proposed law, or whether they support a policy position.

WHO SHOULD PLAN FOR GETTING ISSUES ON THE LOCAL AGENDA?

Planning is the first step toward action; you'll want to recruit help and support for what you'll do. Choosing a planning group carefully can contribute greatly to the eventual success of your effort.

A planning group should involve everyone who might be affected by the issue, or who might have a hand in addressing it:

Stakeholders; those with a direct interest in the issue.

- *Those directly affected or involved in the issue.* Stakeholders in youth violence, for instance, might include young victims, their parents, residents of neighborhoods where violence is common, and/or school personnel threatened by violence. It may even include the participants in violent behaviors; gang members, or others living in violent areas.
- *Those who deal with the issue.* Using the same example as above, that would include the police, the court system (judges, probation officers), the schools, hospital emergency room staff and other health professionals, youth and family agency directors and staff, etc.

Those indirectly affected. This category includes such people as merchants whose business has suffered because people are afraid to shop in the evening or to come to their neighborhoods; innocent youth who find themselves painted with the same brush as those engaged in violence because of their age, appearance, or racial or ethnic background; and property owners unable to sell or rent their houses because of the reputation of the neighborhood.

Policymakers. There are really three groups here: those who make formal policy, those who make informal policy, and funders.

- *Formal policy.* The group that sets formal policy might include local politicians, planners, and community governing or oversight bodies (the Board of Health). All of these can pass or sponsor local

ordinances or official regulations.

- *Informal policy.* This group, which may include some local boards or other entities, agencies, schools, the police and courts, and even businesses, can set policy unofficially through organizational policies, practices, and regulations.
- *Funders.* Funding organizations can also make informal policy decisions by what they choose to fund.

Influential people and other interested citizens. If you include people whose opinions are respected in the community, you are more likely to get community support for your effort. This may include business leaders, leaders of the groups most affected by the issue, clergy and other leaders of the faith community, community activists and advocates, and other individuals with widespread community respect and credibility.

More important is that all of these groups feel ownership of the plan and the effort that your initiative makes to alert the community to your issue, bring it to the forefront, and deal with it. They can bring both information, and, ultimately, an action plan back to their segments of the community, and help to gain support for your initiative. Without their support, there's less chance of actually getting your issue into public consciousness and onto the local agenda.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP A PLAN FOR GETTING ISSUES ON THE LOCAL AGENDA?

What steps do you need to take to get your issue addressed?

Identify and recruit a planning group. Put together a representative group that can help to make the best plan possible and carry it out effectively in the community.

Pick and define your issue carefully. It's crucial to define your issue clearly enough so that people can easily understand it, and narrowly enough so that it can be addressed. An example could be an increase in a particular type of cancer in a region. The cancer increase may be complex; you may want to refine the focus on:

- Early identification and treatment of those affected
- Searching for a cause
- Addressing environmental causes of the increase

Choosing and defining your issue carefully will greatly increase the chances that you'll actually be able to do something about it.

Plan for a communication campaign, not just for a one-time barrage of information or persuasion. Envision the whole campaign, not just the beginning.

- *Find out how much the community already knows and cares about the issue.* Are community members

aware of it? Do they care about it? Are they willing to do something about it? Are they *already* doing something about it? The answers to these questions will help you start where most community members are.

- *Plan a campaign that focuses on where the community is now, while also planning the next steps.*
- *Find "hooks" to pull people into your issue.* These may have to do with their own connection to the issue (local statistics, testimony from community members) or with particular aspects, risk and protective factors, etc. that speak to their values and concerns. Many parents may not be willing to stop smoking for their own sake, for instance, but may be willing to quit to protect their children from the effects of secondhand smoke.

Address public opinion. Obtaining support of the public provides advantages; you'll have community support for what you want to do; the media will take notice and further reinforce that support; and policy makers and funders will be more likely to formally consider the issue and provide you with resources. A plan for getting issues on the local agenda, therefore, should include aiming at public opinion.

There are at least three ways to influence public opinion:

- *Contact the public directly.* Use posters and fliers, social media, website, presentations, community forums and meetings... any way you can think of to directly reach people.
- *Partner with the media.* The media can be incredibly helpful in educating the community about the issue itself, and about your organization or initiative. By publishing statistics and editorials, covering human interest and other relevant stories, and presenting entertainment that deals with the issue, local newspapers, radio, and TV can raise consciousness and help change attitudes about your issue.
- *Partner with trusted intermediaries.* Clergy, widely-respected community leaders, local sports figures, average citizens who are trusted in the community – all can help you influence public opinion. If you can educate them and get them on your side (or, better yet, if they're already familiar with the issue and agree that it's important), you'll have a much better "in" to the community, and your message will be taken more seriously.

Address unofficial policy. Try to find out why those who set or influence policy believe and act as they do. Approach them with individual stories of the effects of the issue on local people (told by those people themselves where possible). Have conversations with them to discover what their major concerns are. These may inform you about how to frame the issue.

Show people there are things they can do. Volunteering, writing letters to the editor or to policy makers, talking to friends, and speaking out at public meetings are some ways that people can help.

Address public policy. To change official policy – and thus to place your issue permanently on the local agenda – you need to mount an advocacy effort, and work with legislators and local officials. The major elements of such a campaign are:

- *Find a champion among legislators, public officials, or policy makers* for your issue.
- *Advocate with legislators and local officials control official policy*.
- *Run a media and publicity campaign* to get public opinion behind you. This doesn't have to be an expensive series of ads on TV, but can be accomplished with press releases and press conferences, public demonstrations, Public Service Announcements (PSA's), letters to the editor, and other free or nearly-free publicity opportunities.
- *Mobilize those affected by or involved in the issue* to call, write to, and visit the appropriate policy makers with a coherent and consistent message.

Follow up. Once there are laws or regulations that address the issue, it is, by definition, on the local agenda. Don't forget to follow up as needed. If your goal is simply to bring the issue to public notice, use that notice to move to the next step in the process. If a law has been passed, maintain contact with policy makers and the public to keep the issue at the top of their consciousness. Getting and keeping issues on the local agenda is not a temporary job: it takes ongoing effort.

IN SUMMARY

While the ultimate goal of getting an issue on the local agenda may be to change official policy through laws or regulations, reaching that point takes a plan for educating the community to the existence and importance of the issue. You have to address not only official policy, but also public opinion and unofficial policy.

Success can be assured with two key factors: paying attention to the timing of the effort and to the inclusiveness of the planning processes. Timing includes taking advantage of a political situation, a crisis that must be dealt with, or a situation where new information or media has brought the issue attention. Involve all stakeholders and as many sectors of the community as possible to encourage ownership of the plan – and the issue – among as many people as possible.

The actual planning process itself includes careful selection of a planning group and defining the issue; planning for a long-term campaign; and addressing public opinion, unofficial and official policy, to bring about change. There should be a plan for follow-up once change has been accomplished, so that gains can be maintained.

Contributor

Phil Rabinowitz

Online Resource

Kansas Action for Children provides an **Advocacy Toolkit** to support people attempting to change or create policy that supports children. The "Get Involved" section includes material about working with the media.

Print Resources

Dearing, J.,& Everett M. R. (1996). *Agenda-Setting.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Meredith, J. & Catherine M. (1999). *Real Clout.* Boston: The Access Project.

CHAPTER 5 - CHOOSING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ORGANIZE FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE?**

- **WHY SHOULD YOU ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?**

- **WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?**

- **HOW DO YOU BRING ABOUT CHANGE THROUGH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?**

Throughout the Community Tool Box, our authors talk about different ways to improve our communities, and how to do all of the tasks, small and large, that make an organization work and work well. But broadly speaking — how does all of this work? What are the overarching strategies that work to improve our communities? Why do some grassroots organizations fail, while others do great things and flourish?

Throughout the Tool Box, we offer many suggestions of what we feel are "right" ways to approach community work, such as Our Model of Practice: Building Capacity for Community and System Change. Our belief in the equality of all people, for instance, or in the importance of individuals' efforts to improve their communities — are not topics of specific sections, but make up the foundation of what we do. These beliefs and ideas are at the base of all of our work at the Community Tool Box.

One such idea is that of community organization — the idea that people can and should come together to talk about what matters to them, and then work together to successfully change their communities. As this idea is a common thread woven throughout our work, we'd like to use this chapter to make it explicit, and try to explore it more fully.

So, then, on the following few screens (and in the next few sections) we'll do just that. In the remainder of this section, we'll give a general overview of community organization — what it is and how you do it. We'll also give brief explanations of different ways of looking at community organization. Although all of the strategies we will discuss have quite a bit in common, it may be helpful to separate out and compare different approaches in order for us to look more clearly at our work.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ORGANIZE FOR COMMUNITY

CHANGE?

Community organizing is the process by which people come together to identify common problems or goals, mobilize resources, and, in other ways, develop and implement strategies for reaching the objectives they want to accomplish.

As you can see, it's a big idea — it's really a way of looking at all of the work that we do. Because of that, it encompasses many of the other ideas discussed in the Tool Box. For example, effective community organization will generally include:

- *Gaining an understanding of the community.* The first key step is learning what the community is like, and what is important to its residents.
- *Generating and using power.* There are many types of power; depending on the nature of your organization and your long term goals, your organization may have (or need) different types. Different kinds of power include:
- *Political or legislative power* — for example, you could work to pass laws to make it more difficult for young people to get hold of alcohol or tobacco
- *Consumer power* — your organization might organize a boycott against a company whose policies are environmentally unsound
- *Legal regulatory power* — your organization might take a delinquent landlord to court
- *Disruptive power* — employees of an organization might go on strike as part of a demand for better working conditions
- *Articulating issues.* A crucial part of effective organizing is being very clear about what people find important, and what you feel should be done about it.
- *Planning purposeful action.* Action planning is central to effective community organization.
- *Involving other people.* Community organizing works in large part because of the strength that exists in numbers. The idea that "what we can't do alone, we can often accomplish together" is what community organization is all about.
- *Generating and using other resources.* While involving many people is at the heart of any community organizing effort, a group will need to obtain other resources as well. These may include cash, gifts in kind, and other forms of donations or support.
- *Communicating with your community.* There are many ways to effectively get the word out and let the community at large in on what you are doing, why you are doing it, and why they should be a part of it.

An important point to remember is that community organization is fundamentally a grassroots process. It's not about an outside "expert" telling a community what it should work on. Instead, it's about community members getting excited about something, and using that energy to create change. In short, community organization is all about empowering people to improve their lives, however that might be best done.

A fundamental lesson for the community organizer is that you don't organize people to do something you think should be done; instead, you find out what is important to people in the community, and then help them reach their goals.

Community organizing, done right, leads to a shift in power: you're building a power base among a broad group of people. Many times, community organization is done among those who have traditionally been denied a voice, or whose needs have been ignored — the poor, the homeless, certain minority groups, etc.

WHY SHOULD YOU ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?

Organizing members of a community — no matter what your goals might be — has some general advantages that will occur if the work is well done. These advantages include:

- A greater ability to bring about the changes you want to see. The collective voice of many people working together on a problem is usually much more powerful than a single voice.
- Empowerment. Involving people (especially those who haven't traditionally had much power) in improving the conditions which shape their lives can increase people's sense of their own worth and capabilities, helping them to live more fulfilling lives.
- Increased self-sufficiency among community members. Organizing people to bring about change helps maintain a high level of ownership by people for their own destinies. Ultimately, this reduces the amount of outside help that will be needed.
- Increased social support. By bringing together diverse groups of people who are working for the same cause, people get the chance to talk and learn with others they may not have met otherwise. Both professionally and socially, community organization offers ample opportunity for growth and enjoyment among those who come together.
- Greater equity in the society. When people gain control over the forces that shape their lives, it changes the balance of power in the community, spreading it more broadly and distributing it more nearly equally. That, in turn, changes for the better the circumstances of those with the least power, making for a more just society.

WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?

There are many different ways for a community to bring about the changes it wants. In the Community Tool Box, those we are most interested in are those in which people come together to improve life in their communities. This occurs in different ways, and for different reasons. Thus, there can be slightly different ways

of looking at the process of organization. The four ways that follow will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Organization for locality development. Also known as community development, locality development focuses on community building by improving the process by which things get done. For example, it emphasizes the ideas of community competency–the ability of the community to solve its own problems by learning skills such as group facilitation and critical thinking that are crucial to community work — and through working to build harmonious relationships among people from different racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. A lot of weight is put on how people think and feel about things. The idea of "helping people help themselves" is key to this concept. Organizations such as the Peace Corps and VISTA offer good examples of what we mean by locality development.

Social planning or policy change. Whereas locality development focuses primarily on the process of working together, social planning focuses on getting results. That is, it emphasizes solving specific social problems, such as a lack of adequate housing or a very high crime rate. Delivering goods and services and avoiding the duplication of those services are important ends in this type of organizing. It is often initiated by community officials or planners, or as the result of state or federal programs.

Because it is driven primarily by statistics and other types of data, social planning may be seen as more "scientific" than locality development. For example, an organizer might point out that, "Records from the health department show that only about 65% of the children entering kindergarten are fully immunized; we need an initiative to make sure all of our children receive the immunizations that will safeguard their health."

The use of "experts" may be considered a necessary part of this approach because of the importance placed on statistics and other data. This is more true of this type of organizing than for any of the others that we will discuss.

Organizing for social action, or systems advocacy. When we think of the civil rights demonstrations in the South in the 1960s, or AIDS activists conducting "die-ins" in front of the White House in the 1980s, this is what we are talking about. Social action organizing is highly adversarial, and the concept of social justice is a dominant ideal.

In social action organizing, members of a certain group — often those who are discriminated against or low on the economic ladder, and thus have little voice as individuals — come together in order to make demands on the larger community for increased resources or equal treatment.

Coalitions are broad groups that bring together people and organizations from throughout the community, including many groups that may not normally work together. For example, a coalition working to increase AIDS awareness in the community might bring together officials from the health department, representatives from the faith community, young people, business leaders, and members of the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) community — groups that sometimes don't see eye-to-eye.

The power of coalitions comes from the idea of strength in numbers — bringing together many diverse people gives you the power you need to make the changes you want.

When looking at these four strategies for community organization, it's very clear that these approaches are

not completely distinct from one another. A group that is mostly concerned with the processes of locality development will nonetheless have, some results they want achieved, and they may well use the more strident tactics of social action to achieve those results. And certainly, a coalition might choose to use any (or more likely, all) of the other three strategies at some point during its life span.

However, our hope is that by separating these ideas — even if the separation is somewhat academic — we can help organizers to think systematically about their desired ends and the means it will take to get there, as well as to organize their work in accordance to their values.

HOW DO YOU BRING ABOUT CHANGE THROUGH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?

Community organization can be done in many ways; how you do it will depend on where you are working and what your specific goals are. More detailed "how-to's" are found in each of the strategy-specific sections that follow this one.

However, some of the basics are pretty much the same, whatever your ultimate goals might be. What follows then, is simply a general overview to get you thinking about the fundamentals.

- First of all, and most obviously, you need to involve people in your community efforts. This is the heart of community organizing. This may be done in many ways — from informal conversations, to going door-to-door, to using more formal methods of recruitment.

Door-knocking is a classic tactic in community organizing that is still used regularly by community activists. Going door-to-door in the area that interests you with a short script like the following can do a lot to spark original interest.

> "Hello, I'm _____ and I work with ____. We're asking people in the neighborhood about how the community can be improved. Would you be willing to take a few minutes to talk about what you think should be looked at or changed?"

Be careful here. There may be some members of your group not comfortable going door-to-door as a way to get the word out. They may be unsure about the safety of the neighborhoods they are visiting. It may also be illegal for your organization to communicate with community members through door-to-door visits. So, before you begin your campaign, check the comfort level of your members and examine local laws to make sure that a door-to-door campaign is safe and legal!

- Next, from the comments and suggestions you have heard from community members, identify the issue that seems to be of the greatest concern. **Three** questions are especially important to consider when deciding to tackle a problem:

- Is it important enough to people that they're willing to take action about it?
- Is it specific? For example, violence may be a problem — but what kind of violence are people concerned about? Domestic violence? Violence in our schools? Muggings after dark?
- Can something be done to affect it in a reasonable amount of time? You may not be able to do much locally to change global warming, but you can probably do quite a bit to encourage energy conservation and the use of green building techniques and power sources.

Then, those who want to do something about the problem should reframe it as a goal. That gives people something positive to strive for, and enlists them in building the community, rather than simply eliminating something harmful or annoying. It not only makes working on the current issue more compelling, but prepares people to continue the community-building process in the future.

It also allows you to narrow down the issue to something clearly achievable. Suppose the issue identified by the community is traffic. It's noisy, it pollutes, and it's gotten a great deal worse over the past ten years, so that what was a ten-minute drive now takes 45 at rush hour. What's a clear goal that will address the issue?

There are a number of possibilities. Improving and expanding public transportation is one, and one that a community initiative could probably have some influence over. The designation of bike lanes and the building of off-street cross-town bike paths is another. Each of these presents a clear, goal that not only represents a community organizing success, but that can inspire people to participate in the next campaign, which might have a more ambitious goal.

- Developing your strategy is the next step in community organizing. What your strategy will be will vary greatly, depending on what type of organizing you are doing. However, in all types of organizing, members of your group will want to come together and develop agreed-upon answers to the following questions.
    - What are your long- and short-term goals?
    - What are your organizational strengths and weaknesses?
    - Who cares about this problem?
    - Who are your allies?
    - Who has the power to give you what you want?
    - How can we make our work enjoyable for community members to be a part of?

It's important to build your organization's strategy in a logical manner. People like to look upon themselves as being reasonable. Thus, organizers should develop the strategy in such a way that each escalation of activity makes sense, so that neither members of the group nor the larger community see what is being done as overblown or reactionary.

A small town in eastern Kansas organized to protest the introduction of a roadway through environmentally-protected and spiritually sacred Native American wetlands. Two organizations in town began by writing letters

to local government officials requesting that the road be constructed around the wetlands rather than through them.

When that didn't work, the groups became more active. Newspaper articles were written, and community members were encouraged to write their local representatives in protest. Residents attended local council meetings and vocally protested the decisions of the city government.

When the letters and verbal protests were unsuccessful, the organizations staged rallies. After the rallies did not get the desired results, the community members began to protest along the portions of the roadway that had been constructed. The protests were ignored in much the same way the letters, council meeting attendance, and rallies had been.

Finally, the two organizations hired attorneys and sued the city to prevent the roadway from being constructed — a move which never would have been condoned by residents at the beginning of the dispute. The lawsuit attracted the attention of the EPA, and soon federal agencies became involved. To date, the groups have been successful in blocking the completion of the roadway.

- From strategies, your organization should develop specific tactics for the strategy you have chosen. Examples of tactics include boycotts, petitions, demonstrations, meetings with people with power, and so on. As we discussed in the last step on developing strategies, members of the group must be sure that the tactics fit the situation — that they aren't too extreme (or too weak!); that they target the appropriate people; and that they have a good chance of being effective.

- The next step in community organizing is to choose specific actions to carry out the strategies and tactics you have developed. These action steps are the bread and butter of your community work. They should be very explicit, specifying who will do what in what way by when.

- The organizer should set goals for immediate, short-ending wins, and these wins should be celebrated. Most community work takes a long time; some of it is never done. Your organization's goals may be very large — ending child abuse; developing a thriving neighborhood in what is currently a run-down, crime-infested area; or an end to all forms of discrimination. These are goals that will take a long time to reach; they may not even be completed in our lifetime.

Because of this, it's important that the group does win something very quickly. It's important for the morale of the group to feel you really are making progress; that your work is not only for a good cause, but you're also going about it in the right way. No one likes to feel that their work is useless, that they are giving up precious free time for a lost cause, or that they are not appreciated for all of their work. So make celebrations of your work — and the people doing it — a regular part of your organization's life.

- Finally, the organization needs to keep on going. As we said above, community work never ends. Your group may be organizing people to work on specific goals. But when your group has won (or when you have decided it's time to bow out gracefully), then it's time to rest, regroup, and move on to the next campaign.

IN SUMMARY

The power of an organized community working together to reach agreed-upon goals is nothing short of spectacular. There is no more important step to take than organization when trying to improve life in our communities. And so, it is crucial for those of us working for our communities to understand how to do so effectively.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a tremendously powerful organizer. In a speech in Memphis in 1968, he rallied listeners with the words, "Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge, to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better nation." We at the Community Tool Box ask that you take that opportunity — that you work to organize people for a better community, a better nation, and finally, a better world.

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If you're working hard to change the world, you know it's an endless struggle... a struggle that can leave you exhausted even when your work is fulfilling and affirmative. You might need a chance to step back, take a break, catch your breath in a place where you can stretch out and see the far horizon.

That's why we established the Windcall Resident Program. Since 1989, it has been a place of retreat and renewal for people engaged in work for social change. Our principal aim is this: to honor and help conserve the commitment and energy of those who work towards a more just society. If you've been doing this difficult work and need to step back to see what's ahead, we encourage you to apply to Windcall.

You may apply to stay at Windcall for two or four weeks during one of its residential sessions. Summer residencies are available during June and July, with a January 15 application deadline. Fall residencies extend from after Labor Day to the end of October, with an April 10 application deadline.

Windcall welcomes residents at no cost during their stay. There are only four guests at any one time. We offer a partial travel stipend for those in need, and we encourage residents to drive whenever possible so that once here they can take full advantage of all that southwestern Montana provides.

Online Resources

Center for Community Change CCC helps the economically disadvantaged improve their communities and change policies and institutions that affect their lives by developing their own strong organizations.

Chapter 11: Community Interventions in the "Introduction to Community Psychology" explains professionally-led versus grassroots interventions, what it means for a community intervention to be effective, why a community needs to be ready for an intervention, and the steps to implementing community interventions.

The COMM-ORG Mission

- To help connect people who care about the craft of community organizing.
- To find and provide information that organizers, scholars, and scholar-organizers can use to learn, teach, and do community organizing.
- To involve all COMM-ORG members in meeting those goals.

The Midwest Academy is one of the nation's oldest and best known schools for community organizations, citizen organizations, and individuals committed to progressive social change.

Emerging Action Principles for Designing and Planning Community Change is from Community Science and shares what science and practice have taught us about strengthening community.

Institute for Social Justice Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)

Contact: Elena Hanggi 523 W. 15th Street, Little Rock, AR 72202. Program: Training for members of ACORN; week-long and 2-day training sessions for others; special training for unions and in operation of radio and television stations.

Print Resources

Berkowitz, W. (1997). *Community and neighborhood organization*. Chapter for Handbook of Community Psychology.

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., Max, S. (1996). *Organizing for social change: A manual for activists* in the 1990s. Minneapolis, MN: Seven Locks.

Fawcett, S. (1999). *Some lessons on community organization and change*. In J. Rothman (Ed.), *Reflections on community organization: Enduring themes and critical issues*. Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock Publishers.

Rothman, J., Erlich, J. & Tropman, J. (1995). *Strategies of community intervention*. (Ed.) Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock Publishers.

PART III
COMMUNICATIONS TO PROMOTE INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION

CHAPTER 6 - COMMUNICATIONS TO PROMOTE INTEREST

Learn how to develop a plan for communication to raise awareness about community issues and your organization's accomplishments.

Developing a communication plan can help focus your message and reach your target audience. A plan can also influence the efficiency and simplicity of your communication methods. This section looks at what a communication plan entails, how and when to create one, and how to use a communication plan to raise awareness about your issue or project.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNICATION?

Communication is the process of transmitting ideas and information. For a grass roots initiative or community-based organization, that means conveying the true nature of your organization, the issues it deals with, and its accomplishments to the community.

Communication can take many forms, including:

- Word of mouth
- News stories in both print and broadcast media
- Press releases and press conferences
- Posters, brochures, and fliers
- Outreach and presentations to other health and community service providers, community groups, and organizations

• Special events and open houses that your organization holds

To communicate effectively, it helps to plan out what you want from your communication, and what you need to do to get it.

WHAT IS A PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION?

Planning is a way to organize actions that will lead to the fulfillment of a goal.

Your goal, in this case, is to raise awareness about your initiative's long-term benefits to your community.

To develop a plan for communication, you have to consider some basic questions:

• Why do you want to communicate with the community? **(What's your purpose?)**
• To whom do you want to communicate it? **(Who's your audience?)**
• What do you want to communicate? **(What's your message?)**
• How do you want to communicate it? **(What communication channels will you use?)**
• Whom should you contact, and what should you do to use those channels? **(How will you distribute your message?)**

The answers to these questions constitute your action plan, what you need to do to successfully communicate with your audience. The remainder of your communication plan, involves three steps:

• **Implement your action plan.** Design your message and distribute it to your intended audience.
• **Evaluate your communication efforts and adjust your plan accordingly.**
• **Keep at it.**

Communication is an ongoing activity for any organization that serves, depends upon, or is in any way connected with the community. The purpose, audience, message, and channels may change, but the need to maintain relationships with the media and with key people in the community remain. As a result, an essential part of any communication plan is to continue using and revising your plan, based on your experience, throughout the existence of your organization.

WHY SHOULD YOU DEVELOP A PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION?

• A plan will make it possible to target your communication accurately. It gives you a structure to determine whom you need to reach and how.

- A plan can be long-term, helping you map out how to raise your profile and refine your image in the community over time.
- A plan will make your communication efforts more efficient, effective, and lasting.
- A plan makes everything easier. If you spend some time planning at the beginning of an effort, you can save a great deal of time later on, because you know what you should be doing at any point in the process.

WHEN SHOULD YOU DEVELOP A PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION?

As soon as your organization begins planning its objectives and activities, you should also start planning ways to communicate them; successful communication is an ongoing process, not a one-time event.

Communication is useful at all points in your organization's development – it can help get the word out about a new organization, renew interest in a long-standing program, or help attract new funding sources.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP A PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION?

Planning for communication is an eight-step process. The steps are:

1. Identify the purpose of your communication
2. Identify your audience
3. Plan and design your message
4. Consider your resources
5. Plan for obstacles and emergencies
6. Strategize how you will connect with the media and others who can help you spread your message
7. Create an action plan
8. Decide how you will evaluate your plan and adjust it, based on the results of carrying it out

1. IDENTIFY YOUR PURPOSE

What you might want to say depends on what you're trying to accomplish with your communication strategy. You might be concerned with one or a combination of the following:

- Becoming known, or better known, in the community
- Educating the public about the issue your organization addresses
- Recruiting program participants or beneficiaries

- Recruiting volunteers to help with your work
- Rallying supporters or the general public to action for your cause
- Announcing events
- Celebrating honors or victories
- Raising money to fund your work
- Countering the arguments, mistakes, or, occasionally, the lies or misrepresentations of those opposed to your work.
- Dealing with an organizational crisis that's public knowledge – a staff member who commits a crime, for example, or a lawsuit aimed at the organization.

2. IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Who are you trying to reach? Knowing your audience makes it possible to plan your communication logically. You'll need different messages for different groups, and you'll need different channels and methods to reach each of those groups.

There are many different ways to think about your audience and the best ways to contact them. First, there's the question of what group(s) you'll focus on. You can group people according to several characteristics:

- *Demographics.* Demographics are simply basic statistical information about people, such as gender, age, ethnic and racial background, income, etc.
- *Geography*. You might want to focus on a whole town or region, on one or more neighborhoods, or on people who live near a particular geographic or man-made feature.
- *Employment*. You may be interested in people in a particular line of work or in unemployed people.
- *Health*. Your concern might be with people at risk for or experiencing a particular condition – high blood pressure, perhaps, or diabetes – or you might be leveling a health promotion effort – "Eat healthy, exercise regularly" – at the whole community.
- *Behavior.* You may be targeting your message to smokers, for example, or to youth engaged in violence.
- *Attitudes.* Are you trying to change people's minds or bring them to the next level of understanding?

Another aspect of the audience to consider is whether you should direct your communication to those whose behavior, knowledge, or condition you hope to affect, or whether your communication needs to be indirect. Sometimes, to influence a population, you have to aim your message at those to whom they listen – clergy, community leaders, politicians, etc.

> For instance, in the 1970s, advocates wanted to stop Nestle from selling baby formula and paying doctors and nurses to recommend it to parents in the developing world. Most parents couldn't afford formula after the free samples ran out, and many didn't have clean water to mix with it, so the practice led to large numbers of unnecessary infant deaths. Rather than target Nestle or the medical professionals who were selling the formula,

advocates aimed at Nestle's customers around the world, instituting a boycott of Nestle products that lasted for over ten years. Ultimately, the company agreed to change its practices.

3. THE MESSAGE

When creating your message, consider content, mood, language, and design.

Content

In the course of a national adult literacy campaign in the 1980s, educators learned that TV ads that profiled proud, excited, successful adult learners attracted new learners to literacy programs. Ads that described the difficulties of adults with poor reading, writing, and math skills attracted potential volunteers. Both ads were designed to make the same points – the importance of basic skills and the need for literacy efforts – but they spoke to different groups.

You should craft your message with your audience in mind; planning the content of your message is necessary to make it effective.

Mood

Consider what emotions you want to appeal to.

The mood of your message will do a good deal to determine how people react to it. In general, if the mood is too extreme – too negative, too frightening, trying to make your audience feel too guilty – people won't pay much attention to it. It may take some experience to learn how to strike the right balance. Keeping your tone positive will usually reach more people than evoking negative feelings such as fear or anger.

Language

There are two aspects to language here. One is the actual language – English, Spanish, Korean, Arabic – that your intended audience speaks. The other is the style of language you use – formal or informal, simple or complex, referring to popular figures and ideas or obscure ones.

You can address the language people speak by presenting any printed material in both the official language and the language(s) of the population(s) you're hoping to reach, and by providing translation for spoken or broadcast messages.

The second language issue is more complicated. If your message is too informal, your audience might feel you're talking down to them, or, worse, that you're making an insincere attempt to get close to them by communicating in a way that's clearly not normal for you. If your message is too formal, your audience might feel you're not really talking to them at all. You should use plain, straightforward language that expresses what you want to say simply and clearly.

Channels of communication

What does your intended audience read, listen to, watch, or engage in? You have to reach them by placing your message where they'll see it.

- Posters
- Fliers and brochures – These can be more compelling in places where the issue is already in people's

minds (doctors' offices for health issues, supermarkets for nutrition, etc.).

