COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Session Goals

• Define community and explore the underlying assumptions that shape how people relate to community.

• Overview of Principles of Community Engagement

• Overview of some methods of Community Engagement

• Build basic knowledge on how to conduct techniques
What is a community?

Dimensions of Community
- Place
- Population
- Political system
- Social organization
- Cultural system
- Economic system

“Community” must be defined so stakeholders can be identified and appropriately involved in the various stages of the community development process.
Think about a time when you were an active member of a community.

• How did you know you were part of that community?

• What were the characteristics that made that experience a community experience for you?

• How do you relate to community in your daily life?
Understanding Community

The way we know community—our experience with it and our understanding of the basic nature of community—provides a framework for assessing communities and the processes at work in community.
What is Community Engagement?
What is community engagement?

A comprehensive process to manage change that involves citizens creating a shared vision for the future.

**Distinguishing Characteristics**

- Focuses on the whole community.
- Emphasizes public participation as self-help.
- Uses participatory democracy as a model for decision making.
- Uses a holistic approach.
- Often initiates the process using an outside professional.

- Citizen participation, both in purpose and function, distinguishes community engagement from other types of interventions.
- Unless people buy into self-help and the decision-making process is open to all stakeholders, the process should not be designated as community engagement.
Why Practice Community Engagement?

It allows people to participate in a civic dialogue.
Gives voice to ordinary citizens.
Creates common vision for the community.

It doesn’t matter where the community is on the spectrum of success. What matters is how engaged citizens are in the decision-making process.

Can sustain community success despite minimal problems.
Addresses a critical need.
Can begin the healing of a divided community.
Decreases feeling of hopelessness after years of neglectful community building.
Community Engagement Practice

Process
Activities (Logic Model)

Practice

Outcome

People develop the ability to collectively help themselves and reduce reliance on external resources. An orderly set of steps lead to problem solving, program planning and task completion.

Without process, the desired outcomes may be diminished or unrealized. Without successful outcomes, the process can be devalued or abandoned. Successful communities understand the role and contribution of each.

The results that occur from the community development process. Outcomes can be physical, environmental, or human capital; financial resources; or social capital.
What are the underlying values and assumptions we make when we talk about community and community engagement?
Community Engagement

Assumptions

- People are capable of rational behavior.
- Significant behavior is learned behavior.
- Significant behavior is learned through interaction over time.
- People can give purposeful direction to their behavior.
- People can impact their environment toward a desired future.
Community Engagement

Values

All people have basic dignity.
People have the right to help make decisions on issues that impact their well-being.
Participatory democracy is the best way to conduct a community’s civic business.
People have the right to strive to create the environment they want.
People have the right to reject an externally imposed environment.
The more purposeful interaction and dialogue within a community, the more potential for learning and development.
Implied within a process of purposeful interaction is an ever-widening concept of community.
Every discipline and profession is a potential contributor to a community development process.
Motivation is created through interaction with the environment.
Community Engagement Principles

- Promote active and representative participation toward enabling all community members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives.
- Engage community members in learning about and understanding community issues, and the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological, and other impacts associated with alternative courses of action.
- Incorporate the diverse interests and cultures of the community in the community development process; and disengage from support of any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged members of a community.
- Work actively to enhance the leadership capacity of community members, leaders, and groups within the community.
- Be open to using the full range of action strategies to work toward the long term sustainability and well-being of the community.
Framework for Community Engagement

ASSUMPTIONS

VALUES

PRINCIPLES

PRACTICE
Think about a project you have worked on in one of your communities. How do you think the community perceived you in that context?

• As an insider, someone who had a stake in what you were doing.

• As a partial insider, someone who lived in the community but was representing Your organization.

• As an outsider, someone who doesn't live in the community and only participates in the community because of your position with your organization.

• As a partial outsider, someone who doesn't live in the community but because of your organization you are widely viewed as part of the community.

• As a partial outsider, someone who lived in the community but was representing your organization.
Reflection Questions

• What communities am I a part of in my everyday life?

