CONNECTIONS FIRST

MAX BELL FOUNDATION & BURNS FUND POLICY FELLOWSHIP

A GUIDE TO BUILDING NATURALLY SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

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TODAY'S CONTEXT

As readers will have noted in the collection of documents and research referenced for this Project, our information and evidence was gathered prior to the COVID 19 pandemic. This consideration may be particularly relevant as the recommended approaches to advance community Natural Supports are reviewed. As an example, there are specific suggestions pertaining to intergenerational strategies. While we still believe this is an important point of both need and opportunity, the pandemic has highlighted the need to minimize risk exposure for seniors to viruses, thus presenting a challenge for intergenerational activities.

So, what will healthy relationships and social connections look like going forward? Can there be healthy, supportive, mutually beneficial relationships via technology, or while wearing face coverings, without touching, and so on? What pertinent considerations must be addressed in our 'new world'?

This Guide does not specifically deal with the many new realities. However, we believe that naturally supportive communities could help us cope more successfully, both individually and collectively, when we face a future crisis; another pandemic or a natural disaster.

Through to the end of this crisis we will discover both challenges faced by communities and their families which have not previously been well recognized or acknowledged, as well as innovative solutions being actioned in numerous communities across the country.

Although some of the illustrative practices suggested in this guide may need to be modified and some may not work in a pandemic situation, the basic approach to building more naturally supportive communities can be applied to many different contexts.

It is also acknowledged that there may be additional public policy solutions needed beyond those recommended on this website to enable community action over the duration of the pandemic threat.

INTRODUCTION

Our Natural Supports are key contributors to key experiences and accomplishments throughout our lives such as our feeling of belonging within a community, and further, how we contribute to that community. Natural Supports are also our safety nets when life doesn't go as planned and a learning tool that we use to support our growth and development across the lifespan.

As a starting point, it is important to remember that the most obvious and often the most powerful Natural Supports are those at the individual level; a particular family member, a best friend, a mentor, etc. Then there are those Natural Supports within your home and work/school environment; your immediate and extended family, classmates, colleagues, etc.

The next tier of Natural Supports is at the community level.

Building and strengthening Natural Supports at the **community** level is the primary focus and priority of this Guide. It is important to note that this guide suggests a process, an approach, ***not*** a program or model.

Across the country, the composite of community fabric is not what it was 50 years ago, and traditional Natural Supports have been impacted accordingly. Neighbourhood children now often go to different schools, different churches, instead of meeting each other after dinner for road hockey or rope skipping; children register in different sports and clubs which are often outside their own neighbourhood. There is a need now to employ strategies to re-build the community fabric that has been, if not 'all but lost', at least eroded in so many of our communities. This must be accomplished in a manner consistent with the features of our contemporary society (e.g. single parent households, dual income families, cultural and religious diversity, etc.).

This Guide contains suggestions and tactics for ***how*** a community might go about becoming more naturally supportive, with a focus on children in their middle years of ages 6 to 16.

Each ***community context is unique*** in respect to demographics, opportunities, community assets, ethnicity, socio-economic status, faith groups, etc. Developing a successful strategy to bolster community Natural Supports should depend upon a community's unique characteristics, its local leaders and pool of champions. Every community will also have a different starting point, and its own unique priorities and needs.

N.B.: There are many fantastic evidence-based resources related to community development processes that are readily available on the internet. We are not attempting to replicate that information. In this Guide, we offer some of the specific information related to our research on Natural Supports that could be used in whatever model/process you might be currently employing, familiar with, or chose to use moving forward. At the end of this section we offer some of the links to a few of these resources should you be interested.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

Natural Supports are informal reciprocal connections that consist of close relationships with friends and family, and broader associations, including neighbours, organizations and local businesses.

Before beginning a broad conversation, it is useful to start with yourself. To get you thinking along the right track, reflect on your own Natural Supports:

How have your Natural Supports helped you throughout your life?