- Newsletters
- Promotional materials – Items such as caps, T-shirts, and mugs can serve as effective channels for your message.
- Comic books or other reading material – Reading material that is interesting to the target audience can be used to deliver a message through a story that readers are eager to follow, or through the compelling nature of the medium and its design.
- Internet sites – In addition to your organization's website, interactive sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are effective mediums for communication
- Letters to the Editor
- News stories, columns, and reports
- Press releases and press conferences
- Presentations or presence at local events and local and national conferences, fairs, and other gatherings
- Community outreach
- Community or national events – The Great American Smokeout, National Literacy Day, a community "Take Back the Night" evening against violence, and other community events can serve to convey a message and highlight an issue.
- Public demonstrations
- Word of mouth
- Music
- Exhibits and public art – The AIDS quilt, a huge quilt with squares made by thousands of people, commemorating victims of the HIV epidemic, is a prime example.
- Movies – Since the beginnings of the film industry, movies have carried messages about race, the status of women, adult literacy, homosexuality, mental illness, AIDS, and numerous other social issues.
- TV – TV can both carry straightforward messages – ads and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) – and present news and entertainment programs that deal with your issue or profile your organization.
- Theater and interactive theater – A play or skit, especially one written by people who have experienced what it illustrates, can be a powerful way to present an issue or to underline the need for services or change.

Several interactive theater groups in New England, by stopping the action and inviting questions and comments, draw audiences into performances dramatizing real incidents in the lives of the actors, all of whom are staff members and learners in adult literacy programs. They have helped change attitudes about adult learners and bring information about adult literacy and learning into the community

4. RESOURCES

What do you have the money to do? Do you have the people to make it possible? If you're going to spend

money, what are the chances that the results will be worth the expense? Who will lose what, and who will gain what by your use of financial and human resources?

Your plan should include careful determinations of how much you can spend and how much staff and volunteer time it's reasonable to use. You may also be able to share materials, air time, and other goods and services with individuals, businesses, other organizations, and institutions.

5. ANTICIPATE OBSTACLES AND EMERGENCIES

Any number of things can happen in the course of a communication effort. Someone can forget to e-mail a press release or forget to include a phone number or e-mail address. A crucial word on your posters or in your brochure can be misspelled, or a reporter might get important information wrong. Worse, you might have to deal with a real disaster involving the organization that has the potential to discredit everything you do.

It's important to try to anticipate these kinds of problems, and to create a plan to deal with them. Crisis planning should be part of any communication plan, so you'll know what to do when a problem or crisis occurs. Crisis plans should include who takes responsibility for what – dealing with the media, correcting errors, deciding when something has to be redone rather than fixed, etc. It should cover as many situations, and as many aspects of each situation, as possible.

6. STRATEGIZE HOW YOU'LL CONNECT WITH THE MEDIA AND OTHERS TO SPREAD YOUR MESSAGE

Establishing relationships with individual media representatives and media outlets is an essential part of a communication plan, as is establishing relationships with influential individuals and institutions in the community and the population you're trying to reach. You have to make personal contacts, give the media and others reasons to want to help you, and follow through to sustain those relationships to keep communication channels open.

The individuals that can help you spread your message can vary from formal community leaders – elected officials, CEOs of prominent local businesses, clergy, etc. – to community activists and ordinary citizens. Institutions and organizations, such as colleges, hospitals, service clubs, faith communities, and other health and community organizations, all have access to groups of community members who might need to hear your message.

7. CREATE AN ACTION PLAN

Now the task is to put it all together into a plan that you can act on. By the time you reach this point, your plan is already done, for the most part. You know what your purpose is and whom you need to reach to accomplish it, what your message should contain and look like, what you can afford, what problems you might face, what

channels can best be used to reach your intended audience, and how to gain access to those channels. Now it's just a matter of putting the details together – composing and designing your message (or messages, if using multiple channels), making contact with the people who can help you, and getting everything in place to start your communication effort. And finally, you'll evaluate your effort so that you can continue to make it better.

8. EVALUATION

If you evaluate your communication plan in terms of both how well you carry it out and how well it works, you'll be able to make changes to improve it. It will keep getting more effective each time you implement it.

And there's really a ninth step to developing a communication plan; as with just about every phase of health and community work, you have to keep up the effort, adjusting your plan and communicating with the community.

Online Resources

Communications Planning: Getting the Right Messages Across in the Right Way, by Mindtools.com, will help you through the preparation steps as well as create an audience-focused communication plan that is sure to get your message heard.

Creating a Communications Action Plan, from viaSport in British Columbia.

Developing a Communication Plan, by the Pell Institute and Pathways to College Network, is an excellent, simple resource providing information on how the communication plan should be designed as well as questions to be answered in order to develop a working and effective plan.

MED Communication Handbook. This 119-page PDF booklet was prepared by Pinnacle Public Relations for the European Territorial Cooperation MED Programme, 2007-2013.

Media Advocacy by Sandra A. Hoover

Newsworthy elements, from the Berkeley Media Studies Group, includes a checklist of questions by category to help you prepare and focus your story.

Planning Before You Communicate. This helpful tool developed by the Public Health Foundation will help you to address and organize essential factors of communications planning, execution, and evaluation. Doing this preparation work before you communicate will save you valuable time and resources when and where they are needed most.

Strategic Communications Planning

Worksheet: Crafting your media advocacy plan, from the Berkeley Media Studies Group, can help you identify key moments in the political process or opportunities — such as holidays, anniversaries or other key dates — far enough in advance that you can prepare and act effectively.

CHAPTER 7 - ENCOURAGING INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY WORK

Learn how to develop a plan to attract membership among diverse stakeholders in community-based efforts.

So you want to attract some members into your club or organization? Why? Are you sick and tired of trying to do everything yourself? Did someone remind you that two heads are better than one? It may not really matter why you've decided to try to attract more members. What matters is that you have a plan.

Developing a plan for recruiting members will make your life much easier. This section will show you how.

WHAT IS A PLAN FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTION?

Planning is a way to organize actions that will hopefully lead to the fulfillment of a goal. In this case, your goal is increasing participation to meet the purposes of your organization. How? By providing clear directions and your approach to following them, in other words, giving a method to your madness.

Developing a plan for recruiting members will cause you to ask yourself some fundamental questions. These questions are essential to just about any recruitment effort, and your answers will be the building blocks for your recruitment plan. They are:

- Why do you want or need members?
- How many members do you need?
- What kind of members do you need?
- Who is going to find and get the new members?
- Where are the new members?
- When is a good time to look for new members?
- How should you approach potential members?
- What happens if you get a yes, a maybe, or a no?
- What are some obstacles you may encounter? And how do you get around them?

Example: An organization in need of increasing participation in community action

My neighborhood organization wants to clean up the area around an abandoned building in our neighborhood. We hope to remove the blight and potentially lower the amount of crime in the area, but we don't know how to find the people. We are very busy and have never done this before.

Also, this may just be the beginning. We want to grow our organization large enough to clean up the whole city. Wouldn't that be amazing? But that would certainly take more members than we recruit ourselves. Maybe we should build a coalition or partnership. Then we'd have the people power we need. But how can we do that?

Here's the key point: Regardless of whether we are trying to recruit members who speak for themselves or members who speak for entire organizations, it would help to have a plan to find people and bring them together. Answering the questions above will save us time in the long run and increase the chances of accomplishing goals we set for ourselves.

WHY SHOULD YOU DEVELOP A PLAN FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTION?

- To make accomplishing your goals easier.
- To help you get from point A (an organization in need of members, or a coalition in need of member organizations) to point B (an organization with the members it needs or a coalition with the members it

needs). Your organization or alliance will almost certainly always need fresh members.

- To make your search for new members more efficient and effective. A plan is essential because it focuses on steps you will need to take to achieve your ultimate goal of recruiting members. The planning stage is the time to decide what actions the organization will take to achieve its goal.

Most of the time, organizers looking for membership would have better luck recruiting potential members if they sat down and planned what they would do to achieve their goals, rather than just jumping right in. A planned effort will almost always be superior to an unplanned, disorganized attempt.

Writing things down is very important to the planning process because you don't want to waste time going over questions you have already answered. Writing down the answers will save precious time.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP A PLAN FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTION?

Let's come back to the fundamental questions mentioned above and go through them one at a time.

WHY DO YOU WANT OR NEED MEMBERS?

It is not only enough to want members for your organization. You must think of why you want them. You must ask yourself, "Why am I looking for new members in the first place?" Your organization may be looking for members who speak for other organizations or themselves.

Your organization may need members of a partnership or coalition who:

- Represent the local government, the local school systems, religious organizations, youth organizations, businesses, other human service organizations, senior citizens, the police, parent groups, colleges and universities, etc.
- Can coordinate the efforts of the organizations they represent to achieve shared goals (for example, a city-wide event in which several organizations carry out different city beautification tasks)
- Can rally support for issues in the best interests of your organization and those of the organizations your coalition members represent

Your organization may need individual members to:

- Hand out flyers
- Help out on a specific project (for example, helping to clean the lot around an abandoned building)
- Help organize and recruit other members
- Give general support to the organization

- Do many, many other things

You must have something in mind. Otherwise, you wouldn't have decided you need more members to begin with. Think... Then *write it down!*

HOW MANY MEMBERS DO YOU NEED?

Once you have listed the reasons you are looking to get new members into your group, you should have a pretty good idea of how many individual members and coalition members you will need to recruit.

> **For example: Starting a plan for increasing participation in community action**
>
> Let's think about the abandoned building example. How many people do we need to clean up the area? It's a big yard, and it is very messy. We'd like to get it done in one day, so the best guess is that it will take at least 15 people.
>
> There are five diehard members of my organization, and a few others around the neighborhood have offered their help if something came up. Well, now we have something.
>
> So we know that we need to get ten more people to commit to this project. Of course, we'd love to get ten new long-term members, but for now, we just need ten more warm bodies to help clean the area.
>
> Okay, now we know why we want new members, and we know that we need at least ten more. Wow! We're already starting to have a plan. Okay, now, let's think big. Let's go back to the city-wide beautification effort.
>
> If our organization gets all the people we need to clean up the area that sparked our beautification efforts, we will still need members representing other organizations in our coalition. We need to have members who can coordinate the actions of their organizations so that the whole city will become beautiful.
>
> Even thinking big is simple. What's next?

WHAT KIND OF MEMBERS DO YOU NEED?

It's not usually a good idea to put people into categories, but in this case, determining what kind of members the organization needs will be helpful.

Organizations need many different kinds of members. As mentioned earlier, this can be especially important when deciding whether your organization is trying to build individual membership or trying to make a coalition through recruiting members who speak for organizations.

Some members may speak for organizations or whole groups of people, and some may not. Some members will be leaders, and some will not.

Members of organizations function at different levels. Some show up more frequently than others; some are more committed than others; some have other things going on in their lives that will take priority over the organization. We can use all these types of members and members with many different kinds of skills.

Members who speak for whole groups of people are especially helpful because, through their membership, your organization will gain access to people who may help out at different levels.

Organizations will often be looking to recruit members with varied skills. However, sometimes a project will come up in which specific skills are needed.

If there is a specific skill your organization is looking for to help achieve your goals, your organization or coalition may wish to recruit members who speak for organizations with some talent in those areas.

As for developing a plan for recruiting members, you must decide what kind of members you are looking for. Then it will be easier to focus your search.

WHO IS GOING TO FIND AND GET THEM?

Well, who have you got? If it is you alone, you certainly have your work cut out for you. But even if you have a small army of recruiters, you will probably still have your work cut out for you. It's a big task. By now, you should know who you are looking for, whether they speak for themselves or organizations, and how many people you need.

Determining who finds and gets the new members is essential to your planning. You and your helpers can plan the approaches you will use to get the people you need.

Don't be shy about delegating responsibility. If you have people available to help you recruit, make those people as useful as possible. Assign recruitment tasks to different people. Don't just tell all of your people to go out there and get members. That will most definitely waste your time and possibly that of potential members too.

Getting back to the clean-up example, we may have decided that there are some people with some specific talents or assets that could help us in our clean-up, and in the neighborhood organization in general.

Divide up the recruiting task. We know that we need some neighbors with yard tools, and someone with a pick-up truck would certainly be helpful.

Make sure you break up the recruiting. Tom, with the pick-up truck, will not be happy if all five members of the group ask him to help out. After all, you want to ask for help, but not to be too pushy. Also, your organization may seem very disorganized if nobody seems to know what anyone else is doing.

So figure out who will be recruiting whom.

And in the case of the city-wide beautification initiative, your organization may wish to seek members who speak for organizations that have special skills or assets that will help achieve your goals. For example, a hardware store, a gardening association, an art club, and a florist may be incredibly helpful.

WHERE ARE NEW MEMBERS TO BE FOUND?

Truthfully, *everywhere*. But now, you can target where you look. Try making a list of places where the type of people and organizations you are looking for might be.

Example: You are looking to build a new clubhouse for some neighborhood kids, and nobody in your organization is good at building. What skills would be handy in a new member? Building skills, of course.

Now that you have this information, *use it*. Find out where people with building skills may be, and go there and ask for help. Check the yellow pages for hardware stores, construction unions, and contractors in your community. Think about other clubs, agencies, and organizations in your community where people with building skills may go.

Example: Let's think big again. Perhaps your organization started out wishing to build a clubhouse for a group of neighborhood kids. Then, everyone became so enthusiastic about the project that your organization decided to form a coalition to promote youth club activities.

Now you may not only wish to recruit members with building skills, but also members who speak for organizations, unions, community services, and local and corporate businesses that may want to become involved. After all, your organization would probably like all the help it can get.

Don't forget. You won't know who wants to get involved unless you ask.

So figure out who your organization would like as members. Then...

Make a list and *write it down!*

WHEN IS A GOOD TIME TO LOOK FOR NEW MEMBERS?

Well, how about now? Any organization should always be looking for new members. Sure, some times are better than others. It is easier to recruit members when the organization is rallying around a particular project or issue. Find a hook (something to attract people to your specific project, cause, or problem). Hooks are useful.

But there are also many important times for an organization to look for new members or a coalition to look for new member organizations. Some of them include when you are:

- Taking on a new initiative
- Wanting to become more powerful in the community
- Starting a publicity/fund-raising campaign
- Replacing former members

If your organization does not have a specific need for new members but is just waiting for a good issue or event to help you start a recruitment drive, certain topics often draw attention and support. These include:

- Children
- Fairness
- Health
- Safety
- Jobs

Are any of these issues related to your project? What others can you think of?

For your plan, you must decide when you will start actively looking for new members. Developing a timeline will prove to be helpful—set goals.

You may also need to know how soon you need your new members. You might have a big event coming up, such as a fundraiser, that you will need more members for. In that case, you might want to create a timeline with your plan of action.

For example, our group needs to have 30 new members before putting on our annual dance in January. It is September now. So, we'll try to recruit at least 15 new members by mid-October. It makes sense for us to aim a little on the high side, so we'll be okay even if we fall short. Our group met together and created the following timeline:

September	October	November	December
Develop a recruiting plan	Set goals to recruit member organizations or representatives.	Meet with representatives of member organizations	Continue looking for support. The more, the merrier!
Begin recruiting members or organizations for a coalition. The goal is to have recruited 15 members by mid-month	We will meet to keep new members' interest	Continue meeting and recruiting. Remember, our goal is 30. But don't stop there!	
If we are having trouble, review tactics.	Keep recruiting		

Remember to develop your plan for recruiting members before you start doing the work. You don't want to spend time switching from tactic to tactic trying to achieve your goals. Be sure to organize your search for new members. Don't forget to make a plan and write it down.

HOW SHOULD YOU APPROACH POTENTIAL MEMBERS?

Ahh, the approach. Let's imagine that although our group feels very strongly about our project (in this case, cleaning up the messy area), it may not sound as appealing to others. Getting new people involved with the project or group sounds about as easy as, say, meeting a life-long partner at a bar.

It's crucial to design an approach carefully. Look at this example:

"Hey, do you want to come out Sunday to pick up trash and scrub graffiti off walls with some people you barely know?"

Not likely to get a very favorable response. Maybe this one is a little better:

"Hello, you live in our neighborhood, don't you? I've seen you around a bit. Well, you know the messy area

around the old Spooky House that makes our neighborhood look like a parking lot after a flea market? A group of us are going to get together Sunday to clean it up, and then we're having a potluck at Shawn Barge's house."

It may be a good idea to personalize your metaphors if you know the person you're trying to recruit. For example, for a sports fan:

"...It makes our neighborhood look like the parking lot of a football stadium on after the game."

Remember, when you are trying to convince people to help out that they need to feel they will get something out of it too: satisfaction, new skills, personal fulfillment, et cetera. You want to make potential members feel as though cleaning up the yard will benefit them because they live in that neighborhood too.

Coalitions that wish to attract member organizations should be careful to give the organizations they are trying to recruit compelling reasons to join. Organizations will not want to become involved with a disorganized, inefficient effort.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A YES, A MAYBE, OR A NO.

Suppose you get a yes. Great! By now, you should certainly know why you've recruited this person in the first place. Just make sure you can tell the new member or organization what is needed when.

A maybe is pretty good too. A "maybe" shows you that this person or organization is not entirely without interest in the cause. Keep in touch with those who say "maybe." Maybe they will be interested in joining at a later date or becoming involved in a different capacity.

A no...well, you can't win them all. You should also try to distinguish a "no" from a "not right now." You may have asked at the wrong time; after all, you don't know everything in everyone's lives. If you didn't get the door shut in your face, you might want to try again later. You never know when someone may have a change of heart.

Whatever someone says, don't be caught by surprise. Think ahead to what you will say next.

OBSTACLES

Anticipate obstacles that may occur. Things don't usually run perfectly, and anything can (and sometimes does) happen. Be prepared to overcome possible barriers. A hurdler doesn't worry about tripping over hurdles; she hurdles them. You must be ready to also.

Contributor

Rob Kramer

Online Resources

Community Building Institute at Xavier University features success stories that focus on volunteer involvement in building community.

Idealist, a project of Action without Borders, posts volunteer opportunities around the globe. Topical discussion boards include a volunteering focus.

Independent Sector is a national leadership forum that encourages philanthropy, volunteering, not-for-profit initiative, and citizen action that help us better serve people and communities.

The International Association for Volunteers offers training and information to encourage and strengthen volunteering worldwide.

A ladder of citizen participation is an article that begins by asking what is citizen participation and what is its relationship to the social imperatives of our time?

The **United Nations Volunteers Program** supports human development globally by promoting volunteerism and mobilizing volunteers.

Volunteer Match is a nonprofit, online service that helps interested volunteers get involved with community service organizations throughout the United States.

Print Resource

Homan, M. (1994). *Promoting community change: Making it happen in the real world*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Learn how to build participation among diverse participants and groups to ensure meaningful community representation in change efforts.

Groucho Marx once said, "I'd never join any organization that would invite me to be a member." Well, we'd

want Groucho in our organization, and (if he were alive) we think we might get him to join. That's because we want members from all sectors of the community. And that's what this section is about.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS AMONG DIVERSE GROUPS?

Who are the potential members of your group or organization? The answer is, "just about everyone." There are very few people in your community who could never be members, which is a helpful and eye-opening point to keep in mind. More than that: just about everyone actually could become a member, if you really wanted them, and if you worked hard enough to get them to join.

Of course, you (probably) don't want everyone in the community to join, for even ambitious people like you have their limits. You probably want to keep your group to a manageable size. At the same time, it's a good idea to keep your eyes open to all parts of the community for potential members.

This section will help explain why. Next, it will show you how to identify the different sectors of a community, and then to begin preparing a wide and diverse list of potential members — real people who could support you and who could work for your cause.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://cod.pressbooks.pub/humanservices/?p=37#oembed-1*

WHY IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS AMONG DIVERSE GROUPS?

- Because if you can bring those different types of members into your group, it will be more representative of the full community; your group will stand to gain broader community support
- Because with a multi-sector membership, more different opinions will probably be expressed and discussed; that means better decisions may get made
- Because a diverse, multi-sector membership is usually also a larger membership — you will then have more talent, and also more varied kinds of talent, at your disposal
- Because the contacts and connections made in a diverse, multi-sector group lead to new community relationships. And these relationships can spark new community initiatives that might never have

otherwise existed.

WHEN DO YOU IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS?

Anytime. But it's an especially good time when you are:

- Starting a membership drive
- Running a campaign
- Wanting to broaden your membership base

Membership has no seasons; you can think about membership 365 days a year. The best time to do it might be now.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS?

It's is a very simple process. It has just two steps:

- Know the different sectors of the community
- Identify and list key potential members within each sector

There is an assumption here, though — namely, that after you have located your potential members, you will go after them, and work to recruit them to your cause. To identify such members, and then stop there, is of little value; you need to bring them on board. Identifying your members is just part of the process. The strategies and techniques of reaching out to potential members, once you have found them, are covered in the next sections of this chapter, Writing Letters to Potential Members and Making Personal Contact with Potential Members.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT SECTORS OF A COMMUNITY?

The sectors of a community are its basic component parts. Just about anything that exists has such components. Living beings have organs and cells; nations have towns and cities; galaxies have stars. In a community, the basic component parts are often called sectors.

Think of sectors as pieces of the pie. Here's one way to slice them.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

These institutions are large and powerful social structures which guide and control much of the community's life. In any community, these are likely to include:

- **Schools**, especially public schools, local colleges and universities, and possibly private and parochial schools
- **Churches**, which may also include organizations and groups within the churches — and across all churches, as in interfaith or ecumenical groups
- **Businesses**, particularly large employers, and/or profitable businesses, acting singly or through collective groups such as the chamber of commerce
- **Media**, including local newspapers, local radio and TV stations, local cable television, and other community-wide print publications
- **Government – town or city**; in some cases county government as well

These are five key sectors (or, five large pie-slices). Should some of them, or even all of them, be represented in your group? Possibly so. The downsides seem small. The upsides are that they can give your group additional range and power. This is an issue for your group to consider carefully. At the very least, your potential members should be listed from among these key sectors; then you can decide how much you want to pursue each one. There may be other social institutions that you consider important. Add them to this list.

OTHER COMMON ORGANIZATIONS

There are other key organizations, or smaller sectors, that are common to most communities as well. They probably exist in yours. Here are a few:

- Clinics
- Day care centers
- Ethnic clubs or associations
- Hobby groups
- Hospitals
- Housing authorities and housing groups
- Libraries
- Neighborhood groups
- Parent-teacher organizations
- Professional associations
- Professional schools

- Recreational groups
- Religious groups
- Service associations (the Rotary, etc.)
- Social service agencies
- Veterans groups

SPECIALIZED GROUPS

There may also be one or more specialized groups in or near your community that can help your cause. That precise group will depend on your own group's purpose.

For example, suppose that:

Your group is interested in:	Then a good group to contact might be:
	Recreation departments

Teen recreation	Coaches (current and retired)
	    Professional sports teams
	    Local health clubs and gyms

	Conservation commissions

Wildlife conservation	School biology departments
	    Hunting and fishing license providers
	    Outdoor stores

	Mental health centers

Mental health	Mental health associations
	    Provider associations
	    Consumer associations, such as the Alliance for the Mentally Ill

Some specialized groups may not be very visible in your community, and hard to track down. But if you keep tracking, you will find them. Your effort should be repaid.

INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS

Finally, there may be individual citizens you know, or someone else knows, who might be interested in what you are doing, and whom you might like to recruit.

These are the basic sectors or component parts of most communities. And this is useful general knowledge. But of course, you want not just general categories, but specific names. So how do you go about lining up names to go with the categories you choose?

HOW CAN I FIND THESE NAMES?

How do you find specific names? You know some now. Unless you are a newcomer, you'll know many names and sources already, and these are valuable contacts. You needn't start from scratch. But once your memory has run dry, most communities have plenty of sources to choose among.

The precise sources that make most sense for you to use will depend on the purpose of your group, the size of your community, and the time you have available. But basically, all you need is to start assembling those sources you choose, and get ready to go through them. Here are some examples:

- All towns have a yellow pages, an excellent source. It's not a bad idea at all simply to leaf through each page, from Accounting to Zoning if need be. This will trigger ideas. Some good general stopping points: the main institutions listed above — churches, schools, newspapers, for example–as well as associations, clubs, social service organizations. Also note categories in your special area of interest. These could be bankers, if your group could be looking for a loan; printers, if you might do brochures; lawyers, if you might need legal advice. Note also that many phone books also list local services in a special section up front.
- Many communities publish their own town guides, with listings similar to the Yellow Pages, but just for one community. Sometimes these are sold in stores. Other times, they may be available in the public library, or town hall, or through groups such as the League of Women Voters. Large cities may also have their own neighborhood guides, published by city government or sometimes neighborhood associations. Check around.
- Some communities have their own lists of social agencies; one agency often takes the lead in putting it out. That organization can vary, but one good place to start checking is the United Way. You may also be able to locate specialized mini-directories, dealing with services in one topic area, such as substance use. Sometimes there are directories in different languages, too. It's worth a look.
- Some communities also have their own lists of town organizations or clubs (as vs. agencies). The range here is wide. These can be formal or informal, up-to-the-moment or totally out-of-date. A good place to start looking is your public library — a friendly and knowledgeable reference librarian can help you a lot (maybe she or he is a potential member, too!).

Then there are specialized lists of certain kinds of people.

- Lists of *voters*, for example; both registered voters, and actual voters in local elections (available from town hall)
- Lists of *parents* with school-age children (available from the school department, in theory; it's often public record)
- Lists of everyone in your *neighborhood* or town, by street — i.e., town census lists (available from your

town clerk's office or local library)
- Lists of people in *specialized occupations*, such as physical therapists, or electricians, or architects (available from the nearest professional society chapter headquarters or from state boards of registration)

* Maybe the best single print source of all is your *local newspaper*. This is largely because information printed in directories gets out of date quickly, and the waiting period between directories can easily be a year or more. Newspapers, though, are current, easily available, and inexpensive. They also have one more big point in their favor; they print information that directories don't have.

That is, the newspaper will tell you about real estate transactions (here are potential new members, moving in), or Pop Warner football tryouts, or the next meeting of the Mothers of Twins club, or Arts Council news, or a new minister in town — in short, the full spectrum of what is going on in the community.

All of this is grist for the mill. Much of that grist may be useless to you, at least right now; yet if you search carefully through the newspaper, the chances are you will find some nuggets every week.

So there are plenty of sources. But before leaving this section, let's briefly mention two more obvious yet very important ones, as important as any we've noted:

- There are *contact lists that you can borrow* from or trade with other people, who have made up their own lists before. Why reinvent the wheel?
- And, of course, you can ask your friends and colleagues. You can say, "Who would be a good person to...?" or "Who would I call if I wanted to...?". Don't hesitate to ask. They might know. And even better, sometimes they might be able to make the call. They can help you when it's time to get that potential member on your side.

MAKING YOUR CONTACT LIST

Now that you have your sources lined up, your next step is to look through each source, and take notes. More specifically, take down (at least) the names, addresses and phone numbers of all those individuals and groups who might be potential members of your organization.

In a way, the task is very simple — it's just writing down names. But it will take time to do it right. So set aside that time, and strive for accuracy and completeness. Here are some tips on how to make the work go most effectively:

- *Be generous*. Take down more names than you may need. If in doubt, write it out. You can always whittle down your list later.
- *Cast a wide net*. You never know who will be interested in your group; at the beginning, it's best not to prejudge. Will the American Legion be interested in your senior center? Maybe not, or even probably not, but give the Legion a chance to decide.

- *Get details later*. Sometimes, you may have the name of a group, but not the key individuals within the group — the director, for example, or the president. That 's okay, for now. Record the name, address, and phone as before. Later on, you can call or ask around to get the names and titles of your key contact people.

- *Computer skills help*. If you or a colleague have good computer skills and can key in your names so that they wind up in alphabetical order (or broken out by other categories), that's a true advantage. But, truth be told, unless you are dealing with thousands of people, computers aren't necessary. A very humble 3″ x 5″ or 4″ x 6″ index card file can generate pretty much the same results, for a likely cash outlay of under $5, file box included. The card file has advantages too — you can carry it with you, make marks on it, and rearrange it anytime you want.

- *Read your newspaper*: If your community has a local newspaper, subscribe to it. At least make sure to read copies when each issue appears. But you want to do more than simply read the paper — you want a pair of scissors nearby, so that you can clip items that relate to potential members of your group. If you are serious about membership, you may well find at least one or two potential new individuals or group members in each issue. You can keep those clippings in different file folders, without drowning in paper.

- *Prioritize your list*. When you have collected all your names, put them in rough priority order. Your priorities should be based upon how much you desire that person (or group he or she represents) to become a member of your organization. What skills or talents do you need for your group? What can this particular member contribute? The answers to these questions will take careful consideration.

One way of prioritizing is to divide names into "A," "B," and "C" lists, with "A" being top priority, and of a size roughly equal to the number of new names you want. For example, suppose you have 300 names on your total list. You want 50 new members. Compose an "A" group of size = 50, and contact them first.

Keep in mind that names will change, so your list will need to be updated every so often. Putting together a good list of potential members will take time. In fact, it's easy to underestimate the amount of time it will take. Don't. And try not to get impatient if it takes more time than you think.

But it's also easy to underestimate the value of a good list once you have it. Your work will pay off. When you are ready to start recruiting your members, all your contact information will be right in front of you — there'll be nothing more to look up. All you'll need to do is to write the letter, or make the phone call, (and record the results), not that either of those is always easy.

Your contact list will have other values, too. You can also use it for mailings, to publicize what you are doing. Or, possibly, at some point for fund-raising. Or perhaps to lend to or trade with other groups, to help them, and build your credit with them if you're so inclined. If you've got a good list, and others know about it, they may beat a path to your door. Make sure your doorbell is working!

NEXT STEPS

Of course, a list is just a list. Those listed are potential members; they may have never heard of you. They are certainly not yet flesh-and-blood members who are going to show up at meetings and do some work in-between. To make them real members, you have to contact them.

Making contact with potential members is not a casual affair. Such contact is a form of courtship. Like most successful courtships, it requires thought and planning. To learn more about how best to make the contact, and make it successful, and bridge the gap from potential to active membership, is the topic of the next two sections.

Online Resources

Chapter 8: Respect for Diversity in the "Introduction to Community Psychology" explains cultural humility as an approach to diversity, the dimensions of diversity, the complexity of identity, and important cultural considerations.

Diverse Partners in Planning and Decision Making. By Louise Parker and Drew Betz, Washington State University. Extension.

A ladder of citizen participation is an article that begins by asking what is citizen participation and what is its relationship to the social imperatives of our time?

Reaching Out to Diverse Populations: Opportunities and Challenges. For psychologists, from the American Psychological Association (APA).

Recruit Participants from Diverse Groups. From Everyday Democracy.

Working with Diverse Cultures. A fact sheet on diversity from the Ohio State University Extension.

PART IV

CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND SPIRITUALITY IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

CHAPTER 8 - DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN

Learn how to use VMOSA to take a dream and make it a reality by developing a vision, setting goals, defining them, and developing action plans.

VMOSA (Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans) is a practical planning process used to help community groups define a vision and develop practical ways to enact change. VMOSA helps your organization set and achieve short term goals while keeping sight of your long term vision. Implementing this planning process into your group's efforts supports developing a clear mission, building consensus, and grounding your group's dreams. This section explores how and when to implement VMOSA into your organization's planning process.

