CMHA Mental Health Promotion Tool Kit

What's the Tool Kit About?

Although the factors that influence mental health are numerous and complex, there are many simple ways to support and sustain mental health at the community level. The projects that are profiled in this tool kit provide examples of straightforward and effective approaches to promoting mental health in diverse communities.

This tool kit emphasizes that the means to promote mental health are already present in communities. Mental health promotion requires imagination, innovation and partnership, but it does not require extensive financial resources or training. Identifying and mobilizing individual and community assets can help mental health promotion projects to take root and flourish, benefiting all members of the community.

The Introduction to this document provides information on the origins of the tool kit, the Canadian Mental Health Associations (CMHA) background in mental health promotion, and a glossary of key terms that we Will be using throughout the tool kit. This background provides the context for the sections that follow.

Part 1, briefly introduces the projects chosen as examples of effective mental health promotion at the community level. For each of the three examples, you'll find a background to and summary of the project. This Will set the stage for Part 2, where we'll explore the process of developing, implementing and evaluating mental health promotion projects, using examples from the three projects to illustrate important points.

Part 2, the meat and potatoes of the tool kit, is organized around a planning model that has been well used in many different communities to achieve a variety of goals. The planning model presents the process of promoting mental health at the community level as a series of steps. The model Will serve as an overall guide, and examples from the three projects Will animate and illustrate the steps.

Forward

What is Mental Health Promotion?

Research from a number of sources [1] shows that mental health promotion is a concept that has significant potential for contributing to the well-being of individuals and communities. But what exactly does it mean?

Good mental health is a goal that most of us share, and mental health promotion is a means of reaching that goal. Mental health is promoted through processes which give people the ability to function well, or which remove barriers that may prevent people from having control over their mental health.

For example, strengthening people's ability to bounce back from adversity and manage the inevitable obstacles that life tends to throw in our path is a fundamental way of promoting mental health. In general, though, any actions which are taken for the purpose of fostering, protecting and improving mental health can be seen as mental health promotion. These can range from community-level interventions such as equitable social policy development, to individual-level interventions which cultivate skills, attitudes and behaviors conducive to mental health.

---

[1] See annotated resource list at the end of this section.

Mental health promotion applies to the whole population in the context of everyday life; it is not only for those who experience mental health illness, nor for those who are considered to be at risk. There is a role, however, for interventions designed specifically for certain groups, such as people who care for a family member with mental illness.

There a few key factors to keep in mind in relation to mental health promotion. One is the importance of informal relationships -- with friends, family, co-workers, and others - which play a vital role in supporting and maintaining positive mental health. Mental health promotion initiatives build on the networks of social support that are already present in communities, and create new relationships that enhance our sense of belonging.

Secondly, it is important to consider that mental health promotion can take many forms. Because positive mental health is the result of many interacting factors, there is no single way to promote it. Communities are made up of a diverse range of people, so efforts to promote mental health need to consider a variety of strategies and approaches that are relevant to the full range. Finally, it is essential that efforts to promote mental health recognize and reflect the diversity of cultures within our communities; these efforts will contribute to building a society that ensures fair and equitable treatment -- one that accommodates and respects the dignity of people of all origins.

To be successful, mental health promotion efforts require active citizen involvement in identifying mental health needs, setting priorities, controlling and implementing solutions, and evaluating progress towards goals - essentially a community development model.

In a sense, this is no different from the process followed in most community-based health promotion projects. If the process is so similar, why set mental health promotion apart from generic health promotion efforts?

Although the principles and processes may be similar, the outcomes of mental health promotion and generic health promotion can be quite different whereas health promotion projects might be working toward improved cardiovascular health or decreased rates of smoking, mental health promotion focuses explicitly on mental health outcomes such as increased sense of personal control, empowerment, self-determination, and resilience.

Much of the work of mental health promotion has to do with shifting attitudes -- emphasizing the importance of maintaining positive mental health instead of dealing with individual distress, and dealing with mental illness in a balanced and humane way that will dismantle stigma and encourage recovery.

Small community mental health promotion projects (like the ones described in the kit) will probably not radically alter perceptions or society, But if a small-scale project is planned, evaluated and then championed, it can have an incremental effect on wider social policy and the decisions that affect whole populations.

We all need mental health promotion. By identifying and activating the personal and social strengths that support positive mental health, people can work together to develop healthier communities.

Rationale for the Tool Kit

In conducting preliminary research for this tool kit, we came across numerous practical guides and resources for community action and health promotion programs. We didn't, however, find any that pertained specifically to promoting mental health at the community level.

Written information on mental health promotion tends to fall into the categories of theoretical and conceptual work, recommendations to bring about mental health promoting change at the policy

level, and guidelines for health professionals to follow to incorporate a mental health promotion approach into their work. We didn't turn up much practical information that was geared toward helping people promote mental health in their own communities.

Both the research process and feedback from community groups indicated that this tool kit would fill a gap in the mental health promotion field, providing the kind of practical information and resources that will help people in communities take action to promote mental health.

What is CMHA and What is its Connection to Mental Health Promotion?

This tool kit is a document of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), a national, voluntary organization whose mission is to promote the mental health of all people. CMHA is unique in Canada as a non-governmental organization with an explicit mandate for mental health promotion and education.

An important objective of the organization is to advocate improvements in mental health services and to press for changes in social policies that have an impact on individuals' mental health.

There are divisions of CMHA in every province and territory, and branches in cities and towns throughout Canada. Their diverse efforts and activities are united by a common vision that builds on the principles of mental health promotion.

To further our mission to promote the mental health of all people, CMHA National has focused on the concepts and principles of mental health promotion; with support from the Mental Health Promotion Unit of Health Canada we developed a conceptual model for understanding mental health promotion and a framework for developing mental health promotion programs.

We built on this background work to create this tool kit, which we hope contains effective tips, strategies and resources to help bring mental health promotion to life in communities across the country.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

and all those who contributed to making the Community Tool Box such a wonderful and complete resource for all aspects of community development and mobilization.

INTRODUCTION

Why a Tool Kit?

The idea for a Mental Health Promotion tool kit came from people working to address individual and collective health concerns in many communities across Canada. Over the past year or two, CMHA, in partnership with the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) conducted nation-wide surveys to find out what is being done to promote mental health locally. The surveys showed that there is already a wide range of community-level activity which can be termed "mental health promotion." These activities include efforts such as helping children to develop healthy self-esteem, providing individuals with mental illness with the skills and opportunities for obtaining meaningful employment, and bringing seniors and children together to share stories and experiences.

Those who responded to the surveys also offered a valuable suggestion: they told us they needed a standard set of tools and resources to develop, implement and evaluate their mental health promotion practices.

This tool kit is a response both to that suggestion, and to the apparent gap in resources on practical aspects of implementing mental health promotion.

Why is it called a Tool Kit?

A multitude of factors contribute to making a community what it is. Mental health promotion projects respond to the unique circumstances and assets of a certain community at a given point in time; the conditions that give rise to a particular approach in one community would not necessarily exist in another.

That's why mental health promotion projects cannot simply be replicated for use in other commentates. It's not possible to create a blue print or template for mental health promotion that can be lifted from one community and applied to another achieve that same result. Attempting to do so would not only stifle the unique local citizen creativity that exists in each place, but would also threaten to turn authentic mental health promotion initiatives into more generic, service-oriented programs.

Because each community contains such a unique mixture of assets, resources and problems, efforts to improve the mental health of local citizens need to be generated from within. Instead of trying to replicate mental health promotion initiatives, we need to stimulate the development of unique initiatives across Canada that encourage people and communities to have a greater sense of control, and that provide support to people in dealing with the ups and downs of life.

For these reasons we don't refer to this resource book as a manual or guide, but as a tool kit - a place where people can find useful examples and tips about the ways that several communities responded to the challenge of promoting the mental health of their citizens. The kit is built around a straightforward planning model, and contains information on many relevant topics, such as effective facilitation, and soliciting in-kind support. There are also a number of practical tools, such as a sample funding proposal and evaluation plans that were used successfully in the selected projects.

We hope the stories in the kit, as well as the planning steps and tools will help to stimulate new ideas about ways to promote mental health in your community.

Who is this Tool Kit for?

This tool kit is intended for anyone who is interested in promoting mental health at the local level. In developing the kit, we focused on making it clear and straightforward both in style and content, so that it would appeal to a broad range of people.

Many other mental health promotion resources are written primarily for health professionals, and therefore reflect a more service-oriented approach. In contrast, this tool kit is intended to provide the kind of practical examples and tips that can be applied by a wide range of community members who are motivated to improve mental health -- professionals and non-professionals alike.

We hope that the tool kit will serve as a useful primer to those who are new to the field of mental health promotion and community development, and that it will also provide new insights to veteran community activists and mental health advocates.

How to Use this Tool Kit

The tool kit tells the stories of how people in several communities took action to promote mental health, but it does not have to be read straight through from beginning to end. Rather, the relevant sections can be consulted as they are needed. For that reason we have included a detailed Table of Contents so you can turn directly to the section you're interested in.

In Part 1, we introduce three projects that exemplify different approaches to promoting mental health at the local level: Inclusion in Community, Helping Skills, and Seniors' Medicine Wheel. A background and summary of each project provides the context for Part 2.

In Part 2 we look closely at the actions taken by community members to bring mental health promotion to life. The process of promoting mental health at the community level is laid out in a series of steps, best represented as a circle (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 : Mental Health Promotion Planning Model
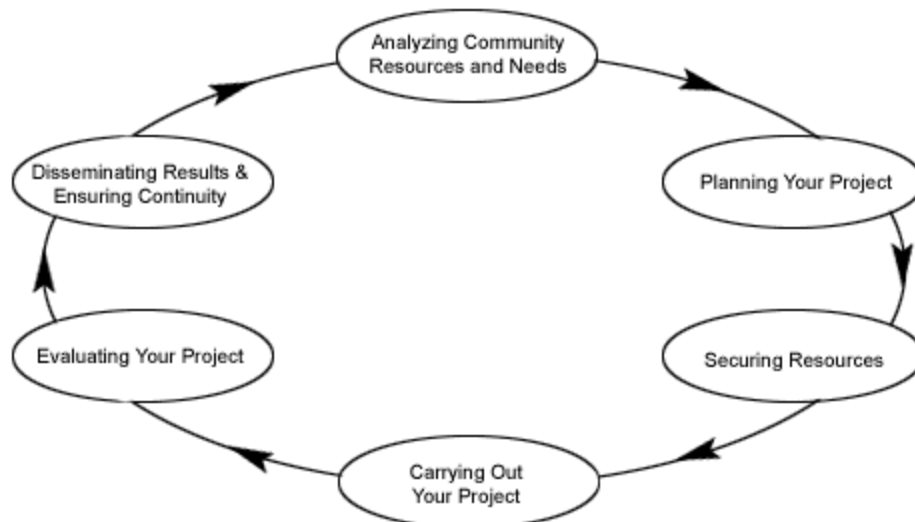
It is important to view the community process as fluid rather than linear -- with the implementation steps forming a circular, or cyclical pattern rather than being points on a straight line arranged in a specific order. In taking action to promote mental health in your community, you will be

constantly moving back and forth between tasks and stages, because in practice, the process does not have an ordered and predictable beginning, middle and end.

This planning model is a variation on a process that is tried and true, having been used by various groups for many years in efforts to improve their communities. We'll use the model as a guide to explore the different steps involved in setting up a mental health promotion project.

Examples from the projects introduced in Part 1 will illustrate how the planning process actually took place in several diverse communities. The mental health promotion projects that we chose did not follow the planning model to a T by any means; they did, to varying degrees, address each of the planning steps in their projects. They are here to provide ideas for you to adapt to your own particular needs.

The illustrations and examples from the projects introduced in Part I ground the planning process in the real world context of community life. We hope that by reading these stories, you will take away some of the wisdom community members gained from their experiences, and you'll be inspired to promote mental health in your own community.

Glossary of Terms

The following are definitions of key terms that will appear often throughout this tool kit.