• How do I relate to community—am I an insider or an outsider?

• How do I define community engagement in my work?

• What are the principles that guide my interactions with people in my community work?
Is the glass half full or half empty?

A community portrayed as half empty will come to rely on outside help.

A community portrayed as half full will harness its own resources.

When communities tackle social and economic challenges they invariably think in terms of needs, problems and deficiencies – like the lack of jobs, lack of opportunities for young people, lack of skills, lack of investment.
Community Engagement

Methods

- Asset Mapping
- Surveying
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Photo Voice
- Community Based Participatory Research
- Nominal Group Technique (NGT)
- Focus Groups
- Logic Model
- Capacity Building
- Participatory Evaluation
A partnership is a strategic alliance or relationship between two or more people. Successful partnerships are often based on trust, equality, and mutual understanding. It is important for both parties to be open-minded and accepting of each other's differences. There must be a willingness to learn and adapt.

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES
• Shared vision
• Mutuality
• Equity
• Respect
• Transparency
• Transformation
• Commitment
• Community ownership
• Capacity building
• Sustainability
Community-Academic Partnerships

- Center for Public Health Practice- http://publichealthpractice.org/

- Project TEACH

- Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center, School of Public Health- http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/research/centers/RMPRC/training/Pages/CBPR.aspx

- Colorado Clinical & Translational Sciences Institute – http://cctsi.ucdenver.edu/COMMUNITYENGAGEMENT/Pages/default.aspx

- Stapleton 2040 - http://www.2040partnersforhealth.org/
Needs Assessment Survey? OR Asset Mapping?

When should you do a needs assessment survey?

Some good times to do a survey include:
• When your group is just starting out
• When there is doubt as to what the most important needs are
• When your group members disagree on this point among themselves
• When you need to convince outside funders or supporters that you are addressing the most important community problems (Sometimes, these assessments are required.)
• When the community asks you to do it
• When you want to ensure that you will have community support
Needs Assessment Survey? OR Asset Mapping?

And are there times when you shouldn't?
There are. A needs assessment is not necessary before every action, and especially:

• When there is absolutely no doubt about the most important needs in the group or community
• When it is urgent to act right now, without delay
• When a recent assessment has already been done, and it is clear that the needs have not changed
• When you feel the community would see an assessment as redundant or wasteful, and that it would be harmful to your cause
1. **Assets and capacities located inside the neighborhood and largely under neighborhood control.** For example:
   - the skills, talents, and experiences of the residents; individual businesses and home-based enterprises; resident income; community business, civic, and cultural associations; and religious organizations.

2. **Assets located within the community but largely controlled by outsiders.**
   - Assets that can be brought under community influence with the right strategy such as public schools, police, private hospitals, vacant land, and energy and waste resources.

3. **Resources originating outside the neighborhood, controlled by outsiders.** For example:
   - welfare expenditures, public capital improvement expenditures, and public information.
How to create an asset map?

• Step 1:
  – Gather information on community households and residents’ skills – start with the positives
  – Identify priority abilities and best skills of each person

• Step 2:
  – Community capabilities (Community activities in which residents have participated)

• Step 3:
  – Experiences and Skills of Entrepreneurs and Volunteers

• Step 4
  – Personal information for future contacts
‘Every living person has some gift or capacity of value to others. A strong community is a place that recognizes these gifts and ensures they are given’. (John McKnight and John Kretzman)
SKILLS INVENTORY WORKSHEET

What job experience do you have?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

What special skills do you have?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

What are your personal strengths? (Ask someone to truthfully list your best characteristics.)
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Any volunteer work?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Education
GED
High School
Post High School
College

Other
Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

NGT is a structured method for group brainstorming that encourages contributions from everyone.

When to use it

• When you want to generate a lot of ideas to and want to assure all members participate freely without influence from other participants.

• When you want to identify priorities or select a few alternatives for further examination.

• When there is concern about some members not participating.
Thank you!

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