WHAT IS VMOSA?

One way to make that journey is through strategic planning, the process by which a group defines its own "VMOSA;" that is, its **V**ision, **M**ission, **O**bjectives, **S**trategies, and **A**ction Plans. VMOSA is a practical planning process that can be used by any community organization or initiative. This comprehensive planning tool can help your organization by providing a blueprint for moving from dreams to actions to positive outcomes for your community.

In this section, we will give a general overview of the process, and touch briefly on each of the individual parts. In Examples, we'll show you how an initiative to prevent adolescent pregnancy used the VMOSA process effectively. Then, in Tools, we offer you a possible agenda for a planning retreat, should your organization decide to use this process. Finally, the remaining sections in this chapter will walk you through the steps needed to fully develop each portion of the process.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION USE VMOSA?

Why should your organization use this planning process? There are many good reasons, including all of the following:

- The VMOSA process grounds your dreams. It makes good ideas possible by laying out what needs to happen in order to achieve your vision.
- By creating this process in a group effort (taking care to involve both people affected by the problem and those with the abilities to change it), it allows your organization to build consensus around your focus and the necessary steps your organization should take.
- The process gives you an opportunity to develop your vision and mission together with those in the community who will be affected by what you do. That means that your work is much more likely to address the community's real needs and desires, rather than what you think they might be. It also means community ownership of the vision and mission, putting everyone on the same page and greatly increasing the chances that any effort will be successful.
- VMOSA allows your organization to focus on your short-term goals while keeping sight of your long-term vision and mission.

WHEN SHOULD YOU USE VMOSA?

So, when should you use this strategic planning process? Of course, it always makes sense for your organization to have the direction and order it gives you, but there are some times it makes particularly good sense to use this process. These times include:

- When you are starting a new organization.
- When your organization is starting a new initiative or large project, or is going to begin work in a new direction.
- When your group is moving into a new phase of an ongoing effort.
- When you are trying to invigorate an older initiative that has lost its focus or momentum.
- When you're applying for new funding or to a new funder. It's important under these circumstances to clarify your vision and mission so that any funding you seek supports what your organization actually stands for. Otherwise, you can wind up with strings attached to the money that require you to take a direction not in keeping with your organization's real purpose or philosophy.

Let's look briefly at each of the individual ingredients important in this process. Then, in the next few sections we'll look at each of these in a more in-depth manner, and explain how to go about developing each step of the planning process.

VISION (THE DREAM)

Your vision communicates what your organization believes are the ideal conditions for your community – how things would look if the issue important to you were perfectly addressed. This utopian dream is generally described by one or more phrases or vision statements, which are brief proclamations that convey the community's dreams for the future. By developing a vision statement, your organization makes the beliefs and governing principles of your organization clear to the greater community (as well as to your own staff, participants, and volunteers).

There are certain characteristics that most vision statements have in common. In general, vision statements should be:

- Understood and shared by members of the community
- Broad enough to encompass a variety of local perspectives
- Inspiring and uplifting to everyone involved in your effort
- Easy to communicate – for example, they should be short enough to fit on a T-shirt

Here are a few vision statements which meet the above criteria:

- Healthy children
- Safe streets, safe neighborhoods
- Every house a home
- Education for all
- Peace on earth

MISSION (THE WHAT AND WHY)

Developing *mission statements* are the next step in the action planning process. An organization's mission statement describes *what* the group is going to do, and *why* it's going to do that. Mission statements are similar to vision statements, but they're more concrete, and they are definitely more "action-oriented" than vision statements. The mission might refer to a problem, such as an inadequate housing, or a goal, such as providing access to health care for everyone. And, while they don't go into a lot of detail, they start to hint – very broadly – at *how* your organization might go about fixing the problems it has noted. Some general guiding principles about mission statements are that they are:

- *Concise*. Although not as short a phrase as a vision statement, a mission statement should still get its point across in one sentence.
- *Outcome-oriented*. Mission statements explain the overarching outcomes your organization is working to achieve.
- *Inclusive*. While mission statements do make statements about your group's overarching goals, it's very important that they do so very broadly. Good mission statements are not limiting in the strategies or sectors of the community that may become involved in the project.

The following mission statements are examples that meet the above criteria.

- "To promote child health and development through a comprehensive family and community initiative."
- "To create a thriving African American community through development of jobs, education, housing, and cultural pride.
- "To develop a safe and healthy neighborhood through collaborative planning, community action, and policy advocacy."

   While vision and mission statements themselves should be short, it often makes sense for an organization to include its deeply held beliefs or philosophy, which may in fact define both its work and the organization itself. One way to do this without sacrificing the directness of the vision and mission statements is to include guiding principles as an addition to the statements. These can lay out the beliefs of the organization while keeping its vision and mission statements short and to the point.

OBJECTIVES (HOW MUCH OF WHAT WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY WHEN)

Once an organization has developed its mission statement, its next step is to develop the specific objectives that are focused on achieving that mission. Objectives refer to specific measurable results for the initiative's broad goals. An organization's objectives generally lay out how much of what will be accomplished by when. For

example, one of several objectives for a community initiative to promote care and caring for older adults might be: "By 2025 (by when), to increase by 20% (how much) those elders reporting that they are in daily contact with someone who cares about them (of what)."

There are three basic types of objectives. They are:

- *Behavioral objectives*. These objectives look at changing the behaviors of people (what they are doing and saying) and the products (or results) of their behaviors. For example, a neighborhood improvement group might develop an objective around having an increased amount of home repair taking place (the behavior) or of improved housing (the result).
- *Community-level outcome objectives*. These are related to behavioral outcome objectives, but are more focused more on a community level instead of an individual level. For example, the same group might suggest increasing the percentage of decent affordable housing in the community as a community-level outcome objective.
- *Process objectives*. These are the objectives that refer to the implementation of activities necessary to achieve other objectives. For example, the group might adopt a comprehensive plan for improving neighborhood housing.

It's important to understand that these different types of objectives aren't mutually exclusive. Most groups will develop objectives in all three categories. Examples of objectives include:

- By December 2030, to increase by 30% parent engagement (i.e., talking, playing, reading) with children under 2 years of age. (*Behavioral objective*)
- By 2025, to have made a 40% increase in youth graduating from high school. (*Community -level outcome objective*)
- By the year 2026, increase by 30% the percentage of families that own their home. (*Community-level outcome objective*)
- By December of this year, implement the volunteer training program for all volunteers. (*Process objective*)

STRATEGIES (THE HOW)

The next step in the process of VMOSA is developing your strategies. Strategies explain how the initiative will reach its objectives. Generally, organizations will have a wide variety of strategies that include people from all of the different parts, or sectors, of the community. These strategies range from the very broad, which encompass people and resources from many different parts of the community, to the very specific, which aim at carefully defined areas.

Examples of broad strategies include:

- A child health program might use social marketing to promote adult involvement with children
- An adolescent pregnancy initiative might decide to increase access to contraceptives in the community
- An urban revitalization project might enhance the artistic life of the community by encouraging artists to perform in the area

Five types of specific strategies can help guide most interventions. They are:

- Providing information and enhancing skills (e.g., offer skills training in conflict management)
- Enhancing services and support (e.g., start a mentoring programs for high-risk youth)
- Modify access, barriers, and opportunities (such as offering scholarships to students who would be otherwise unable to attend college)
- Change the consequences of efforts (e.g., provide incentives for community members to volunteer)
- Modify policies (e.g., change business policies to allow parents and guardians and volunteers to spend more time with young children)

ACTION PLAN (WHAT CHANGE WILL HAPPEN; WHO WILL DO WHAT BY WHEN TO MAKE IT HAPPEN)

Finally, an organization's action plan describes in great detail exactly how strategies will be implemented to accomplish the objectives developed earlier in this process. The plan refers to: a) specific (community and systems) changes to be sought, and b) the specific action steps necessary to bring about changes in all of the relevant sectors, or parts, of the community.

The key aspects of the intervention or (community and systems) changes to be sought are outlined in the action plan. For example, in a program whose mission is to increase youth interest in politics, one of the strategies might be to teach students about the electoral system. Some of the action steps, then, might be to develop age-appropriate materials for students, to hold mock elections for candidates in local schools, and to include some teaching time in the curriculum.

Action steps are developed for each component of the intervention or (community and systems) changes to be sought. These include:

- Action step(s): What will happen
- Person(s) responsible: Who will do what
- Date to be completed: Timing of each action step
- Resources required: Resources and support (both what is needed and what's available)
- Barriers or resistance, and a plan to overcome them!
- Collaborators: Who else should know about this action

Here are two examples of action steps, graphed out so you can easily follow the flow:

Action Step	Person(s) Responsible	Date to be Completed	Resources Required	Potential Barriers or Resistance	Collaborators
• Draft a social marketing plan	Terry McNeil (from marketing firm)	April 2026	$15,000 (remaining donated)	None anticipated	Members of the business action group
• Ask local corporations to introduce flex-time for parents and mentors	Maria Suarez (from business action group)	September 2028	5 hours; 2 hour proposal prep; 3 hours for meeting and transportation	Corporation: may see this as expensive; must convince them of benefit of the plan for the corporation	Members of the business action group and the school action group

Of course, once you have finished designing the strategic plan or "VMOSA" for your organization, you are just beginning in this work. Your action plan will need to be tried and tested and revised, then tried and tested and revised again. You'll need to obtain feedback from community members, and add and subtract elements of your plan based on that feedback.

IN SUMMARY

Everyone has a dream. But the most successful individuals – and community organizations – take that dream and find a way to make it happen. VMOSA helps groups do just that. This strategic planning process helps community groups define their dream, set their goals, define ways to meet those goals, and finally, develop practical ways bring about needed changes.

In this section, you've gained a general understanding of the strategic planning process. If you believe your organization might benefit from using this process, we invite you to move on to the next sections of this chapter, which explain in some depth how to design and develop your own strategic plan.

Contributor

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Online Resources

Concerns Report Handbook: Planning for Community Health

The Free Management Library presents a thorough guide to strategic and action planning, plus links to online discussion groups.

Imagining Our Dream Community provides guidance for visualizing your organization's ideal community.

Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy: An Action Planning Guide for Community-Based Initiatives

Preventing Adolescent Substance Abuse: An Action Planning Guide for Community-Based Initiatives

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: An Action Planning Guide for Community-Based Initiatives

Preventing Youth Violence: An Action Planning Guide for Community-Based Initiatives

Promoting Child Well-Being: An Action Planning Guide for Community-Based Initiatives

Promoting Health for All: Improving Access and Eliminating Disparities in Community Health

Promoting Healthy Living and Preventing Chronic Disease: An Action Planning Guide for Communities

Promoting Urban Neighborhood Development: An Action Planning Guide for Improving Housing, Jobs, Education, Safety and Health

Reducing Risk for Chronic Disease: An Action Planning Guide for Community-Based Initiatives

The Ruckus Society offers an Action Planning Manual that discusses strategies for nonviolent direct action.

Strategice Plan information page from Implementation Matters.

The Strategic Planning Process outlines 8 steps to developing a customized strategic plan for a coalition.

Work Group Evaluation Handbook

Your Action Planning Guide for Promoting Full Community Participation Among People with Disabilities, a resource for independent living centers and other community-based initiatives, from the KU Research & Training Center on Independent Living and the KU Center for Community Health and Development.

Youth Development: An Action Planning Guide for Community-Based Initiatives

Print Resources

Barry, B. (1982). *Strategic planning workbook for non-profit organizations*. St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

Bryson, J. (1988). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Coover, V., et al. (1985). *Resource manual for a living revolution: a handbook of skills & tools for social change activists*. Philadelphia: New Society Publisher.

Fawcett, S., Paine, A., Francisco, V., Richter, K.., Lewis, R., Williams, E., Harris, K., Winter-Green, K., in collaboration with Bradley, B. & Copple, J. (1992). *Preventing adolescent substance abuse: an action planning guide for community -based initiatives*. Lawrence, KS: Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development, University of Kansas.

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Halfon, N., Inkelas, M., Rice, T., Sutherland, C., Tullis, E., & Uyeda, K. (2004). *Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems. Volume 6: A Strategic Planning Guide for State-Level Early Childhood Systems-Building Initiatives: From Resources to Results for Young Children and Their Families.* Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities.

Kansas Health Foundation. *VMOSA: An approach to strategic planning.* Wichita, KS: Kansas Health Foundation.

Lord, R. (1989). T*he non-profit problem solver: a management guide.* New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.

Murray, E., & Richardson, P. (2002). *Fast Forward: Organizational Changes in 100 Days.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Olenick, J., & Olenick, R. (1991). *A non-profit organization operating manual: planning for survival and growth.* New York, NY: Foundation Center.

Stonich, P. J. (1982). *Implementing strategy: making strategy happen.* Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company.

Unterman, I., & Davis, R. (1984). *Strategic management of not-for-profit organizations.* New York, NY: CBS Educational and Professional Publishing.

Watson-Thompson, J., Fawcett, S.B., & Schultz, J. (2008). *Differential effects of strategic planning on community change in two urban neighborhood coalitions.* American Journal of Community Psychology, 42, 25-38.

Wolff, T. (1990). *Managing a non-profit organization.* New York, NY: Prentice Hall Press.

Wolff, T. (2010). *The Power of Collaborative Solutions: Six Principles and Effective Tools for Building Healthy Communities.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Learn how to develop effective vision and mission statements to effectively communicate the work of your organization or effort.

Creating your organization's vision and mission statements are the first two steps in the VMOSA action planning process. Developing a vision and mission statement is crucial to the success of community initiatives. These statements explain your group's aspirations in a concise manner, help your organization focus on what is really important, and provide a basis for developing other aspects of your strategic plan. This section provides a guide for developing and implementing your organization's vision and mission statements.

WHAT IS A VISION STATEMENT?

Your vision is your dream. It's what your organization believes are the ideal conditions for your community; that is, how things would look if the issue important to you were completely, perfectly addressed. It might be a world without war, or a community in which all people are treated as equals, regardless of gender or racial background.

Whatever your organization's dream is, it may be well articulated by one or more *vision statements*, which are short phrases or sentences that convey your community's hopes for the future. By developing a vision statement or statements, your organization clarifies the beliefs and governing principles of your organization, first for yourselves, and then for the greater community.

There are certain characteristics that most vision statements have in common. In general, vision statements should be:

- Understood and shared by members of the community
- Broad enough to include a diverse variety of local perspectives
- Inspiring and uplifting to everyone involved in your effort
- Easy to communicate – for example, they are generally short enough to fit on a T-shirt

Here are some examples of vision statements that meet the above criteria:

- A community where all individuals and families achieve their human potential.
- CALCASA envisions a world free from sexual violence.
- A future where tobacco is a thing of the past. (Truth Initiative)
- A world without Alzheimer's Disease. (Alzheimer's Association)
- The United States is a humane community in which all animals are treated with respect and kindness. (ASPCA)
- A world where everyone has a decent place to live. (Habitat for Humanity)

WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT?

The next step of the action planning process is to ground your vision in practical terms. This is where developing a *mission statement* comes in. An organization's mission statement describes *what* the group is going to do and *why* it's going to do that. An example is "Promoting care and caring at the end of life through coalitions and advocacy."

Mission statements are similar to vision statements, in that they, too, look at the big picture. However, they're more concrete, and they are definitely more "action-oriented" than vision statements. Your vision statement should inspire people to dream; your mission statement should inspire them to action.

The mission statement might refer to a problem, such as an inadequate housing, or a goal, such as providing universal access to health care. And, while they don't go into a lot of detail, they hint – very broadly – at how your organization might fix these problems or reach these goals. Some general guiding principles about mission statements are that they are:

- *Concise*. While not as short as vision statements, mission statements generally still get their point across in one sentence.
- *Outcome-oriented*. Mission statements explain the fundamental outcomes your organization is working to achieve.
- *Inclusive*. While mission statements do make statements about your group's key goals, it's very important that they do so very broadly. Good mission statements are not limiting in the strategies or sectors of the community that may become involved in the project.

The following examples should help you understand what we mean by effective mission statements.

- Promoting community health and development by connecting people, ideas and resources. (Community Tool Box)
- The California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) provides leadership, vision and resources to rape crisis centers, individuals and other entities committed to ending sexual violence.
- Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. (Alzheimer's Association)
- The mission of the ASPCA, as stated by Henry Bergh in 1866, is "to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States".
- Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

WHY SHOULD YOU CREATE VISION AND MISSION

STATEMENTS?

Why is it important that your organization develops vision and mission statements like those above? First of all, these statements can help your organization focus on what is really important. Although your organization knows what you are trying to do to improve your community, it's easy to lose sight of this when dealing with day-to-day organizational hassles. Your vision and mission statements remind members what is important.

Second, your vision and mission statements give other individuals and organizations a snapshot view of what your group is and what it wants to accomplish. When your vision and mission statements are easily visible (for example, if they are on the letterhead of your stationery), people learn about your organization without having to work hard for the information. Then, those with common interests can take the time necessary to learn more. This efficiency is very helpful when you are recruiting other people and organizations to join your effort.

Finally, vision and mission statements focus members on their common purpose . Not only do the statements themselves serve as a constant reminder of what is important to your organization, the process of developing them allows people to see the organization as "theirs". Creating these statements builds motivation as members will believe in something more completely if they had a hand in developing it.

Having a clear and compelling vision statement has other advantages, such as:

- Drawing people to common work
- Giving hope for a better future
- Inspiring community members to realize their dreams through positive, effective action
- Providing a basis for developing the other aspects of your action planning process: your mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans

Having a clear and compelling mission statement also has more advantages, such as:

- Converting the broad dreams of your vision into more specific, action-oriented terms
- Explaining your goals to interested parties in a clear and concise manner
- Enhancing your organization's image as being competent and professional, thus reassuring funding sources that their investment was (or would be!) a smart choice

HOW DO YOU CREATE VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS?

Now having a better understanding of vision and mission statements, your organization has the tools to develop your unique statements. If your group has already developed vision and mission statements, you might

wish to look at them in light of the criteria we discussed above. If members of your organization feel your current statements could be improved, this process can be easily used to modify them. Let's begin.

LEARN WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

As developing your vision and mission statements is the first step in creating your action plan, it is especially important that these first steps are well grounded in community beliefs and values. Awareness of the important issues in your community is critical for the development of a strong, effective, and enduring action group.

Therefore, one of the first steps you should take when developing the vision and mission of your organization is to define the issue(s) that matter most to people in your community. How do you go about doing so?

There are many different ways you can gather this information, including:

Conducting "public forums" or "listening sessions" with members of the community to gather ideas, thoughts, and opinions about how they would like to see the community transformed.

In public forums or listening sessions, people gather from throughout the community to talk about what is important to them. These meetings are usually led by facilitators, who guide a discussion of what people perceive to be the community's strengths and problems, and what people wish the community was like. Someone typically records these meetings, and a transcript of what is said provides a basis for subsequent planning.

Holding focus groups with the people interested in addressing the issue(s), including community leaders, people most affected by the issues, businesses, church leaders, teachers, etc.

Focus groups are similar to public forums and listening sessions, but they are smaller and more intimate. Generally speaking, they are comprised of small groups of people with similar backgrounds, so they will feel comfortable talking openly about what concerns them. For example, the group members are generally about the same age, are of the same ethnic group, or have another common identity and/or experience. Focus groups function like public forums, and also use facilitators and recorders to focus and document discussion.

Your organization may hold focus groups with several different groups of people to get the most holistic view of the issue at hand. For example, if your organization is involved in child health, you might have one focus group with health care providers, another with parents or children, and still another with teachers. Once you have a rough mission statement, you might again hold a focus group for feedback.

Obtaining interviews with people in leadership and service positions, including such individuals as local politicians, school administrators, hospital and social service agency staff, about what problems or needs they believe exist in your community.

Often, these individuals will have both facts and experiences to back up their perspectives. If so, this data can be used later if and when you apply for funding, or when you request community support to address the issues. More information on this topic can be found in Chapter 3, Section 12: Conducting Interviews.

It's important to realize that these different ways of gathering information from your community are not

mutually exclusive. In fact, if you have the resources, it is recommended to do all of the above: to have some time for the community at large to respond, then spend more time in focus groups with the people you believe might contribute greatly to (or be most affected by) some of the issues brought up in the public forum. And finally, some one-on-one time with community leaders can strengthen your knowledge and purpose; remember, there are community members who have been wrestling with the same issues you are now looking at for a long time. Take advantage of that experience so you don't waste time on something that's already been done.

DECIDE WHAT TO ASK

No matter if you are talking to one person or a crowd, your purpose is the same: to learn what matters in your community. Here's a list of questions you might use to focus your discussions with community members. These questions may be used for individual interviews, focus groups, public forums, or in any other way you choose to gather information.

- What is your dream/vision for our community?
- What would you like to see change?
- What kind of community (or program, policy, school, neighborhood, etc.) do we want to create?
- What do you see as the community's (or school's, neighborhood's, etc.) major issues or problems?
- What do you see as the community's major strengths and assets?
- What do you think should be the purpose of this organization (or effort)?
- Why should these issues be addressed?
- What would success look like?

When your organization is gathering input, the facilitator should encourage everyone to share their most idealistic, hopeful, and positive ideas. Don't worry right now about what's practical and what's not – this can be narrowed down later. Encourage everyone to be bold and participate, and to remember that you are trying to articulate a vision of a better community.

DECIDE ON THE GENERAL FOCUS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

Once members of your organization have heard what the community has to say, it's time to decide the general focus of your organization or initiative. First of all, what topic is most important to your organization and your community? For example, will you tackle urban development or public health issues? Racism or economic opportunity?

A second question to answer is at what level will your organization work. Will your organization begin only

in one school, or in one neighborhood, or in your city? Or will your initiative's focus be broader, working on a state, national, or even international level?

These are questions for which there are no easy answers. Your organization will need to consider lessons learned from the community and decide through thoughtful discussion the best direction for your organization. We suggest you open this discussion up to everyone in your organization to obtain the best results.

However, if your organization is receiving grant money or major funding from a particular agency, the grant maker may specify what the general goal of your group should be. For example, if your group accepts a grant to reduce child hunger, at least part of its mission will be devoted to this purpose. Even in these circumstances, however, the community should determine the ultimate vision and mission that will best advance what matters to local people.

DEVELOP YOUR VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Now that your organization has a clearer understanding of what the group will do and why, you are in a prime position to develop the statements that will capture your ideas.

As you are looking at potential statements, remember to keep them broad and enduring. Vision and mission statements wide in scope allow for a sense of continuity with a community's history, traditions, and broad purposes. Additionally, vision and mission statements that are built to last will guide efforts both today and tomorrow.

Vision Statements

First of all, remind members of your organization that it often takes several vision statements to fully capture the dreams of those involved in a community improvement effort. You don't need – or even want – just one "perfect" phrase. Encourage people to suggest all of their ideas and write them down, possibly on poster paper at the front of the room, so people can be further inspired by the ideas of others. As you do this, remind the group of:

- What you have learned from your discussions with community members
- What your organization has decided will be your focus
- What you learned about vision statements at the beginning of this section

If you have a hard time getting started, you might wish to check out some of the vision statements in this section's Examples. You might ask yourself how well they meet the above suggestions.

After you have brainstormed a list of suggestions, your group can discuss critically the different ideas. Oftentimes, some of the vision statements will jump out at you – someone will suggest it, and people will just instantly think, "That's it!"

If it's more complicated than that, you should ask yourselves the following questions:

- Will it draw people to common work?
- Does it give hope for a better future?
- Will it inspire community members to realize their dreams through positive, effective action?
- Does it provide a basis for developing the other aspects of your action planning process?

A final caution: try not to get caught up in having a certain number of vision statements for your organization. Whether you ultimately end up with two vision statements or ten, what is most important is that the statements together provide a holistic view of your organization's vision.

Mission Statements

The process of writing your mission statement is similar to developing your vision statements. The same brainstorming process can help you develop possibilities for your mission statement. Remember, though, that unlike vision statements, you will want to develop a *single* mission statement for your work. After brainstorming possible statements, you will want to answer questions for each one:

- Does it describe *what* your organization will do and *why* it will do it?
- Is it concise (one sentence)?
- Is it outcome oriented?
- Is it inclusive of the goals and people who may become involved in the organization?

Together, your organization can decide on a statement that best meets these criteria.

OBTAIN CONSENSUS ON YOUR VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Once members of your organization have developed your vision and mission statements, your next step might be to learn what other community members think of them before you use the statements regularly.

To do this, you could talk to the same community leaders or focus group members you spoke to originally. First of all, this can help you ensure that they don't find the statements offensive in any way. For example, an initiative that wants to include young men more fully in its teen pregnancy prevention project might have "Young men in Asheville are the best informed" as one of their vision statements. But taken out of context, some people community members might believe this statement means young men are given better information or education than young women, thus offending another group of people.

Second, you will want to ensure that community members agree that the statements together capture the spirit of what they believe and desire. Your organization might find it has omitted something very important by mistake.

DECIDE HOW YOU WILL USE YOUR VISION AND MISSION

STATEMENTS

Finally, it's important to remember that while developing the statements is a huge step for your organization worth celebration, there is more work to be done. Next, you have to decide how to use these statements. Otherwise, all of your hard work would lead to nothing. The point is to get the message across.

There are many ways in which your organization may choose to spread its vision and mission statements. To name just a few examples, you might:

- Add them to your letterhead or stationery
- Use them on your website
- Give away T-shirts, or bookmarks, or other small gifts with them
- Add them to your press kit
- Use them when you give interviews
- Display them on the cover of your annual report

...and so on. Again, this is a step that will use all of your creativity.

IN SUMMARY

Developing effective vision and mission statements are two of the most important tasks your organization will tackle because almost everything else you do is affected by these statements. We hope that this section has allowed you to feel more confident in your group's ability to create successful and inspiring vision and mission statements. Remember, think broadly and boldly! Good luck!

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Online Resources

Coalition Vision, Mission, and Goals defines SWOT Analysis, coalition vision and mission statements, and goals and strategies.

Print Resources

Barry, B. (1982). *Strategic planning workbook for non-profit organizations*. St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

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Learn how to develop SMART+C objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed, and Challenging) for your efforts.

To obtain results, we need to articulate the outcomes we desire.

This section focuses on developing specific objectives that will help make your vision and mission a reality.

WHAT ARE OBJECTIVES?

Objectives are the specific measurable results of the initiative. Objectives specify *how much* of *what* will be accomplished by *when*. For example, one of several objectives for a community initiative to promote care and

caring for older adults might be: "By 2024 (*by when*), to increase by 20% (*how much*) those elders reporting that they are in daily contact with someone who cares about them (*of what*)."

There are three basic types of objectives. They are:

- *Process objectives*. These are the objectives that provide the groundwork or implementation necessary to achieve your other objectives. For example, the group might adopt a comprehensive plan for improving neighborhood housing. In this case, adoption of the plan itself is the objective.
- *Behavioral objectives*. These objectives look at changing the behaviors of people (what they are doing and saying) and the products (or results) of their behaviors. For example, a neighborhood improvement group might develop an objective for having an increased amount of home repair taking place (the behavior) and fewer houses with broken or boarded-up windows (the result).
- *Community-level outcome objectives*. These are often the product or result of behavior change in many people. They are focused on change at the community level instead of an individual level. For example, the same neighborhood group might have an objective of increasing the percentage of people living in the community with adequate housing as a community-level outcome objective.

It's important to understand that these different types of objectives aren't mutually exclusive. Most groups will develop objectives in all three categories.

Objectives should be **S.M.A.R.T. + C.:**

- *Specific*. That is, they tell *how much* (e.g., 10%) of *what* is to be achieved (e.g., what behavior of whom or what outcome) *by when* (e.g., by 2025)?
- *Measurable*. Information concerning the objective can be collected, detected, or obtained.
- *Achievable*. It is feasible to pull them off.
- *Relevant* to the mission. Your organization has a clear understanding of how these objectives fit in with the overall vision and mission of the group.
- *Timed*. Your organization has developed a timeline (a portion of which is made clear in the objectives) by which they will be achieved.
- *Challenging*. They stretch the group to set its aims on significant improvements that are important to members of the community.

WHY SHOULD YOU CREATE OBJECTIVES?

There are many good reasons to develop objectives for your initiative. They include:

- Having benchmarks to show progress.
- Completed objectives can serve as a marker to show members of your organization, funders, and the

greater community what your initiative has accomplished.

- Creating objectives helps your organization keep focused on initiatives most likely to have an impact.
- Keeping members of the organization working toward the same long-term goals.

WHEN SHOULD YOU CREATE OBJECTIVES?

Your community organization should create objectives when:

- Your organization has developed (or revamped) its vision and mission statements, and is ready to take the next step in the planning process.
- Your organization's focus has changed or expanded. For example, perhaps your organization's mission relates to care and caring at the end of life. You have recently been made aware of new resources, however, to positively affect the lives of those deeply affected by the death of a loved one. If your organization were to apply for this new grant, it would clearly expand upon your current work, and would require objectives as you developed your action plan.
- The organization wants to address a community issue or problem, create a service, or make a community change that requires:
  - Several years to complete. For example, your child health organization might hope to increase the percentage of students who finish high school – a task that may take several years to complete.
  - A change in behavior of large numbers of people. For example, your organization may be trying to reduce risks for cardiovascular diseases, and one of your objectives may be to increase the number of adults who engage in physical activity in your community.
  - A multi-faceted approach. For example, with a problem as complex as substance use, your organization may have to worry about tackling related issues, such as access to drugs, available drug rehabilitation services, legal consequences for drug use, etc., as well as reducing the prevalence (how often or how much) of drug use.

HOW DO YOU CREATE OBJECTIVES?

So once your organization has decided that it does wish to develop objectives, how do you go about doing so? Let's look at the process that will help you to define and refine objectives for your organization.

DEFINE OR REAFFIRM YOUR VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

The first thing you will need to do is review the vision and mission statements your organization has developed. Before you determine your objectives, you should have a "big picture" that they fit into.

DETERMINE THE CHANGES TO BE MADE

The crux of writing realistic objectives is learning what changes need to happen in order to fulfill your mission. There are many ways to do this, including:

- *Research what experts in your field believe to be the best ways to solve the problem*. For many community issues, researchers have developed useful ideas of what needs to occur to see real progress. This information may be available through local libraries, the Internet, state and national agencies, national nonprofit groups, and university research groups.
- *Discuss with local experts what needs to occur*. Some of the people with whom you may wish to talk include:
  - Other members of your organization
  - Local experts, such as members of other, similar organizations who have a great deal of experience with the issue you are trying to change
  - *Agents of change*, or the people in a position to contribute to the solution. Agents of change might include teachers, business leaders, church leaders, local politicians, community members, and members of the media.
  - Targets of change, the people who experience the problem or issue on a day-to-day basis and those people whose actions contribute to the problem. Changing their behavior will become the heart of your objectives.
- *Discuss the logistical requirements of your own organization to successfully address community needs*. At the same time your organization is looking at what needs to happen in the community to solve the issue important to you, you should also consider what your organization requires to get that done. Do you need an action plan? Additional funding? More staff, or more training for additional staff? This information is necessary to develop the process objectives we talked about earlier in this section.