CAPACITY BUILDING involves enhancing the ability of individuals and groups to mobilize and develop resources, skills and commitments needed to accomplish shared goals.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY refers to the ability of community members to use the assets of its residents, associations and institutions to improve quality of life. Each community's collection of assets will be unique, for it will reflect the specific characteristics of its population, its political structures and geography.

Many different terms, including **CONSUMER, SURVIVOR, CONSUMER/SURVIVOR and EX-PATIENT** have been coined in North America to describe people who have experienced mental illness. The terminology chosen implies a particular point of view, and can change over time with changes in ideology and perspective.

Since consumer and consumer/survivor are the most widely used term across Canada at the time of writing, you will come across these terms in this tool kit in the sections addressing the relevance of mental health promotion for people with mental illness.

The concept of **EMPOWERMENT** is the bedrock upon which mental health promotion efforts are built. Empowerment means having a sense of control over one's life, and is crucial for everyone, whoever they are and wherever they live. Empowerment is strongly related to feelings of personal well-being.

HEALTH PROMOTION is concerned with maximizing the involvement of individuals and communities in improving and protecting quality of life and well-being. Health promotion aims to address equity in health, the risks to health, sustainable environments conducive to health, and the empowerment of individuals and communities by contributing to healthy public policy, advocating for health, enabling skills development and education.

MENTAL HEALTH is an integral part of overall health. Mental health is the result of the interaction of various predisposing factors (i.e. early childhood experiences) precipitating factors (i.e. stressful life events), social support and individual resources (i.e. resiliency) and experiences.

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION is the process of developing positive mental health both for and with the community in general and individuals who experience mental illness.

The concept of mental health promotion recognizes that people's mental health is inextricably linked to their relationship with others, environmental and lifestyle factors, and the degree of power they can exert over their lives.

MENTAL ILLNESS is a recognized, medically diagnosable disorder that results in the significant impairment of an individual's cognitive, affective or relational abilities. Mental illnesses result from biological, developmental and/or psychosocial factors.

In the context of this kit, **PARTNERSHIPS** are alliances that are used to improve the health of a community. **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS** bring together people from diverse parts of the community in order to address a particular issue co-operatively, and with mutual respect and sensitivity. A wide range of skills and resources is present in such collective efforts, a feature that makes collaborative partnerships especially powerful tools in bringing about change.

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH is the emotional resilience which enables us to enjoy life and survive pain, disappointment and sadness. It involves a positive sense of well-being and an underlying belief in our own, and others' dignity and worth.

RESILIENCY is a recurring theme in discussions about and approaches to mental health promotion. In this context, resiliency can be described as the quality that allows an individual or group to function well despite the odds against them. Two fundamental concepts are associated with resiliency: risk and protective factors. Mental health promotion concepts focus on minimizing the impact of risk factors (such as stressful life events) and enhancing the protective factors such as social support that increase people's ability to deal with life's challenges.

STAKEHOLDERS are those people who are interested, involved, and invested in the project or initiative in some way. In the case of mental health promotion initiatives, groups of people who might be identified as stakeholders may be: community groups, funders, health and social service providers, or university or college-based research teams.

> "Mental health is created, and jeopardized, in families and schools, on streets and in workplaces. It is the result of.. . the way we ore treated by others, and the way we treat other people and ourselves"
> -Framework for Action for Promoting Mental Health in Europe. European Commission, I997

Annotated Resource List

A British Columbian legacy. McKnight, J.L Evanston, III. Centre for Urban Affairs and Policy Research. Northwestern University. 1990.

> This paper describes the work of a citizen initiative in British Columbia designed to make communities more welcoming to people with developmental disabilities. It is a personalized account of the author's participation in guiding the enterprise through its first two years. The paper provides insights into the principles and guidelines that are fundamental to successful citizen efforts to make communities more inclusive and welcoming for all people.

A dictionary of public health promotion and education: terms and concepts. Naomi N. Modeste. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996.

> This dictionary presents a selection of widely used terms that reflect the process of health promotion and education rather than disease specific terminology. It emphasizes the four settings of the community, workplace, primary care and schools. Related terms are cross-referenced and key sources are mentioned; the second section lists 32 health and professional organizations, mostly American.

Framework for action for promoting mental health in Europe. National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health. Helsinki: European Commission, 1997.

> This document outlines the key concepts and a framework for action needed to promote mental health in Europe. This framework is required in planning, implementing, evaluating and monitoring national and international mental health promotion and prevention policies and programs.

Mental health promotion: A quality framework. London: Health Education Authority, 1997.

> Produced by Britain's Health Education Authority, this document provides a framework for demonstrating the benefits and value of mental health promotion, with a key focus on measuring success. It provides a starting point for identifying priorities and planning interventions.

Mental health promotion: Policy, practice and partnerships. McColloch, G.P. and Boxer, j. London: Balliere Tindall, 1997.

> This text for practitioners and service providers discusses many of the issues that arise in putting the concepts of mental health promotion into practice. Although it primarily addresses the interests and concerns of service providers, this practical guide will be helpful for a wide variety of people interested in mental health promotion.

Social action series. Willinsky, C. and Pape, B. Toronto: Canadian Mental Health Association, National Office. 1997.

> This publication draws on a summary of a literature review as well as a series of interviews with key stakeholders in the field of mental health promotion. It contains four main sections: the meaning of mental health promotion; the components of a mental health promotion approach; the contrast between mental health promotion and other similar ideas; and some practical applications.

Promoting health through community development. In Promoting health and mental health in children, youth, and families. Glenwick, D. S. and Jason, L.A., (eds). New York: Springer, 1993.

> This book chapter describes the opportunities and challenges in promoting health through community development. It summarizes and critiques prominent models and programs that use elements of community development practice in health promotion. It uses several case examples to illustrate the process, and suggests future research and action issues related to understanding and improving community health initiatives.

Rules of the game: Lessons from the field of community change. Homan, M.S. Pacific Grove, CA.: Brooks Cole, 1999.

> This hands-on guide to community work offers practical wisdom and guidelines to demystify the community change process. Homan presents the insights he gained through many years of working with communities to bring about positive change. He identifies the skills, attitudes and choices that are important to achieving success in bringing about community change. His style is informal, making the content of the book accessible to a wide audience.

Unhealthy societies: The afflictions of inequality. Wilkinson, ROC. London: Routledge, 1996.

> This book demonstrates that the social cohesion of egalitarian societies produces improved quality of life and health. Examples from Britain, Japan, the United States and

Eastern Europe are given throughout the five sections that examine the health of societies, health inequalities, social cohesion and conflict, psychological causes of illness and the relationship between redistribution of economic growth and quality of life.

Part 1: Program Outlines

The following section outlines three programs which we believe are excellent examples of mental health promotion in practice:

- Inclusion in Community, CMHA National Office,Toronto
- Helping Skills, CMHA Newfoundland and Labrador Division
- Seniors' Medicine Wheel, Portage Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Manitoba.

The programs cover a wide variety of mental health promotion issues and are relevant to many different individuals and groups in the communities where they are being implemented. Each initiative is unique - reflecting the reality of the community where it took place.

These particular programs were selected for several reasons. Each project incorporates many of the fundamental principles of mental health promotion -- capacity building, meaningful participation, partnerships, cultural sensitivity, social support, and a sense of the interconnectedness among different sectors of the community.

Additionally, while the programs originate from different sources, they all involve local people in a process that is essentially controlled by them, and responds to the resources and needs of their communities. The objectives of each project focus explicitly on improving people's mental health, using strategies selected by community members.

We've included different types of projects to illustrate that mental health promotion applies not only to the general population, but also to specific groups within that population. You will therefore find one project that responds specifically to the concerns of people with mental illness, one that is relevant to the generic population, and one that focuses on a particular population group.

This section introduces the projects briefly and presents and overview of the background, goal, objectives, process and partners for each one. In the chapters that follow, we take a closer look at how the projects were implemented and we provide tips and tools to help you bring mental health promotion to life in your
own community.

Inclusion In Community

Canadian Mental Health Association, National Office,Toronto, Ontario

Background

People living in communities across Canada are increasingly finding that they can't rely on the government or the service system to adequately address all of their health and social needs. Instead, people are learning to draw on their own capacities to provide support to one another, and are strengthening the human connections within their communities. The Inclusion in Community project is based on enhancing this awareness of mutual responsibility among ordinary citizens, and building on people's interdependence and sense of community.

The project involved five CMHA Branches to across Ontario[2] supporting their communities to find new collaborative approaches for addressing the needs of people with mental illness. Each site brought consumers[3], families, and generic community groups together to plan and implement a

---

[2] The Inclusion in Community project also had a national component, which took place in three sites across Canada over a period of nine months. We chose to include information only from the Ontario-based sites here because, given the longer timeline of their component of project, ther were able to implement the project objectives most completely.
[3] See glossary.

strategy to shift the focus from the exclusive reliance on mental health services to promoting the mental health of people in the community with serious mental health problems.

This shift in focus involved all sectors of the community -- from pew/e with mental illness learning to become less dependent on services and more involved in community life, and community members acting as guides for people with mental illness, to health professionals working collaboratively with other sectors of the community to improve the quality of life for people with mental illness.

By developing collaborative partnerships with a wide range of community members and organizations, the Inclusion project created new and innovative relationships that would help to open up community life to consumer/survivors.

> "Isolation from community life is the worst disability."
> -John McKnight, I990

Conceptual work for the Inclusion in Community project was accomplished largely by the CMHA's National Mental Health Services Work Group[4] through its work on [New Framework for Support]. This policy document (which guides CMHA's thinking about supports for people with mental illness) promotes full community integration of people with mental illness through the mobilization of a range of formal and informal supports in the community. The message of the Framework is that informal supports such as service clubs and recreation facilities are resources for people with mental illness, which can enhance or, in some cases, even replace formal mental health services.

Summary

Inclusion in Community involved five communities in promoting the inclusion of people with mental illness in the community. Consumers and other community partners joined together to find ways to address the mental health needs of community members with mental illness.

The project was co-ordinated through the CMHA's National office, funded by Ontario's Trillium Foundation, and implemented in five selected communities through local CMHA Branch offices. The process of selecting the sites involved several steps. CMHA Branches that wanted to participate demonstrated their interest and ability to carry out the project, and provided a confirmation of interest from potential community partners.

Sites were selected by the national steering committee with a view to achieving both balance and diversity among the communities represented. The sites included a variety of different communities in Ontario: a mix of urban and rural, francophone, anglophone and multilingual speakers. The project brought together citizens from many cultural backgrounds, creating new links between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, and strengthening links between a diversity of other groups.

The project's activities put Framework principles into practice at the local level by engaging new partners in the community process. Rather than turning to service providers to address the issues of people with mental illness, the communities that participated drew upon the resources of consumers themselves, their families and friends, generic community groups such as churches and service clubs, and other community members such as employers, landlords and businesspeople.

Goal

The goal of the Inclusion project was:

---

[4] The Inclusion project was steered by this Work Group, which has been involved in Framework development and promotion since 1983. Memberbship in the group includes consumers, family members and service providers.

- to shift the focus of selected CMHA Branches from a formal service delivery approach to a mental health promotion approach.

Objectives

The objectives of the project were:

- to promote at least three new partnerships among consumers, families, local decision-makers, CMHA Branches, and the broader community;
- to implement strategies in five different sites which promote integration into the natural community
- to disseminate the results and learnings of the project throughout the CMHA infrastructure and to other groups concerned with mental health.

Process

The challenge for the inclusion sites was to make community organizations and resources, such as recreation centres and service clubs, more accessible to consumer/survivors. The approach was to bring together a range of partners in a community to work alongside the usual mental health stakeholders -- consumers, family members and service providers. Given this challenge, and building upon work that was already being done in the CMHA Branches, project staff, community members, and volunteers worked together to choose and implement their sites' individual goals and strategies.