> Who has been important to you in your life?
> Who, other than your immediate family, has made a difference in your life?
> Who has provided you with comfort?
> Who helped build your confidence throughout your life?
> Who do you go to for advice?
> With whom do you celebrate life's successes?
> Who in your neighbourhood do you consider your Natural Supports to be?

» Thinking further at the level of your own 'community' (however you may choose to define it), how could your community Natural Supports play a more significant role in your life?

- What has been helpful to you in the past?
- What could there be more of?
- What could be done differently, so that your community connections would be a more powerful, positive influence on your well-being?

» What might **you** do to add or strengthen your community Natural Supports? And how might these Natural Supports be more dynamic and helpful for you?

NEXT

Thinking at the 'community' level, what could you and others do for your community in order to build greater cohesion and social connections. Who could your collaborators be to help get the conversation started?

If you already have an ongoing community engagement and development process, consider how you can weave the natural supports approach into that process. Are there key potential collaborators missing that need to be included?

The sections below may provide some ideas and information that will be useful.

SETTING THE STAGE

If you do not currently have a community engagement or development process in place, once you feel ready, identify who could help you champion Natural Supports in your community. **Appendix 5** offers one example of the stages of a community planning cycle.

Suggested approach:

» Invite a small group of community leaders to join you in thinking further about Natural Supports in your community. The goal is to build a small but diverse cadre of community champions for Natural Supports.

» Develop a shared understanding of what Natural Supports are and why living in a naturally supportive community is beneficial.

» Consider having your group begin by doing some individual reflection as you have done.

» Have a focused discussion about the outcomes that might be of most importance to your community if it were more naturally supportive. This becomes critical to constructing the vision, and the preferred and desired future of your community.

Use the outcomes in Appendix 1 to help guide the discussion and trigger ideas.

» Discuss what the community (your community and other nearby communities) might do to be more naturally supportive. Focus some of that discussion on children in their middle years (6 to 16) and their families.

» Reflect on the attributes/characteristics that might be most important for your community. The attributes/characteristics identified should help facilitate familiarity and enable/nudge connections and Natural Supports.

Use the list in **Appendix 2** *to guide the discussion. Add others that might be important. It is suggested you begin with up to 10 that you would target reducing to no more than 6 through an engagement/validation process with the broader community.*

ASSESS YOUR COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

Think of the 'community' as a collection of building blocks; some work independently, most work in harmony, a few work symbiotically (the sum is greater than the parts). Each community has its own set of needs/priorities and assets/strengths. These must be identified and quantified through an 'assessment' exercise.

You can 'slice and dice' a community in various ways in order to design a plan around your unique community map of building blocks or assets. An inventory of your community assets should consider:

1. Formal Community Assets: paid staff, public buildings (schools, health clinic, library, recreation facility), activity parks, out-of-school programs, churches, YMCA, seniors' residences, pool, etc.

2. Community Clubs, both formal and informal; community associations or leagues (buildings and programs), running club, book clubs, art groups, Scouts/Guides, 4H, etc.

3. Contemporary Intergenerational Activities: e.g. Grandpa/Grandma and Tot Programs

4. Community Leaders and Champions; individuals and pools of expertise including key volunteers and active participants.

5. Regular Community Events: picnics, movie nights, winter and summer fairs/festivals, family field trips, etc.

Suggested approach:

• Bring together your community champions to brainstorm a preliminary list of assets.

• Survey service providers, and the staff and volunteers in community organizations to build the list.

• Determine the community's current awareness and utilization of each asset.

• Determine capacity/utility of each asset for broader community use. (Note: Much time, expense and energy can be expended attending to aging infrastructure and staffing issues. Assets with these types of challenges are not recommended for initial plans/actions to build a natural supports approach.)

• Validate list with community leaders.

• Map assets on a neighbourhood map.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

To build a more naturally supportive community approach, authentic engagement must happen at all steps along the way. It is not just a step. Rather, it underpins, validates and, ultimately, is the key mechanism that will advance and embed the approach in community. To be successful the strategy must be community-driven and enabled by community organizations and leaders.