At this point in the planning process, you don't need hard and fast answers to the above questions. What you should develop as part of this step is a general list of what needs to occur to make the changes you want to see.

For example, **perhaps your group has decided upon the following mission: "To reduce risk for cardiovascular diseases through a community-wide initiative."** At this point in your research (without getting into specifics), your organization might have decided that your objectives will be based on the following general goals:

- Begin smoking cessation programs
- Begin smoking prevention programs
- Bring about an increase in aerobic exercise
- Decrease the amount of obesity
- Encourage healthier diets

- Increase preventative medicine (for example, more checkups for earlier detection of disease; better understanding of warning signs and symptoms)
- Increase the scientific understanding of your own organization regarding the causes and pathophysiology of cardiovascular disease
- Strengthen your organization's ties with national organizations committed to the same goals as your organization

COLLECT BASELINE DATA ON THE ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

As soon as your organization has a general idea of what it wants to accomplish, the next step is to develop *baseline data* on the issue to be addressed. Baseline data are the facts and figures that tell you how big the problem is; it gives specific figures about the extent to which it exists in your community.

Baseline data can indicate the *incidence* (new cases) of a problem in the community. For example, "Malott County has an adolescent pregnancy rate of 12.3 pregnancies for every thousand teenage girls." Such data can also reveal the *prevalence* (existing cases) of the problem. For example, "In Jefferson County, 35% of teens reported that they did not use contraceptives during the last time they had sex."

Baseline data may also measure *community attitudes* towards a problem. For example, "65% of the residents of Malott County do not consider teen pregnancy to be an important problem for the community."

Why collect baseline data?

This information is important because baseline data provides your organization with the numbers; the starting points against which you can measure how much progress you have made. Not only is this information helpful when originally asking for financial (or other) assistance, it can help you show what your organization has done later in its lifetime.

So, early in your organization's life, you can prove to funders that there really is a very significant problem in your community that needs to be addressed ("Malott County's adolescent pregnancy rate is the highest in the state of Georgia.") Then, when asked later in the life of your community initiative, "What have you done?" you will be able to answer, "Since our coalition was formed, Malott County has seen pregnancy among teens drop by 35%." If you don't collect (or obtain) the baseline information, you can't prove how much you have done.

How do you collect this information?

There are two basic ways to collect baseline data:

- You can collect your own baseline data for the information related to your specific issues. Ways to gather this information include the use of surveys, questionnaires, and personal interviews.
- You can use information that has already been collected. Public libraries, city government, social service agencies, local schools, or city health departments may already have the statistics that you want, especially if another organization has already done work on a similar issue in your community.

DECIDE WHAT IS REALISTIC FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION TO ACCOMPLISH

Once you know what you want to do, as well as exactly how big the problem is, it's time to figure out how much you believe your organization can accomplish. Do you have the resources to affect all of the goals you looked at in Step Two? And to what extent will you be able to achieve them?

These questions are difficult ones to answer. It's hard for a new organization to know what it can reasonably expect to get done. For example, if you are trying to increase rates of childhood immunization, will your organization be able to increase it by 5% in three years, or by 20% in one year? How do you make these decisions?

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers. Your organization will need to take a good look at its resources, as well as talk to experts who have a sense of what is not only possible, but likely. For example, you might ask members of organizations who have done similar things, or researchers in your topic area what they believe makes sense.

Remember, you are attempting to set objectives that are both *achievable* and *challenging*. It's hard to hit just the right note of balance between these two qualities, and you may not always get it just right. Research and experience, however, should help you come closer and closer to this goal.

SET THE OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION OR INITIATIVE

With all of this information in mind, your organization is ready to set some short-term goals or objectives that are feasible but demanding. Remember, objectives refer to *specific measurable results*. These changes in behavior, outcome, and process must be able to be tracked and measured in such a way to show that a change has occurred.

> **A caution**: Oftentimes, the objectives of a community initiative or organization are set or influenced by the primary funding agency. Regardless of outside influences, each community initiative must decide what problems it is going to take on and what objectives would define success for their organization.

Your organization's list of objectives should do all of the following:

- Include all three types of objectives: objectives that measure behavior change, community outcomes, and those that measure important parts of the planning process.
- Include specific objectives that tell how much of what will occur by when. For example, "By 2025, rates of teen pregnancy among 12-17 year old girls will decrease by 30%."
- They should include all of the "SMART + C Criteria." As we discussed earlier in this section, this means that they should be, **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**imed, and **C**hallenging.

Let's look at one more example of some objectives; these goals come from an organization focusing on preventing adolescent substance use.

> **Objectives developed by an adolescent substance use prevention initiative**
> By the year 2024, the use of tobacco among 12-17 year olds will be reduced by 40%.
> By the year 2024, the use of alcohol among 12-17 year olds will be reduced by 50%.
> By the year 2024, the use of marijuana among 12-17 year olds will be reduced by 70%.
> By the year 2024, the use of cocaine among 12-17 year olds will be reduced by 80%.

REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS CREATED

Before you finalize your objectives, it makes sense for members of your organization to review them one more time, and possibly, ask people outside of your organization to review them as well. You might ask members of your organization who were not involved in the development process to review your work. You may also wish to get the thoughts of local experts, targets and agents of change, and/or of people doing similar work in other communities to review what you have developed. You can ask reviewers to comment on:

- Do your objectives each meet the criteria of "SMART+ C"?
- Is your list of objectives complete? That is, are there important objectives that are missing?
- Are your objectives appropriate? Are any of your objectives controversial? If so, your organization needs to decide if it is ready to handle the storm that may arise. For example, a program that is trying to reduce the spread of AIDS in its community may decide clean needles for drug addicts is an objective they wish to strive for; but it may very well cause difficulties for that organization. That's not to say the organization shouldn't make that an objective, but they should do so with a clear understanding of the consequences.

USE YOUR OBJECTIVES TO DEFINE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S STRATEGIES

Finally, once you have your objectives, you are ready for the next step: developing the strategies that will make them possible. Once your objectives are finished, and satisfactory to members of the organization and important people outside of your group, you are ready to move on to developing successful strategies.

IN SUMMARY

Developing objectives is a critical step in the planning process. The next section covers how to develop strategies to achieve the objectives you have set.

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Online Resources

Chapter 16: Behavioral Community Approaches in the "Introduction to Community Psychology" outlines how large, complicated problems can be broken down into smaller ones, the importance of studying and bringing about change in observable behaviors, and how behavioral approaches are used in Community Psychology.

SMART Objectives is a Public Health & Quality Improvement tool from the Minnesota Department of Health.

Print Resources

Barry, B. (1982). *Strategic planning workbook for non-profit organizations*. St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

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CHAPTER 9 - WORKING TOGETHER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSION

Learn how to understand people's cultures, promote engagement with others, and build strong, diverse communities.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

As community builders, understanding culture is our business. No matter where you live, you are working with and establishing relationships with people–people who all have cultures.

What is culture? Here is one viewpoint.

"Culture" refers to a group or community which shares common experiences that shape the way its members understand the world. It includes groups that we are born into, such as race, national origin, gender, class, or religion. It can also include a group we join or become part of. For example, it is possible to acquire a new culture by moving to a new country or region, by a change in our economic status, or by becoming disabled. When we think of culture this broadly we realize we all belong to many cultures at once.

Do you agree? How might this apply to you?

WHY IS CULTURE IMPORTANT?

Culture is a strong part of people's lives. It influences their views, their values, their humor, their hopes, their

loyalties, and their worries and fears. So when you are working with people and building relationships with them, it helps to have some perspective and understanding of their cultures.

But as we explore culture, it's also important to remember how much we have in common. People see the world very differently, but they know what it is like to wake up in the morning and look forward to the adventures that of the day. We are all human beings. We all love deeply, want to learn, have hopes and dreams, and have experienced pain and fear.

At the same time, we can't pretend our cultures and differences don't matter. We can't gloss over differences and pretend they don't exist, wishing we could all be alike, and we can't pretend that discrimination doesn't exist.

This chapter will give you practical information about how to understand culture, establish relationships with people from cultures different from your own, act as an ally against racism and other forms of discrimination, create organizations in which diverse groups can work together, overcome internalized oppression, and build strong and diverse communities.

This section is an introduction to understanding culture, and will focus on:

- What culture is
- The importance of understanding culture in community building
- Envisioning your cultural community
- How to get started in building communities that encourage diversity.

But first, it is important to remember that everyone has an important viewpoint and role to play when is comes to culture. You don't have to be an expert to build relationships with people different from yourself; you don't have to have a degree to learn to become sensitive to cultural issues; and you don't have to be a social worker to know how culture has affected your life.

WHY IS UNDERSTANDING CULTURE IMPORTANT IF WE ARE COMMUNITY BUILDERS?

The world is becoming increasingly diverse and includes people of many religions, languages, economic groups, and other cultural groups.

It is becoming clear that in order to build communities that are successful at improving conditions and resolving problems, we need to understand and appreciate many cultures, establish relationships with people from cultures other than our own, and build strong alliances with different cultural groups. Additionally, we need to bring non-mainstream groups into the center of civic activity. Why?

- **In order to build communities that are powerful enough to attain significant change, we need large numbers of people working together**. If cultural groups join forces, they will be more effective

in reaching common goals, than if each group operates in isolation.

- **Each cultural groups has unique strengths and perspectives that the larger community can benefit from.** We need a wide range of ideas, customs, and wisdom to solve problems and enrich community life. Bringing non-mainstream groups into the center of civic activity can provide fresh perspectives and shed new light on tough problems.

- **Understanding cultures will help us overcome and prevent racial and ethnic divisions**. Racial and ethnic divisions result in misunderstandings, loss of opportunities, and sometimes violence. Racial and ethnic conflicts drain communities of financial and human resources; they distract cultural groups from resolving the key issues they have in common.

- **People from different cultures have to be included in decision-making processes in order for programs or policies to be effective**. The people affected by a decision have to be involved in formulating solutions–it's a basic democratic principle. Without the input and support of *all* the groups involved, decision-making, implementation, and follow through are much less likely to occur.

- **An appreciation of cultural diversity goes hand-in-hand with a just and equitable society**. For example, research has shown that when students' cultures are understood and appreciated by teachers, the students do better in school. Students feel more accepted, they feel part of the school community, they work harder to achieve, and they are more successful in school.

- **If we do not learn about the influences that cultural groups have had on our mainstream history and culture**, **we are all missing out on an accurate view of our society and our communities.**

As you think about diversity, it may be helpful to envision the kind of cultural community you want to build. In order to set some goals related to building relationships between cultures, resolving differences, or building a diverse coalition, it helps to have a vision of the kind of cultural community you hope for.

WHAT KIND OF CULTURAL COMMUNITY DO YOU ENVISION?

CAN YOU IMAGINE THE KIND OF CULTURAL COMMUNITY YOU WANT TO LIVE OR WORK IN?

People have very different views of what a multicultural society or community should be like or could be like. In the past few decades there has been a lot of discussion about what it means to live and work together in a society that is diverse as ours. People struggle with different visions of a fair, equitable, moral, and harmonious society.

- How will the world be unified as a cohesive whole, if people separate into many different cultural

groups?

- In order to be a part of that dream, must I assimilate?
- Why does racism persist in places that are committed to equality and liberty?
- How can I protect my children from the harmful influences in the larger culture? How can I instill my children with the moral values of my own religion or culture, but still expose them to a variety of views?
- Are there structural problems in our government or economic system that serve to divide cultural groups? How can they be changed?
- Should I put my community building and civic energies into my own cultural community, rather than the mainstream culture? Where can I have the biggest influence?
- Can oppression be stopped by legislation, or does each person have to overcome their individual prejudice, or both?
- Why do immigrants have to hold onto their own cultures and languages?
- If my group is excluded, what can I do?
- How do I protect my children from being targeted by racism or sexism other forms of discrimination if I live in a diverse society? Shall I send them to culturally or racially specific school, or a female-only school, or another appropriate school?
- If each person overcame their own prejudices, would all the divisions disappear?
- How do I overcome my prejudices?
- Is prejudice a thing of the past?
- Why can't we all just get along?

What do you think about these questions? Which issues do you struggle with? What other issues are important to you or your cultural group?

As you envision the kind of diverse community, you and your neighbors may want to consider these kinds of questions. These are some of the real and tough questions that people grapple with on a daily basis. These questions point to some of the tensions that arise as we try to build harmonious, active, and diverse communities in a country as a complex as ours. There are no easy answers; we are all learning as we go.

So, what kind of community do you envision for yourself? How will diversity be approached in your community? If you could have your ideal community right now what would it look like? If you can't have your ideal community right now, what will be the next steps you will take in building the kind of cultural community you want?

Here are some questions that may help you think about your community:

- Who lives in your community right now?
- What kinds of diversity already exists?
- What kinds of relationships are established between cultural groups?
- Are the different cultural groups well organized?

- What kind of struggles between cultures exist?
- What kind of struggles within cultural groups exist?
- Are these struggles openly recognized and talked about?
- Are there efforts to build alliances and coalitions between groups?
- What issues do different cultural groups have in common?

These are some of the questions that can get you thinking about your how to build the kind of community you hope for. What other issues do you think are important to consider? What are your next steps?

So, you may ask, "How do we get started?" Here are some ideas that will help you set the stage for creating your vision of a diverse organization or community.

HELPFUL TIPS TO START BUILDING A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

In the book, **Healing into Action**, authors Cherie Brown and George Mazza list principles that, when put into practice, help create a favorable environment for building diverse communities. The following guidelines are taken from their principles:

WELCOME EVERYONE.

In order for people to commit to working on diversity, every person needs to feel that they will be included and important. Each person needs to feel welcomed in the effort to create a diverse community. And each person needs to know that their culture is important to others.

GUILT DOESN'T WORK IN FOSTERING DIVERSITY.

Blaming people as a way of motivating them is not effective. Shaming people for being in a privileged position only causes people to feel bad; it doesn't empower them to take action to change. People are more likely to change when they are appreciated and liked, not condemned or guilt-tripped.

TREATING EVERYONE THE SAME MAY BE UNINTENTIONALLY OPPRESSIVE.

Although every person is unique, some of us have been mistreated or oppressed because we are a member of a particular group. If we ignore these present-day or historical differences, we may fail to understand the needs of those individuals. Often people are afraid that recognizing differences will divide people from each other.

However, learning about cultural differences can actually bring people closer together, because it can reveal important parts of each other's lives. It can show us how much we have in common as human beings.

PEOPLE CAN TAKE ON TOUGH ISSUES MORE READILY WHEN THE ISSUES ARE PRESENTED WITH A SPIRIT OF HOPE.

We are bombarded daily with newspapers and TV reports of doom and gloom. People have a difficult time functioning at all when they feel there is no hope for change. When you present diversity issues you can say things like, "This is an excellent opportunity to build on the strengths that this organization has," or "There is no reason why we can't solve this problem together."

BUILDING A TEAM AROUND US IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF CREATING INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY CHANGE AROUND DIVERSITY ISSUES.

You will be more effective if you have a group of people around you that works together closely. People often try to go it alone, but we can lose sight of our goals and then become discouraged when operating solo. It is important to take the time to develop strong relationships with a core of people, and then work together as a group.

RECOGNIZE AND WORK WITH THE DIVERSITY ALREADY PRESENT IN WHAT APPEAR TO BE HOMOGENOUS GROUPS.

In working to combat racism and other forms of oppression many people become discouraged when they are unable to create a diverse group. Starting by recognizing differences in religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomics, parenting, and class backgrounds will help create a climate that welcomes differences; it will also lay the groundwork for becoming more inclusive.

IN SUMMARY

We've talked about what diversity is, why it is important, how to begin envisioning your ideal diverse community, and how to set up an environment that fosters diversity. This is only the beginning.

In working towards your diverse organization or community there is much more to do. In the next sections we will talk about how to become aware of your own culture, build relationships with from different cultures, become allies to people discriminated against, overcome internalized oppression, build multicultural organizations and coalitions, and other topics as well.

Each of us can build the kinds of communities we dream of. In our families, organizations, institutions, and neighborhoods, we can insist that we won't remain isolated from those who are different from ourselves. We can transform our neighborhoods, institutions, and governments into equitable, non-oppressive, and diverse communities.

Contributor

Marya Axner

Online Resources

Brown University Training Materials: *Cultural Competence and Community Studies: Concepts and Practices for Cultural Competence* The Northeast Education Partnership provides online access to PowerPoint training slides on topics in research ethics and cultural competence in environmental research. These have been created for professionals/students in environmental sciences, health, and policy; and community-based research. If you are interested in receiving an electronic copy of one the presentations, just download their Materials Request Form (found on the main Training Presentations page under "related files"), complete the form, and email it to NEEPethics@yahoo.com.

The Center for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services collects and describes early childhood/early intervention resources and serves as point of exchange for users.

Collins, C. (2018). What is white privilege, really? *Teaching Tolerance, 60*: This article explains white privilege, gives the history of white privilege, examines how white privilege differs from racism, and offers guidance on using white privilege for positive change.

Chapter 8: Respect for Diversity in the "Introduction to Community Psychology" explains cultural humility as an approach to diversity, the dimensions of diversity, the complexity of identity, and important cultural considerations.

Kagawa-Singer, M., Dressler W., George, S., and Expert Panel. **The Cultural Framework for Health: An integrative approach for research and program design and evaluation**.

Culture Matters is a cross-cultural training workbook developed by the Peace Corps to help new volunteers acquire the knowledge and skills to work successfully and respectfully in other cultures.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Nonprofit Organizations by Sean Thomas-Breitfeld and Frances Kunreuther, from the International Encyclopedia of Civil Society.

HealthEquityGuide.org is a website with a set of strategic practices that health departments can apply to more meaningfully and comprehensively advance health equity.

"How Studying Privilege Systems Can Strengthen Compassion," a TED talk given by Peggy McIntosh at TEDxTimberlaneSchools

Proclaiming Our Roots: Learn more about the lived experiences of Black and Indigenous folx through their digital stories.

Reframing Childhood Obesity: Cultural Insights on Nutrition, Weight, and Food Systems is a report from the Cultural Contexts of Health and Wellbeing initiative at Vanderbilt University that focuses on

three key areas in which cultural insights and global examples can help improve health policy around childhood obesity by understanding how historical and structural factors frame food and weight beyond individual choice.

The International & Cross-Cultural Evaluation Topical Interest Group, an organization that is affiliated with the American Evaluation Association, provides evaluators who are interested in cross-cultural issues with opportunities for professional development.

The Multicultural Pavilion offers resources and dialogue for educators, students and activists on all aspects of multicultural education.

The National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University increases the capacity of health care and mental health programs to design, implement and evaluate culturally and linguistically competent service delivery systems. Publications and web links available.

SIL International makes available "**The Stranger's Eyes**," an article that speaks to cultural sensitivity with questions that can be strong tools for discussion.

Study, Discussion and Action on Issues of Race, Racism and Inclusion – a partial list of resources utilized and prepared by Yusef Mgeni.

Organizations:

Center for Living Democracy

289 Fox Farm Rd

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(802) 254-1234

National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)

1835 K Street, N.W., Suite 715

Washington, D.C. 20006

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Re-evaluation Counseling

719 Second Avenue North

Seattle, WA 98109

(206) 284-0113

Southern Poverty Law Center

400 Washington Ave.

Montgomery, AL 36104

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McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies*. Wellesley, MA: Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College.

Murphy, Frederick. (Ed.) (2013). *Community Engagement, Organization, and Development for Public Health Practice*. New York: Springer.

Okihiro, G. (1994). *Margins and mainstreams: Asians in American history and culture*. Seattle, WA: The University of Washington Press.

Takaki, R. (1993). *A different mirror: A history of multicultural America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Learn how to understand cultures and build relationships with people from other cultures.

Relationships are powerful. Our one-to-one connections with each other are the foundation for change. And building relationships with people from different cultures, *often many different cultures*, is key in building diverse communities that are powerful enough to achieve significant goals.

Whether you want to make sure your children get a good education, bring quality health care into your communities, or promote economic development, there is a good chance you will need to work with people

from several different racial, language, ethnic, or economic groups. And in order to work with people from different cultural groups effectively, you will need to build sturdy and caring relationships based on trust, understanding, and shared goals.

Why? Because trusting relationships are the glue that hold people together as they work on a common problem. As people work on challenging problems, they will have to hang in there together when things get hard. They will have to support each other to stay with an effort, even when it feels discouraging. People will have to resist the efforts of those who use divide-and-conquer techniques–pitting one cultural group against another.

Regardless of your racial, ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic group, you will probably need to establish relationships with people whose group you may know very little about.

Each one of us is like a hub of a wheel. Each one of us can build relationships and friendships around ourselves that provide us with the necessary strength to achieve community goals. If each person builds a network of diverse and strong relationships, we can come together and solve problems that we have in common.

In this section, we are going to talk about:

- Becoming aware of your own culture as a first step in learning about other people's culture.
- Building relationships with people from many different cultures.

But first let's talk about what culture is. Culture is a complex concept, with many different definitions. But, simply put, *"culture" refers to a group or community with which we share common experiences that shape the way we understand the world*. It includes groups that we are born into, such as race, national origin, class, or religion. It can also include groups we join or become part of. For example, we can acquire a new culture by moving to a new region, by a change in our economic status, or by becoming disabled. When we think of culture this broadly we realize we all belong to many cultures at once. Do you agree? How might this apply to you?

HOW DO YOU LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE'S CULTURES?

START BY BECOMING AWARE OF YOUR OWN CULTURE.

It may seem odd that in order to learn about people in other cultures, we start by becoming more aware of our own culture. But we believe this is true. Why?

If you haven't had a chance to understand how your culture has affected you first hand, it's more difficult to understand how it could affect anyone else or why it might be important to them. If you are comfortable talking about your own culture, then you will become better at listening to others talk about theirs. Or, if you understand how discrimination has affected you, then you may be more aware of how it has affected others.

Here are some tips on how to becoming more aware of your own culture:

WHAT IS YOUR CULTURE?

Do you have a culture? Do you have more than one? What is your cultural background?

Even if you don't know who your ancestors are, you have a culture. Even if you are a mix of many cultures, you have one. Culture evolves and changes all the time. It came from your ancestors from many generations ago, and it comes from your family and community today.

In addition to the cultural groups we belong to, we also each have groups we identify with, such as being a parent, an athlete, an immigrant, a small business owner, or a wage worker. These kinds of groups, although not exactly the same as a culture, have similarities to cultural groups. For example, being a parent or and an immigrant may be an identity that influences how you view the world and how the world views you. Becoming aware of your different identities can help you understand what it might be like to belong to a cultural group.

Exercise:

Try listing all the cultures and identities you have: (This is just a list of suggestions to get you started. Add as many as you think describe you.)

What is your:	**Are you:**	
Religion		
Nationality	A female	
Race	A male	In the military
Sexual identity	Nonbinary or genderqueer	Poor
Ethnicity	Disabled	In prison
Occupation	From an urban area	Wealthy
Marital status	From a rural area	In the middle class
Age	A parent	In the working class
Geographic region	A student	

*(column 3 header: **Have you ever been:**)*

Did this help you think about your identities and cultures? How have these different cultures and identities affected your life?

HOW DO YOU BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES?

There are many ways that people can learn about other people's cultures and build relationships at the same time. Here are some steps you can take. They are first listed, and then elaborated upon one at a time.

- Make a conscious decision to establish friendships with people from other cultures.
- Put yourself in situations where you will meet people of other cultures.
- Examine your biases about people from other cultures.

- Ask people questions about their cultures, customs, and views.
- Read about other people's culture's and histories
- Listen to people tell their stories
- Notice differences in communication styles and values; don't assume that the majority's way is the right way
- Risk making mistakes
- Learn to be an ally.

Make a conscious decision to establish friendships with people from other cultures

Making a decision is the first step. In order to build relationships with people different from yourself, you have to make a concerted effort to do so. There are societal forces that serve to separate us from each other. People from different economic groups, religions, ethnic groups, and races are often isolated from each other in schools, jobs, and neighborhoods. So, if we want things to be different, we need to take active steps to make them different.

You can join a sports team or club, become active in an organization, choose a job, or move to a neighborhood that puts you in contact with people of cultures different than your own. Also, you may want to take a few minutes to notice the diversity that is presently nearby. If you think about the people you see and interact with every day, you may become more aware of the cultural differences that are around you.

Once you have made the decision to make friends with people different from yourself, you can go ahead and make friends with them in much the same way as with anyone else. You may need to take more time, and you may need to be more persistent. You may need to reach out and take the initiative more than you are used to. People who have been mistreated by society may take more time to trust you than people who haven't. Don't let people discourage you. There are good reasons why people have built up defenses, but it is not impossible to overcome them and make a connection. The effort is totally worth it.

Put yourself in situations where you will meet people of other cultures; especially if you haven't had the experience of being a minority, take the risk.

One of the first and most important steps is to show up in places where you will meet people of cultures other than your own. Go to meetings and celebrations of groups whose members you want to get to know. Or hang out in restaurants and other gathering places that different cultural groups go. You may feel embarrassed or shy at first, but your efforts will pay off. People of a cultural group will notice if you take the risk of coming to one of their events. If it is difficult for you to be the only person like yourself attending, you can bring a buddy with you and support each other in making friends. At these events, it is important to participate, but make sure you do not become the center of the event in order to lift up the voices and actions of the people leading the event.

Examine your biases about people from other cultures.

We all carry misinformation and stereotypes about people in different cultures. Especially, when we are young, we acquire this information in bits and pieces from TV, from listening to people talk, and from the

culture at large. We are not bad people because we acquired this; no one requested to be misinformed. But in order to build relationships with people of different cultures, we have to become aware of the misinformation we acquired.

An excellent way to become aware of your own stereotypes is to pick groups that you generalize about and write down your opinions. Once you have, examine the thoughts that came to your mind and where you acquired them.

Another way to become aware of stereotypes is to talk about them with people who have similar cultures to your own. In such settings you can talk about the misinformation you acquired without being offensive to people from a particular group. You can get together with a friend or two and talk about how you acquired stereotypes or fears of other different people. You can answer these kinds of questions:

- How did your parents feel about different ethnic, racial, or religious groups?
- What did your parents communicate to you with their actions and words?
- Were your parents friends with people from many different groups?
- What did you learn in school about a particular group?
- Was there a lack of information about some people?
- Are there some people you shy away from? Why?

Ask people questions about their cultures, customs, and views

People, for the most part, want to be asked questions about their lives and their cultures. Many of us were told that asking questions was nosy; but if we are thoughtful, asking questions can help you learn about people of different cultures and help build relationships. People are usually pleasantly surprised when others show interest in *their* cultures. If you are sincere and you can listen, people will tell you a lot.

Read about other people's cultures and histories

It helps to read about and learn about people's cultures and histories. If you know something about the reality of someone's life and history, it shows that you care enough to take the time to find out about it. It also gives you background information that will make it easier to ask questions that make sense.

However, you don't have to be an expert on someone's culture to get to know them or to ask questions. People who are, themselves, from a culture are usually the best experts, anyway.

Don't forget to care and show caring

It is easy to forget that the basis of any relationship is caring. Everyone wants to care and be cared about. Caring about people is what makes a relationship real. Don't let your awkwardness around cultural differences get in the way of caring about people.

Listen to people tell their stories

If you get an opportunity to hear someone tell you her life story first hand, you can learn a lot–and build a strong relationship at the same time. *Every* person has an important story to tell. Each person's story tells something about their culture.

Listening to people's stories, we can get a fuller picture of what people's lives are like–their feelings, their nuances, and the richness of their lives. Listening to people also helps us get through our numbness– there is a real person before us, not someone who is reduced to stereotypes in the media.

Additionally, listening to members of groups that have been discriminated against can give us a better understanding of what that experience is like. Listening gives us a picture of discrimination that is more real than what we can get from reading an article or listening to the radio.

> **Exercise:**
> You can informally ask people in your neighborhood or organization to tell you a part of their life stories as a member of a particular group. You can also incorporate this activity into a workshop or retreat for your group or organization. Have people each take five or ten minutes to talk about one piece of their life stories. If the group is large, you will probably have to divide into small groups, so everyone gets a chance to speak.

Notice differences in communication styles and values; don't assume that the majority's way is the right way.

We all have a tendency to assume that the way that most people do things is the acceptable, normal, or right way. As community workers, we need to learn about cultural differences in values and communication styles, and not assume that the majority way is the right way to think or behave.

> **Example:**
> You are in a group discussion. Some group members don't speak up, while others dominate, filling all the silences. The more vocal members of the group become exasperated that others don't talk. It also seems that the more vocal people are those that are members of the more mainstream culture, while those who are less vocal are from minority cultures.
>
> ### How do we understand this? How can this be resolved?
> In some cultures, people feel uncomfortable with silence, so they speak to fill the silences. In other cultures, it is customary to wait for a period of silence before speaking. If there aren't any silences, people from those cultures may not ever speak. Also, members of some groups (women, people of low income, some racial and ethnic minorities, and others) don't speak up because they have received messages from society at large that their contribution is not as important as others; they have gotten into the habit of deferring their thinking to the thinking of others.
>
> When some people don't share their thinking, we all lose out. We all need the opinions and voices of those people who have traditionally been discouraged from contributing.
>
> In situations like the one described above, becoming impatient with people for not speaking is usually counter-productive. However, you can structure a meeting to encourage the quieter people to speak. For example, you can:
>
> - Have people break into pairs before discussing a topic in the larger group.
> - At certain times have each person in the circle make a comment. (People can pass if they want to.)
> - Follow a guideline that everyone speaks once, before anyone speaks twice.
> - Invite the quieter people to lead part of the meeting.
> - Talk about the problem openly in a meeting, and invite the more vocal people to try to speak less often.
> - Between meetings, ask the quieter people what would help them speak, or ask them for their ideas on how

a meeting should be run.

A high school basketball team has to practice and play on many afternoons and evenings. One team member is a recent immigrant whose family requires her to attend the birthday parties of all the relatives in her extended family. The coach is angry with the parents for this requirement, because it takes his player away from the team.

How do we understand this? How can this be resolved?

Families have different values, especially when it comes to family closeness, loyalty, and responsibility. In many immigrant and ethnic families, young people are required to put their family's needs first, before the requirements of extra-curricular activities. Young people from immigrant families who grow up in the U.S. often feel torn between the majority culture and the culture of their families; they feel pressure from each cultures to live according to its values, and they feel they have to choose between the two.