In the spirit of a true community development project, the focus and strategy selected in each site reflected the reality of that community, and its size, economy, population, facilities, resources, and history. The distinct strategies selected by the various sites were:

- increasing access to leisure and recreation services (Waterloo);
- community participatory theatre (Forest);
- increasing employment supports (Timmins);
- peer advocacy and expanding volunteer opportunities in generic community agencies (Cornwall);
- connecting people coming out of hospital with community supports and services to promote their recovery (Ottawa).

The process of moving from a service delivery framework to a community process model was neither smooth nor uneventful. Each of the sites had a different starting point and experienced different challenges in making the transition. As the participants themselves noted at the final meeting of all the sites, inclusion is not finished with the end of these specific projects -- there is always room to make our communities more welcoming and more diverse.

Partners

The Inclusion in Community project was designed to develop partnerships in the sites were developed among consumer/survivors, families, CMHA staff, and community agencies. One of the primary goals of these partnerships was to encourage those groups not normally involved with mental health issues, like local citizen's associations clubs, to be more proactive in involving and welcoming people with mental health problems.

Local partners were engaged through planning meetings held in each of the sites. At the initial meetings, the concepts and goals of the project were introduced to a wide variety of community members, in order to discuss potential directions for the project, as well as to mobilize community support and resources.

The sites used many personal and professional connections in order to achieve their goals. Some of the community partners who became involved in the project include: an Aboriginal women's support centre, several community colleges, a municipal housing authority, the Navy Veterans, the Presbyterian Church, and several local and federal political leaders.

Sources:

A New Framework for Support for People with Serious Mental Health Problems. Trainor, j., Pomeroy, E., and Pape, B. Toronto: CMHA National, 1993.

Inclusion in Community: Building Capacity. Project Proposal to the Trillium Foundation. Pape, B. Toronto: CMHA National, 1996.

Inclusion in Community: Building Capacity. Final Report to the Trillium Foundation. Pape, B and McKee, H. Toronto: CMHA National, 1998.

Inclusion in Community: A Guide to Local Action. McKee, H. Toronto: CMHA National. 1998.

Helping Skills

Canadian Mental Health Association, Newfoundland and Labrador Division

The Helping Skills project grew out of a participatory research project conducted by the CMHA Newfoundland and Labrador Division that explored the impact of the northern cod moratorium on peoples' well-being. The research showed that although there was a great deal of innate strength and resiliency in the communities, there was also significant distress resulting from loss of employment, and, in particular, loss of a traditional way of life.

Community members expressed great concern about the lack of helping services available to people in rural areas, and about the erosion of social support resulting from the tensions and changes caused by the moratorium.

During the same period, the provincial health system was undergoing restructuring, with the establishment of Regional Community Health Boards responsible for health promotion, as well as mental health and addictions services, among other things. The priorities in this restructuring included encouraging greater community participation, and developing partnerships between the formal and informal sectors to address health needs.

The Community Health Boards charged with the responsibility to implement this mandate were, however, seriously under-resourced. Regional co-ordinators were reporting social and emotional distress to which they had no means of responding. Affordable counselling services were desperately lacking, and virtually non-existent in many rural areas. The priest, the family doctor and the public health nurse were the local over-stretched resources, and people were waiting for up to a year to see psychiatrists and other mental health professionals.

Summary

The Helping Skills project addressed both the need to develop alternative support networks and the need to build partnerships. Local service providers recognized that the distress that people were experiencing was a result of their loss of employment and way of life, not because of any psychiatric concern. Therefore, the goal of the project was to create a new helping resource - a non-service oriented approach that drew on the strengths and capacities of local people to support each other through hard times.

The Helping Skills project proposed to train a network of volunteers in the essential skills of helping. Once they were trained, they would be a resource for people who needed understanding, support and a confidential listening ear.

The Helping Skills project formed partnerships with two Community Health Boards to create a train-the-trainer program. Counsellors (or service providers) in rural areas would be trained as facilitators, and would in turn deliver the program to volunteers in their communities.

The project was built upon the following key assumptions:
1. there were people in communities who possessed the motivation and innate capacity to help others;
2. with training these people could develop and enhance their helping skills;
3. the training would contribute to building informal helping capacity in communities:
4. by referring people to the network of volunteer helpers, counsellors would become more available to respond to people in psychiatric distress who really needed professional help.

The training would make a clear distinction between the activity of "helping" and that of "counselling" or professional therapy, and enable helpers to identify their own limits and the situations where additional support was required.

Goals

- to create a model for developing informal helping resources;
- to build partnerships between formal and informal sectors in the area of mental health;
- to increase the knowledge, skills and involvement of community members to support their peers and address the health needs of their communities.

Objectives

- to develop and pilot a "train the trainer" program for service providers to facilitate the learning of effective helping skills by community volunteers;
- to establish a corps of trainers and volunteer helpers with the skills to appropriately refer or otherwise assist people with emotional or social needs;
- to use and teach others how to use a mentoring model to transfer learned skills in areas such as active listening, empathy and setting boundaries.

Process

The project was designed to unfold in three phases of six months each. A brief explanation of each phase follows.

Phase I : *"Train-the-trainers"

In the first six months, CMHA staff made contact with the community Mental Health Coordinators and looked for candidates from partner agencies in the region. The agencies were asked to commit a portion of their employees' time to the project. The potential trainers were asked about the kind of training they felt they needed in order to adequately prepare volunteers to be peer helpers. Based on these discussions, a consultant went on to design a training program.

The twelve trainers then spent ten days working full time with the consultant, learning about how to teach helping skills. The training focused on drawing out the participants' first hand knowledge of what it means to be helpful and to be helped. Based on this process, a Facilitator's Manual was written to provide a comprehensive "road map" for the training.

When they returned to their regions, the trainers spent up to two months promoting the program and recruiting interested and appropriate people from the community to become volunteer helpers.

Phase 2: "Transferring the Skills"

During the second six-month period, the trainers focused on transferring skills to the volunteers within their area. This was accomplished through 20 weekly group sessions, using the teaching and mentoring methods they themselves had learned with the consultant in Phase I. Monthly teleconferences provided a forum for sharing progress and problem solving among the trainers. The consultant also visited each site to meet with the volunteer groups. In the final month of Phase 2, the ten trainers spent three days with the consultant evaluating the training process and planning ahead to monitor and maintain the helping network.

Phase 3: "The Network in Action"

In the final six months, the volunteer helpers put their learning to use in their own communities. Some received referrals from various sources such as health professionals and people who referred themselves, while others simply used their new skills informally in their own lives and relationships. Throughout the duration of the project, the consultant was always available for problem solving and guidance. At the end of the third phase, an independent evaluator assessed the effectiveness of the skill transfer process.

This led to the development of Phase 4, program and training manual were revised to reflect the learnings of the project so far. A few changes were made to the language used in the manual, so that it reflected a more informal approach: "trainers" became "facilitators", and "peer counsellors" became "volunteer helpers".

During this time, staff also focused on promoting the project more widely, and delivering the revised facilitator training to people from other health regions.

Partners

One of the main goals of the project was to build active partnerships between the formal and informal sectors of mental health. To accomplish this, the co-operation of agencies in the areas of health and social services was enlisted, and a portion of selected employees' time was dedicated to being community trainers of volunteer helpers.

Sources:

Building Helping Skills: Project proposal. Buchan, M. CMHA Newfoundland & Labrador Division, St John's: September, 1995.

Building Helping Skills. Concluding reflections: What we learned. Buchan, M. CMHA Newfoundland & Labrador Division, St. John's: 1997.

Helping Skills: Facilitator's Manual. McConnel, S., and MacLeod, L. CMHA, Newfoundland and Labrador Division. 1998.

Seniors' Medicine Wheel

Portage Friendship Centre. Portage la Prairie, Manitoba

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, like many across the country, provides a wide array of services to Aboriginal people of all ages. Services range from housing

and recreation, to addictions and literacy programs. It is a non-profit, charitable organization with a mandate to assist Aboriginal people's adjustment to living in an urban environment. The Friendship Centre first opened its doors in the 1960's as a drop-in centre. Currently the Centre serves more than 1,500 people a year.

Approximately 25% of the population in the Portage area is of Aboriginal descent, either Treaty, Status, non-Status or Metis. The Portage Friendship Centre, the only Aboriginal-based organization in the area, has a long history of providing much-needed programs and services which are sensitive to the cultural traditions and needs of this community.

The Seniors' Medicine Wheel project was developed to address the needs of the growing population of urban Aboriginal seniors. Approximately 15% of Aboriginal people living in the Portage area are over the age of 50.

A large number of these seniors attended residential schools as children, and have had to cope with the extreme physical, emotional and spiritual trauma that they experienced in that setting. For many seniors, trying to deal with the legacy of that abuse has led them to move away from the reserves and into urban centres, where they have lost touch with traditional cultural and social support systems.

In urban centres such as Portage la Prairie, Aboriginal seniors have often fallen through the cracks -- excluded from mainstream community life, and unable to access culturally-sensitive social and health care services.

This marginalization and isolation has had many health impacts, and has hindered Aboriginal seniors from accessing the health and social services they need. The Seniors' Medicine Wheel program was developed specifically to provide urban Aboriginal seniors with information, access, support and referrals to existing health services.

The project began as an attempt to connect Aboriginal seniors to culturally appropriate services -- a worthwhile project indeed, but not one that would necessarily be considered mental health promotion. Simply by bringing the seniors together, however, the Medicine Wheel project produced some unexpected, but very welcome results.

By bringing them together for weekly meetings and sharing circles, the project provided Aboriginal seniors with the seeds of a real mental health promotion project -- one which united the seniors with many of the community's children, and began a cycle of cultural sharing and emotional recovery.

Through this process, the seniors began to think of themselves as Elders, which is the name Aboriginal people generally use to refer to members of the community who are esteemed and valued -- who have wisdom to share.

Summary

The Seniors' Medicine Wheel is summarized in a slightly different manner than the other two sample projects, in order to reflect both the unique way that it came about, and the people it served. Instead of breaking the program down into the categories of Goals, Objectives, Process, and Partners, we tell the story of the Medicine Wheel program, starting from its beginnings as an initiative designed to connect urban Aboriginal Elders with local health services, and moving to what it eventually became, an initiative to promote the mental health of children and seniors in the urban Aboriginal community.

The Elders who took part in the Seniors' Medicine Wheel program shared many concerns about their own health, as well as the health of the younger generations. They saw many things

they would like to change in their community, from substance abuse and family violence, to a loss of cultural identity and a sense of hopelessness amongst the community's youngest members.

During the initial phase of the project, a series of weekly gatherings facilitated by staff from the Friendship Centre brought Elders together to learn more about the various services that were available, and how to access them in order to improve their health.

In these meetings, the Elders were also able to share their concerns about what they were seeing in their community. They felt a sense of responsibility to take action to improve the situation for the children and youth who were growing up in what they knew was a physically, mentally and spiritually unhealthy environment.

Through their weekly discussions the Elders realized that they all shared a deep concern for the children and youth in their community, and feared that many of them were entering into a cycle of abuse that had begun generations earlier, with the residential schools. The Elders felt compelled to do something to improve the mental health and self-esteem of those children. They felt that by sharing their traditional cultural knowledge with the young people, they could help them to be proud of who they were. In teaching and sharing with the children, the Elders would also gain something -- the knowledge that they were making an important contribution to the mental health of their community.

The second, mental health promoting, phase of the Seniors' Medicine Wheel project was born. Through contacts at the Friendship Centre, they began to work with Aboriginal Head Start, a pro-gram already operating in the community, whose mandate was to foster spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical growth in Aboriginal children, and to support parents and guardians as the prime teachers and caregivers of their children.

Given that another aspect of Head Start's mandate was to work with and support other community programs, forming a partnership between Head Start and the Medicine Wheel project seemed logical. This partnership united two initiatives which placed equal value on caring, creativity and pride flowing from the knowledge of traditional beliefs, language and culture.

The Elders were the only members of the community who still knew some of the traditional languages and teachings, and could pass them on to the younger generations. Because many of the Elders were survivors of residential schools, however, some of their knowledge of language and tradition had already been lost.