» Develop an engagement strategy:

• Are there opportunities such as planned events or meetings, school newsletters, etc., that could be used to make citizens aware of the opportunity Natural Supports present? This concept will be best advanced as a part of another initiative/conversation related to neighbourhood cohesion, safety, recreation needs, out-of-school time to name a few.
• How will you promote engagement, collaboration, connections and build awareness?

- Who will lead the process?
- What resources are required?
- What role will community leaders, schools and businesses have in supporting the engagement of the community?

» Develop a common understanding of community natural supports and their value to the community and in particular to outcomes for children.

- What are the key messages?
- What information will you use to engage your citizens?
- How and what will you communicate as to why relationships, social connections and Natural Supports are important?
- How will you describe the benefits of living in a more naturally supportive community?

N.B.: While all the information on the Connections First website (www.connectionsfirst.ca) is useful to consider as you develop your information pieces, we suggest that in particular you review the data points in the Evidence Summary, the Infographic, and the Call to Action.

» Implement the engagement strategy. Before you can begin to talk about actions and strategies, it is critical to first validate the lists developed with the champions.

- What is most important to the citizens in your community?
- Does your community have an overarching vision? If so, how does a Natural Supports approach align with and enable progress toward that vision? If not, you may want to develop one at the front end of your engagement process, or adopt or adapt one from a local community organization that fits.
- Which of the outcomes the group developed resonate most for people? (Related to Appendix 1)
- What attributes/characteristics do they think are most important for their community? In other words, what kind of neighbourhood do they want to live in? (Related to Appendix 2)
- What do residents think are the strongest assets in the community? Did your group miss any? What are most helpful?

PLANNING FOR ACTION

You are now ready to begin planning how to move towards your desired outcomes, having engaged with the community to determine:

1. Which characteristics/attributes are most important to them and their families;

2. What these characteristics really mean to them; and,

3. What the overarching vision is for the community.

It is the vision and the characteristics/attributes that will provide the key parameters to guide the development of a naturally supportive community:

»   What are the actions which you would like to take in your community which would enable and foster all the citizens in your community to thrive together in a more naturally supportive community?

»   What is readily achievable, feasible, and practical?

»   Are there alignments with other initiatives that could help enable implementation?

Based on the evidence gathered from this Policy Fellowship, the following list of actions can be used to help stimulate thinking, ideas and discussion. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Your community may well have innovative or differing ideas and priorities. The actions listed can each help build stronger community Natural Supports.

Suggested approach:

Select actions for discussion that align most strongly with your community's chosen vision, attributes and outcomes.

*   Chose a few actions initially.

*   Consider how you will measure your progress toward your goal(s).

*   Develop an implementation plan considering the roles of the champion group, leaders and members of other community organizations, business and volunteers, etc.; resources required; timing; and communication.

*   Include concrete, easily attainable steps in the plan to make incremental progress toward your goal(s).

Communication should include "stories" about how these actions will make a difference for individuals, families the community.

Examples: Many families feel unable to participate in community activities and events. Accessibility is a concern. For some, accessibility means a location in a safe, walkable distance from home; but for others, it means the requirements for registration, scheduling and fees prevent them from participating. Write a short story about how an action related to accessibility would alter the experience for a family in your neighbourhood.

Families want 'a place to go' in the neighbourhood; a place to unwind, feel safe to build new connections, visit with friends and neighbours; where children and their families come together in a less formal way. Write a short story about a new space that has been made available in the neighbourhood, and how families now go there regularly and have a stronger sense of belonging.

Suggested evidence-based actions include:

I. Collaborating and Partnering:

» Provide training for the employees of local businesses to appreciate the benefit of brief, informal interactions; i.e. social snacking (see **Appendix 3**).

» Partner with businesses and organizations in your community to provide volunteers and community leaders access to space when not in use.