As community workers, we need to support and respect minority and immigrant families and their values. It may already be a huge concession on the part of a family to allow a teenager to participate in extracurricular activities at all. We need to make allowances for the cultural differences and try to help young people feel that they can have both worlds–instead of having to reject one set of values for another.

As community builders, it helps to develop relationships with parents. If a young person sees her parents have relationships with people from the mainstream culture, it can help her feel that their family is accepted. It supports the teen in being more connected to her family and her community–and also, both relationships are critical protective factors for drug and alcohol abuse and other dangerous behaviors. In addition, in building relationships with parents, we develop lines of communication, so when conflicts arise, they can be more easily resolved.

Risk making mistakes

As you are building relationships with people who have different cultural backgrounds than your own, you will probably make mistakes at some point. That happens. Don't let the fear of making mistakes keep you from going ahead and building relationships.

If you say or do something that is insensitive, you can learn something from it. Ask the affected person what bothered or offended them, apologize, and then go on in building the relationship. Don't let guilt bog you down.

Learn to be an ally

One of the best ways to help you build relationships with people of different cultures is to demonstrate that you are willing to take a stand against discrimination when it occurs. People will be much more motivated to get to know you if they see that you are willing to take risks on their behalf.

We also have to educate ourselves and keep informed so that we understand the issues that each group faces and we become involved in their struggles–instead of sitting on the sidelines and watching from a distance. Educate yourself about other cultures by doing your own research, don't ask others to do it for you. There are many resources in this chapter to help you learn.

IN SUMMARY

Friendship is powerful. It is our connection to each other that gives meaning to our lives. Our caring for each other is often what motivates us to make change. And establishing connections with people from diverse backgrounds can be key in making significant changes in our communities.

As individuals, and in groups, *we can* change our communities. We can set up neighborhoods and institutions in which people commit themselves to working to form strong relationships and alliances with people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. We can establish networks and coalitions in which people are knowledgeable about each other's struggles, and are willing to lend a hand. Together, we can do it.

Contributor

Marya Axner

Online Resources

Brown University Training Materials: *Cultural Competence and Community Studies: Concepts and Practices for Cultural Competence* The Northeast Education Partnership provides online access to PowerPoint training slides on topics in research ethics and cultural competence in environmental research. These have been created for professionals/students in environmental sciences, health, and policy; and community-based research. If you are interested in receiving an electronic copy of one the presentations, just download their Materials Request Form (found on the main Training Presentations page under "related files"), complete the form, and email it to NEEPethics@yahoo.com.

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Diverse Teams Feel Less Comfortable — and That's Why They Perform Better from the Harvard Business Review.

Exploring Community-led Racial Healing Models to Deepen Partnerships between Community Development and Healthcare from the Build Healthy Places Network.

The International & Cross-Cultural Evaluation Topical Interest Group, an organization that is affiliated with the American Evaluation Association, provides evaluators who are interested in cross-cultural issues with opportunities for professional development.

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Takaki, R. (1993). *A different mirror: A history of multicultural America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Learn how to create opportunities for people to identify common ground, respect differences, and appreciate strengths.

- **WHY IS IDENTIFYING SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES, AND ASSETS IMPORTANT?**

- **HOW CAN OPPORTUNITIES TO IDENTIFY SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES, AND ASSETS BE CREATED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

- **HOW DO YOU INITIATE A PROCESS TO HELP INDIVIDUALS FROM DIFFERENT GROUPS FIND COMMON GROUND AND SHARE THEIR ASSETS?**

- **WHAT TYPES OF EVENTS CAN YOU COORDINATE TO CELEBRATE THE COMMUNITY'S DIVERSITY AND ASSETS?**

- **WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN YOU CONDUCT TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT CONDITIONS AND FORCES THAT HELP SHAPE A GROUP'S IDENTITY AND CURRENT SITUATION?**

- **WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES THAT YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF AND HOW CAN THE CHALLENGES BE OVERCOME?**

WHY IS IDENTIFYING SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES, AND ASSETS IMPORTANT?

"They are always speaking in a different language. I don't understand them. What could I possibly have in common with them?"

"We all care about our children, no matter where we come from. I don't have a problem getting an appointment with the school principal. Why should you?"

"There is a high rate of alcohol abuse among Latino men. It's because they like to hang out and do nothing."

Have you heard these comments before? They typify the perceptions that people have about others because they assume that they are different or similar.

If we assume that we are different because of our culture, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, we may end up perpetuating stereotypes. But if we focus only on our similarities, we risk ignoring the differences that make our groups special and that are important to us. And if we look only at what is wrong with someone else's group based on what we think is right and wrong, we are ignoring their strengths and values. This section will provide you with guidance on how to create opportunities to help members of different ethnic and cultural groups find common ground, respect their differences, and appreciate their strengths.

Let's consider an effort to bridge differences between African American residents and Korean merchants in a neighborhood. If the effort focuses only on helping both groups understand their cultural traditions (e.g.,

wedding rituals, celebration of a newborn), we leave the effort with a better understanding of why Koreans and African Americans do what they do, but knowing still that they are different. The next time we meet another Korean family, we may assume that they are typical of any Korean family and without realizing it, expect them to behave a certain way.

If the effort focuses only on helping both groups understand their similarities, then the initial gap between them may actually appear smaller. For example, Koreans and African Americans consider "family" not just to be the immediate family, but also the grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We leave the effort with a better understanding that Koreans and African Americans share similar values but not fully realizing that a Korean may have an easier time getting a job than an African American due to institutionalized racism.

If the effort focuses only on what is wrong with the two groups, for example, African American children are at risk because they don't have enough male role models or Korean children are at risk because they are caught between the traditional and the American worlds, then we leave the effort with little understanding about the assets of these two groups. Consequently, we might try to force these communities into a mold that is not right for them.

- Interact and develop trust, friendliness, warmth, and empathy
- See what they have in common as members of the same community and as hardworking individuals who want a better life for their children
- Reduce the myths about each other's groups
- Learn about the things that shape a person's life and cause differences among groups, especially differences related to political power and socioeconomic status
- Minimize the external influences that perpetuate stereotypes based on physical traits and other qualities

Keep in mind though that helping people to see their similarities, differences, and assets is only one step in the community building process. Unless this process is linked to actions that change the behaviors of groups of people and institutions, change will only occur at the individual level.

HOW CAN OPPORTUNITIES TO IDENTIFY SIMILARITIES, DIFFERENCES, AND ASSETS BE CREATED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Think of your approach as a multi-prong strategy with activities that allow people to share their similarities and to learn about the differences.

One example may be to design a discussion process to allow people to share their similarities, coordinate events that celebrate diversity, AND design a public education campaign to educate people about conditions that help shape a group's identity and current situation.

Build on issues that you know affect everyone in the community, such as healthy children, safer streets, clean parks, elderly care, or more recreational centers. Use these issues to create a common goal toward which everyone can work.

Identify the individuals who need to be engaged from each sector of the community that you are trying to build. If you are trying to build a community that has diverse ethnic groups, be sure that each group is included. If you are trying to build a community between people with different sexual orientations, be sure to include all of them.

> **Keep in mind:** Be very careful about how you build on existing events or programs of existing organizations. For example, in one community, the neighborhood organization had a bad reputation of being exclusive and internally conflicted. Building on an event sponsored by the neighborhood organization or inviting more than one representative from this organization could lead others to think that nothing will change. Don't bypass this organization, because it has an important role in the community, but be explicit about its role and who the representative should be at the meeting.
>
> On the other hand, building on an event or organization that has a positive image could give your effort more credibility. For example, ask a credible leader from a particular group to announce your effort at his/her event. This will provide you easier access to that particular group in the future and to demonstrate the blessing that your effort has received from that group.
>
> *Do your homework. Find out about events and organizations before you use them for your community building purposes.*

Don't let someone from a particular group be an after-thought and invite that person after the second meeting has occurred. That person may think that they were secondary to the rest of the participants. If a key person from a particularly important group has not yet been identified or cannot make the first meeting, it may be wise to delay the meeting.

Additionally, adding a new person after the group has already met could threaten the trust and relationship-building that the group starts to have among its members. If it is difficult for you to decline a new person because this person is critical or a current member of the group insists on bringing a friend, make sure that you take the time to ask the group permission and to orient the new person before the next meeting.

> **Tip:** The number of persons you invite from each group matters. You don't want one group to dominate. If you are inviting groups that have never come together before, it may be a good idea to invite two representatives from each group to reduce the fear of being a lone voice.

When scheduling the first meeting or discussion, be sensitive to people's schedules and traditions. For example, if you are trying to engage the Muslim community and it happens to be the month of Ramadan, schedule your meetings after they break their fast, or build in a break for them to say a prayer before they can eat. Once you have everyone at the first meeting, you can check future meeting schedules with them.

Pay attention to the meeting location, and make sure that it is not a location that is traditionally perceived as exclusive or representative of certain groups.

HOW DO YOU INITIATE A PROCESS TO HELP INDIVIDUALS FROM DIFFERENT GROUPS FIND COMMON GROUND AND SHARE THEIR ASSETS?

Find a phrase that appeals to all the groups in your community. For example, everyone is likely to want to have "better communities" or "a better quality of life."

At the first meeting, build in some informal social time or structured icebreakers before "getting down to business." For example, you could ask each person how and where they got their names. This exercise will help people learn to pronounce one another's names correctly (e.g., names of people from India, Thailand, Vietnam, Iran, Ethiopia, etc.). It will also be rich exchange as people learn about the value and meaning behind each name.

Then select a phrase or term and ask each person to describe the meaning of the selected phrase (e.g., healthy community) to him/her. Here is a list of questions that can be used to facilitate the discussions. Not all the questions can or should be asked or answered in the first discussion, but the facilitator needs to be very strategic in developing discussion guides and agendas that build on the previous discussion.

Through these discussions, the assets of each group will become evident. For instance, a Latino resident may describe how her church is an existing resource because it coordinates activities to help Latino women develop English and other professional skills. This church and the trained women become assets for the community.

> The Hope Community in Minneapolis, Minnesota has developed listening projects that bring together diverse residents in the community to "dream of what a neighborhood can be when children matter." They have used the information gathered through such projects to develop community development strategies.
>
> For more information contact:
> Mary Keefe, Associate Director
> Hope Community, Inc.
> 2101 Portland Avenue, South
> Minneapolis, MN 55404.
> Phone: 612-874-8867

Facilitation questions:

- What does "community" mean to you? You can also use visual aids and ask the participants to draw a picture of their idea of a community. (This information will help show the participants how much they have in common in terms of their aspirations for a better place to live.)
- Where do you see yourself in the community? What role do you think you play in the community? (This information will help indicate how each person and the group they belong to contributes to the community.)
- How does your community reflect and not reflect your idea of a community? (This information will help participants learn about each person's perception of the community they live in, and how and why

the community meets or does not meet their expectations)

- What do you think needs to happen in order for the community to be better for you and your family? (This information will help participants learn about the changes that each person wants to see in the community.)

- What existing cultural resources, assets, activities, or structures can you build on to make this the community you want? (This information will help identify the strengths of the community, assets of each group, and to recognize previous and current efforts to strengthen the community.)

- What is missing in the community? Why? And what can you do individually and together to make the changes happen? (This information will help identify needs and to plan action steps that individuals and their groups can take individually and collectively.)

As one dialogue progresses and you learn about how you could improve it, you could start another dialogue with a new group of people. You could ask the participants in one dialogue to identify two other leaders or friends to join a new dialogue.

WHAT TYPES OF EVENTS CAN YOU COORDINATE TO CELEBRATE THE COMMUNITY'S DIVERSITY?

At the same time that you are carrying out a process to help individuals find common ground, you can also plan events that celebrate the community's diversity. You could ask the individuals in the dialogues to help plan these events. These events should be open to everyone in the community. These events will also help to highlight the assets of each group in the community.

Festivals and important occasions are useful subjects for learning about and celebrating different groups' traditions. For instance, you could put together a calendar of new year festivities that each major racial, ethnic, and cultural group in the community celebrates.

> **Tip:** Some groups (e.g., Chinese, Muslims) use the lunar, and not the calendar year. This means that the date of their new year may fall on a different day every year based on the calendar year. Double check before you make any annual plans.

You could then work with the local public library and other public facilities (e.g., YMCA, community center, city hall) to hang decorative items and post information about the new year event, and work with the particular group to plan one activity about its traditions during its new year celebration.

Another way to celebrate the community's diversity is to intentionally acknowledge and appreciate traditions that tend to be overshadowed by historically dominant festivities. For example, during Christmas season, plan events that also celebrate Kwanzaa and Hanukkah.

Things paired with primary reinforcers such as food can also take on reinforcing value themselves. Many groups can use the same ingredients and produce different dishes. These dishes are a form of diversity that is

non-threatening and typically welcomed by everyone. One idea is to do research on a particular ingredient and then ask each group to share information and to demonstrate how it uses that ingredient.

Find out how each group celebrates, commemorates, or grieves over significant events in their history and culture. Take one common subject (e.g., birth, death, independence day, war, etc.), educate the community about the meaning and value of the related events, and then share the practices with everyone. Publicize the information and the events.

Some communities make a point of celebrating Black History month, Asian/Pacific Islander month, or Hispanic month as way to promote and appreciate different cultures. There is nothing wrong with this approach, but we must remember that appreciating different groups should be a constant practice and not just during certain times in the year. It is better to have different events for all the major groups in your community throughout the year rather than concentrate them during certain months only.

What do you currently do in your community to celebrate diversity? When do the events usually occur? How can you plan it so that the events happen on a regular basis throughout the year?

Initial questions to guide the planning of events to celebrate diversity include:

- What are the major celebrations and events in your culture?
- What do people in your culture do on that day/week/month?
- What would you like to share with the rest of the community about that celebration or event?
- Are there similar celebrations and events by the other groups in the community?

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN YOU CONDUCT TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT CONDITIONS AND FORCES THAT HELP SHAPE A GROUP'S IDENTITY AND CURRENT SITUATION?

Activities to educate people about conditions and forces that help shape a group's identity and current situation can be conducted in small group settings or for the community-at-large (e.g., a public education campaign). These activities should also be conducted at the same time as the dialogues to identify common ground and the events to celebrate diversity. The main purpose of these activities is to help diverse groups understand the history, oppression, and injustice that form the basis for why groups are treated differently.

ARE GROUPS TREATED DIFFERENTLY IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT QUALITY OR QUALITIES SEPARATE GROUPS FROM ONE ANOTHER?

Visual cues, such as images of enslaved Black people, Chinese railroad workers, or mosques could be used to prompt discussion among a small diverse group. Members could be asked to describe what the images mean to

them. Someone knowledgeable about the history of the image could be invited to share the information with the group.

Another possibility is to select a significant symbol in the community (e.g., statue of a prominent person in front of city hall, name of a school, historical buildings) and ask each person to describe what that symbol means to him or her. This is a particularly useful exercise for newcomers in a community (e.g., refugees from Laos) to learn about the history of their new residence, and for long-time residents (e.g., African Americans and European Americans who have lived in the community for generations) to have a role in welcoming the newcomers.

Public education campaigns can be a useful strategy to raise the community's awareness about conditions that helped shape a group's identity and current situation. In such campaigns, use research data (e.g., cite statistical evidence about the tax contributions of immigrants to the U.S. economy to dispel myths about the large number of undocumented immigrants that are benefiting from public monies) and stories from actual residents (e.g., how an immigrant in the community started a small business that is now a source of employment for local residents) to make the point.

Examples of ideas for a public education campaign include:

- A series of articles in the local newspaper about the plight of a group of refugees who recently resettled in the community
- A series of articles about health disparities between African Americans and European Americans and the possible reasons for the gap
- Table tents (e.g., for restaurants) and posters that celebrate the community's diversity
- Planned trips to different faith institutions in the community and discussions about different religious symbols and practices
- Planned and facilitated discussions in schools, block associations, chambers of commerce, and other community settings about topics such as institutionalized racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination

At the end of each article or in the table tents and posters, include a tear-out slip so that individuals interested in participating in your community building effort can send you their contact information. This way, you could expand the circle of people who want to do something about the growing diversity of their community and, at the same time, develop a list of potential volunteers. Postcards could be distributed at the end of discussions and field trips for the same purpose.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES THAT YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF AND HOW CAN THE CHALLENGES BE OVERCOME?

People could have had positive or negative experiences in the past with processes to get to know each other, build coalitions, or break down group barriers. For example, the Latino administrators in a school may have tried to work with Vietnamese parents in the past through a local Vietnamese organization. The attempt failed because of cultural barriers in communication style. Consequently, the two groups experienced negative feelings about each other.

Do your homework. Find out which individuals or groups have tried to work together before and what were their experiences. Interview key leaders, ask them what would encourage people to work together again or for the first time.

These group processes, particularly during discussions about power differences, could themselves create tension and conflicts. For example, a Jewish man may feel offended that he is perceived to have economic power because the stereotype of Jews is that they know how to make and save money.

The facilitator and the participants must agree on ground rules for discussion and for handling situations when someone may be offended, hurt, or angered. For example, someone can say out loud, "ouch," or hold up an object.

Sometimes, groups tend to compare themselves based on the degree to which they have been oppressed. For example, members of the "untouchable caste" in India may feel that they have suffered oppression of the worst kind because they were discriminated against by people of their own nationality and ethnicity. African Americans may feel that there was no worse oppression than slavery.

The facilitator should call out this behavior when they see it, let the groups know that all forms of oppression are wrong. Help the groups understand that their collective effort could help reduce discrimination of all kinds and not just against one particular group.

It is difficult to link the process of getting to know one another to taking action. The strategy or process must ensure that such a link is intentionally created during the planning stage and not as an afterthought. For example, an African American leader once said to a group of funders and program managers that the African American community is tired of sitting around and talking. They know what they want and all they need is some funds to carry out their actions.

Be explicit about why you are asking people to the table, especially what is in it for them and what is the desired outcome.

There has to be adequate time, resources, knowledge, and skills to support the process. Initiating the process without ensuring enough support to complete it could create more harm than good. For example, one organization put a lot of upfront effort and resources into establishing a group to deal with the misrepresentation of immigrants in the media. This process got the group members all fired up, but by the time

they developed the action steps, there was no more money to support the steps. This created a lot of frustration and increased the reluctance of this group to get involved in another effort in the future.

Take the time to develop a budget and a step-by-step action plan. This plan should be guided by the amount of resources available and reasonably projected. To implement the plan work in phases if you have to and evaluate process and affirm future actions at the end of each phase.

IN SUMMARY

Effort must be made and opportunities created to help members of different racial groups, and cultural groups to learn about, acknowledge, and respect their similarities, differences, and assets. If an effort emphasizes only one of these components the participating members will get an incomplete picture of one another and the groups they belong to. If resources are limited, you might want to consider ways to conduct a smaller-scale activity that conveys all the components, rather than a large-scale activity that emphasizes one of the components only.

Contributor

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Online Resources

Chapter 8: Respect for Diversity in the "Introduction to Community Psychology" explains cultural humility as an approach to diversity, the dimensions of diversity, the complexity of identity, and important cultural considerations.

Study, Discussion and Action on Issues of Race, Racism and Inclusion – a partial list of resources utilized and prepared by Yusef Mgeni.

Print Resources

Center for Living Democracy. (1997) *Interracial dialogue groups across America: A directory. Brattleboro, VT: Center for Living Democracy.* (For a copy please write to The Center for Living Democracy, 289 Fox Farm Road, Brattlevoro, VT 05301, call: 802-254-1234

Chavis, D., Lee, K., & Buchanan, R. (2001). *Principles for intergroup projects.* Gaithersburg, Maryland: Association for the Study and Development of Community.

Lee, K. (2002). Building intergroup relations after September 11. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 131-141. (A copy of the paper can be obtained by writing the author at the Association for the Study and Development of Community, 312 South Frederick Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 or at **kien@capablecommunity.com**.)

National Conference for Community and Justice. (2001). Building bridges with reliable information. Washington, DC: The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). (For a copy please write NCCJ- National Capital Area Region, 1815 H Street, NW, Suite 1050, Washington, DC 20006; call 202-822-6110; e-mail: **nationalcapital@nccj.org)**

Quiroz, J. (1995). Together in our differences. Washington, DC: The National Immigration Forum. (For information on how to obtain a copy, contact the **National Immigration Forum**: 200 Eye Street, NE, Suite 220, Washington, DC 2002, call: 202-544-0004.

Reichler. P, & Dredge, P. (Eds.) (1997). Governing diverse communities: A focus on race and ethnic relations. Washington, DC: National League of Cities (NLC). (For a copy please contact NLC Publications Center: P.O. Box 491, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701 or call 888-571-2939.)

Stephan, W. & Stephan, C. (2001). Improving Intergroup Relations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Organizations

Hope in the Cities National Office

Richmond, Virginia

1103 Sunset Avenue

Richmond, VA 23221

Telephone: (804) 358-1764

Fax: (804) 358-1769

Palmetto Project

P.O. Box 506

Charleston, SC 20402

Telephone: (843) 577-4122

Fax: (843)-723-0521

Study Circle Resource Center

PO Box 203

697 Pomfret Street

Pomfret, CT 06258

Phone: (860) 928.2616

Fax: (860) 928.3713

Learn how to understand people's culture, community and leadership to enhance engagement.

In order to work effectively in a culturally and ethnically diverse community, a community builder needs to first understand how each racial and ethnic group in that community is organized in order to support its members. It is not uncommon to hear a community leader, a funder, a political representative, or a service provider say, "We were not able to engage that group over there because they are not organized. They have no leaders. We need to organize them first." This statement is not always accurate; most groups have their own network of relationships and hierarchy of leaders that they tap into for mutual support. These networks or leaders may not be housed in a physical location or building that is obvious to people outside of the group.

They may not even have a label or a title. There is an unspoken understanding in some groups about when and whom they should turn to among their members for advice, guidance, and blessing. Once a community builder understands the social organization of the group, it will become easier to identify the most appropriate leaders, help build bridges, and work across multiple groups in a diverse community.

What do we mean by "social organization?" Social organization refers to the network of relationships in a group and how they interconnect. This network of relationships helps members of a group stay connected to one another in order to maintain a sense of community within a group. The social organization of a group is influenced by culture and other factors.

Within the social organization of a group of people, there are leaders. Who are leaders? Leaders are individuals who have followers, a constituency, or simply a group of people whom they can influence. A community builder needs to know who the leaders are in a group in order to get support for his community building work.

In this section, you will learn more about the social organization and leadership of different cultural and ethnic groups. The material covered in this section focuses primarily on African Americans and immigrants for two reasons:

1. Tensions tend to occur among groups that are competing for resources that are already limited and not always accessible to them; and
2. Most of the struggles facing community builders and other individuals have been with recent immigrants whose culture, institutions, and traditions are still unfamiliar to mainstream groups.

As recent immigrant groups integrate into their new society, their social organization and leadership structures transform to become more similar to those of mainstream groups. This process could take decades and generations; all the more reason why it is important for community builders to understand the social organization and leadership structure of the new arrivals and to build on their values and strengths. While some traditional social structures may prevail, others may adapt to those of the mainstream culture.

Take a moment and think about the most recent group of newcomers to your community. *Who are their leaders? Where do their members go to for help?*

Think about the group you belong to. *Who are the leaders? Whom do you go to for help? How is your group organized to communicate among its members?*

Obviously there are too many groups in this world to include in this section. We will try to share information about as many groups as we can. While the section may not inform you about the social organization and leadership of groups other than the ones described here, we hope it will help you understand enough about the influence of culture on social organization and leadership to ask the right questions of any group.

HOW DO CULTURE AND OTHER FACTORS AFFECT THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF A COMMUNITY?

There are many definitions of culture. Culture typically refers to a set of symbols, rituals, values, and beliefs that make one group different from another. Culture is learned and shared with people who live or lived in the same social environment for a long time. Culture is captured in many, many ways — in the way members of a group greet and interact with one another, in legends and children's stories, in the way food is prepared and used, in the way people pray, and so on. Since it is difficult and not always appropriate to change someone's culture, how do you then use culture as a positive force to aid community building?

IN THE CHINESE COMMUNITY:

The Chinese community is the largest and the fastest growing group among Asian and Pacific Islander populations.

> **Keep in mind:** The Chinese community forms a very heterogeneous group that includes people from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and other parts of South East Asia. There are many dialects spoken among Chinese people and not all Chinese persons can understand one another's dialects. Therefore, make sure you know which Chinese dialect requires translation if you have to provide translation services.

The Chinese culture places heavy emphasis on taking care of one's family. Chinese people believe that taking care of their families is a contribution to civic welfare, because healthy families lead to a healthy society. This belief is based on Confucian values, which emphasize filial piety, or a respect for family. The concept of filial piety is instilled in Chinese children from a very young age. In other words, familial relationships form the basis for Chinese social organization and behavior.

Chinese parents place a heavy emphasis on their children and their ability to become successful. Confucian values include reaching for perfection, and perfection can be achieved through education. This is why Chinese parents invest a lot of resources in making sure that their children excel academically.

HOW DOES THIS VALUE AFFECT THE WAY CHINESE COMMUNITIES ARE ORGANIZED AND PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

In Chinese communities in America and other countries, it is common to find local associations or *huiguan* formed by members from the same province or village in China and Taiwan. These local associations provide capital to help their members start businesses. They also perform charitable and social functions and provide protection for their members. These associations play a key role in community building efforts, particularly in Chinatowns. They are formed because of the Chinese emphasis on the importance of

family; in China, you consider the people from the same province or village as your extended family. Therefore, in order to engage any Chinese community in a community building effort, it will be useful to identify and involve the leaders of these associations. *How do you find out about huiguans?* Look in the Chinese newspapers (if you don't read Mandarin, ask someone who does); attend Chinese events and find out who sponsored them; walk around Chinatown (if there is one in your community or city) and look at the advertisements posted in grocery stores, restaurants, and shops.

Education also becomes an issue that can be used to mobilize the Chinese community. With the heavy emphasis on academic excellence, it is more likely that you can convince Chinese parents to show up for a meeting about the quality of their children's education than for a meeting about a recreational center for the community. This means that you should look for ways to link education to the issue that you are trying to address in your community building effort.

Recent Chinese immigrants fear very much that their children or the next generation will lose touch with their culture. Hence, they do whatever they can to teach their children how to speak and write Mandarin or other Chinese dialects. This desire has led to the creation of many Chinese schools in areas that have large populations of Chinese immigrants. Sometimes, these schools have their own buildings; at other times, they are conducted on the weekends in a public school. These schools can play a critical role in reaching out to the Chinese community.

IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY:

A group's history of oppression and survival also affects the way it is organized. The networks and organizations that form to protect the rights of their members influence the way in which members of the group organize for self-help. Enslaved Africans, who were "Christianized" by their European enslavers, used spiritual symbolism to preach freedom and to give their people hope and strength. As a result, in the African American culture, religious institutions, primarily Christian (e.g., the African Methodist Episcopal church), have functioned as mutual-aid societies, political forces, and education centers. While Christian churches are predominant among African Americans, the existence and leadership of the Nation of Islam and Muslim leaders in organizing the African American community should also be considered. Today, African American spiritual leaders are among the most influential leaders in African American communities. Therefore, in order to engage any African American community in a community building effort, it will be important to identify and involve that community's spiritual leaders.

HOW DOES THIS VALUE AFFECT THE WAY AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ARE ORGANIZED AND PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

In most African American and Black communities, it is common to find one or more churches that are

the focal point for social, economic, and political activities. Spirituality, especially Christianity, provides an effective bridge among African Americans, Latinos, and European Americans.The Allied Communities of Tarrant (ACT) in Fort Worth, Texas, is an example of using spirituality to organize a coalition among leaders from these three communities. African American Baptist ministers, European American Lutheran and Disciples of Christ ministers, as well as Latino and European American Catholic priests who were connected to one another through their spiritual interests decided to work across racial lines in order to improve the quality of life for their members. With the help of the Industrial Areas Foundations (IAF), they struggled to identify their commonalties, differences — especially related to race — power, and assets. Eventually, they established ACT and took on the issue of school reform, starting with the African American community. African American church leaders came together to develop initiatives within their own churches to empower and support parents to participate in the effort.

IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY:

Many Central Americans fled the poverty and oppression in their countries to seek a more secure and better life in a new place. As one person settled in the new location and saved enough money, he or she would help family members to migrate. Because of the informal and extended family networks that are part of the Central American culture, natural support systems develop to assist new arrivals.

ASIDE FROM CULTURE, WHAT OTHER FACTORS AFFECT THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CENTRAL AMERICANS?

The close proximity of Central America to the United States (compared to other continents) plays a role in the social organization of Central Americans. Regional associations that are typically named after a town, a city, or a region in Central America emerge in the immigrants' new geographic setting to provide support in cultural identification, security, and maintenance of connection with their families and friends who remained behind in Central America. These associations are usually affiliated with religious groups, soccer clubs, political parties, revolutionary movements, or social service organizations in Central America. Because of this form of social organization, the Salvadoran community in the United States has been able to raise a large amount of funds to assist earthquake and hurricane victims in their homeland.

HOW CAN YOU BUILD ON THESE FORMS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION TO ENGAGE THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY?

Soccer ("football") is a favorite activity among Central Americans. It is not unusual to see adults and children from Central American countries playing soccer in public parks and school compounds. Central American

countries are very proud of their national soccer teams. It's similar to the way American football or baseball is valued in the United States, but it is more than just a game for immigrants. Soccer becomes an avenue for meeting other people from the same country or region and forming a social support network. If you are a community builder who is trying to bring various Central American groups together, try using soccer as the common ground!

The Catholic Church is also a key institution that holds members of the Central American communities together. Even in Central America, the church has played a leading role in political advocacy and organizing. In the immigrants' new country, the church continues to play this role, in addition to providing services and social support, and maintaining a line of communication between the immigrants and their families and friends in Central America. Build on the strength and influence of the church to bring credibility to your community building effort and to reach out to Central American communities.

IN THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY:

Migration patterns can provide important information about a group of people. Typically, most immigrants come because they already have a relative or a friend that lives in the United States. They move in with the relatives or friends who also help them find their first job. In the Caribbean culture, there is a tradition of helping the new arrivals through rotating credit associations or saving clubs, otherwise known as susus. According to this tradition, a group of people pools their money and then loans it to someone who needs it. The borrower pays back the loan over a period of time and commits to stay in the susu until the payment is complete.

HOW CAN YOU BUILD ON THESE FORMS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION TO ENGAGE THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY?

If your community building effort focuses on economic development, then it is important for you to identify the person who manages the susu. You could ask a Caribbean business or a mutual aid society for Caribbean immigrants for the contact person.