Working together benefited both the seniors and the children enormously. The Elders were giving something of great value to the children --their time, their cultural knowledge and their wisdom. They were recognized, many for the first time, for the contributions they were able to make to the community. Through their nurturing relationship with the Elders, the children not only learn Aboriginal language and traditional beliefs, but they also develop confidence, respect, and a sense of their own value.

The Elders and children formed lasting relationships through the Medicine Wheel program. Some of the Elders actually adopted the children as grandchildren, and continue to spend time teaching and sharing together. The participants in the project worked together to create two workbooks: a colouring book for children that tells many of the traditional legends and stories, and a book recognizing the wisdom and contributions of the Elders. These books have been made available to other Aboriginal communities, to inspire them to take similar action to promote mental health.

It was evident to the staff at the Friendship Centre that the program was a huge success, because, at a certain point, it ceased to be a program and instead became a part of people's lives. Although the funding for the program came to an end, the work that the project began has

not. The Medicine Wheel program helped inspire a community to begin a healing process -- a movement that promotes both mental health and cultural regeneration.

Sources:

Aboriginal Head Start Initiative. http://www.hc-sc.gc.calhppb/childhood-youthlacy/ahs.htm

Mental Health Promotion Resource Directory. Canadian Public Health Association, Ottawa: 1998.

Seniors' Medicine Wheel Project Proposal. Portage Friendship Centre, Portage La Prairie: 1996.

Seniors' Medicine Wheel Final Report to Health Canada, Health Promotion and Programs Branch. Portage Friendship Centre, Portage la Prairie: 1998.

> *"As an eagle prepares to leave the nest with all the skills and knowledge it needs to participate in Iii, in the same manner so will I guide my children. I will use the culture to prepare them for Fife.*
>
> *The most important thing I can give to my children is my time. I will spend time with them in order to learn from them and listen to them.*
>
> *I will teach my children to pray, as well as the importance of respected We are the caretakers of the children for the Creator. They are his children, not ours. I am proud of our own Native language. I will learn it if I can and help my children to learn it.*
>
> *In today's world it is easy for the children to go astray. So I will work to provide positive alternatives for them. I will teach them their culture. I will encourage education. I will encourage sports. I will encourage them to talk to the Elders for guidance, but mostly, I will seek to be a role model myself. I make this commitment to my children so they will have courage and find guidance*
> *through traditional ways."*

- Author unknown - Aboriginal Head Start Newsletter
Winter 1997-98.

Chapter One: Analyzing Community Resources and Needs

Introduction

1. Focusing on Community Capacity

1.1 Identify individual and community assets

- WHAT is a community asset?
- WHY should you identify community assets?
- WHEN should you identify community assets?
- HOW do you identify community assets?

1.2 Define and analyze the issue

- WHAT does it mean to define and analyze the issue?
- WHY should you define and analyze the issue?
- HOW do you define and analyze the issue?

2. Developing the Community

2.1 Ensure broad community participation

- WHY should you ensure broad participation?
- HOW do you ensure broad participation?

2.2 Create collaborative partnerships

- WHY create collaborative partnerships?
- HOW do you create collaborative partnerships?
- WHO needs to be involved?

Summary

Tips for Analyzing Community Resources and Needs

Checklist

Tools
- An introduction to community capacity mapping
- A primer on facilitation skills
- An introduction to community problem solving

Annotated Resource List

Introduction

Most of us want the same things from our communities. We want them to be safe from violence and illness; we want neighbourhoods that are alive and work well. And we would all like to have people who care for us and whom we trust. But how do we develop a community like that? Our belief is that communities are built when people work together on things that matter to them, like creating environments where each person feels a sense of belonging and mutual support.

"A community is commonly understood to be about relationships; it's not a place. A neighborhood is a place, but community is about people's relationships."
- John McKnight 1990

The factors that affect people's mental health don't fit into neat categories, but often involve just about every aspect of their lives, and every sector of the community. Defining our problems as being connected to other issues (and people) helps us to see the many ways in which we are linked together.

Complex issues like improving mental health require cooperation throughout a community in order for significant change to happen. No one person, organization, or even sector can bring about major improvements in people's mental health without the cooperation of virtually everyone involved in or affected by the issue.

In this chapter we look at some of the initial activities that are essential to successful mental health promotion initiatives: defining and analyzing the community's resources and needs, and engaging the community to build collaborative partnerships and facilitate broad community participation. Completing these activities ensures that the initiatives that result will reflect community values and encourage community ownership.

We examine the ways that people worked to engage the community and identify the issue to focus on which reflected the unique context of the setting -- from a group of Aboriginal Elders concerned about the spiritual and emotional health of younger generations to a group of community members who were interested in creating new opportunities for people with mental illness.

Focusing On Community Capacity

In many fields, including mental health, the growing use of capacity building language and concepts reflects a fundamental shift in the underlying beliefs about how change happens and how to bring about change. At a societal level, institutions are returning the responsibility for maintaining mental health to communities, and at the local level, individuals are reassuming some of the knowledge and control over their mental health that have, in the past, been vested in professionals and "experts."

The capacity building approach, on which our understanding of mental health promotion is based, assumes that there are strong relationships among individuals, families, groups, and organizations within the community. One must consider and relate to all these arenas while working within any one arena, because each influences and is influenced by the others. For capacity building efforts to achieve their true potential, attention must be given to the web of connections affecting all persons, organizations, groups and communities involved.

A capacity building approach emphasizes what the community has, not what it lacks. Why should we look at things this way? Because assets and strengths can be used to meet community needs; they can improve community life.

Isolated Newfoundland communities have historically been extraordinarily resourceful in dealing with their own human problems and survival issues. Helping skills, indeed, are natural human abilities possessed by many individuals and readily recognized by those who turn to them for support.

In recent decades, however, such skills have been defined and taught by such professions as social work, psychology and nursing, and developed to a high level of sophistication by psychotherapists and counsellors.

The "professionalization" of helping and the placing of ultimate trust in the expert has in many ways undermined the role of informal resources. A certain mystique about professional counselling has developed, so that many people have lost confidence in their own abilities to help friends and neighbours when they are going through difficult times.

In situations of emotional stress such as that caused by the cod moratorium, people tend to feel that informal help is inadequate and that professional counselling is needed. In rural Newfoundland, the changes to the health care system and the difficulty in accessing services were added causes of anxiety.

The Helping Skills project participants addressed this situation and the impact it was having on their communities by taking a capacity building approach. Key to their involvement was their first-hand knowledge of the needs and scarcity of resources in their communities. They engaged in a learning process that challenged them to deconstruct assumptions about helping, and incorporated their experiential knowledge of what's helpful and what isn't.

The Helping Skills project made participants more aware of the resources that they already
The Helping Skills project participants addressed had, rather than pointing out areas of need.
They this situation and the impact it was having on learned that, rather than mental health
services, listening skills and friendly support were most helpful resources that they could offer to others in distress.

1.1 Identify Individual and Community Assets

What is a Community Asset?

A community asset or resource is anything that can be used to improve the quality of community life. This means:

- It can be a person - someone who is well connected and knows many paths into community life, someone with unique insight, special experience or specific skills;
- It can be a physical structure or place - a school, a hospital, a recreation centre, a social club, a park;
- It can be a business - that provides jobs and supports the local economy,
- You too are a community asset, and so are your friends, and the people you have yet to meet. This is a very encouraging and promising way of seeing the world.

Why Should You Identify Community Assets?

Because they can be used as a foundation for improving the mental health of the community, and also because:

- External resources (e.g. federal and provincial funding) often just aren't available, whether we like it or not. Therefore the resources for change must come from within each community[1].
- Identifying and mobilizing community assets enables residents to gain control over their lives.
- People can become active shapers of their own destinies, instead of passive clients receiving services from a variety of agencies.

---

[1] Focusing on the assets that the community already has does not imply that the community does not need additional resources from the outside. It simply means that communities often have the best solution to their own problems.

- Improvement efforts are more effective and longer lasting when community members dedicate their time and talents to bring about the changes they want.

When Should You Identify Community Assets?

- When you can't provide traditional services, even if you want to, and are looking for other ways to strengthen the community

In the rural Newfoundland communities where the Helping Skills project took place, the restructuring of health care services had a particularly strong impact. The provincial health system was undergoing radical change at the same time that the province was dealing with reductions in federal transfer payments, and the effects of the cod moratorium.

The new community health boards (which were charged with the responsibility of implementing community mental health services) had very limited resources. They were simply not equipped to respond to the level of distress in rural communities with professional services.

The Helping Skills project proposed a way to develop the capacity of the communities to respond to their own immediate needs. The result of the project was a powerful and sustainable new community resource: a network of citizens skilled in listening and providing social and emotional support to their neighbours.

- When the community includes talented and experienced citizens whose skills are valuable but underused

The Elders who came together every week at the Friendship Centre in Portage did so to discuss their concern over what they were seeing in their community. Several generations of community members bore the emotional, physical and spiritual scars of residential schools, which had systematically destroyed their language, culture and traditions.

The children who were raised in the shadow of the residential schools had not known healthy family and community life, but were faced, on a daily basis, with violence, abuse and lack of hope.

The Elders decided to do something to improve this situation. In their discussions, the Elders realized that they themselves were among the few who possessed the skills and strengths that were
necessary to address these problems. They had insights into their community and possessed cultural understanding and wisdom that they could use to make a difference in the lives of the children.

By teaching the younger generations about their culture and traditions, the Elders were providing them with skills and knowledge that the children's parents had not been able to. By acknowledging and sharing their skills, the Elders were promoting their own, and the children's mental health.

- When you want to strengthen existing relationships and build new ones that will promote successful community development in the future

Although an enormous diversity of different people and communities participated in the Inclusion in Community project, they all shared an understanding of the key element that would ensure the project's success: relationships.

People with mental illness have often been isolated from community life. The Inclusion in Community project helped to focus particular attention on opening up community life, so that people who have experienced mental health problems could contribute their talents, and form the relationships and friendships that we all need to keep us strong and healthy.

The relationships and partnerships that formed through the project were wide ranging, and brought together people who might otherwise not have met. The bonds that were formed have outlived the project itself - the original partners, as well as new ones, continue to get together formally and informally, to find new ways of opening community doors for isolated people.

How Do You Identify Community Assets?

In order to build on the assets and strengths in your community, you must first find out what those assets are. In the tools section at the end of this chapter, you'll find a guide to identify community assets and resources in your community.

1.2 Define and Analyze the Issue

Often the issues that bring people together are those that are initially viewed as 'problems'. Problems are a part of life for individuals, families and communities. Communities, like individuals, work to solve their own problems. The process of analyzing those problems helps in their solution.

Before jumping into any attempts to solve community problems, it's important to spend some time thinking about the nature of mental health issues and problems, and to address several key questions: Why has a certain problem developed? What is the underlying cause of the problem? What kind of community action will help solve the problem?

What Does it Mean to Define and Analyze the Issue?

Analyzing community mental health concerns is a way of thinking through a particular mental health problem or issue before acting on a solution. It starts with looking for possible reasons why a problem exists, and then checking out whether those reasons are true. Then, and only then, is it time to start identifying possible solutions and implementing the best ones.

Stated simply, a problem can be defined as the difference between what is, and what might or should be. We often have a strong internal sense of when something is wrong and should be corrected - a feeling of distress or injustice. Knowing what to do to solve the problem is often less obvious.

If we spend some time defining and analyzing community problems -- gathering information and thinking about their root causes -- it helps us to clarify and understand those problems so that we can come up with more effective and appropriate solutions.

This is especially true in the case of mental health promotion. Because the factors that determine mental health are so complex, it's particularly important to spend some time defining the community mental health issue, and analyzing its various aspects, before taking action. A careful

consideration of the causes and parameters of the problem will help to lay the foundation for an effective solution.

Why Should You Define and Analyze The Issue?

There are several key reasons why it's a good idea to do some analysis before setting to work to promote mental health in your community.