» Encourage employees to volunteer for community programs and events.

» Collaborate with other local organizations, associations, leagues, services, etc., to combine available resources and/or work together in a similar area of interest.

» Join with nearby neighbourhoods to collectively host events, activities, fundraisers, etc.

» Establish partnerships with local schools, and not-for-profit organizations to enable increased collaboration and further awareness of services, supports and resources available within the neighbourhood.

II. Ensuring Accessibility:

» Make community spaces available at low or no cost to encourage informal connections between community members, including children.

» Identify safe spaces for events and activities to be held.

» Identify opportunities for connection and group events, ideally within walking distance, for residents and families.

» Look for solutions to barriers to enable equal and open access to events, programs, and community spaces.

» Reduce or eliminate barriers for residents, including providing food, child care, and subsidies or discounts for opportunities and events, particularly for those who are struggling or have lower income.

III. Identifying and Developing Community Leadership:

» Designate someone in the community to coordinate the development of engagement approaches. Ideally have a paid representative who primarily works to promote neighbourhood engagement and connections, such as an engagement coordinator. An example would be the Abundant Community Initiative informed by the work of John McKnight and Peter Block (see http://www.abundantcommunityinitiative.org).

» Have an "open-door" policy for residents in community offices and facilities.

» Consider innovative approaches to contribution and participation to create more connections, enable new opportunities and events, recruit more volunteers, etc.

» Work with residents to foster more opportunities and events (e.g. assisting with neighbourhood grant applications or recruiting volunteers).

» Assist with providing resources and equipment to local opportunities and events.

» Actively recruit, utilize, support and recognize volunteers.

» Offer residents opportunities to build their capacity for leadership and to become a champion on behalf of their neighbourhood.

IV. Promoting Inclusivity:

• Ensure that community events and activities are inclusive and culturally safe.

• Engage specifically and intentionally with diverse groups in your community (e.g. cultural, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, age) in events, programs and services.

• Residents are given opportunities to share their culture, values, traditions, etc., with other members of their neighbourhood.

• Ensure that the community is able to connect or direct residents to targeted or intensive care and supports when needed.

V. Facilitating Community-driven Engagement:

» Ask residents frequently what they would like to see happen in their community.

»   Give residents opportunities to take leadership roles within the neighbourhood in planning and executing events such as block parties, movie nights, and fundraising.

»   Promote and support leadership to be open to new ideas from residents.

»   Seek and receive input and feedback from residents.

»   Ensure that residents are made aware of opportunities and events offered within their neighbourhood through multiple avenues, including door-knocking, fliers, newsletters, webpages, social media, email, and telephone.

»   Provide incentives to volunteers to promote engagement (e.g. volunteer hours can be credited to reduce fees for membership, facilities or programs).

VI. Building a sense of belonging and neighbourliness:

»   Build relationships and trust with residents.

»   Provide opportunities and events for whole families.

»   Provide opportunities to enable the creation of intergenerational connections (e.g. seniors tutoring students, 'adopt a grandparent'). See Appendix 4 for additional detail on Intergenerational Strategies.

VII. Enabling resiliency:

»   Support families to enable tailored opportunities, services and supports to meet their needs.

»   Provide opportunities for families to become aware of supports and services available within their neighbourhood (e.g. service fairs, pamphlets located at associations and leagues, table with service and support information at neighbourhood events).

»   Connect with 'vulnerable', isolated and newer residents to welcome them to the neighbourhood, and make them aware of resources and opportunities.

SUSTAINING ACTION

Monitoring, reporting-back, and adjusting are all key to sustaining and, ultimately, advancing the efforts. There is much about this in the community development literature. Below we have a few suggestions to assist with these actions:

A few key suggested steps for consideration:

» Make monitoring progress simple both in process and in the number of elements to be captured.

» Develop measurement or reporting based on what the citizens think success would look like; how would they know if it was making a difference in their lives?