WHAT DO ALL THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS HAVE IN COMMON?

They support the social organization of a community. Depending on the community's culture and the context that the community has to survive in and adapt to, they all serve different functions.

HOW DO CULTURE AND OTHER FACTORS AFFECT THE

LEADERSHIP OF A COMMUNITY?

The information above showed that culture and other factors (social, economic, historical, and political) have an effect on the way a community organizes itself for self-help and support. The same can be said about leadership. There are different levels and types of leaders that support the social organization of a community. Sometimes, we make the mistake of assuming that there is only one leader in a community or that a leader has to look a certain way. Just as we respect and value the cultural diversity of communities, we have to respect and value the diversity of leadership.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU THINK A LEADER SHOULD HAVE?

In every ethnic or cultural group there are different individuals who are regarded as leaders by members of the group. Every leader has a place and a role in his or her community. Leaders can be categorized by type (e.g., political, religious, social), by issue (e.g., health, education, economic development), by rank (e.g., president, vice president), by place (e.g., neighborhood block, county, city, state, country), by age (e.g., elderly, youth), and so on.

Let's use the same communities described before. In Chinese communities, the leader is typically the head of the family. If family refers to a grandfather, father, mother, sons and daughters, and grandchildren, then the leader is the grandfather. If family refers to the congregation of a church, the leader is the pastor. If family refers to a clan, the leader is the President of the clan's association (or *hui guan*).

In African American communities, the leader is typically a spiritual leader. A leader can also be someone who is successful in overcoming the barriers of institutionalized racism and provide opportunities for other African Americans to be treated equally by others in the mainstream society (e.g., a business person, an educator, or an elected official).

In Central American communities, the leader is also typically a spiritual leader. It can also be the coach of a soccer team or the president of an association that links a city in Central America with one in another country.

WHAT DO ALL THESE LEADERS HAVE IN COMMON?

They provide guidance, they have influence over others, others respect them, they respond to the needs of others, and they put the welfare of others above their own. Every leader serves a specific function within the social organization of a community; however, the same type of leader in one community does not necessarily have the same role in another community. For example, a spiritual leader in a Chinese community is not regarded as a political leader, as he might be in the African American community.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND EXAMPLES?

How can you, the community builder, learn about the social organization of other ethnic and cultural groups?

- Go into the process with an open mind.
- Don't assume that the same leader, organization, or institution serves the same function across groups.
- Keep in mind that the social organization and leadership of a group is influenced by its culture, history, reasons for migration, geographic proximity to its homeland, economic success, intra-group tensions, and the way it fits into the political and social context of its new and surrounding society.
- Look for the formal and informal networks.
- Interview members of a group and ask where and whom they go to for help or when they have a problem.

  Keep in mind : Among different groups, the church has different functions. For example, Korean and Chinese churches do not have strong political functions compared to Latino or African American churches. Korean churches serve their members socially by providing a structure and process for fellowship and sense of belonging, maintenance of ethnic identity and native traditions, social services, and social status. Korean pastors consider their churches as sanctuaries for their members and do not wish to burden them with messages related to political or economic issues. Instead, they focus on providing counseling and educational services to Korean families as well as clerical and lay positions for church members. Korean immigrants hold these positions in high regard.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND ETHNIC ORGANIZATIONS THAT A COMMUNITY BUILDER CAN USE TO LEARN ABOUT THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF A GROUP, TO IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE ITS LEADERS?

The section before emphasized the importance of learning about the social organization and leadership of various groups in a community so that you can tap into the appropriate resources and assets of each group. You understand that different organizations, institutions, and leaders play different roles in each group. *Where do you start? How do you go about getting that knowledge?*

Identify natural gathering points and traditions related to social gatherings. Tapping into natural gathering points and traditions related to social gatherings are excellent ways to identify and engage the local leaders and build community relationships. For example, in the Filipino community, tea time is a common practice due to historical European influence. Therefore, "tea meetings" in restaurants are useful for attracting community members to discuss issues and to ask how to involve them in community building efforts. Ethnic

grocery stores also play a major role in distributing information to large numbers of people. These stores frequently have bulletin boards where notices are posted about all kinds of activities in that community. In addition, cultural celebrations draw large crowds and provide an effective avenue for outreach. Attend these gatherings. Find out who sponsored and organized them. Talk to the people who attend them. Ask them how they found out about the gatherings. Ask them who you should contact if you wanted more information about the gatherings.

Build on the informal networks of women. One way to engage a racial, ethnic, or cultural group is to tap into the informal networks of women. Go to places where women tend to go, such as the grocery store, the school their children attend, and the hair salon. Ask the parent coordinator at the school if you could speak to some of the mothers. It is likely that you will be able to identify one or more women who are respected by their peers and to whom everyone tells their problems.

> Mujeres Unidas y Activas, a women's organization was born when a project that brought together women from various cultures showed that the women experienced similar concerns (e.g., public health issues related to their housing conditions, domestic abuse, concern for their children's education). After the project was completed, the women felt the need to continue to meet informally for mutual support. The network eventually became an organization that is involved in addressing issues that concern women.

Gain entry and credibility through traditional leadership structures. The approach is applicable to any group with a traditional leadership structure serving as a gatekeeper to its members. If you already understand the traditional leadership structure, use it to get support for what you are doing.

> **Keep in mind:** Engaging the traditional leadership structures in some communities may perpetuate class, gender, or other differences. For example, the traditional leadership structure in Middle Eastern communities tends to be patriarchal. By choosing to engage the male leaders as a way to involve the larger community, you may be reinforcing that culture's treatment of women. Community builders must always be aware of the extent to which they might encounter and be required to address cultural traditions that reinforce inequities.
>
> At the same time, you have to be aware that by bypassing or trying to expand the traditional power structure, you may be sacrificing credibility with the community or, at the very least, losing some of the most powerful community leaders. If you think there's a need to change some aspects of the culture in a community that is not your own, it makes much more sense to work through members of that community, rather than challenging the leaders directly. Over time, you may be able to convince them, but you have to approach them in a way that doesn't rob them of dignity or belittle customs that have been taken for granted for generations.

Identify and work with the "bridge generation." Young people are the ideal bridge in most communities, especially in immigrant communities, because they are raised in traditional ways but schooled in the ways of the dominant culture. Young people typically accompany their parents to the clinic, school, faith institution, and many other places. Sometimes, they translate for their non-English speaking parents. Therefore, they are likely to know where their parents go for help and who organizes the events in their community.

Ask national organizations that serve and advocate on behalf of different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups for assistance.

National organizations with special concerns have become powerful forces in linking immigrants to mainstream American institutions. Examples include the American Physicians of Indian Origin, Japanese American Citizens League, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Education Fund, Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging. These organizations play a more extensive role than faith-based institutions, community centers, or cultural programs do in bridging immigrant traditions with mainstream American institutions and values. As a community builder, you might want to engage these organizations if your community building effort is focused on advocacy for a specific issue.

Take advantage of programs that serve large numbers of immigrants. English as a Second or Other Language classes (ESOL) and citizenship workshops often attract large numbers of immigrants, particularly recent newcomers, and provide another way to reach them. Many of these programs are conducted on weekends and evenings.Even though their primary intent is to teach new immigrants how to function biculturally, they can also become social support systems. If you want to talk to or engage large numbers of people, try the ESOL classes and citizenship workshops.

Take advantage of ethnic neighborhoods. In places like Chinatown, Koreatown, and Little India, there are many businesses and organizations that serve the needs of the residents. Go to these neighborhoods, walk through them, and look for community centers, mutual aid organizations, and other businesses that advertise programs or attract larger numbers of people.

How else can you find out more about a community?

- Find an informant from that community and utilize his or her contacts to guide you toward other community members and leaders.
- Spend time at places that are frequented by members of the target group and talk to people there.
- Scan the neighborhood and/or ethnic newspaper for articles about major events and activities in a community and the organizations that sponsor them.
- Contact the editor of the newspaper to ask his/her opinion about who the leaders are in a community.
- Go to the ethnic grocery or convenience stores to review the announcements about events and other activities and the organizations that sponsor them.
- Look in the phone directory or search the Internet for a list of organizations that support a communinty.

Keep in mind: Relationship building and trust building are fundamental parts of the work, especially in cultures that may be less familiar to you and/or those that have experienced racism and other forms of oppression. Getting to know people and gaining their trust takes time, patience, and flexibility.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES THAT YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF AND HOW CAN THE CHALLENGES BE

OVERCOME?

- During the relationship building and information gathering process, the informant may have expectations about being invited to be part of your community building effort. The informant may think that he or she is the most appropriate person to engage. The informant may also seize the opportunity to talk about the merits or the weaknesses of another leader in the group. *You must remember NOT to make any promises to the leader about anything until you have had the opportunity to speak to as many individuals as possible and determined the most appropriate leader to involve in the effort. Also, don't get drawn into the discussions about the merits or weaknesses of other leaders. Don't share information about what other leaders might or might not have said already. Just listen.*

- There may be misperceptions in the community about which group you represent and who "owns" the community building effort. Such misperceptions would make it very difficult for you to build relationships in the community. *You have to consider several factors before you begin to engage any of the leaders in the community. How were previous community building efforts, if any, initiated in the past? Who initiated them? Was the effort effective? If not, what happened? This knowledge would help you understand the attitudes toward you and the community building you are involved in. You might also want to consider establishing an advisory group made up of leaders from different groups to help announce and plan the effort*

- It is impossible for you, the community builder, to know everything about every group and its culture. You may be an outsider to a group. *Don't be afraid to acknowledge your ignorance. Display humility, respect the influence of each leader, and ask to be educated. You might consider starting off the conversation with a statement such as, "I know very little about your culture, but I understand that it is important to learn about it so that the community building effort I'm involved in can build on your cultural strengths and will not make assumptions about your group's needs. I really appreciate the time you are taking to talk to me and I look forward to learning from you."*

- When working in a diverse community that is made up of two or more racial, ethnic, or cultural groups, it is unlikely that any one community builder will have all the linguistic skills and cultural knowledge needed to relate to all the groups. At the same time, you, the community builder may be a member of one of the groups. You must be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of working with a group of people that share your culture (e.g., a Chinese community builder working in a Chinese community). You have the advantage of already knowing the culture and the language. A disadvantage is that the informant may expect you to play favoritism because you "owe" your community.

A team made up of community builders from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds would allow for the ability to relate to a wide range of experiences, to speak multiple languages, and to empathize with the variety of challenges that community leaders face. It would also help to avoid some of the expectations and misperceptions

about whom you represent and who would benefit from your effort. Furthermore, working in diverse community building teams set an example for the leaders of a group and across groups.

- There are usually several subgroups within an ethnic or cultural group that compete with each other because of differences in political affiliation, socioeconomic status, ancestry, or regional origins. As a community builder, you have to be careful not to create further tensions.*Maintain a neutral perspective and don't get drawn into discussions about other leaders. Reach out to as many types of leaders as possible. Explain that you are just in the information gathering stage; however, make note of the tensions so that you can be prepared to facilitate any potential conflicts in the future if those leaders happen to participate more extensively in the community building effort.*

- The process of building relationships and gathering information may lead to the identification of needs in one or more groups. For example, suppose that local and informal leaders in a given group require assistance in strengthening their leadership, coalition building, or cross-cultural communication skills.*You could identify outside resources and expertise to help them or you could serve as a coach to the local group. This process itself can be a useful community building strategy.*

Contributor

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Online Resources

Brown University Training Materials: **Cultural Competence and Community Studies: Concepts and Practices for Cultural Competence**. The Northeast Education Partnership provides online access to PowerPoint training slides on topics in research ethics and cultural competence in environmental research. These have been created for professionals/students in environmental sciences, health, and policy; and community-based research.

Chapter 8: Respect for Diversity in the "Introduction to Community Psychology" explains cultural humility as an approach to diversity, the dimensions of diversity, the complexity of identity, and important cultural considerations.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Nonprofit Organizations by Sean Thomas-Breitfeld and Frances Kunreuther, from the International Encyclopedia of Civil Society.

Study, Discussion and Action on Issues of Race, Racism and Inclusion – a partial list of resources utilized and prepared by Yusef Mgeni.

Print Resources

Casinitz, P. (1992). Caribbean New York. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Cordoba, C. (1995). *Organizing with Central-American immigrants in the United States*. In F.Rivera & J.Erlich (Eds.), Community organizing in a diverse society (pp. 177-196). Needham Heights, MA: Simon & Schuster.

Feagin, J. & Feagin, C. (1999). *Racial and ethnic relations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Simon & Schuster.

Hamilton, N. & Chinchilla, N.S. (2001). *Seeking Community In A Global City*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Hofstede, G. (1997). *Culture and organizations*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Karpathakis, A. (1999). *Home society politics and immigrant political incorporations: The case of Greek immigrants in New York City*. International Migration Review, 31 (4), pp. 55-78.

Lee, K. (2002). Lessons learned about civic participation among immigrants (draft). Report to the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, Washington, DC.

Lee, P. (1995). *Organizing in the Chinese-American community: Issues, strategies, and alternatives*. In F.Rivera & J.Erlich (Eds.), Community organizing in a diverse society (pp. 113-142). Needham Heights, MA: Simon & Schuster.

Leonard, K. (1997). *The South Asian Americans*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Min, P.G. (2000). *The structure and social functions of Korean immigrant churches in the United* States. In Zhou, M., & Gatewood, J. (eds.). Contemporary Asian American: A Multidisplinary Reader. New York: New York University Press.

Perkins, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Restoring at-risk communities*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Warren, M. (2001). Dry bones ratting. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

PART V
ORGANIZING FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

CHAPTER 10 - PRINCIPLES OF ADVOCACY

Section 10-1: What Is Advocacy?

Learn how to actively promote a cause or principle involving actions that will lead to a goal your organization has selected.

Before direct action comes planning, and before planning comes an understanding of what needs to be put in the plan. So first, here's a reminder of what advocacy is (as well as what it's not).

- Advocacy is active promotion of a cause or principle
- Advocacy involves actions that lead to a selected goal
- Advocacy is one of many possible strategies, or ways to approach a problem
- Advocacy can be used as part of a community initiative, nested in with other components.
- Advocacy is not direct service
- Advocacy does not necessarily involve confrontation or conflict

Some examples may help clarify just what advocacy is:

- You join a group that helps build houses for the poor–that's wonderful, but it's not advocacy (it's a service)
- You organize and agitate to get a proportion of apartments in a new development designated as low to moderate income housing – that's advocacy
- You spend your Saturdays helping sort out goods at the recycling center – that's not advocacy (it's a service)
- You hear that land used for the recycling center is going to be closed down and you band together with many others to get the city to preserve this site, or find you a new one. Some of you even think about blocking the bulldozers, if necessary – that's advocacy

Advocacy usually involves getting government, business, schools, or some other large institution (also known as Goliath) to correct an unfair or harmful situation affecting people in the community (also known as David, and friends). The situation may be resolved through persuasion, by forcing Goliath to buckle under pressure, by compromise, or through political or legal action.

Several ingredients make for effective advocacy, including:

- The rightness of the cause
- The power of the advocates (i.e., more of them is much better than less)
- The thoroughness with which the advocates researched the issues, the opposition, and the climate of opinion about the issue in the community
- Their skill in using the advocacy tools available (including the media)
- Above all, the selection of effective strategies and tactics

For some people, advocacy is a new role. It may be uncomfortable–particularly if confrontation and conflict are involved. But, for others, advocacy is more attractive than setting up and running service programs in the community.

Advocacy can be glamorous: the David vs. Goliath image, manning the barricades, making waves. But the decision to put major resources into advocacy is not one to be taken lightly. If it doesn't work–if you stick your necks way out and don't succeed–not only will you fail, but you may do so in public, discrediting your cause, perhaps making conditions worse for the people you set out to help.

DOES ADVOCACY ALWAYS INVOLVE CONFRONTATION?

Advocacy can be confrontational, but conflict is usually a bad place to start. Good advocates know they must think very hard about any confrontation that's going to be necessary. That's one reason for careful planning of strategy and tactics. Even if the issue seems as clear as a bell, and your choice of actions seems just as obvious, it's a good idea to take another long, hard look.

WHY AND WHEN WOULD YOU CHOOSE ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is best kept for when "routine" work such as gathering support for a cause, raising money, and recruiting members of a community initiative or program won't get you where you want to go.

In most cases, it's a good idea to think twice before launching yourselves (or your group) as advocates, because it's a strategy that's more effective if there isn't too much of it around. Imagine a city where there were public demonstrations every day, where City Hall was besieged constantly by groups with special petitions, resolutions, and assorted agitations. The community would quickly develop advocacy fatigue. So would the advocates.

The best time to start planning for an advocacy campaign is:

- When your direct experience or preliminary research shows you cannot achieve your goals in any other way
- When you are sure you have (or will have) the capacity to carry it through

- When you have enough enthusiasm and energy to last for what could be a long haul!

This chapter will help you get launched. And this particular section will give you a taste of what's coming up in the seven remaining sections of the chapter, where you will gain a deeper understanding of the issue, identify allies and opponents, plan out your strategy and tactics, and evaluate your efforts.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC COMPONENTS OF ADVOCACY?

Each of these components is addressed in greater depth in the following sections of this chapter, but this is a broad overview of how to advocate for your issue.

SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR ADVOCATES

Once you go public with an advocacy campaign, you may draw the attention of a number of people, not all of whom will wish you well. If things go wrong, you could end up looking very silly in the local news, which would not be good for your future campaigns. Even worse, in some circumstances a wrong step could land you in court. At the very least, there's a risk of spinning your wheels if you don't go about the many tasks of advocacy efficiently.

For example, to look at a worst-case scenario, think of what could go wrong with a campaign to promote better health for the poor:

- You accuse the local hospital of turning away a sick patient, without checking your facts. The hospital proves that it treated the man, but he discharged himself early.
- You push your allies out of shape by launching a press release that uses their name, without checking the wording with them first.
- You announce a big demonstration outside the hospital, and only three people show up.

It's amateur night!

In the next section of this chapter, we've gathered 20 tips that will help members of your group avoid disasters. They'll be able to take on their tasks efficiently, confidently, and with a low risk of tripping over their shoelaces.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

You probably already have a pretty good idea of what the issue or problem is.

For example:

- You are aware of a growing problem of homelessness, particularly among people with small children
- You feel that not nearly enough is being done in your community to prevent youth smoking
- Your group is afraid that a new industrial park up river will pollute the water

However, it is important to develop a deeper understanding of the issue, including research to analyze of who has power. Remember, advocacy is about power–who can influence things that matter. You will need to know where the power of your opponents lies, and how you can most effectively influence or confront it.

RECOGNIZING ALLIES

If you are the only people in town who want something done about the problem you have identified, your cause could be in trouble. It's one thing to fight city hall: much harder to take on a whole community of hostile or indifferent people. If there are only a handful of people on your side, it may be all too easy for those in power to dismiss you as the lunatic fringe. One of your jobs will be to make that "fringe" start to look like a representative slice of the whole population affected by the issue. Then people in power will take notice.

Somewhere, there are allies – people who can band together with you and give your cause bulk, visibility, and clout. You can use methods such as a "power grid" that will help you pinpoint those groups and agencies in town that have the power to help your group. This grid will also help you identify specific ways in which these potential allies can help.

Of course, you'll need to be careful about who you invite on board–some allies may bring baggage that you don't need. We'll help you balance potential benefits against potential risks, and come up with some useful backers who will help, rather than hinder, your cause – whether you want to build a full-fledged coalition, or an informal alliance or network.

In addition to deciding whether other groups have an interest in your cause, it's important to find out if an alliance with them is in your interest. For example, suppose you are planning to make life difficult for retailers who sell cigarettes to kids, and you know that the American Cancer Society, a couple of local youth groups, and a pair of enlightened churches have the same goals. Just how can you best help each other? Do you want a close relationship? Suppose these people are limited by their own charters in the type of action they can get involved in? Suppose they might want to take over the direction of the whole campaign? Suppose they are with your interests on some matters, and against you in others?

IDENTIFYING OPPONENTS AND RESISTANCE

Although it's possible to advocate without having an opponent (for example, you may be working largely to overcome ignorance and inertia), most advocacy campaigns have a recognizable Goliath–or even several big (and potentially mean) kids on the block. Who are your opponents? Why are they putting up resistance? And what can you do about it?

Those questions should be answered together. There's not much point knowing the names of your opponents unless you also know why they are opposing you. Sometimes, this may not be for the most obvious reasons, so you'll need to know what's going on.

Starting with the *cause* for resistance is often more fruitful than starting with a list of people you expect to be bad guys: you may get some surprises. For example, a big developer might turn out to support your drive for more low-cost housing, because he recognizes that the presence of homeless people in the neighborhood can deter rich people from buying his expensive houses. Similarly, people from whom you might expect support might turn out to oppose you. Perhaps a big agency that seems to share your goals is bent out of shape because you seem to be trespassing on their turf or accusing them of ineffectiveness in the past. You can't take anything for granted.

ENCOURAGING INVOLVEMENT OF POTENTIAL OPPONENTS AS WELL AS ALLIES

Once you have a plan, you'll know where you are going, and how to get there. That will give you confidence, and that confidence will give you clout. Armed with that, you may be able to approach certain groups or individuals whom you thought were opposed to you. Maybe they still are, but you may find that you can find help in unexpected quarters. Now that your plan makes you more business-like, people may decide to cut a deal. Or, now that your position can be made clear to others as well as to yourselves, you may find that although a certain group still may oppose you on some issues, you are on the same side of others.

DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR ADVOCACY

Planning for advocacy is often a complex program because we have to deal with power and opposition. As you know by now, an advocate will usually have to overcome obstacles much greater than "mere" inertia, or lack of funds, which are often the main barriers where other types of community development projects are concerned. In advocacy situations, there are likely to be well-prepared opponents waiting in the tall grass. And they will need to be out-planned.

You will need to develop a plan based on your knowledge of who those opponents are; and knowledge of who can help you.

For a useful analogy, we'll invite you to think of the overall campaign as a building project:

- Your vision and mission is to provide a place to live that is warm and safe
- Your objective is to build a house
- Your strategy will take the form of blueprints for the house
- Your action plan will include the specifics: who will pour the concrete for the foundation, put up a frame, add the roof, et cetera, and when will they do it

And all will go together as part of one big action plan.

IN SUMMARY

Advocacy is exciting work. You get the pleasure of fighting the good fight, and sometimes, the thrill of victory. In order to have that, though, you need to get through all of the day-to-day details and specifics. You'll need to keep an eye on the forest while working on the trees individually. By going through this chapter carefully, we think you will be better prepared to bring about the changes that matter to your community.

Contributor

Prue Breitrose

Online Resources

Community Advocacy: A Psychologist's Toolkit for State and Local Advocacy is a science-based toolkit that highlights various advocacy strategies to inform policy at the state and local levels. It aims to build a community of grassroots psychologist advocates that can intervene to promote well-being in the communities in which they reside.

YouTube videos from Connecticut Network: **Defining Advocacy** – What does "advocacy" mean, and who qualifies to be an advocate? (2 min.), and **Your Right to Advocate** – Petitioning leaders at the national, state, city or neighborhood level, plus: the role of lobbyists. (6 min.)

Print Resources

Advocacy and Campaigning Course Toolkit (INTRAC). This online PDF provides theoretical and practical information for advocating and establishing a positive campaign.

Advocacy Toolkit (International Competition Network). The purpose of this toolkit is twofold: (1) Share and disseminate alternative approaches to advocacy across competition agencies; and (2) Provide a useful, practical guide to competition agencies looking to amend or refresh their current approach.

Altman, D., Fawcett, S., Seekins, T., & Young, J. (1994). *Public Health Advocacy: Creating Community Change to Improve Health*. Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention. Palo Alto,CA.

Article: Community Health Advocacy (U.S. National Library of Medicine). Loue, S. (2006). Community health advocacy. Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, 60(6), 458-463. This article addresses six key questions about advocacy and highlights the foundational issues of advocating for community health.

Avner, M., & Smucker, B. (2002). *The lobbying and advocacy handbook for nonprofit organizations: Shaping public policy at the state and local level*. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. This book offers a clear step-by-step guide to implementing a successful advocacy program at both the state and local levels.

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., Max, S.(1991) *Organizing for Social Change: a manual for activists in the 1990s*. Minneapolis, MN. Midwest Academy.

10 Common Elements of Successful Advocacy Campaigns (PDF). This freely accessible PDF is Chapter 6 from the Lobbying Strategy Handbook. This particular chapter discusses steps 4-7 in the list of ten.

Community Health Advocates (from Community Health Advocates website) is a health portal to advocates who work to help their communities get, keep, and use health coverage. Through the portal, there is access to several publications designed to educate advocates and consumers on gaining health coverage.

Daly, J. (2012). *Advocacy: Championing ideas and influencing others*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Practical knowledge for transforming advocacy ideas into practice are provided, emphasizing the power of action-oriented marketing. Daly draws off of current research in the fields of persuasion, power relations, and behavior change to explain how to successfully advocate for a cause.

How – and Why – to Influence Public Policy. (1996). *Community Change.* 17, 1-40.

How to Run an Online Advocacy Campaign (Network for Good Website). On this webpage, a blueprint is provided for designing and running an online advocacy campaign.

Libby, P. (2011). *The lobbying strategy handbook: 10 steps to advancing any cause effectively*. SAGE Publications, Inc.This book provides a 10-step framework that walks readers step-by-step through the elements of a lobbying campaign. Three separate case studies are used to show how groups have successfully employed the model.

Sen, R. (2003). *Stir it up: Lessons in community organizing and advocacy*. Jossey-Bass; 1st Edition. Sen *goes step-by-step through the process of building and mobilizing a community and implementing key strategies to affect social change*. Using case studies to illustrate advocacy practices, Sen provides tools to help groups tailor his model for their own organizational needs.

Understanding Advocacy (Article from International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC)) provides basic information about communication, action, and goals as they pertain to advocacy.

Section 10-2: Survival Skills for Advocates

Learn effective guidelines for getting support for your cause and tested personal strategies for continuing your advocacy work despite obstacles you might face.

In this section we discuss survival skills for the successful advocate.This list has been compiled from the experiences of many advocates, but it's by no means complete. Not all of these skills may be relevant to your particular situation. However, we feel a review of them may help provide a solid basis for your advocacy campaign.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR ADVOCACY?

Advocacy survival skills are a set of general guidelines for pleading your cause–and for staying in the game long enough to be successful. They have been used effectively by other advocacy campaigns. You and your group may want to review and adapt them as you develop your strategy and tactics for community change.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO USE SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR ADVOCACY?

Success depends on much more than just dedicated people working for a common cause (although that's one necessary ingredient!). This Tool Box section talks about the "Golden Rules" for advocacy – that is, how to be effective in promoting your cause while keeping your head about you.

HOW DO YOU USE SURVIVAL SKILLS IN ADVOCACY

EFFORTS?

None of the survival guidelines are set in stone. They should be used to fit your situation and resources. They have benefited many previous advocacy groups, but are not necessarily a recipe for instant success. The important thing is to study these guidelines and use what you find useful; then get to work!

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE!

Keep your eyes open for positive events that happen in and around your community initiative or because of your group's work.

- When you notice something great happening, even if it's something small, recognize it publicly
- Thank others for their efforts. Pay them public compliments. This will help motivate people to contribute in the future, knowing that you appreciate their contributions!
- Being conscientious about thanking people will help set you apart from other groups that only complain

EMPHASIZE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S VALUES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY

Always highlight the positive values and vision relating to your organization's work. For example, you may ultimately be working towards improved community health, safe workplaces and streets, a clean community environment, or quality education. Everybody wants to experience these things, so it's difficult for opponents or skeptics to argue against the kind of values you promote.

- Keeping public attention focused on values and principles that benefit everyone helps move your initiative along and prevents petty or wasteful arguments from sidelining your efforts
- Communicate to others your group's accomplishments: the new programs, policies, and practices it helped bring about

PLAN FOR SMALL WINS

If members of your group aren't able to see any progress after dedicating a lot of time and effort to your mission, their interest and motivation won't last very long. People like to see results, no matter how small. Sometimes, significant progress on a particular community issue is slow to show itself. To break up the time that passes without major breakthroughs occurring, develop a plan of action that has some shorter term or intermediate goals.

For a long term goal of providing all necessary immunizations to 100% of children age 2 and younger; developing an outreach program for high risk mothers and children 12 months from now might be a good intermediate goal.

When each of the shorter term or intermediate goals is met, celebrate! Celebrations along the way to "the big win" will build the confidence and reputation of your group.

PRESENT THE ISSUES IN THE WAY YOU WANT OTHERS TO SEE THEM

A common strategy of opponents is to "frame" or present the issues in such a way that the people or communities most affected by the problem are held responsible for their unhappy situations. Instead of responding to criticism in terms set forward by your opponents, move support away from their perspective by framing the issue in your own voice.

> The opposition claims that mothers on welfare take advantage of the system by having more babies to get "free money" from the government. Try to avoid responding to their framing of the issue; for example, by claiming that no woman could possibly profit from the small amount of extra money a month per child the state pays. Instead, reframe the issue by focusing on what contributes to mothers being on welfare in the first place: lack of employment opportunities, lack of adequate day care, etc.

DEVELOP YOUR OWN PUBLIC IDENTITY

Even if your particular organization is part of a larger movement, such as a nationally recognized group working to reduce drug use or teen violence, establish your own local public image. If you are too closely linked with a larger and better-known organization, the public may transfer its positive and negative image of the larger organization to your small group. This could overshadow whatever you really stand for and put your credibility as a non-biased, independent organization at risk.

CHECK YOUR FACTS

Understand your organization's issues and actions inside and out. This involves being able to quote a source of information or point to reliable statistics for claims you make publicly. Facts should guide your actions and public statements. If you are caught with inaccurate information or documentation, you could seriously damage your organization's reputation, embarrass yourself, and take attention away from important issues at hand.

- *Document your claims*. For example, if you claim that alcohol producers have targeted children for advertising campaigns, count and write down the location and content of the alcohol-related billboards

and posters you find near elementary, junior high, and high schools.

- *Collect data*. Obtain accurate, high quality information from experts or those who most likely have current facts and figures about the issues and options you present.
- *Verify your information*. Use as many believable sources as possible. The more people who can say, "Yes, that's right," the more backup you'll have if someone challenges your arguments.
- *Practice using those facts and figures to explain why your organization does what it does*. Be able to point to the source of your information. Most importantly, express information clearly, showing that you've done more than just swallow a bunch of facts–you understand them.
- *Having solid documentation will protect you from counterattacks* from your opponents and improve your reputation in the community.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Small successes help build morale and sustain commitment to the issues. They don't always happen as a result of complex, super involved actions. Give simpler, short -term solutions that move toward a bigger solution a chance before you take a step up in complexity.