To better identify what the problem or issue is:

Before looking for solutions, you'll want to clarify just what is the problem. Unless you are clear, it's hard to move forward.

> In the Inclusion project, community members identified that people with mental illness are often excluded from meaningful participation in the life of the community.

To understand what is at the heart of the problem:

A problem is usually caused by something; what is that something? And often the problem we see is actually a symptom of something else. You need to get a complete picture.

> Persistent stigma, and over-reliance on the formal service system are two factors at the heart of the exclusion of people with mental illness from community life.

To determine the barriers and resources associated with addressing the problem:

It's good practice and planning to anticipate barriers and obstacles before they happen. By doing so, you can often get around them. Analyzing community mental health issues can help you to understand and find the community resources you will need to tackle the problem.

> The barriers to inclusion included: fear, prejudice, and lack of understanding and education. The resources that the Inclusion project drew on included: people's positive experiences with friends and family, and the enthusiasm and motivation of certain community members.

To develop the best action steps for addressing the issue:

Having a plan of action based on a careful analysis of the issue is always better than moving forward without a clear idea of where you're headed.

In each of the sample projects, people came together to analyze the situation - to ask themselves and each other why a certain problem was occurring, or why a particular mental health issue had become a concern. They did this before they attempted to propose a course of action or implement a solution to the situation in the community. Here are their stories:

The idea for the Helping Skills grew out of the CMHA Newfoundland and Labrador Division's project called "A Needs Assessment for Community Self-Help". The project involved people in 27 communities that had been affected by the northern cod moratorium, telling about the impact the moratorium was having on their well-being and that of their families and communities.

What people said was that while many of them were coping adequately so far with the support of their family and friends, there was a lot of anxiety and some serious distress about the sudden, mass unemployment caused by the moratorium. Everyone was worried about the future and how their communities would survive, and everyone saw the need for more sources of help and support as the situation got worse. Where mental health services existed, they were stretched to the limit, and in many communities there were no such resources at all.

CMHA, however, recognized that the need being expressed was not so much for psychiatric services as for support and help with the natural process of adjusting to major loss and change. The Division responded by developing a proposal which reflected the issue and suggested ways in which it could be addressed at the local level. The proposal was submitted and accepted, and the Helping Skills project was born.

The idea for the Inclusion in Community project came from the input of people with mental illness from all across Canada who had participated in national consultations and evaluations of mental health programs. Time and again, consumer/survivors expressed the idea that although formal mental health services are important, they are not the only, nor the most important support that help people with mental illness to recover and lead fulfilling lives in the community.

By focusing exclusively on the provision of formal mental health services, the important role that non-formal supports (such as housing, recreation, family and friends) play in the lives of people who have experienced mental health problems has often been neglected. People expressed the need to participate in and have access to generic community supports and services. Taking an active part in the activities and facilities offered by the community gives people a sense of belonging -- a need that is shared by everyone, regardless of the presence or absence of a psychiatric label.

The Inclusion in Community project, like Helping Skills, was organized and administered through CMHA (although this time it was at the national, rather than the provincial, level) but grew out of the ideas expressed by consumer/survivors themselves. They "named" the problem - the need to provide more opportunities for people with mental illness to connect with the broader community - and suggested ways of supporting communities to work toward solutions.

The communities that implemented the project focused their energy on getting a wide range of people involved, and developing a strategy that was appropriate to their particular situation, while the National office of CMHA looked after many of the administrative duties, such as reporting to the funding agency and managing the budget.

How Do You Define And Analyze the Issue?

In each mental health promotion initiative, the process of defining and analyzing the issue reflects the community context, and will therefore be unique to that particular setting.

There are, however, some general guidelines that might be helpful to a variety of groups who are interested in defining and analyzing mental health issues in their communities. In the tools section at the end of this chapter you'll find a guide to get you started analyzing mental health issues in your own community.

2. Developing The Community

Community development can change the relationships between people in communities and the institutions which shape their lives. By encouraging involvement in local life, community development helps people have a say in decisions which affect their lives. Those most affected by decisions need to be integrally involved in making those decisions.

A community development approach to mental health promotion emphasizes community participation and self-reliance, with individuals, families and communities assuming more responsibility for their own mental health. These themes - self-help, citizen participation, and community control, are hallmarks of a community development approach to mental health promotion.

Encouraging the community to take control of mental health promotion initiatives will help to mobilize the kind of local human and material resources that you'll need to bring about sustainable change in your community. These grassroots efforts should result in programs that are small enough to manage and large and durable enough to produce a significant impact on community conditions that support mental health.

In the Inclusion in Community project, the sites wanted to build the goal of inclusion of consumer/survivors in the broad life of the community into all aspects of their work. To those involved in one of the sites, this meant that consumer/survivors should steer the process, and determine the direction that inclusion would take in their community, Because the decisions made in the project would most strongly affect the lives of consumers, they determined the direction the project took.

As a first step, the consumer/survivors who steered the project decided that they wanted to document the wealth of experiential knowledge that people in the group, and other consumers, possessed. Nearly forty individuals gave freely of their time and experience to discuss the process of recovery from mental illness. The end result of the research project that followed was a rich resource of documented life experience entitled "Journeys in Recovery".

In the report many consumers identified that when they were trying to get back on their feet after having been in the hospital, they often felt adrift and isolated. They felt they needed to be able to make connections with peer support groups and other community resources that could assist them with basic things like finding a decent place to live, getting work and accessing community facilities and services.

The consumers who took part in the research emphasized that they were not referring to specific mental health-related services, they were talking about peer-support and the types of resources that were available to everyone in the community.

"Journeys in Recovery" led to what became the hospital outreach project, which proposed to link people coming out of the hospital to peer and community supports, to make the transition more manageable. As one participant described the process: "our project went from recording experiences to putting the experience to practical use to make the journey easier for the ones following us".

The recommendations yielded by the "Journeys In Recovery" research process became the spark for action. By providing an opportunity to document people's experiences, analyze the information and take action based on that information, the Inclusion project encouraged people with mental illness to play an active role in shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

"Significant community development takes place on/y when local people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort"

John Kretzman & John McKnight, 1994

2.1 Ensure Broad Community Participation

Broad community participation is a key component of mental health promotion. Because the factors that affect mental health are so diverse, any effort to promote mental health should encompass that diversity by encouraging the participation of a wide range of community members. Mental health promotion works by encouraging effective community participation in setting priorities, making decisions and planning, implementing and evaluating strategies to achieve better mental health.

Why Should You Ensure Broad Participation?

Connecting people both to one another, and to the issue is a critical component of empowerment. When communities members are actively engaged with one another and with community life, a series of interlocking relationships are formed that become not only a support for individuals, but also a resource for the entire community.

Participants in successful mental health promotion initiatives find out experientially that they can make a difference, be heard, and that a group of diverse people can constructively address complex mental health issues.

Our communities are made up of people from a broad range of cultures and abilities. In many cases, culture provides people with a sense of identity and belonging, nurturing and supporting community life.

People from distinct cultural groups have different perspectives, experiences, expectations, knowledge, and other qualities and attributes. These differences can become a source of conflict and division if they are disregarded, but they can become a source of richness and strength when they are recognized and valued. By appreciating diversity, you will communicate more effectively, make more relevant decisions, and take advantage of a broader range of insights and talents.

In order to ensure broad community participation, we must recognize that everyone has some preconceived notions about people who are different from themselves, in terms of culture, ability, etc. It is important to overcome these so that people feel at ease participating in the group.

The Inclusion project took place in five different sites across Ontario, from major urban centres like Ottawa, to Forest a small, mainly rural community. In Forest., CMHA staff organized a community forum that brought together a variety of different people to discuss mental health issues
of concern to the community. During that initial forum, a number of people from the community expressed their interest in being members of a steering committee to guide the development of a community mental health promotion initiative.

The committee was composed of a wide range of people: consumer/survivors, members of the local clergy, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, staff from the local community health centre, recreation centre, and community college, as well as farmers and family members. By getting together on a regular basis and discussing the barriers in the community for people with mental illness, the group identified that the stigma surrounding mental illness posed one of the greatest barriers to the inclusion of consumer/survivors in the community. The diverse nature of the group helped to ensure that the project would be truly representative of the community.

How Do You Ensure Broad Participation?

Support the participation of all people

If you want to have a diverse group of people committed to your project, it's important to support their participation. Make sure the project is accessible to people from ethnocultural and disability communities by providing practical support such as transit allowances and making sure meetings are held in accessible locations, and during times that are convenient for everyone.

Think about significant dates and holidays for the different ethnocultural groups in your community so you don't schedule meetings on these dates.

Communicate clearly

Effective communication is also an important part of supporting people's participation. Avoid using jargon, and make sure that everyone understands what's being said. Act quickly on any input that people provide about making the project more supportive of diversity,

Use your networks

Start with people you know. It will be easier to talk to and interest people with whom you already have some relationship.

Find out what other organizations, groups and individuals are active in your community who share some of the same concerns, and get in touch with them. You may be able to form partnerships that benefit you both.

Go to where people are

Instead of trying to get people to come to you, try going to them. Go to the meetings of other groups and to places and events where people gather. This is particularly important if you're trying to involve different cultural and ethnic groups, youth, seniors and others who may not come to you.

Ask members to invite others

Most community volunteers become involved because they were asked to participate by a friend, a family member, or a neighbour.

Create newsletters and leaflets

Newsletters keep group members in touch. Delivering leaflets to a wide range of neighbourhoods will help you to attract new members.

2.2 Create Collaborative Partnerships

An essential element of mental health promotion is creating innovative partnerships and enhancing community capacity. By participating in collaborative projects, people become empowered and energized; they quickly see that they are able to accomplish a great deal more by joining forces than by working in isolation.

A variety of different community organizations, associations and individuals need to work together collaboratively in order to effectively address issues that impact mental health, such as economic development, housing, health care and education.

> "Collaborative approaches to health promotion contribute to health goals and community empowerment In so doing, they offer a glimpse of the connectedness that is part of the essence of a good life."
> Stephen Fawcett et al. 1996

Why Should You Create Collaborative Partnerships?

It makes sense to try to bring as many different sectors of the community on board for several reasons:

- your initiative will be more representative of the whole community;
- your group will stand to gain broader community support;
- the contacts and connections made in a diverse, multi-sector group will lead to new community relationships, which can spark new initiatives that might never have otherwise existed in the community.

The Inclusion in Community project was designed so that partnerships in the sites were developed among consumer/survivors, families, CMHA staff, and community partners. One important purpose of the partnerships was to engage those groups not normally involved in mental health issues to be more proactive in involving and welcoming those with mental health problems.

In the Cornwall site of the Inclusion project, partnerships were developed with service clubs such as the Navy Veterans, and other community agencies, such as a local literacy project. These partnerships connected consumer/survivors to the broader community by opening up the world of volunteer work to them.

In addition to learning from the experiences of other consumers, Ottawa participants also reached out to non-mental health specific organizations such as local colleges. Each group wanted to let people know of their supports and services but each faced the same problem - limited resources. Inclusion was the key to bringing these groups together to do collectively what they could not do separately.

All three of the sample projects used collaborative partnerships as a means to improve the mental health of people in communities. In each site participants understood that the formation of new and innovative community partnerships was a key part of the overall mental health promotion strategy, and one that would help to ensure that the initiative would take root in the community.

Who Needs To Be Involved?

Collaborative partnerships should be as inclusive as possible, bringing together people from all parts of the community (schools, businesses, government., etc.) and from different levels (neighbourhood, municipal, provincial).

Partnerships should also include representatives from the various ethnocultural groups that live in the community. A community partnership to promote mental health might include representatives from:

- the media;
- the business community;
- area schools;
- seniors, youth and cultural organizations;
- local government;

- health organizations;
- the faith community;
- financial institutions.

People from each of these areas will be able to promote mental health in important, unique ways.

How Do You Create Collaborative Partnerships?

Go for it!