» Should you have outside funding sources with additional requirements, keep reporting to the community in simple terms and use their language rather than that of funders. They won't be interested in the more detailed data generally. If it's requested, be fully transparent.

» Create opportunities for discussion of results and to receive feedback from the community at various points along the way, not just at the end of a year.

» Modify actions as indicated or stop those that are not showing benefit to the community.

» Consider adding new actions to increase the impact.

» Share your experiences with neighbouring communities. Learning from one another about what works and what doesn't can save both time and energy.

The Connections First team encourages you to share your work, ideas, progress and results on our blog on the website www.connectionsfirst.ca. It would be greatly appreciated and will help everyone learn about how we can best build more naturally supportive communities.

Suggested reference: Reynolds N, Tough S, Walsh JL, Agius M. Connections First: A Guide to Building Naturally Supportive Communities. Document of the Connections First Max Bell Foundation and Burns Memorial Fund Policy Fellowship, May, 2020. Available at the All Our Families, Max Bell Foundation, and Connections First websites.

APPENDIX 1

Outcomes

These outcomes were derived from both the scientific literature and the evidence generated for this project (see *Connections First website tab on Evidence*). It is not expected that a community would adopt all these outcomes. They are provided to help guide the development of outcomes relevant for your community context, and to seed discussion and ideas. You may choose to use some from these lists, and you may add some of your own unique outcomes.

Potential long-term outcomes

How will you know when you get there?

» When:

- All neighbourhood children and their families feel socially connected and have at least one link to culturally relevant and respectful supports.

- There's a shared community value related to Natural Supports that is embedded in planning for events, activities and programs.

- Community leaders broadly understand the concept of Natural Supports, and how having a more naturally supportive community can help build neighbourhood connections, a sense of belonging, and social cohesion.

- Broad partnerships exist amongst community leaders that include a focus on enhancing child/youth wellness in the community.

  o Partners include those from local business, not-for-profit organizations, schools, services, community associations or leagues, spiritual organizations, etc.

  o Leaders feel engaged and valued for their contribution to enhancing the well-being of children in the community.

Potential short-term outcomes

» For families:

- Families have informal friendships and associations with other families in the neighbourhood that mean a lot to them.

- Families can go to someone in their neighbourhood if they need advice about something.

- Families believe neighbours would help in an emergency.

- Families would be willing to work with others on something to improve the neighbourhood.

- Families regularly stop and talk to each other in the neighbourhood.

- Families help each other out (e.g. shovel each other's sidewalk, let someone know if they left their garage door open).

- Families feel a sense of belonging while living within their neighbourhood.

- Families have met most of their next-door neighbours.

- Families have met most of their neighbours on their block/street/floor.

- Families volunteer within their neighbourhood at least once a year.

- Families are members of their community/residents/home-owners association or league.

- Families feel there are safe spaces for their children to play within the neighbourhood.

- Opportunities, events and supports are close-by, ideally within walking distance, for the majority of families.

- Families are aware of supports and services available within their neighbourhood (e.g. service fairs, pamphlets located at community associations or leagues, table with service and support information at neighbourhood events).

- Parents and caregivers have knowledge about parenting and child development.

» For children in their middle years:

- Children feel they belong when they are with other kids their age.

- Children are a part of a group of friends that do things together.

- Children have an adult in their neighbourhood that cares about them, believes they will be a success, and listens to them when they have something to say.

- Children are able to participate in organized after school activities, including educational lessons, music or art lessons, and individual or team sports.

- Children are able to participate in unstructured out-of-school activities, including spending time with friends, playing video games, and reading for fun.

- Children have safe spaces to play and meet friends within their neighbourhood.

Translate your group's thinking into action combined with indicators of progress and measurable goals (e.g. to strengthen relations with a neighbour). Develop concrete steps or tactics to establish incremental progress towards goal achievement (e.g. invite the neighbour over for coffee).