A workers' strike protesting inadequate protection from hazardous materials may be premature unless simpler and less confrontational approaches have been tried first. A simpler, more effective starting point for this situation would be for workers to file a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

BE PASSIONATE AND PERSISTENT

Working for community health and improvement can be an uphill battle, because so often the solutions need to be the responsibility of everyone, not just of a few. It's important to have the passion and persistence to overcome entrenched attitudes the public may have toward health and community problems, and possible public resistance to change.

- Passion lends energy to your movement. It can help sway undecided people to your viewpoint, and it helps you focus on your goals
- Persistence keeps your issues in the public eye, helps you follow through on commitments, and keeps your opponents scrambling to keep up with your kind of dedication

BE PREPARED TO COMPROMISE

Building healthy communities sometimes calls for compromise with groups whose goals may not be identical to your own.

- Although you want to stay true to your vision, be open to alternative plans of action or compromises that, although not ideal, may get you closer to your goals
- Your willingness to compromise fosters good will between you and your opponents by making you appear reasonable. This may encourage wider support within the community, as long as you are not too willing to compromise, which might be perceived as weakness.

Tobacco control advocates in San Francisco wanted to include bars in a smoking ban in public places. The advocates realized a ban on smoking in bars was considered too extreme by the general public, and including bars in the list of targeted establishments would greatly decrease support for the ban. The advocates decided to drop bars from their list of places to target. This was perceived as a reasonable compromise by the public, and the ordinance passed.

BE OPPORTUNISTIC AND CREATIVE

Look out for opportunities to promote your goals and seize them when they come along. This may involve lying in wait for an appropriate, "natural" time when you can capitalize on some event related to your objectives.

February is already strongly associated with Valentine's day and hearts in the romantic sense, so the American Heart Association has long had an increase in cardiovascular and "heart health" promotion during this month.

STAY THE COURSE

Advocates have successfully gone head-to-head with some pretty powerful people, including politicians, CEOs of well-known businesses, and national lobbying organizations like the National Rifle Association. Facing such influential opponents can be scary, especially when they will most likely have greater name recognition and resources to oppose you.

As an advocate for your community, you will have some credibility with the public—after all, you're fighting for their well being; whether that's safer streets, decent jobs, cleaner air, or more access to medical care. The public will recognize this!

The bottom line is this: if you are intimidated into inaction, your opponents will automatically win and nothing will change.

LOOK FOR THE GOOD IN OTHERS

When you encounter members from groups that disagree with your goals or viewpoint, don't assume they are "out to get you" or ready to pick a fight.

- If an opponent criticizes your organization, begin by assuming the person doesn't have the same

understanding that you do and is speaking out of a lack of information

- Educate the person. You could even invite her to attend some of your organization's functions to find out what your group is really about

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

Opponents may try to distract you from your advocacy activities by attacking you personally. By responding to their name-calling, you waste precious energy and lessen your chances for future cooperation or compromise with these people. Also, your public image may suffer if the general public sees you involved in mudslinging. Instead of giving in to the temptation to fight back, stay focused on the really important issues at hand.

> Advocates for increased enforcement of alcohol sales laws were once accused by the alcoholic beverage industry as being in favor of a police state, or of being anti-business

Sometimes it may be necessary to respond to their attacks in order to maintain your credibility in the eyes of the public. When you do, make sure your defense or counter attack is well documented with facts and/or data to back you up.

MAKE ISSUES LOCAL AND RELEVANT

When you bring your issues to the local level, you increase your chances for public support. Issues become relevant to community members when they are close to home. For example, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has been very successful in many communities because many people know someone who has lost a child to an alcohol related accident. Some ways to really bring issues home to people in your area include using statistics for the issue gathered locally, using such local role models as businesses or volunteers, or presenting the issues in a certain way to help community members understand how they will be affected.

- The state legislature plans to start selling lands for the development of a turnpike interchange. The interchange will only travel through one mile of your county, yet county residents will be charged an extra 55 cents to travel on it. In addition, the proposed development runs through lands used for Native American religious ceremonies. In addition to advocating to stop the destruction of the sacred grounds, your organization could publicize the extra cost to residents who use the interchange.
- Your organization works to build self-esteem and create life options for local teenagers. Invite local business people to speak to your organization on how they are working to create more part-time employment for teenagers and on what kind of skills they would like future employees to have. Perhaps you could create a mentoring pool where professionals from your community would work with students in developing their career goals.

GET BROAD-BASED SUPPORT FROM THE START

Sometimes it may seem as if becoming part of an advocacy movement automatically puts you on the "other side" from state and federal services, politicians, community leaders and private organizations.

Even though there may be some differences between your group and key segments of the community, you may all be more or less working towards the same broad goals of helping the community become healthier.

It's important to include people from "inside the system" in your advocacy efforts. This helps you not only widen your perspective on the issues, but it helps you identify "ins" with key agencies and people who can provide valuable support and clout to your efforts.

WORK WITHIN THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUR GROUP MEMBERS

The actions that your group takes should agree with the experiences, values, and interests of individual group members. It's important that you regularly monitor the preferences and limitations of group members in order to choose actions that members feel comfortable doing.

> If your group of advocates wants to stage a protest that could result in getting arrested for trespassing or violating a city ordinance, make sure members are prepared to experience getting arrested or ticketed–especially if they have never been arrested before.

TRY TO WORK OUTSIDE THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUR OPPONENTS

A confused or unsure opponent is a weak opponent. When you have the ability to work outside your opponents' experiences or field of expertise, do so. Most companies don't plan in advance to deal with public opposition to their policies, actions, or products. Likewise, they don't know how to respond to unexpected alternatives presented publicly to them by advocates.

> An anti-tobacco advocate was invited to debate a tobacco industry representative on smoker's rights. Instead of arguing against smoker's rights as expected, he argued for the right of smokers to sue the tobacco industry for health costs.

MAKE YOUR OPPONENTS PLAY BY THEIR OWN RULES

Federal, state, and local agencies and governing bodies all have rules and regulations for how activities are carried out. Make sure you take advantage of those guaranteed procedures when dealing with these groups.

- Advocacy groups can use mandatory public hearings to show support for or opposition against proposed policy changes.

- Citizens' groups can also file appropriate complaints with government agencies or organizations responsible for enforcing certain regulations. Once you are familiar with an organization's procedures and protocols, exploit them to the benefit of your goals.

TIE YOUR ADVOCACY GROUP'S EFFORTS TO RELATED EVENTS

Watch for events that might be relevant to your group's objectives or tactics. Linking to such events helps publicize your cause and strengthen your position in the community.

- Advocates wanting to increase public assistance for the poor, including adequate housing, could link their cause to the death of a local person who died of exposure during the harsh winter
- Opponents of nuclear power might link their claims about the dangers of nuclear power to an accident at a nuclear power plant

ENJOY YOURSELF!

Remember how we talked about celebrating successes to maintain commitment to your cause? That's about having a good time, too. If members of your advocacy group don't enjoy what they're doing, then there's something wrong.

Great! You've made it through our list of survival skills. We hope that a few, if not all, of these will provide you guidance as you prepare to take action. You may even want to refer back to these as your advocacy campaign progresses. Again, feel free to modify these to best suit your needs and situation.

Good luck and have fun!

Contributor

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Libby, P. (2011). *The lobbying strategy handbook: 10 steps to advancing any cause effectively*. SAGE Publications, Inc.This book provides a 10-step framework that walks readers step-by-step through the elements of a lobbying campaign. Three separate case studies are used to show how groups have successfully employed the model.

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Online Resource

Advocacy Toolkit. This page has a downloadable toolkit link at the bottom of the page which provides general guidelines for advocating for yourself and your peers.

A YouTube video from the Connecticut Network: **Advocacy Strategies** – Learn some skills and attributes that can help you successfully champion your cause. (5 min.)

Section 10-3: Understanding the Issue

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE?

You probably already have a good idea about why your issue is important. You probably also know something about its history, and what brought the situation about. That's great, but before you face the world in a big-time (or even small-time) advocacy campaign, you will need to be armed with quite a lot of extra knowledge about the background of your issue, as well as the way it affects your community.

WHY DO YOU NEED A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR ISSUE?

- You'll need to have arguments at your fingertips that can convince your members that the issue is important and keep them fired up
- You'll need to persuade allies to join your cause by presenting them with facts that they won't be able to ignore or refute
- You'll need to know why your opponents are taking the side they take, and what financial or other interests they may have in continuing to take that side
- With research, you'll know better what needs to be done to correct a situation. Furthermore, you'll know which of the necessary steps are fairly easy to take, and which may be a major stretch for your organization.
- You'll know what strategic style is likely to work best, whether you're going to run an "in your face" type

of initiative, or act behind the scenes, or something in between

- When and if the dispute becomes public – as you may want it to do – you will have the answers. If a reporter asks you for a reaction, or shoves a microphone in your face, you will be sure of your facts.
- You'll be ready with facts any time you are challenged by your opponent, by the establishment (such as City Hall), or by the media
- Because you'll thoroughly understand the status quo from the beginning of your campaign, you will be able to plan your progress logically and, at the end, know just how far you have come

The bottom line is that before you proceed with the specific planning steps in the rest of this chapter, you will need a nice, solid, comforting layer of knowledge on which to base your plans.

WHAT SORT OF RESEARCH IS INVOLVED?

Other parts of the Tool Box deal with the collection of facts and statistics. There is no doubt that you must know the facts about your issue – in fact, you can't operate without them. But you will need much more than a basis if you are to be a successful advocate:

- You'll need to know how people feel about the issue, and what they believe
- You'll need to know how the issue links or divides different segments of the community
- You'll need to understand who is pulling the strings to make your opponents take the line they do
- You'll need to know what forces might be at work in the local political scene to make officials drag their feet – or even jump in to oppose you
- You might need to know what it will take to make people give up the old way of doing things and try something else
- You might need to know the belief systems of people who oppose you on ideological grounds

STARTING POINTS FOR YOUR RESEARCH:

Who is affected by the issue?

- Who is affected the most?
- Who loses, and what do they lose?
- Who gains, and what do they gain?

What are the consequences of the issue?

- For the individuals mostly affected?

- For their families?
- For society?

What is the economic impact of the issue?

- What are the economic costs of the issue, and who bears these costs?
- What are the economic benefits of the issue, and who benefits?

What is the social impact of the issue?

- What are the social costs of the issue, and who bears these costs?
- What are the social benefits of the issue, and who benefits?

What are the barriers?

- What are the barriers to addressing this issue?
- How can they be overcome?

What are the resources?

- What resources will we need to address this issue?
- Where and how can they be tapped?

What is the history of this issue?

- What is the history of the issue in the community?
- What past efforts were made to address it?
- What were the results?

To put it another way, it's helpful to find the root cause of the issue and what has happened since.

WHAT ARE THE BEST SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

You will probably need two main types of information:

GATHERING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Getting accurate background information may be heavy lifting; you, or others in your group, may need to become experts in the field, or find existing experts to join or advise your group. For example, suppose your issue involves excessive logging and its effect on the environment. Your group should be somewhat knowledgeable about wildlife, watersheds, water quality, effects of logging on fish, the life-cycle of trees, the economics of the industry, the forestry regulations, and so on.

If your issue is health care for the poor, you may need to have a reasonable knowledge of a great many fields, including information about the economics of health care systems, the effect of medical neglect on poor families, and state and federal policies as they affect the indigent.

LIBRARIES

When you're looking for background information, your local library is a great place to start. It will have many current subscriptions and back numbers of major newspapers, magazines, etc.. Special reports published by periodicals can be a valuable resource for information about the background of your issue.

In addition, many reference librarians are born to surf. They can guide you to reliable sites on the Web where you can get what you need.

Here are some specific places to look in the library:

- The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature
  ◦ This will lead you to the names and dates of articles on your issue that have appeared in magazines in recent years. Many libraries will also be able to produce the back copies of the magazines. These articles can be valuable in giving you background information–but keep in mind that, although it's not terribly common, incorrect (or outdated) information does occasionally find its way into print. To be on the safe side, verify what you learn with two or three independent sources.
- Almanacs and yearbooks
  ◦ Annual publications such as The World Almanac and Book of Facts, published by the Newspaper Enterprise Association may produce information you need. Yearbooks are more specialized. For example, The Municipal Yearbook and The County Yearbook are both published by the International City Management Association.
- Indexes and surveys
  ◦ Major newspapers often publish "indexes" which you can use to dig up stories from the archive, which the library may keep on microfiche or microfilm. The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the Christian Science Monitor are three useful ones. Surveys of events are compiled by various organizations. One of the most useful is Facts on File.

THE INTERNET

Get a good Internet directory, or put the right key words into a good search engine and you may find untold riches. For example, start with *Fed World* and it will lead you to dozens of Federal agencies and their oceans of data. Or try the Library of Congress.

While the Internet is full of good information, (for example, you found us!), you'll want to keep a couple of things in mind. The Internet is not monitored, so the information you find may be outdated or even completely incorrect. Start with the web pages of national or state organizations devoted to your topic; you can feel confident that these will be accurate and up-to-date.

LEARNING FROM OTHER ADVOCACY GROUPS

In many cases, background research might already have been done by national advocacy groups, such as the Children's Defense Fund or the Sierra Club. You may also be able to learn from smaller advocacy groups who may be tackling issues similar to yours. However, you'll need to be careful about taking over facts and figures prepared by other organizations. In certain cases, these might not be accurate, or might give a different slant to the research than the one you need.

One thing that you can learn from other groups is their process–the way they went about their own research. For example, suppose a group in a neighboring community had a problem with a major industry dumping untreated waste into the river. Now, a similar problem seems to be developing with a pet-food processing plant in your community. You can find out what sources of information they used and what roadblocks they encountered in their efforts to remedy the situation.

You might want to use something similar to this form to get started:

Need to know	Where to look	Useful?
Effect of paper mill waste on fish	• Library • College – Professor Smith, Zoology Department • Ask group at Milltown	• Yes – ask for Jane • No – consults for company! • Great – have a lot of stuff they'll share

GATHERING LOCAL INFORMATION

You will need very specific information about the issue as it affects your community in order to plan your campaign and push the right buttons.

Some of the research methods that you use to gather background information may also be excellent for

filling in the local angle. For instance, reference librarians often have an excellent knowledge of the community and where its archives or other background facts may be found.

The local media

If you have a local newspaper, try the clippings file. You may find valuable information about the origins of the problem you face. Television and radio may not keep archives systematically, but if there's a reporter or researcher on staff who's been around for many years, he or she might be glad to give you some guidance. For example: "I remember there was a zoning dispute... " or "When that hospital was set up, there was some provision... " Even unspecific memories and hints may lead you to the right corner of officialdom to dig out useful documents.

Remember that many local papers now have websites which are often stuffed with archival material.

Annual reports

Is your opponent a company that issues annual reports? These can provide useful statistics. Or you might find valuable information from special reports issued by groups such as public interest groups, business organizations, social services, and others that release information to the public. (Again, librarians might know where to look.)

Archival records

City Hall, or other government agencies, such as school boards, may have archival records that tell you what you want to know. For example, court records and real estate records may be loaded with information about past difficulties of opponents, the history of zoning decisions, and so on.

Another possible source to find information is through the Freedom of Information Act. Under this Act you can obtain information about federal government agencies. This may be about an outside agency or about your own. There are three exceptions: the Congress, the Federal Courts, and the Executive Office. Requests for information cannot be made to schools, state or local governments, and private businesses, organizations, or individual records.

Commercial sector

Often the business establishment of a community will gather facts and figures–for example, for use in a brochure that is designed to bring new business or new residents to the town. The Chamber of Commerce may be a good place to start.

FILLING THE GAPS

There may be some information that you just can't get from written sources, whether paper or electronic. And if there are gaps in what you need to know, you may find that you can fill them best by asking questions.

For example, do you want to know whether a strategy you are considering is likely to win the support of the general public or their undying resentment? Ask!

Here are some suggestions for extracting the information you need from people in your community.

Interviews with community leaders

Set up a time to go and chat with people who are identified by members of the community as leaders. These people don't have to be elected officials or people in power, but they should be respected and have influence. They might be:

- Church leaders
- Youth group leaders
- Respected local professionals
- Representatives of the business community
- Educators (i.e. school board members, school principals)

Usually these people are busy, so it pays to plan out your questions before you go in, and to make them specific. For example, "If you were in our situation, how would you... ?" Or, "Thinking back 15 years, can you remember how the community reacted to...?"

Remember that these leaders may be important to you later in the campaign, so be careful to keep them on your side! If they don't yet want to open up about a certain topic, back off.

Interviews with community residents

You may be able to gather useful information about community knowledge and attitudes by reaching a sample of the residents, if your sample is big enough, and if it is really representative.

There are various techniques you can use, including:

- Intercept surveys (stopping people on the street)
- Telephone surveys (with numbers picked at random)
- Written surveys (sent to a sample picked at random)

You may get useful information from any of these methods, though the return rate on written surveys is usually very low and they're very expensive. Just chatting to people in the street, or telephoning a sample to ask what they think about a certain topic may give you fresh insights, or bring to your attention problems you hadn't thought about.

Just remember that you probably can't quote facts and figures gathered in these surveys unless:

- You use a sufficiently large sample
- You are very professional about the way that the sample is chosen
- You are very professional about the way the questions are worded
- The results are carefully coded and analyzed

For example, if your group claims that "90% of the people in this town support us," and it turns out you

only telephoned your friends, or only talked to people in coffee shops, this will be easy for the opposition to dismiss–and they are unlikely to take your statistical claims seriously in future.

Focus groups

These can be useful in two ways:

- To "go fishing" for ideas and reactions from a fairly typical bunch of people
- To test out specific ideas

There is one caveat: most research from focus groups can't be used to "prove" anything. You can't say, "People in the community say that clean air is their highest priority – just on the basis of one focus group – it's simply not a large enough sample. But focus groups can be very effective in suggesting lines of inquiry that you might not have thought of, and in giving reactions to ideas presented to them.

Guided discussions

This way of gathering information is something like doing focus groups one on one. Members of your group chat with members of the community, either face-to-face or by telephone. Interviewers follow a check-list of points you want covered in the course of the conversation, and questions you'd like answered, but you can also afford to let the conversation wander – and that can often produce some good insights into the issue.

Contributor

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Section 10-4: Developing a Plan for Advocacy

Learn how to properly plan for advocacy to avoid surprises that might make you look ineffective, clumsy, or incompetent, in order to increase your chances of success.

WHAT'S A PLAN FOR ADVOCACY?

Other sections of the Community Tool Box have covered strategic planning. How should planning for advocacy be different?

The answer is that in many ways the process will be similar — but it's even more important to do it thoroughly, and do it up front. That's because advocacy:

- Involves getting powerful individuals or organizations to make big changes that may not be in their short-term interest
- Often involves working in the public eye
- Often involves sticking out your neck, as you take a stand against a larger opponent

Planning will help you find out ahead of time where the major difficulties may lie, and to avoid surprises (including those surprises that might make you look ineffective, clumsy, or stupid).

In addition, as with any project, planning will help you to:

- Clarify your goals
- Clarify the steps that will take you to your goals
- Increase your chances of success

If you don't plan, you may waste valuable energy, miss some opportunities, perhaps even antagonize people you need to keep on your side.

WHEN SHOULD YOU CREATE A PLAN FOR ADVOCACY?

It's important to complete a plan before you start advocating, because, as you will find, each part of the plan can affect the others.

Normally, planning your goals comes first–but you may have to change those plans if you find, as you plan further, that the tactics you were hoping to use aren't legal, or won't work. When you plan everything together–and ongoing–you can both build support and make adjustments as you go.

> Your goal might be to close down a refinery that had been guilty of dumping toxic chemicals in the community. You find, when you check into the list of possible allies, that the economic impact of closure would be devastating to the community. So you adjust your goal to one that would change safety practices in the refinery and permit closer community oversight.
>
> If you had publicly stated your goal of closing the place, before talking with others or filling in the other steps of your plan, you could have antagonized many of those whose support you would need. These might include many people in the community who depended on the refinery financially. And it would have been hard to win them back, after publicly coming out against their interests.

MAKING YOUR PLANS

Planning is best done as a group activity. One way is to write up ideas on the chalkboard or on butcher paper. Then, after they've been debated, record the ideas you've chosen in a permanent place. The actual format of the plan is not important. What's important is that you write it down in a form you can use, and that lets you check one part of the plan against the rest. A loose-leaf binder (or computer file) with separate sections for each category may be all you need.

GOALS (OR OBJECTIVES)

If you are asked what the goal of your advocacy campaign or group is, your answer may come out in the form of a mission statement: "Our aim is to create decent and affordable housing," or "We intend to reduce pollution of the local waterways." However, for planning purposes, goals should be split down into much more specific steps. Remember that it's better to keep your focus on a relatively narrow, manageable group of issues, rather than letting yourselves try to cover too much ground, and lose strength in the process. It's also important to split up the goals according to your time-frame.

Long-term goals spell out where you want to be, by the end of the advocacy campaign.

- Ten years from now, the supply of low-income housing in Bay City will have increased by 50%
- In four years, we will reduce the pregnancy rate among 12 to 17 year-olds in Bay City by 30%
- Five years from now, toxic dumping in Murray County will be eliminated

Intermediate goals get you much of the way:

- They focus on community and system changes – new or modified programs, policies, and practices in the local community or the broader system
- They provide concrete building blocks towards the ultimate goal
- They help the group to feel it is doing something. This can be helpful to maintain high levels of motivation over the long haul.
- They provide earlier "bench-marks" by which you can measure progress.

  - In one year, the City Council will create six new low-income housing units
  - In six months, we will have changed the hours of the clinic to increase access
  - In nine months, two major businesses will have introduced flextime policies that permit adults to be with children after school

Short-term goals have some of the same functions as the intermediate kind. They help keep a group motivated, providing more immediate benchmarks in the form of action steps.

- By June, we'll have signed up 10 new members
- In two months, we'll hold the first public hearing
- By the November election, we will get 1,500 people out to vote

WRITING OUT YOUR GOALS

In terms of planning, it pays to examine each goal before you write it down, to make sure it meets certain

criteria. Specifically, each goal should be **SMART** + **C**: Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Relevant; Timed; and Challenging.

Here's how **SMART** + **C** goal-planning works:

- **(S)**pecific. The more specific you can be about what it is you want your group to achieve and by when, the better.

  Instead of, "We'll hold a meeting," your goal should be: "We'll hold a meeting for parents of teenage children in Memorial Hall to invite input on the initiative."

- **(M)**easurable. Put your goals in measurable terms. The more precise you are about what you want to get done, the easier it will be to see what and how much your group has accomplished. This may prove to be essential if you are carrying out a systematic evaluation of your campaign (see related section of this chapter).

  Not: "Smoking in our community will be reduced," but instead: "The percentage of smokers in our community will decline by 30% by the year 2000."

- **(A)**chievable. It's great for you to be ambitious, but you should also remember to set realistic goals that your group can actually achieve. Real change takes time and resources. If you bite off more than you can chew, your group and the community may become prematurely disappointed or discouraged.
- **(R)**elevant (to your mission). You should be setting goals that will start your group on the path to successfully accomplishing its mission. If you stray too much from that path, you may lose sight of what it is you're trying to accomplish.
- **(T)**imed. A date for completion should be set. Even if circumstances change and your date must be altered later, it's much better to start off knowing when you can expect to achieve your goals, so you will know when it may become necessary to make adjustments.
- **(C)**hallenging. Goals should also stretch up. If we know we can get 500 people out to vote, but need 2,000–and can get that with extra effort–we should set the more challenging goal.

PLANNING YOUR GOALS

The simplest way may be to use a loose-leaf binder or computer file, with one page for each of your major goals. On each page, provide space for "short," "intermediate " and "long-term" objectives, with two or three objectives under each sub-heading.

Do you have the resources to reach those goals? That's what you'll pin down in the next part of the planning process.

YOUR RESOURCES AND ASSETS

Once you have your goals written down, it's easier to make an inventory of the resources you'll need, in terms of organization, money, facilities, and allies–and the assets you have already.

Resources for advocacy may be very different from those needed to run service programs in the community. You won't be needing massive financial support over a long period of time, as would be the case if you wanted to open a day-care center, for example. That's the good news. The bad news is that the sort of charitable foundation that might fund a day-care center most generously may not want to put any money at all into advocacy.

So? So you may not have much cash. But (good news again) you might be rich in other resources–especially people. Your list of available resources will vary, according to the size of your group and its needs, but might include any of the following:

- Funds (including in-kind contributions) balanced against expenses
- People who are already available (both staff and volunteers), and their skills
- People you expect to be available
- Contacts (e.g., with media resources)
- Facilities (e.g., access to transportation and computers, meeting rooms)
- Access to information archives or libraries

Since advocacy is stressful, make sure your assets are solidly in place. Do you have internal problems that need to be solved in your group, such as relationships between staff and volunteers? Disagreements about use of funds? These need to be sorted out now if possible, during the planning stage.

PLANNING YOUR RESOURCES AND ASSETS

The simplest way to plan is to write out a list of resources and assets in a binder (or computer file) so you can add new ones as you go along. Keep one section for each of the headings above: Funds, People presently available, People expected to be available, Useful community contacts, Facilities, and Access to other resources.

Did you come up short on the most vital resource of all–the people who are willing to help? Then the next section might help you build it up, as you survey the degree of community support you have now, and how much you might expect in the future. When you look into your community support, for the next part of your plan, you may find a few surprises.

YOUR COMMUNITY SUPPORT (AND OPPOSITION)

For this part of the plan, you will write down lists of expected allies and opponents. Part of this may be simple.

For example, if you are planning to restrict the logging (and erosion-causing) practices of a big local lumber company, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to guess that the owners and employees of that company are unlikely to be on your side, but local environmental groups will likely give you their support.

But sometimes it's not so simple, which is why it will pay to do some careful planning, including personal contact and listening. It may be that people you expect to be opponents may also be allies under certain circumstances; and those thought to be allies may oppose your efforts.

> You want to get a big strawberry grower in your community to cut down on the pesticide used on his fields. It's getting into the river; and the farm workers and some of the people who live nearby claim it makes them sick. But the mayor of your community normally sides with business interests, no matter what. In the past, he has made statements hostile to many environmental causes. Furthermore, he's an old golfing buddy of the strawberry grower. You naturally pencil him in as a possible opponent. But wait. This mayor owns land just downstream from the strawberry grower, and plans to put in a big development of expensive houses ("Strawberry Fields"). The last thing he wants is a cloud of pesticide upstream, and upwind. He may not want to tackle his buddy in public, but you find to your surprise that behind the scenes, he'll be your ally.

PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT (AND OPPOSITION)

This can be as simple as making three lists on binder paper: one for allies, one for opponents, and one for unsure (possible allies or opponents). These lists will be useful as you approach the next part of the planning process: deciding specifically whose behavior you want to change, and who can help you do the changing.

TARGETS AND AGENTS OF CHANGE

For this part of the plan, it's important to know very precisely what caused the problem your advocacy group is addressing.

Who are targets and agents of change? Let's suppose you want to take on the many business people in town who are supplying cigarettes to kids. You know they are out there: you've already done an informal survey of kids smoking outside the junior high, and they tell you that buying tobacco is quite easy, in spite of the law.

- Your main targets of change will be the tobacco retailers. They are the ones who will need to alter their behavior if you are to achieve your goals.
- The agents of change are those who will cause the targets to actually make the change, by one means or another.

In many cases, it's not that simple. For example, what about the police, who should be enforcing the law. Are they going to be targets of change, as you work on their enforcement of the law? Or are they to be agents–going in to make the bust?

Sometimes, there may be crossover from one status to another, such as:

- The police chief may be a target initially since there is little enforcement, but a delegation of kids against tobacco persuades him that he really needs to commit himself to their cause. He sanctions undercover buys by minors to get evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the merchants, and commits himself to enforcing the law vigorously.
- Even a tobacco retailer may turn out to be an agent, if she sees the light, and offers to influence the practices of other members of the local tobacco retailers association.

Although targets (or agents) are often institutions or groups, it may be easier to focus on one individual. For example, you might plan to change the thinking of one elected official or agency head at a time rather than going for a massive shift of opinion. Or it might seem feasible to tackle one senior executive in a company that's not hiring local people who need decent jobs.

PLANNING YOUR TARGETS AND AGENTS OF CHANGE

You can simply write one list of targets, one of agents, and one of possible hybrids: people who could switch from one category to another.

At this point in the planning, you will have a fairly clear idea about what you want to achieve, what are the main obstacles, and what are the resources–in terms of money, facilities and people–that can help you reach the goals. The next steps involve drawing a clear road-map showing how you will get there from here.

PLANNING YOUR STRATEGY

In a sense, advocacy itself is a strategy–it's the way you have decided to reach your particular goal, because you can't get what you want without taking on some institutions and people who have power, and getting that power structure to change.

Now you need the specific strategies that will help you reach your goals. As an advocate, you will also have to make sure that your strategies:

- Make the best use of (and don't antagonize) your allies
- Produce the kind of change you want in your opponents

Many people tend to assume that because you are involved in advocacy, your strategy will involve confrontation. Yes, it may – but often, that's not the best approach.

For example, in a program aiming to curb youth smoking, you might decide on a mix of strategies, some of them quite adversarial, and some not.

Less confrontation / conflict:

- Increase public awareness through a media campaign
- Educate the merchants
- Gather data about violations of the law to encourage increased levels of enforcement
- Work through the schools
- Network with like-minded organizations
- Work for policy change in local government

More confrontation:

- Apply economic pressure on merchants through boycotts
- Arrange for kids to picket

Most confrontation:

- Blockade the entrances to specific stores
- Be prepared to be arrested for your act of civil disobedience

CHOOSING A STRATEGIC STYLE

As you can see, many different actions fit under the definition of "strategy," and they may incorporate many different styles–from friendly persuasion to "in your face."

Your choice of style will depend to a great extent on your knowledge of the community, and of what will work (as well as your knowledge of your members and allies, and what they can do best and most comfortably). The people and institutions of a community are connected in complicated ways, and people may see their own interests threatened if certain institutions seem to be under attack. Yes, you can change people's attitudes – but this may take time. A raucous demonstration at the wrong time might solidify old prejudices, making it harder in the long run for people to change.

On the other hand, sometimes a public demonstration is essential to bring an issue to the attention of the public (and the media). In some circumstances, it can help fire up the enthusiasm of your members, and bring in new ones. The point is that you need to think hard about what effect it will have, based on your knowledge of the community, your targets and agents, and the root causes of the issue.

STAYING FLEXIBLE

Although it's a good idea to do as much forward planning as possible, an advocacy campaign is likely to be dynamic, adjusting with changing circumstances. Obviously, not everything can be locked in.