Private citizens have initiated many of the most successful cases of broad-based collaboration. They usually start with a small group of people with the credibility to convince others that something can and must be done.

The members of the "initiating committee" are broadly representative of the community, and often begin by gathering information on the issue and identifying the stakeholders.

Engage your stakeholders

As your understanding of the issue grows, so will your understanding of who needs to be involved. Who is responsible for the problem or issue? Who is affected by it? Whose perspectives or knowledge are needed to develop good solutions or strategies?

When you have identified your stakeholders, the next stage is to bring them together by inviting a key representative of each group to a public meeting or information session.

Spend time learning about each other

Before jumping in to any attempts to collaborate on the issue, it's important to devote some time and energy to learning about each other. Take the time to discuss interests, to appreciate the points of view and values that are common to the members of the group, and to share hopes and fears.

Building a collaborative climate and sustaining it through the many challenging and even frustrating moments that lie ahead demands a solid foundation of trust.

Build agreement among stakeholders

Differing perspectives enhance the wisdom brought to the problem-solving efforts and the possibilities for real change.

Focus first on building agreement that the problem exists and on getting enough stakeholders to work together to change the situation. When you've established that agreement, you can move on to defining the problem and creating strategies to take action on the problem.

> Communities ore never built from the top down, or from the outside in.
> John Kretzmon & John McKnight 1994

Summary

- Action to promote mental health is all about connecting people to each other, to the issue and to the community.

- Although each of the sample projects came about through a somewhat different process, the idea for each project was generated by the community, and not imposed from the outside.

- In each project, the course of action taken to promote mental health built on local resources, assets and strengths.

- Each sample project was based on relationships of groups of people, for that is what communities are built on. These groups come together in clubs, associations, organizations, businesses, neighbourhood groups and families.

- Each project involved a broad range of community members and created new relationships and partnerships. These relationships and partnerships took many different forms - both new friendships between individuals, and broader community partnerships involving organizations, neighborhood groups, local businesses, etc.

- An important outcome of the ongoing process of community and citizen involvement is community ownership. Communities need to shape their own program directions and develop and mobilize the skills necessary to manage continued efforts.

Tips For Analyzing Community Resources and Needs

USE LOCAL LEADERSHIP - in all of the projects, influential local citizens were part of the community process. Members of the community who are well known, respected and active in civic life can be excellent resources for your mental health promotion project

NETWORK - use your own networks - personal and professional - to link with a range of community partners. Networking will give you access to a wide range of community assets. Think broadly
about who you can include as partners.

TAP INTO THE SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES available in your community for help in setting your goals, planning and developing leadership. These include non-governmental organizations, community colleges, and university-based community research teams.

INVITE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS TO WHATEVER EXTENT THEY WISH. Even those who are very interested may have some real time constraints. People will be more willing to participate in the effort if they feel their availability and interests are respected.

KEEP YOU EFFORT VISIBLE. Make sure you're getting the attention you need from the broader community by developing contacts in the local media.

Checklist

- Local residents' capacities are being used to promote mental health in your project.

- You have developed an inventory of the capacities and skills of local residents.

- Your mental health promotion project mobilizes, enhances and expands these local capacities.

- You have taken the time to get to know one another.

- Your project will involve partners from many different sectors of the community

- Your group members reflect the cultural diversity present in your community.

Tools

In this section we'll give a brief description of some of the tools that could be helpful to you in the beginning stages of setting up a mental health promotion initiative in your own community. Because there are so many wonderful and comprehensive tools that cover the areas of engaging the community and identifying the issue, we'll just provide an overview and a list of resources you can refer to for further reading.

The tools that follow include:

1. An introduction to community capacity mapping
2. A primer on facilitation
3. An introduction to community problem solving

Introduction To Community Capacity Mapping

Wherever there are effective community development efforts, those efforts are based on an understanding, or map, of the community's assets, capacities and abilities.

Each community boasts a unique combination of assets upon which to build its future. A thorough map of those assets would begin with an inventory of the gifts, skills and capacities of the community's residents. In a community whose assets are being fully recognized and mobilized, all people will be part of the action, not as clients or recipients of services, but as full contributors to the community-building process.

In addition to mapping the gifts and skills of individuals, households and families, community-building initiatives can compile an inventory of citizens' associations. These associations, less formal and dependent on paid staff than formal institutions, are the vehicles through which citizens assemble to solve problems, or to share common interests and activities. These groups are indispensable tools for community development.
Beyond the individuals and local associations that make up the asset base of communities are all of the more formal institutions which are located in the community. Private businesses, public institutions such as schools, libraries, parks, police and fire stations, non-profit institutions such as hospitals and social service agencies -- these organizations make up the most visible and formal part of a community's fabric.

There are several excellent internet and written resources available to guide community members through the process of recognizing and mapping community assets, and mobilizing those assets to bring about positive change in the community. You can refer to the following resources for more detailed information on community mapping:

A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents.
Kretzman, J., McKnight, J. and Sheehan, JACTA Publications, 4848 North Clark St., Chicago, IL, 6064O.Tel I-800-397-2282. www.nwu.edu/lPR/publications

> This book provides eleven clear examples of capacity inventories developed and used by different communities across the United States as well as practical reasons and valuable tips for conducting and using capacity inventories in your community.

Asset Based Community Development - North Victoria Healthy Communities Coalition
http://-.netl-nvhcclasset.html

> This website provides templates that can be used by any group to map the individual, community and economic assets present in their community. The site also contains a number of examples that will be helpful to for those who are new to asset mapping to follow.

Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets. Kreaman, J. McKnight, J. Chicago:ACTA Publications,ACTA Publications, 4848 North Clark St., Chicago, IL, 6064O.Tel I-800-397-2282.
http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/publications , 1993.

> This non-traditional yet practical guide to the process of building communities is reflective of the values of mental health promotion. Based on a five-step process for "asset-based community development", the book presents a positive approach by focusing on locating the assets, skills and capacities of community members and organizations. It provides a contrast to a more traditional approach (which focuses on needs, problems and deficits) and suggests a number of limitations to this earlier model.

Community Tool Box Chapter 2, Section 6: Identifying Community Assets -
http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edulctblc2lc2s6.html

> This chapter summarizes the capacity building approach by highlighting the different assets that are present in each community, and discussing ways of mapping and accessing those assets.

Mapping Community Resources - http://www.ctcnet.org/r98Icor2.htm

> An interesting article that describes a community mapping project and the process used to develop assets. The article is based on the work of the Community Technology Centre Network (CTCNet), whose Reseach and Evaluation Team conducted a community mapping project in the Boston area.

2. A Primer On Facilitation

To be really successful at taking action on a mental health issue in your community, you will need to spend some time focusing on the skills that you'll need to make all of the action happen.

One of the key skills that you'll need for successful mental health promotion work is the ability to facilitate effectively Facilitation skills are the "process" skills that you will need to guide and direct key parts of your organizing work with the community: in meetings, and planning and training sessions.

What Is Facilitation?

Whether it's a meeting (large or small) or a training session, someone has to shape and guide the process of working together so that you meet your goals and accomplish what you've set out to do. While a group of people will probably be involved in setting the agenda and figuring out the goals, one person needs to concentrate on how you're going to move through your agenda and meet those goals effectively This is the person we call the "Facilitator".

Facilitation has three basic principles:

1. A facilitator is a guide to help people move through a process together, not the seat of wisdom and knowledge. That means the facilitator isn't there to give opinions, but to draw out opinions and ideas of group members.
2. Facilitation focuses on how people participate in the process of learning or planning, not just what is achieved.
3. A facilitator is neutral and never takes sides.

Effective facilitators are able to balance several tasks at once. They ensure that agenda items are covered, that important issues are discussed, decisions made and actions taken, while at the same time focusing on how the meeting is structured and run, to make sure that everyone can participate.

Why Do You Need Facilitation Skills?

If you want to plan effectively, keep members involved, and provide positive leadership for your initiative, you will need facilitation skills. The more you know about how to shape and run a good planning and learning process, the more your members will feel empowered about their own ideas and participation, take on responsibility and ownership, and stay invested in your initiative.

Meetings are a big part of organizing a mental health promotion initiative in your community. It might seem that you are going from one meeting to the next, especially in the early stages of your project, so you will want to make those meetings as fruitful and effective as possible. The key to this is developing strong facilitation skills. These skills will come in handy in many places other than just meetings: for planning, for "growing" new leaders, for resolving conflicts, and for maintaining good communication among the members of your group.

Being a good facilitator is both a skill and an art It is a skill in that people can learn certain techniques and can improve their ability with practice. It is an art in that some people just have more of a knack for it than others. If there is no requirement that a certain person facilitate (e.g. president of the Board) then your group can draw on members who already possess a natural skill or talent.

Facilitating means:
- understanding the goals of the meeting and the organization;
- keeping the group on the agenda and moving forward;
- including everyone in the meeting, including drawing out the quieter participants and controlling
- the domineering ones;
- making sure that decisions are made democratically.

How Do You Plan A Good Facilitation Process?

A good facilitator is concerned with: the outcome of the meeting or planning session; with how the people in the meeting participate and interact; and also with the process. While achieving the goals and outcomes that everyone wants is, of course, important, a facilitator also wants to make sure that the process is sound, that everyone is engaged, and that the experience is the best it can be for the participants.

In planning a good meeting, the facilitator should focus on ensuring that the following three areas are covered in advance:

1. Climate and environment

There are many factors that affect how safe and comfortable people feel about interacting with each other and about participating. The environment and general "climate" of a meeting or

planning session sets an important tone for participation. Some of the things you will want to consider include the following:

- Is the location a familiar place, where people will feel comfortable?
- Is the meeting site accessible to everyone?
- Is the space the right size for the number of people you are expecting?

2. Logistics and room arrangements

Believe it or not, how people are seated, whether they are hungry and whether they can hear can make or break your planning process. As a facilitator, the logistics of the meeting should be of great concern to you, whether or not you are the person responsible for them. Some things to consider are:

- Seating arrangements: Arranging chairs in a circle or around a table encourages discussion, equality and familiarity.
- Places to hang flipcharts: you'll need some space to display the results of brainstorming sessions and other important material.
- Refreshments: If people are hungry, they are much less likely to participate fully. If you're planning on having refreshments, to make the necessary arrangements well before the meeting begins.
- Microphones and audio-visual equipment Will you need any equipment? Have you arranged for it and made sure that it works?

3. Ground rules

To build a safe and comfortable environment, a good facilitator has a few more points to consider. How do you protect the people who are worried their ideas will be attacked or mocked? How do you hold back the big talkers who tend to dominate, while still making them feel good about their participation?

This is an especially important concern in the area of mental health promotion. Discussions about mental health issues need to be facilitated effectively, so that people can feel safe and supported sharing personal, often painful experiences with others. Having a clear set of ground rules should help the facilitator as well as the participants to have a sense of trust and safety in the group.

Most meetings have some kind of operating rules. Some groups use a more formal procedure, while others have rules they've adopted over time. If you want participation to flow naturally, and people to feel invested in following the rules, the best way to go is to have the group develop them as one of the first steps in the process. This builds a sense of power among the participants, and the rules tend to be respected. Common ground rules include the following:

- One person speaks at a time;
- Listen to what other people are saying;
- Respect other people's ideas;
- Have a system to keep track of speakers - to make sure everyone is heard, and that no one dominates to the exclusion of others.

Now that you know the basics on developing facilitation skills, you can put them into practice at your next meeting!

This section provided only a very brief summary of facilitation skills, drawn from information found in the Community Tool Box, Chapter 10a, Section 3: Developing Facilitation Skills http://ctb.ukans.edu/ctblc10as3.html. You will also find a number of other resources on facilitation in the annotated resource list at the end of this chapter.

3. Introduction to Defining the Issue and Developing A Solution

People in communities often come together to identify issues that matter to them, and take action to bring about positive change.

The starting point in any attempt to taking action to promote mental health is understanding the community context. The context is influenced by many things:

- people's hopes and expectations - for example, the belief that things can change;
- job and family demands;
- issues of identity - cultural, gender, linguistic, sexual, etc.;
- problems, especially poverty and inequity;
- the broader social and political context.