APPENDIX 2

Characteristics/attributes of a naturally supportive community

The suggested list below consists of those characteristics/attributes that are identified in the evidence and relate directly to the outcomes and strategies that advance community Natural Supports.

» Collaboration across community serving organizations, and involving broad and diverse partnerships.

» Inclusivity with respect to age, gender, ethnicity, language, disabilities, etc. Cultural diversity is valued for the richness it adds to the community fabric.

» Accessibility, both physical (e.g.: a safe walkable distance), and ease of use (e.g.: equal opportunity to participate).

» Community driven, authentically and respectfully engaging with residents.

- » Shared leadership, advancing volunteerism and learning.

- » Belonging, pride in neighbourhood.

- » Neighbourliness, neighbours helping neighbours.

- » Resiliency, healthy relationships and living in a supportive environment.

- » Strength-based, focus on shared assets, not gaps.

- » Empowerment, all citizens in the community have an equal voice.

APPENDIX 3

Social snacking

What is a social snack? What is a weak tie? And why do I need them?

Social snacking is a phrase used to describe the brief, informal and non-intimate interactions one may have in daily events – such as getting a coffee from your favorite shop, or chatting with the staff at your favorite lunch spot – or even the brief "good morning" to the person next to you at the gas pump. These brief informal encounters, sometimes called weak ties, are full of potential to brighten our day. These 'snacks' contribute to our happiness, sense of belonging and identity.[1,2]

These brief encounters have both practical and physiologic outcomes. Practically, these serve as a mechanism for sharing information and for broadening our perspectives, and they have even been associated with creativity.[3,4] Importantly, social snacking and weak ties improve our mood, sense of connection, feelings of trust and reduced stress. Social snacking can increase levels of oxytocin or dopamine and activation of the autonomic nervous system which are linked to our feelings of happiness and well-being.[5]

The importance of social snacking goes across age group and culture – for example, bus drivers can make eye contact with children and youth who use the bus, and neighbours can say "good morning" to children in the park.

The famous author of The Village Effect, Susan Pinker, sums it up as follows

"Face-to-face contact releases a whole cascade of neurotransmitters and, like a vaccine, they protect you now, in the present, and well into the future, so simply [...] shaking hands, giving somebody a high-five is enough to release oxytocin, which increases your level of trust, and it lowers your cortisol levels, so it lowers your stress."[6]

So... we all need social snacks which can be accomplished in any number of ways, but think about the following:

1. When I have a chance for a brief encounter with a youth, I can make eye contact

2. When I have a chance for a brief encounter with a family, I can smile and look up

3. When I have a chance for a brief encounter with a store clerk, I can have a brief conversation

4. When I have a chance for a brief encounter at the coffee shop, I can ask a question

5. When I have a chance for a brief encounter I can....

Selected References

1. Sandstrom GM, Dunn EW. Is efficiency overrated?: Minimal social interactions lead to belonging and positive affect. Social Psychological and Personality Science. 2014;5(4):437-442.

2. Sandstrom GM, Dunn EW. Social interactions and well-being: The surprising power of weak ties. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin. 2014;40(7):910-922.

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4. Perry-Smith JE. Social yet creative: The role of social relationships in facilitating individual creativity. The Academy of Management Journal. 2006;49(1):85-101.

5. Zak PJ, Kurzban R, Matzner WT. Oxytocin is associated with human trustworthiness. Hormones and Behavior. 2005;48(5):522-527.

6. Pinker S. The village effect: How face-to-face contact can make us healthier and happier. Canada: Vintage Canada; 2015.

APPENDIX 4

Intergenerational strategies

Intergenerational Natural Supports strategies are of interest to both policy makers and communities.

25% of seniors in Canada live alone.[7] This group (no published data is yet available) are now being labelled "elder orphans"; i.e. those over 65 years of age with no living spouse or children at home.