For example, you might be all set to barricade a logging trail in an environmental cause, when you hear that

a state senator is about to propose legislation that would go some way towards accomplishing what you want; your barricade might cause some senators to vote against him. Or you might hear rumors to the effect that your people would be met with massive force. Or you might be told that alternative old logging trails are to be opened up. Or that you had somehow overlooked another area of the watershed where logging could produce even more environmental damage.

Here are some things that you should keep in mind, as your advocacy campaign progresses, involving surprise developments from *good news*; *rumors*; *unmet needs*; or *bad news*.

Good news	If something that your group applauds has happened in your community (for example, if some group has made a good policy change), you will want to **reinforce** it.
Rumors	You will need to stay ahead of developments by keeping your collective ear to the ground. If you hear that something contradictory to your aims is about to happen (for example, if you hear that a new housing development is not, after all, going to provide the low-income housing that was promised), you need to **investigate**.
Unmet Needs	If your studies of community needs turned up major gaps, (for example, if the immunization rate for infants is exceptionally low), then you would want to **create plans** to make sure those needs are met (for example, apply pressure for resources for mobile vans to promote access).
Bad news	You may need to be flexible, with the ability to deliver a **quick response** if something bad happens, such as the threatened demolition of low-income housing.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

It may be useful to brainstorm strategies in the group, and write down those that you feel will help you attain your goals. In some cases, simply writing the chosen strategies in a form that you can store easily (for example, in a loose-leaf binder or computer file) is all you need. Others may prefer something more complex.

Here's one possible format, which has a built-in double-check to make sure each strategy is on target.

Goal: Funding for school-linked clinics		
Strategy	**Does it:**	**Yes**
Launch a lobbying effort to win over elected officials to fund school-linked clinics.	• Help us reach our goals? • Use our allies? • Minimize our opposition? • Suit our style?	x x x x

Strategies are the broad strokes: they don't spell out specifically how something will get done. That's the job of the tactics (or action steps) that you choose? the next part of the planning process.

TACTICS

Tactics are the action steps. The icing on the cake. The finishing touch. The part that shows. Tactics can cover a wide range of activity, from writing letters to speaking up at City Council meetings, from filing complaints to setting up negotiations, from boycotts and demonstrations to carrying out surveys.

As you plan tactics, you will need to make sure that they:

- Carry out your strategy, and are appropriate for your goals
- Fit your style (one tactic out of control can wreck a whole campaign)
- Are doable and cost effective, within your resources, funds, allies and good will
- Make your group feel good about themselves, and what they are doing

You will find plenty of discussion of specific tactics in other parts of the Community Tool Box. Some of these relate to the development of programs, but some fit well under the rubric of advocacy – that is, they involve identifying specific targets of change, and encouraging that change for the good of the community.

HELPFUL QUESTIONS

As you plan tactics, it may be useful to ask yourselves these questions about each of them:

- What will be the scope of this action?
- Who will carry it out?
- When will the action take place, and for how long?
- Do we have the resources to make it happen?
- What resources are available?
- Which allies and constituents should be involved?
- Which individuals and organizations might oppose or resist?

PLANNING TACTICS

There are many different ways of writing out your tactical plans. For example, you may find it useful to attach your plan to each major objective. Here's an example of one way you can do that:

Table: Turning goals into action steps

Goal	Action Steps
By August 2013, provide the community with data on youth's views about sexuality, including availability of contraception, methods of contraceptive use, and sexual activity.	By May 2013, the school subcommittee will secure support from school administrators and teachers to survey high school students on issues related to sexuality.
	By May 2013, the school subcommittee will secure informed consent from parents and students to distribute the survey.
	By June 2013, the school subcommittee will prepare a survey to distribute to high school youth.
	By June 2013, teachers will distribute the survey to all high school youth.
	By July 2013, the staff will summarize the results and prepare a report.
	By July 2013, the chair of the school subcommittee will communicate the results of the survey to the school administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the general community.

Here's another approach, which will also bring your resources and opponents into the planning process.

Goal	Action	By whom	By when	Resources and support needed	Possible opponents
Reduction of teen smoking by 40%	Tobacco-buying sting	Pete, jane, with kids	May 15, 2013	• Kids for undercover buys • Permission from police chief	• Tobacco retailers • Chamber of Commerce?

PUTTING THE PLAN TOGETHER

The entire plan, covering all six of the above steps, should be formally written down. The process of writing will help clarify your thinking. The written version will be available to bring us back in line when "scope creep" occurs: we wobble away from our basic plan.

As we have suggested, some groups might be happy working with a loose-leaf binder, with separate sections for each of the main planning steps. However, others may prefer to get all the planning for one major action onto one "Campaign Planning Chart."

In this example, budget cuts have been proposed that will affect the funding for a clinic that offers the only health care available to the poor in the neighborhood. Your group is advocating an increase in funding for the clinic, and opening a new clinic to serve an area now without health-care facilities.

Goals	Resources & Assets	Support / Opposition	Targets / Agents	Strategies	Action Steps
Better health care for the poor in Jefferson County.	**Personnel:** 1 organizer, 50% time Secretary, 25% time 6 volunteers Need 5 – 8 more volunteers **Budget:** • $2000 • Need additional $1000	**Allies:** • Poor People's Alliance • Medical Watch of Jefferson County **Opponents:** • County Health Care Agency	**Possible targets of change:** • Key members of the health care committee – Smith and Kosdek **Possible agents of change:** • Dr. Rogers • The Medical Association	• Educate community about need	• Hold meetings • Identify and contact sympathetic media representatives

Contributor

Prue Breitrose

Online Resource

Community Advocacy: A Psychologist's Toolkit for State and Local Advocacy is a science-based toolkit that highlights various advocacy strategies to inform policy at the state and local levels. It aims to build a community of grassroots psychologist advocates that can intervene to promote well-being in the communities in which they reside.

Introduction to Advocacy Planning. **This online PDF provides information on understanding the problem you are trying to solve, identifying an alternative aim, and breaking down the objectives as part of the advocacy planning cycle**.

Print Resources

Advocacy Strategy Workbook – This resource goes step-by-step with worksheets to guide each of the stages of advocacy planning.

Advocacy Toolkit (UNICEF) – Chapter 3 of this toolkit provided by UNICEF is devoted to developing an advocacy strategy and gives an outline of questions that need to be asked. The chapter concluded with an advocacy planning worksheet.

Altman, D., Balcazar, F., Fawcett, S., Seekins, T., & Young, J. (1994). *Public health advocacy: Creating community change to improve health*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention.

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., & Max, S. (1996). *Organizing for social change: a manual for activists in the 1990s*. Chicago, IL: Midwest Academy.

Crafting Your Advocacy Strategy (UNICEF) provides information on how to go about crafting a strategy for an advocacy campaign.

Developing an Advocacy Plan (Victim Assistance Training) – This website provides a step-by-step guide to planning for advocacy with case studies and activities following each step.

Fawcett, S. B., & Paine, A., et al. (1993). *Preventing adolescent pregnancy: An action planning guide for community based initiatives*. Lawrence, KS: Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development, The University of Kansas.

Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems. *Advocating for policy change*. San Rafael, CA.

Planning for Advocacy – This online PDF is a section from the Advocacy Toolkit for Women in Politics provided by UN Women. It provides a step-by-step process for planning for advocacy.

PART VI
MAINTAINING QUALITY AND REWARDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1.

CHAPTER

PART VII
GENERATING, MANAGING, AND SUSTAINING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

2.

CHAPTER

PART VIII
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES ~ CASA

CASA National: Court Appointed Special Advocates

https://nationalcasagal.org/

Illinois CASA   https://illinoiscasa.org/

Cook County: https://casacookcounty.org

DuPage County: https://dupagecasa.org/

Kane County: https://casakanecounty.org/

CASA of DuPage County, Inc. is a non-profit organization that recruits, trains, and supports volunteer citizen advocates to effectively speak to the best interests of abused, neglected, dependent and vulnerable children in the DuPage County Court system. Every child has the right to a safe, permanent, and nurturing home.

WHAT IS A CASA ADVOCATE?

CASA Advocates are volunteers who go through an extensive training process before being sworn in by the presiding judge and matched with appropriate cases. They are typically assigned to one child or set of siblings and spend an average of 10 hours per month on their case, including a monthly visit with the child. As an appointed member of the court, a CASA Advocate assumes the following responsibilities:

- To serve as a part of the fact-finding process for the judge by thoroughly researching the background of the assigned case
- To speak on behalf of the child in the courtroom, representing his or her best interests
- To act as a monitor for the child for the duration of the case, ensuring that the case is brought to a swift and appropriate conclusion

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://cod.pressbooks.pub/humanservices/?p=111#oembed-2

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet

ADVOCACY

Through a variety of activities, groups, and committees, Catholic Charities fosters awareness and collaboration. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that we are doing everything in our power to help the least among us in the seven counties we represent Will, Kendall, Grundy, DuPage, Iroquois, Ford, and Kankakee.

The Advocacy Committee at Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Joliet is composed of employees and Board Members who work toward raising awareness with federal, state, and local government officials. Our focus has been on advocating for affordable housing, cost of doing business increases for our programs, reduction in poverty and racism in America, and helping the victims of natural disasters.

In DuPage County, the Community Connections network includes Catholic Charities, other human service agencies from DuPage County, and interested persons from parishes and non-profits advocating on issues such as child care, transitional housing, help for expectant mothers in crisis, affordable housing, transportation, and emergency services to name a few. For more information, call 630-495-8008.

In Will County we participate in the Continuum of Care, Voices for Illinois Children, Supportive Housing Action Coalition, Illinois Homeless Network, etc. In Grundy County we participate in the Local Interagency Council and the Community Support team as well as the 13th Judicial Violence Prevention Council. For additional information on these activities, please call 815-723-3405.

Catholic Charities also works closely with Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) to raise awareness about poverty and racism in America.

For additional information, on CCUSA, social policy and legislative advocacy efforts please try the following links:

- Catholic Charities USA – CCUSA
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – USCCB
- Catholic Relief Services – CRS

https://catholiccharitiesjoliet.org/advocacy/

DISABILITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Illinois Life Span Program

Statewide Resources and Information, Focused on Developmental Disability Services and Supports

Illinois Life Span (ILS) is a program of The Arc of Illinois – a statewide advocacy organization committed to empowering people with disabilities to achieve full participation in community life through informed choices.

https://www.illinoislifespan.org/

Ray Graham Association

Our Life-Changing Story

Founded in 1950, Ray Graham Association empowers those we serve and those who care for them to reach, grow, and achieve. We believe in your loved one and are dedicated to providing the best care for them and your family. With you by our side, we're meeting the unique needs, goals, and dreams of the nearly 2,000 people with disabilities we serve and the 350 people we employ.

Our Purpose-Driven Mission

Thanks to your continued support, Ray Graham Association provides a loving community, stability, and personal care, for people with disabilities. Our goal is to empower people to:

- **Reach their potential** by providing access to therapeutic programs, recreation, and family support resources.
- **Grow their future** through neighborhood living, life-skills training, and employment opportunities.
- **Achieve their goals** by pursuing personalized plans with measurable actions and results.

If you want to learn more about Ray Graham Association services, you can email **ProgramServices@RayGraham.org** or call 630-620-2222.

https://www.raygraham.org/

EASTER SEALS

Easterseals

Easterseals is leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access through life-changing disability and community services.

Visit About Us to learn more about Easterseals.

Easterseals is leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access by enriching education, enhancing health, expanding employment, and elevating community.

We do this through life-changing services and on-the-ground supports for children and adults with disabilities, families, and local communities across the country.

Easterseals employs an inclusive cast and crew led by people with disabilities for a ground-breaking national awareness campaign. The PSA series highlights how Easterseals is expanding local access to healthcare, education, and employment for people with disabilities, families, and communities across the country.

https://www.easterseals.com/

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EDUCATION

Illinois ~ SPECIAL EDUCATION

PARENTS/GUARDIANS' INFORMATION

All parents can positively impact their children's learning and healthy development, and when families, schools and communities partner together, schools thrive and students benefit. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to navigate the educational system and know how to best work with district and school personnel. Often times, parents of students with disabilities face additional challenges. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has developed some web pages and resources specifically for parents of students with disabilities.

https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Parents-of-Students-with-Disabilities.aspx

Self-Advocacy ~ Center for Parent Information and Resources:

https://www.parentcenterhub.org/priority-selfadvocacy/
https://www.parentcenterhub.org/priority-selfadvocacy/

HOMELESS POPULATION

Bridge Communities ~ Glen Ellyn, IL

The mission of Bridge Communities is to transition homeless families to self-sufficiency by working with partners to provide mentoring, housing, and supportive services.

Bridge Communities Transitional Housing Program

Bridge Communities provides a holistic program of services that provide the necessary elements to create permanent change in the lives of homeless families in DuPage County.

The strength of the Bridge Communities Program is in the positive relationship that develops between the client families and their volunteer mentors.

Bridge Communities is a dynamic, holistic, grassroots non-profit organization committed to transforming the lives of homeless families through meaningful partnerships with community-based agencies and individuals. The program of housing, mentoring, employment, and education counseling focuses families toward a goal of permanent housing and self-sufficiency. Bridge Communities addresses homelessness, underemployment, unemployment, skill deficiencies, lack of education, parenting issues, and debt management.

https://www.bridgecommunities.org/index.html

Hesed House ~ Aurora, IL

https://www.hesedhouse.org/

Lazarus House ~ St. Charles, IL

https://www.lazarushouse.net/

Ending Homelessness: Housing Action Illinois

https://housingactionil.org/what-we-do/advocacy/homelessness/

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) administers the **Illinois Human Rights Act**. The IL Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in Illinois with respect to employment, financial credit, public accommodations, housing and sexual harassment, as well as sexual harassment in education. A discrimination charge can be initiated by calling, writing or appearing in person at the Department's Chicago or Springfield office within 300 days of the date the alleged discrimination took place in all cases except housing discrimination (one-year filing deadline). https://dhr.illinois.gov/

Guidebook on Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications

The **Illinois Department of Human Rights** (IDHR) is proud to release a first-of-its-kind Guidebook on Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications. In accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Act, this book provides guidance and clarification on the accommodations and modifications that must be made in housing for persons with disabilities and their family members.

The release of the Guidebook comes at a time when the nation celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Federal Fair Housing Act, an important civil rights law that guarantees equal access to housing for all by prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing. IDHR is committed to working with housing professionals to eliminate housing discrimination and achieve diverse, inclusive communities.

https://dhr.illinois.gov/publications/ra-rmguidebook.html

USEFUL RESOURCES ON THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND PROTECTION IN SITUATIONS OF RISK:

- *An ADA Guide for Local Governments: Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities.* US Department of Justice: http://www.ada.gov/publicat.htm#Anchor-Emergency.
- British Columbia Association for Community Living: http://www.bcacl.org/index.cfm?act=main&call=788F8794
- International Disability Rights Monitor, *Disability and Tsunami Relief Efforts in India, Indonesia and Thailand* (Center for International Rehabilitation: September 2005): http://www.disability.ws/idrm
- Mental Disability Rights International: http://www.mdri.org
- National Organization on Disability, Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Disabilities Series:

http://www.nod.org
- Nobody Left Behind Research Project, Research and Training Center on Independent Living, Lawrence, Kansas: "Final Report of the Nobody Left Behind: Preparedness for Persons with Mobility Impairments Research Project" (M.H. Fox et al. 2007):

  http://www.nobodyleftbehind.org
- Not Dead Yet:

  http://www.notdeadyet.org
- UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No 6, the Right to Life (Article 6), 16th Session, 1982:

  http://www.law.wits.ac.za/humanrts/gencomm/hrcom14.htm

PART 3: ADVOCACY! TAKING ACTION FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIEShttp://www.oercommons.org/courses/human-rights-yes-action-and-advocacy-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/view

INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Family Shelter Service of Metropolitan Family Services DuPage

605 E Roosevelt Rd, Wheaton, Illinois 60187
Tel: 630-221-8290 | Fax: 630-221-8098 **Hotline**: (630) 469-5650

Court Services:

Family Shelter Service of Metropolitan Family Services DuPage works with the courts in a variety of ways:

- Court Advocates provide support and information about legal remedies available for victims' protection.
- Advocates assist petitions with filing Orders of Protection and helping them navigate the court process.
- Victim Advocates follow up on every police-reported incident of domestic abuse in DuPage County to check on victim safety and to provide referral information.
- Last year, FSS of MFSD helped victims of domestic abuse obtain 1,782 Orders of Protection.

Emergency Shelter

When a woman is planning to leave a violent relationship, there are many reasons why shelter is a safe option for her. It may not be safe for her to stay with friends or family members, because the abusive partner is aware of these locations. Or, she has become so isolated from a support network that there is no place else to go for help. Shelter provides a safe and supportive environment for women and their children to heal physically and emotionally. They are given the opportunity to address their immediate needs and to make steps towards achieving their goals.

Every woman entering shelter develops a plan with her primary counselor. This plan is used to outline goals and the steps that must be taken to reach those goals; for example, finding safe housing, exploring employment opportunities, arranging for childcare and transportation needs and accessing available legal protection. While in shelter, residents meet with an assigned counselor several times per week to discuss their progress towards achieving these goals. In addition, each resident is expected to take part in group programs including parenting skills, domestic abuse education, and support groups.

The length of stay is designed to meet the needs of each person and family in the program. In addition, each resident is expected to follow our shelter program guidelines. Shelter stay is evaluated on a weekly basis.

The shelter program is based on communal living, in a home-like environment. Communal living means

sharing living space with other women and children and requires the ability to live with a diverse population. Each resident is expected to participate in the maintenance of a safe environment, including daily chore assignments and maintaining a respectful, nonjudgmental atmosphere. Women seeking shelter have an option to also seek temporary shelter for their pets through a local humane society. Hotline counselors will ask you about the safety of your pets. Our shelters are accessible to people with disabilities.

The shelter locations are kept confidential for safety reasons.

Upon departure from shelter, clients are encouraged to participate in the FSS of MFSD community counseling program. In this way, the need for ongoing support and encouragement can be provided.

More information about the shelter program, including specific program guidelines, can be obtained in detail by calling our 24-hour hotline (630-469-5650) and speaking with a trained hotline counselor.

https://www.metrofamily.org/FSSofMFSD/

Mutual Ground

418 Oak Avenue | Aurora, IL 60506

Main Office: 630.897.0084

Substance Use Services: 630.897.1003
Domestic Violence Hotline: 630.897.0080
Sexual Violence Hotline: 630.897.8383
Explore the Many Ways to Volunteer at Mutual Ground: https://mutualground.org/volunteer

Direct Service Volunteers

At Mutual Ground, Direct Service Volunteers work directly with survivors in our community. Volunteers provide victim advocacy at local hospitals and law enforcement centers, talk to callers on the hotline, and support families with childcare.

Requirements: 60-Hour Certification, Mandated Reporter Training, and background checks are required for all volunteers who work directly with Mutual Ground clients.

Ambassador Volunteers

Mutual Ground Ambassador Volunteers promote our mission, support special events, and raise awareness about domestic and sexual violence and substance use disorders. This team of dedicated and passionate volunteers are instrumental to Mutual Ground's ability to impact the community. Opportunities to support our mission include community outreach, fundraising, event planning, organizing donations for clients, landscaping, and facility projects.

https://mutualground.org/about-us

LEGAL AID

Illinois Legal Aid Online

Who is ILAO?

At ILAO, we believe in justice. We believe the law is for everyone. We know, however, that not everyone is equal in the eyes of the legal system. Race and culture, language, education, location, time, disability, and income are enormous barriers to using the law to get justice.

For more than 20 years, Illinois Legal Aid Online (ILAO) has opened opportunities to justice so that people can resolve their problems, especially those with the least access to the legal system. Through innovation and partnership, we make the law actionable and accessible.

We believe that, with the right knowledge and guidance, people can be their own best advocates. We mobilize people with plain-language, 24/7 tools – in three languages – so families can understand and assert their legal rights. ILAO helps people, who are unable to find or afford attorneys, open opportunities for justice.

https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/

Illinois: Legal Advocacy Service (LAS)

The Legal Advocacy Service (LAS) was created so that eligible children and adults, who have a disability, could obtain legal advice and representation to protect and enforce their rights guaranteed by Illinois' mental health laws.

LAS attorneys provide needed assistance to persons with disabilities in a variety of settings: mental health facilities, residential programs, community placements, and nursing homes. Issues addressed include, but are not limited to: admission and discharge from hospitalization, adequate treatment, refusal of unwanted services, and confidentiality of mental health records.

Assistance takes the form of information, referral, and legal representation in court hearings and administrative proceedings. https://gac.illinois.gov/las.html#:~:text=The%20Legal%20Advocacy%20Service%20(LAS,by%20Illinois'%20mental%20health%20laws.

DuPage Legal Assistance Foundation (DuPage Legal Aid)

Since its founding in 1975, the DuPage Legal Assistance Foundation (DuPage Legal Aid) has helped thousands of clients in need of legal help, most often in matters involving family law issues, such as divorce, child support and custody. The lawyers working with us provide free legal help both in the courtroom and in meetings with clients, giving legal advice and counsel to those in need. To learn more, please call us at (630) 653-6212

http://www.dupagelegalaid.org/

DuPage County Legal Self-Help Center

DuPage County Courthouse

505 N. County Farm Road
Wheaton, IL 60187
United States
(630) 407-8811
Find More

KANE COUNTY LAW LIBRARY & SELF HELP LEGAL CENTER

Kane County Judicial Center
37W777 State Rt 38
Law Library, 2nd floor
St. Charles, IL 60175
United States
Phone: 6304067126
Website

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LGBTQTAI+

Advocacy for LGBTQ+ Elders: SAGE

https://www.sageusa.org/what-we-do/advocacy-for-lgbt-elders/

Equality Act: Passed House (02/25/2021)

This bill prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in areas including public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding, employment, housing, credit, and the jury system. Specifically, the bill defines and includes sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity among the prohibited categories of discrimination or segregation.

The bill expands the definition of public accommodations to include places or establishments that provide (1) exhibitions, recreation, exercise, amusement, gatherings, or displays; (2) goods, services, or programs; and (3) transportation services.

The bill allows the Department of Justice to intervene in equal protection actions in federal court on account of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The bill prohibits an individual from being denied access to a shared facility, including a restroom, a locker room, and a dressing room, that is in accordance with the individual's gender identity.

https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5

LGBTQ+ ACLU Illinois:

The ACLU of Illinois firmly believes that rights should not be limited based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. We stand in support of inclusive policies that strengthen rights for LGBT individuals. After securing the freedom to marry for gay and lesbian couples in Illinois, the ACLU of Illinois has continued to protect gay and lesbian couples from discrimination by those who justify their actions based on religion. Our advocacy also supports people who are Transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming, so that they are able to live their authentic lives, without discrimination in employment, access to accurate identity documents and public schools. And, the ACLU is continuing our historic work to resist and combat discrimination for those with HIV. https://www.aclu-il.org/en/issues/lbgt-rights

LGBT ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS: https://www.lgbtmap.org/policy-and-issue-analysis/lgbt-advocacy-organizations

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance:

The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) aims to promote safety, support, and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing, and research.

The goals of the Alliance are:

1. **Public Education:** To educate and involve schools, community organizations, parents, public officials, youth, and the general public in Illinois, regarding sexual orientation and gender identity issues and the needs of LGBTQ youth in schools;

2. **Youth Organizing:** To engage youth across the state of Illinois to become leaders in the LGBTQ+ safe schools movement and support them as agents of change in their own schools and communities; and

3. **Policy and Advocacy:** To conduct advocacy activities that will result in the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity issues in the programs and policies that support the safety and well-being of youth.

https://www.ilsafeschools.org/advocacy-intake-form

Youth Outlook Resources:

Our Mission

Established in 1998, Youth Outlook is the first and longest-running social service agency in Illinois solely dedicated to supporting LGBTQ+ youth. We work in seven counties in northern Illinois, offering drop-in centers for youth, caregiver, and parent support, plus community education and professional development.

https://youth-outlook.org/resources/

Dear 40-Year-Old Me | Illinois Safe Schools Alliance ~ YouTube Video

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RECLAIM13

Reclaim13

Human trafficking

Our Mission

Reclaim13's mission is to end the cycle of sexual exploitation. This cycle begins in an individual's life, and without intervention, continues into the next generation. Most trafficked children were sexually abused, neglected, or received other forms of maltreatment as children. Once abused, a child is more vulnerable to further abuse and, potentially, exploitation. Child sexual exploitation has potential long-term consequences in the life path of survivors, including vulnerabilities for intimate partner violence, further abuse, and involvement in damaging relationships. Reclaim13 intervenes in this cycle and works toward a world where all children can grow up feeling safe and loved.

13 Facts About Human Trafficking and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

1. 13 is a critical age in a child's life, when he/she is more vulnerable to many forms of manipulation and exploitation. Most children who are exploited were first abused prior to this age.

2. Girls and boys, trafficked in the United States, are typically American kids. Trafficking has been reported in all
50 states.

3. Most victims of sex trafficking experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact or abuse prior to sexual exploitation. (Of all childhood adversities, sexual abuse is the strongest predictor of human trafficking, NIH).

4. The most common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation, according to the Global Report on
Trafficking in Persons by the United Nations on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). In the United States, most victims
are first exploited as children.

5. 1 in 6 children reported missing are likely victims of sex trafficking. Trafficking by the Numbers, NCMEC

6. Predators manipulate through popular technology like social media, apps and games to contact and entrap
children to exploit them. Online exploitation spiked amid coronavirus pandemic.

7. Many common items we purchase regularly may be connected human trafficking. Here's What's *Really* Behind
the Shimmer in Your Fave Makeup

8. In 2019, 88% of reports to the National Human Trafficking Hotline were related to sex trafficking.

9. In 2019, the NCMEC CyberTipline received 16.9 million reports related to suspected child sexual exploitation.

Number of reports in largest centralized reporting system .

10. Many victims of trafficking had little recourse, but Illinois and federal laws passed recently allow trafficking

victims to sue their captors for damages. U.S. Department of Justice Victims Assistance and Compensation, New

Laws Ramp Up Protection for Human Trafficking Victims

11. Victims suffer not only physically and emotionally (including trauma, PTSD, and attempted suicide), but often

from social rejection and ostracism as well. We can help victims know they are loved and valued with specialized care. More at reclaim13.org. 7 Facts You Didn't Know about Human Trafficking

12. It takes the collaborative efforts of many to end domestic minor sex trafficking. Illinois Human Trafficking Task

Force Report

13. Traffickers and abusers use tactics to create traumatic bonding with their victims to control and exploit. By

getting involved, we can create healthy bonds for vulnerable children. People often stay in abusive relationships because of something called 'trauma bonding' – here are the signs it's happening to you

Ending the *Cycle*

13 IS THE AGE when a child is most vulnerable to sexual exploitation. **"RECLAIM"** is what we do. We reclaim the lives of children impacted by sexual exploitation

Need help? Crisis Hotline: 312.462.3306

General Information: 630.209.4554 | info@reclaim13.org

Address: 2200 S Main St. Suite 306, Lombard, IL, 60148

https://www.reclaim13.org/

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VETERANS ADVOCACY

The *Veterans Advocacy & Benefits Association*: https://www.thevaba.com/

Veterans: **Introduced in House (02/02/2023)**

Veterans Patient Advocacy Act

   This bill requires the Office of Patient Advocacy within the Veterans Health Administration to ensure (1) t here is not fewer than one patient advocate for every 13,500 veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system, and (2) highly rural veterans may access the services of patient advocates. The bill al so requires the Government Accountability Office to report on the implementation o

https://www.congress.gov/
search?q=%7B%22source%22%3A%22legislation%22%2C%22search%22%3A%22advocacy%22%7D

f such policies.

WOMEN MAKING HISTORY IN ADVOCACY

Women of the world, unite!

Explore women's activism from generations past and present.

https://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/timeline/womenunite/en/index.html#/

WORLD RELIEF

For over 75 years, across 100 countries, we've been connecting people like you to the world's greatest needs—extending your compassion to millions of suffering men, women, and children. Together we're creating change that lasts—today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

World Relief has offices throughout the United States, each with unique opportunities to work and volunteer.

https://worldrelief.org/

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YOUTH ADVOCACY

360 Youth Services

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

1305 W. Oswego Rd.

Naperville, IL 60540

630-961-2992

COUNSELING/PREVENTION OFFICE

1323 Bond St, Ste 119

Naperville, IL 60563

630-717-9408

Today, 360 Youth Services offers substance use prevention education, counseling, and housing. The organization serves youth and families in Naperville and the surrounding areas.

Housing: SAFE & AFFIRMING HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

360 Youth Services is proud to offer housing to youth experiencing Homelessness. Through our Emergency Youth Shelter, Transitional and Rapid Rehousing Programs, and Cornerstone Group Home, we serve young people ages 13-24 and work side by side with young people to ultimately transition to independence. Our programs use Housing First practices and the lens of harm reduction, trauma-informed care; we affirm BIPOC and LGBTQ individuals and utilize positive youth development to help young people access housing, support services and skills needed to break the cycle of Homelessness.

https://360youthservices.org/

The All Students Count Coalition (ASCC) is a network of national, state, and community organizations led by Advocates for Youth.

https://www.advocatesforyouth.org/issue/lgbtq-health-and-rights/

Autism Speaks: Advocating for policies and programs in support of individuals and families with autism

https://www.autismspeaks.org/advocacy

College of Dupage:

Autismerica is a student organization for students on the autism spectrum to better educate themselves about COD and socialize with one another in a safe and supportive environment. Parents are also provided a separate meeting opportunity.

Contact Information

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   Sheryl Ebersold

Accommodations Specialist

(630) 942-3798

Email: ebersold@cod.edu

   https://www.cod.edu/autismerica

YWCA

Our Mission In Action

YWCA's strategic framework is the culmination of consultation and exploration with YWCAs across the country and reflects our legacy as a pioneering organization that squarely confronts social justice issues to make lasting, meaningful change. The focus areas below guide our organization's collective efforts at the national and local levels, with each YWCA association tailoring its approach to meet their community's needs.

YWCA focuses our mission-driven work on these areas to improve the lives of girls and women:

DuPage County: Advocacy & Volunteer Portal

https://givingdupage.galaxydigital.com/need/detail/?need_id=662101

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PART IX
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVOCACY AND ADVOCACY COMPETENCIES IN HUMAN SERVICE PROFESSIONS

https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/assets/Journal/journal-of-human-services_fall-2013.pdf

3.

APPENDIX I - POWERPOINTS

Activism in the US: https://dp.la/exhibitions/activism

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
SERVICES, INC.

Advocacy Issues: https://www.apaservices.org/advocacy/issues

This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.