Within this context, people may come together to identify issues that matter to them, and take action to bring about positive change in the community.

In this section we take a brief look at a process to help you define and analyze a community mental health issue, and then we lead you through some steps to generate and choose solutions to take action on that issue.

What Are The Steps In Defining An Issue?

If you've decided to take action to bring about change in your community, then you already understand that something isn't quite right. You may have noticed that people in the community who have lost their jobs are experiencing a great deal of distress, and are not getting the support they need, or that children in the community are being neglected, and have a sense of hopelessness about their future.

Although these problems may seem insurmountable at first the process you can use to begin to solve these problems is not. It consists of four basic steps, which we explain in the following pages: looking at what you know, finding out more information on the problem, defining the problem, and generating and choosing solutions. The first step in solving any problem is to:

1. Start with what you know

You will never know everything about the issue you have decided to focus on, but you and the people in your group will probably already know more than you realize.

There are a lot of different ways to gather information about how people perceive the situation. They can be asked in advance to write down what they know about the problem. Or the facilitator can lead a brainstorming session to try to draw out the greatest number of ideas. Remember that a good facilitator will draw out everyone's opinions, not only those of the most vocal participants.

The following are some helpful hints to keep in mind while brainstorming:

- **Watch out for assumptions.** Be aware that people may have the diversity in your group and your community.

- **Be creative.** Even just telling people that they should think as creatively as possible will probably help your group come up with more numerous and interesting suggestions.

- **Don't censor ideas.** Brainstorming sessions are intended to produce as many ideas as possible. Discussion, analysis and idea selection come later.

- **Write everything down.** An idea which seems outlandish on first hearing might turn out to be possible, or might yield another idea which end up being the perfect solution to the different cultural interpretations of information and ideas. Respect could problem.

- **Keep energy level high.** The facilitator can set the pace and keep things going by soliciting more and different ideas from the group.

- **Stay on track.** It's easy for the group to go off on a tangent during brainstorming. The facilitator or recorder can gently remind people of where they are going.

- **Encourage synergy of ideas.** Ideas can be piggybacked or combined as people see connections during : the process.

2. Decide what information is missing, and gather what you need

Information is key to effective decision making. You need to gather as much information about the problem as possible, in order to generate effective solutions. You might collect any of several types of information available. Usually, what you hear or read will fall into one of the following categories.

- **Fact:** People in the community who have experienced serious mental illness often find that they are excluded from many aspects of community life.

- **Inference:** People with mental illness in the community probably aren't made to feel welcome in non-mental health related settings, such as local recreation and community centres.

- **Speculation:** If people with mental illness don't feel comfortable taking part in the regular life of the community, like going to the community centre, it's probably pretty hard for them to get back on their feet.

- **Opinion:** Places like recreation and community centres aren't properly set up to deal with the needs of people with mental illness.

When you are gathering information, you will probably hear all four types of information, and all can be important. Speculation and opinion can be especially important in gauging public opinion. If public opinion on your issue is based on faulty assumptions, as in the case of the opinion expressed in the example used above, then part of your solution strategy will probably include some sort of informational or educational component.

Where and how do you find this information? It depends on what you want to know. A few of the possibilities include:

- the library;
- the internet;
- questionnaires;
- interviews.

3. Define the Problem

With all the information in front of you, you're ready to create a "problem statement" a comprehensive definition of the problem. Before you do, remember two general principles.

- **Define the problem in terms of what you wont to see change, rather than solutions to problems.** If you define the problem in terms of a particular solution, you're closing the door to other, possibly more effective solutions. "People with mental illness in our community don't feel welcome taking part in community activities" offers more space for possible solutions than, "We need to create more activities and settings where people with mental illness will feel comfortable."

- **Define the problem as one everyone shares; avoid assigning blame for the problem.** This is important to ensure that the problem is not represented as the concern of only a few people, but is one that is important to the community as a whole.

Now, you're ready to define the problem. Often the best way to do this is to have the facilitator write the problem statement on a flip chart, so that everyone can give feedback on it until the statement has developed into one that everyone is pleased with.

When you're defining the problem, ask if everyone understands the terminology being used. Define the key terms of your problem statement, even if you think everyone understands them. People may understand the terms you're using to have different meanings, and it's helpful to come to a common understanding.

After you have developed a problem statement that everyone agrees with, you should make sure that there is agreement as to why the problem exists in the first place. Write down the problem statement, and ask participants "Why does this problem exist?" Write down the answer given and ask "But why does (the answer) exist?"

(in a table in the book)
e.g. "People with mental illness are often excluded from community life"

But why?

"Because they don't feel welcome taking part in many community activities"
But why?

"Because of persistent stigma surrounding mental illness"
But why?

and so on....

Continue on down the line until participants feel comfortable about the root of the problem. Agreement is essential here. If people don't agree about the source of the problem, an effective solution may still be out of reach.

4. Generate and choose solutions

Generating and choosing solutions will be a much easier task for your group if you have already been through the process of defining and analyzing the problem together. Group members will have already reached a certain level of comfort with each other.

Generating solutions

Now you're ready to think up some possible solutions. Besides brainstorming, there are many other ways to gather the kind of ideas you'll need to develop your solution. The following are a few suggestions of some different techniques for generating ideas:

- Send several pieces of paper around the room. People can write down their ideas, which can later be discussed without anyone knowing who suggested which idea.

- If your group is large, divide it into smaller groups of 4-6 people. Each person writes a possible solution to the problem on his/her own pad of paper. Then each person puts their pad of paper on the table in the middle of the group. Next, everyone takes someone else's pad and comments on the idea. People in the group keep doing this until everyone in the group has commented on everyone else's idea. During or after the meeting, all the ideas are discussed or summarized in a report.

Evaluating solutions

Hopefully your work up to this point has produced many potential solutions. Now it's time to which idea is best suited for your group. Answering the following questions for each idea should help you get closer to making a decision:

- What do you like about the idea?
- What don't you like about the idea?
- What might the side effects be?
- Is it practical?
- Is it effective?
- Is it cost effective?
- Will be easy to put into practice?
- Can group members do it, or will you need outside help?
- How much time will it take?
- Will it be accepted by everyone involved (i.e. group members, community as a whole)?

Making a final decision

If a thorough discussion doesn't result in a decision that everyone agrees with, there are several techniques you might find helpful:

Dotmocracy:

Write the potential solutions on flip chart paper and post them where everyone can see. Give each member of the group the same number of sticky dots at least as many as the number of solutions posted) or you can use magic markers to draw dots.

Next, get group members to "vote" on the solutions by placing the dots next to the solution(s) that they think would be most effective. People can distribute their dots between solutions, or they can place them all next to a single solution, according to their preference.

This exercise is particularly effective because it gets people moving, and represents the decision-making process graphically.

Sleep on it
In some cases, you may choose not to decide immediately, or to defer the decision until the next meeting. Some ideas and opinions may change if people are given a little time to mull them over.

Whatever the group decides to do, the facilitator should ask for feedback after the decision has been made. The facilitator can ask if anyone has any suggestions that might make the solution better, and if everyone is completely satisfied with the decision reached.

Defining and analyzing the problem, and generating and choosing solutions are some of the most difficult tasks you will face in your project. Once you've made it this far, remember to celebrate what you've already accomplished!

This section on defining the issue and developing a solution was based on information contained in the Community Tool Box, Chapter 2, Section 3: Analyzing Community Problems, Berkowitz, B. Chapter 10a, Section 5: Defining and analyzing the problem. Nagy, J. Chapter 10a, Section 6: Generating & choosing solutions. Nagy, J. and Axner, M.

Annotated Resource List

A British Columbian legacy. McKnight, J.L. Evanston, III: Centre for Urban Affairs and Policy Research. Northwestern University, 1990.

> This paper describes the work of a citizen initiative in British Columbia designed to make communities more welcoming to people with developmental disabilities. It is a personalized account of the author's participation in guiding the enterprise through its first two years. The paper provides insights into the principles and guidelines that are fundamental to successful citizen efforts to make communities more inclusive and welcoming for all people.

Capacity Building. Wilder Foundation. Website: http://www.wilder.org/suc/capbuild.html

> This website contains a wealth of information and resources on community development and capacity building approaches to community work. Also contains a number of links to other helpful websites.

Collaboration Handbook: Creating, sustaining and enjoying the journey. Winer, M. and Ray, K. Minnesota:Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, Wilder Foundation Publications. 1996. http://www.wilder.org/pubs/commb/commbwbk.html

> Conceived to help diverse groups work together to accomplish more than they could by working alone, this workbook describes what collaboration is, when it is the best strategy for accomplishing goals, and how to collaborate successfully. The book provides instruction, case studies and worksheets to guide users through each stage of the process of developing and sustaining collaborative partnerships.

Collaborative Leadership: How citizens and civic leaders can make a difference. Chrislip, D., and Larson, C.Toronto: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

> This book offers new perspectives that address key challenges facing communities: how to deal with complex issues, engage citizens, and generate civic will to break legislative and bureaucratic deadlock. The book is written to help leaders bring together diverse community members in efforts that lead to real, measurable change. It provides advice, guidance and insight, examines the conditions that make leadership difficult and provides a framework for initiating, designing and implementing collaborative efforts.

Community Building: What makes it work? Mattessich, P and Monsey, B. Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. Wilder Foundation Publications, 1995. http://www.wilder.org/pubs/commb/commbwbk.html

> This book provides a review of the factors influencing the success of community building initiatives. It synthesizes the findings of community building studies into an easy-to-use reference. The book also contains a glossary of community building terms, a list of resources, technical support for community builders and an extensive bibliography.

Community Development: Creating community alternatives -Vision, analysis and practice.
Ife, J. Melbourne: Longman, 1995.

> This book provides a theoretical examination of how community development can be
> achieved in social, economic, political, cultural, environmental and personal/spiritual
> terms. It also demonstrates how these principles can be practically and sensitively
> applied by those interested in improving their communities.

Community Tool Box. Chapter I, Section 2. Building Capacity for Community Change. Nagy, J
and
Fawcett, S. http://www.ctb.ukans.edu/ctblcIs2.html

> This chapter provides a good introduction to the concepts of capacity building and
> collaborative partnerships. It presents a model of the community change process that is
> referred to throughout the Community Tool Box.

Community Tool Box. Chapter 18, Section II. Developing Multisector Collaboration Axner, M
and Berkowitz, B. http://www,ctb.ukans.edu/ctb/c18sII.html

> This chapter provides an overview of different factors involved in bringing a diverse group
> of people, organizations and institutions together to take action on a community issue.

Cultural influences in community participation in health. L. Stone. Social Science &
Medicine; 35(4): 409- 17, 1992.

> This paper traces changes in the way that the role of culture has been analyzed in
> relation to community health issues and in particular with respect to 'community
> participation'.

Health promotion at the community level. Bracht, N. (ed.) Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990.

> This book guides professionals and citizens to mobilize communities to improve their
> health. It brings together principles and practice of community organization and change.
> Topics include community change theory and practice; community analysis and
> activation; intervention strategies; program evaluation, maintenance and diffusion;
> specific applications to a minority community, smoking and the elderly.

People-centred health promotion. Raeburn, J. and Rootman, I. London: Wiley, 1997.

> This book presents an approach to health promotion which is first and foremost people-
> oriented. It discusses the basic elements of a people-centred approach which includes
> empowerment, organizational and community development, participation, life quality and
> evaluation, and presents the application of such an approach in practice as illustrated by
> a series of real-life projects. It concludes with a vision of a society based on people-
> centred health promotion principles.

Promoting health, a practical guide. 3rd edition. Ewles, L. and Simnett, I. London:
Scutari Press, 1995.

> Intended for health promoters, this book is a self-teaching guide and a source of ideas for
> group
> teaching. It has been updated to reflect recent changes in health care research and
> policies, and has sections that cover basic ideas and issues of health promotion; moving
> from theory to practice; and developing competence in health promotion.