Over the last several years, loneliness has been recognized as a public health issue that requires resolution. As Nora Spinks, CEO of the Vanier Institute of the Family has said: "You have densely populated urban environments where you can be alone in a crowd".[8] The former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy called loneliness "a growing health epidemic".[9] Many of us are familiar with the research undertaken by Julianne Holt-Lunstad of Brigham Young University who found that being disconnected is as dangerous to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or being a 'couch potato'.[10,11] In the UK, there has been a Minister of Loneliness overseeing a national strategy to end loneliness. Many jurisdictions are piloting 'social prescribing strategies' to combat loneliness.

While there is a building volume of evidence on the subject, more evidence and more 'robust' evidence is required.

Surveys shows that young people often feel lonely as well; sometimes even more lonely than the elderly. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) conducted an online survey on loneliness which found that 40% of 16 to 24-year-olds said that they very often feel lonely. Across respondents over age 75, only 27% reported loneliness.[12]

A community Natural Supports approach which brings together children in their middle years with older adults would be beneficial to both.

Before embarking on this approach:

» Identify the older adult demographic in your community: How many older adults are there? How many live alone? Do you have any seniors' residences in your community? Do you have a senior's community program or club?

» Identify the needs, skills and interests of the older adults.

» Engage with the older adults in order to identify opportunities to connect with children in their middle years: Have they done it before? What worked and what did not?

» What would success look like?

» Identify the needs, skills and interests of the children and their families.

» Engage with the families to identify opportunities.

» Determine the mutual benefits.

» Co-create a plan. Starting with small groups is recommended: Who should participate? What events and activities would you begin with? Where could connections in your community occur? What are the transportation needs of both the children and the older adults? When would connections occur? Would you require funding? Would you need volunteers to help set up or facilitate connections?

» Develop a communication plan to get the support of the community.

» Build awareness of the strategy.

» Promote the explanation of 'why' for those involved, as well as the benefits for the community as a whole.

» Engage the local businesses and organizations.

Selected References

7. Tang J, Galbraith N, Truong J. Living alone in Canada. Canada: Statistics Canada;2019.

8. Laucius J. The cost of loneliness: Canadians are facing a solitary future - and it's affecting their health. Ottawa Citizen. December 19, 2019;Health.

9. Murthy V. Work and the loneliness epidemic: Reducing isolation at work is good for business. In. Harvard Business Review. USA2017.

10. Holt-Lunstad J, Robles TF, Sbarra DA. Advancing social connection as a public health priority in the United States. American Psychologist. 2017;72(6):517-530.

11. Holt-Lunstad J, Smith TB, Baker M, Harris T, Stephenson D. Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: A meta-analytic review. Perspectives on Psychological Science. 2015;10(2):227-237.

12. Manchester Institute of Education. The BBC Loneliness Experiment. The University of Manchester. https://www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/education/research/impact/bbc-loneliness-experiment/. Published 2018.

APPENDIX 5

A Model for Getting Started[13]

How do we begin taking action in the community?

To give you some general guidance, here's a simple model for taking action you can use.
You'll find more details in the toolkits and other resources in the bulleted points below. Best wishes for success as you work to bring about positive change in your community!
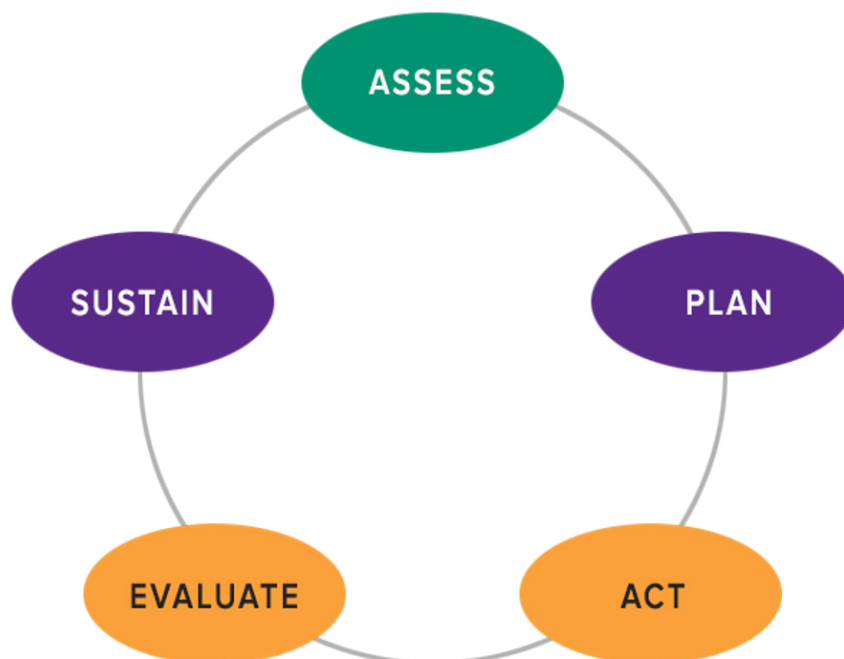
Assess

Begin by learning what issues matter to the community, and what resources may be available.

These resources from the University of Kansas Center for Community Health and Development Community Toolbox will help you do your assessment:

*   Toolkit: Assessing Community Needs and Resources

*   Developing a Plan for Identifying Local Needs and Resources

*   Identifying Community Assets and Resources

Plan

Planning provides overall direction on the road that leads from where things are now to where we hope they will be. It can be helpful for a group to develop a clear vision, a mission statement, objectives, strategies, and an action plan.

Resources for planning include:

*   Toolkit: Developing a Framework or Model of Change

*   Toolkit: Creating Strategic and Action Plans

*   An Overview of Strategic Planning or "VMOSA:" (Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans)

Act

You have identified something that you and your community care about, and it is time to take action. This involves mobilizing people around the effort and implementing some sort of intervention.

Supports for implementation include:

*   Toolkit: Developing an Intervention

*   Toolkit: Increasing Participation and Membership

*   Conducting a Direct Action Campaign

Evaluate

How do you know that your initiative is working? It's important to monitor what is happening and make adjustments as necessary.

Here are some resources for evaluating your efforts:

*   Toolkit: Evaluating the Initiative

*   Introduction to Evaluation

*   Choosing Evaluation Questions and Planning the Evaluation

*   Methods for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives

Sustain

Some important work has been started. How do you keep your efforts going?

- Toolkit: Sustaining the Work or Initiative

- Strategies for Sustaining the Initiative

- Planning for Long-Term Institutionalization

Selected Reference

13. Center for Community Health and Development. Community Tool Box. University of Kansas. https://ctb.ku.edu/en. Published 2020.

APPENDIX 6

Additional resources

» Community Planning Toolkit from the Tamarack Institute:
https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/community-planning-toolkit

» A Guide to Community Asset Mapping from the Falls Brook Centre, recommended by the Tamarack Institute:
https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/a-guide-to-community-asset-mapping

» Well-being and Resiliency Frameworks from the Government of Alberta Children's Services:

- A Framework for Supporting Safe and Healthy Children and Families:

  https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/520981c4-c499-4794-af55-bc932811cb1e/resource/7fda0ae8-8d97-49e7-b94b-7f0088cd767d/download/well-being-resiliency-framework-march2019.pdf

- The miyo Resource kâ-nâkatohkêhk miyo-ohpikinawâwasowin:

  https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/a0afeba2-e180-4f1c-8aa0-68bb1327ff71/resource/acc8ecfd-00dd-40c2-8c31-36d01656daad/download/well-being-resiliency-miyoresource-march2019.pdf

- Evaluation Framework:

  https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/7d64cad5-f400-4cd3-b7d7-76c3a38ff548/resource/9d3ebd8c-e52f-4964-971e-828d4c3bf21c/download/well-being-resiliency-fmwk-evaluation-march2019.pdf

» Intergenerational programming toolkit from the City of Edmonton:
https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/afe-intergenerational-toolkit.pdf