Stop, Look and Listen: An interactive guide to working with communities. Valaitis, R., et al.

McMaster University/Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Public Health Dept.
http://www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/nursing/stoplook/

>Stop, Look and Listen is a self-directed, interactive program in CD-ROM format which can assist community workers to better understand participatory community assessment, planning and development. It takes the user on a journey, using childhood pedestrian injury as an example, to facilitate community action. Community assessment includes identifying the community's capacities and issues, reviewing community decision-making, planning, intervention and evaluation.

Chapter Two: Planning Your Project

Introduction

Steps In The Planning Process

Step 1. Identify Issues and Priorities

Step 2. Set Goals and Objectives
- Vision, Mission & Goals
- Objectives
- WHAT are objectives?
- WHY create objectives?
- HOW do you create objectives?

Step 3. Select A Strategy To Achieve Your Goals
- WHAT should your strategy do for your initiative?
- WHY develop strategies?
- HOW do you develop strategies?

Step 4. Identify Resources - Assets And Needs
- WHAT kind of resources will you need?
- HOW can you identify and secure resources?

Step 5. Create A Plan For Evaluation
- WHY develop an evaluation plan?
- WHEN should you develop an evaluation plan?
- WHERE do you begin?
- WHO are your stakeholders and what do they want to see in an evaluation?

Step 6. Identify An Action Plan
- WHAT is an action plan?
- WHY develop an action plan?
- HOW do you develop an action plan?
- WHEN should you develop an action plan?

Step 7. Implement Your Plan

Summary

Tips For Successful Planning

Checklist

Annotated Resource List

Introduction

Now that you've got a sense of some of the necessary steps in engaging your community and identifying the mental health issue that you want to focus on, you have to move on to the specifics. How do you go from identifying the issue to taking action on that issue? How are

you going to make the desired changes happen?

The answer lies in careful planning -- the essential step of figuring out how to get from 'here' (where we are now) to 'there' (where we'd like to be). In this section we'll look at some of the key points you need to cover in order to plan a successful mental health promotion initiative in your community.

> Planning is a way to organize actions that will lead to the fulfillment of a goal.
> Community Tool Box, Chapter 6, Section 4

Developing a plan should help you to answer the following three questions:

- What am I trying to achieve?
- What am I going to do?
- How will I know whether I've been successful?

Once begun, it is best if the planning process continues through the life of your initiative. It might be helpful to envision the planning process as cyclical, much like the model we presented in the introduction to describe the whole process of promoting mental health in your community. The following planning model (figure 2) can serve as a framework to guide your planning process.

This model, which describes the stages in the planning process, is an elaboration of the planning step of the larger mental health promotion model we presented earlier.

Figure 2:
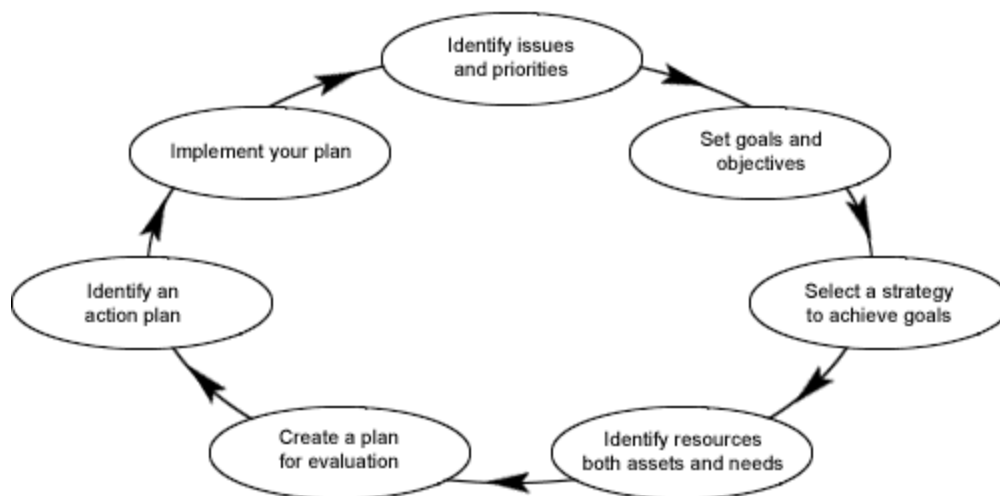
There are a few key points to note when using the model to help you plan your mental health promotion initiative.

The first point is that the arrows lead you around in a circle. This is because, as you carry out your plan and evaluation, you will probably find things that make you rethink and change your original ideas. For example, once your plan is underway, you may find your objectives are too ambitious and need to be scaled down.

The second point to keep in mind is that this model provides direction and a frame on which to build, but need not be followed exactly. Planning is often not a tidy process. You will be continually reviewing and modifying your plan, and the planning model will simply help to keep you on course.

Steps In The Planning Process

You may choose to form a planning group, or you may continue to work with the original group that came together to form the initiative. Once you've convened that group, you should start to think about the steps you must take to take action on the analysis of community resources and needs. Your plan should start with the information and ideas you have already gathered, and accommodate the new information that the group will develop while brainstorming about your initiative's objectives and strategies.

Step 1: Identify Issues And Priorities

Before you can begin to promote the mental health of people in your community, you have to have a clear idea of the specific issue to focus on. A clear, compelling issue is necessary to ignite interest and provide a focus.

The issue unifies the energy and identity of the group -- it defines the situation in a way that suggests clarity of purpose and of action. It helps participants stay on track. Without a specific issue for people to rally around, a mental health promotion project can easily lose a sense of direction.

There may be a long list of community mental health needs that you would like to respond to, but you can't do it all with one project. You have to have a clear view of what specific needs you're responding to, and what your priorities are. Determining your priorities can be a difficult process because there are a multitude of mental health issues you could potentially focus on and many of them are interconnected.

The tools included at the end of Chapter 1 can help you tease the issues apart and determine which one should be the focus of your mental health promotion project.

Step 2: Set Goals And Objectives

There are various words that people use to describe what they want to achieve -- aims, objectives, targets, goals, mission, purpose, vision, achievement, results, product, outcomes.. . Although each term might mean something slightly different to different people, most would agree that these words all describe various ways of defining what it is you are trying to do, and how you will know if you've been successful.

It helps to put these terms into different groupings, from the general to the specific, from the lofty to the concrete:

VISION
MISSION
GOALS
OBJECTIVES
INDICATORS

Vision, Mission & Goals

The process of developing your vision, mission and goals is an extremely important part of planning your initiative. It helps to define the issue, solidify the commitment and leadership of the planning group, and legitimizes to your group's efforts.

It's important that the whole group decides on your vision, mission and goals, not just one or two members. Since they will be involved early in the process, members of your planning group will develop a true sense of ownership and loyalty to the initiative. They will have a personal investment in the success of the project.

Vision

Your vision describes your dream, the way things ought to be. Developing a vision will help you to engage partners, obtain resources, and encourage community participation. It will also help to keep you on track during the planning process.

The vision of the Helping Skills Project included statements like "People in communities have the interest and aptitude to help each other". " Enhancing peoples' natural helping abilities builds community capacity to address mental health needs".

Mission

Your mission describes your statement of purpose: what you are going to do, and why. The mission describes your special task, and states what the specific motivation which brings together all those people to accomplish the task.

Together, the vision and mission define your group's common purpose. They inspire you to turn your dreams into reality.

The mission of the Helping Skills project was to build the capacity of communities to respond to the distress caused by the cod moratorium and other social changes by strengthening people's natural abilities to support and help each other.

Developing a vision and mission with your group is the first step in planning your project. The best way to begin is by holding a brainstorming session to get as many ideas and opinions on the table as possible. You will want to start with a broad base of information, and zero in on the issue as you move through the planning process together.

Goals

Although the terms "goals" and "objectives" are often used interchangeably, they are not the same; there are important differences between them. A goal describes the eventual destination you hope to reach, and objectives refer to what kind of steps you will take to get there. You want to be sure that your goals reflect your dreams, as well as the context and reality of the community.

Your goal describes what you are trying to do in general terms. Goals are:

- global in nature: they encompass all aspects of the project and provide general direction;
- generally not measurable;
- long-term.

The goal for the Helping Skills project was to create a new helping resource - a network of volunteers trained in the essential skills of helping who could provide understanding, support, and a confidential listening ear to people who turn to them for help or are referred to them by professionals.

Objectives

Your objectives are much more specific than goals. Objectives describe what you're aiming at, and provide particular information about how much change is sought, of what kind, and by when.

What Are Objectives?

Objectives represent smaller steps than project goals -- steps that, if completed, will lead to reaching your goals. Your objectives can serve as intermediate markers of your progress, and are closely linked with developing your evaluation, which we'll talk about later.

Your objectives should be:

Specific -They should indicate several things: What is to be achieved? By how much? By when?

Challenging -They should stretch you to set your aims on efforts that are important importance to the community.

Attainable - On the other hand, objectives should be both realistic and achievable within the to the community.

Measurable -They should be identified in terms that are as measurable as possible, including specific targets? (e.g. # of people reached, jobs created, etc.).

Relevant -They should be consistent with your vision, mission and goals.

Timed -Your objectives should contain a timeline by which they will be achieved.

Why Create Objectives?

Although it may seem like a lot of work, there are several good reasons to set objectives.

- Objectives can serve as a marker to show you (and your community, funders, and others) what your mental health promotion initiative has accomplished.

- Objectives can help you prioritize your goals as you begin your work.

- Objectives serve to re-emphasize your mission through the process of change that your initiative brings about. This helps you and those who you are collaborating with to work together effectively towards the same goals.

It's a good idea to create objectives when you are trying to tackle an issue or problem that is multifaceted, such as improving the mental health of people in your community.

Setting objectives can help you and your group to tease out the various strands of your specific mental health issue, making it more manageable. Your objectives can become useful motivators and effective tools to bring a complex community mental health issue within your grasp.

How Do You Create Objectives?

The process of creating objectives is fairly straightforward, and involves four basic steps.

Look at the "big picture"

It begins by revisiting your original vision, mission and goals, so that you see the "big picture" that your objectives will fit into.

> The Helping Skills project sought to strengthen the capacity of community members to respond to distress by enhancing their natural helping abilities.

Identify changes

The second step in creating realistic objectives involves determining the changes that need to be made. You can figure these out by:

- returning to your vision, mission and goals to see what you want to change;

- brainstorming with other members of your group to see what changes need to be made in order to reach your goals, both short and long-term;

- identifying the people who need to become involved, both those in a position to contribute to a solution and those who experience the problem or issue on a day-to-day basis;

- identifying which sectors or groups within your community can help you fulfill your goals.

> Having defined what they wanted to accomplish, (mission and goal) CMHA sought guidance from knowledgeable resource people about how this could be carried out. They decided on a train-the-trainer process, and identified the would need in order to connect with communities and potential trainers. Community Health Board members and employees had strong networks in their local communities and were well positioned to assess problems and appropriate solutions, as well as to promote the project and Community Health Boards as the partners they recruit volunteers.

Collect data
The third step in creating your objectives consists of collecting baseline data on the mental health issue that you are addressing. Baseline data reflects the current situation in the community with respect to the mental health issue you have decided to focus on. It helps you measure the boundaries of the issue.

> CMHA's previous project, A Needs Assessment for Self-Help, provided the base-
> line data for the Helping Skills project. While it can be difficult to get precise data on community mental health issues, the need for helping skills had been widely identified both by health

professionals and by communities themselves. For example, in one community more then 200 km. from the nearest mental health counsellor, 78% of people who completed a questionnaire said that they, or someone they knew would benefit from counselling.

Baseline data provide the starting points against which you can measure how much progress you have made. Later in the life of your mental health promotion initiative, when you are asked, "What have you accomplished?" you will be able to provide a clear and specific response.

There are several ways to collect baseline data. You can collect your own baseline data for the information related to the specific mental health issue you want to address in your initiative. You can gather this information using surveys, questionnaires and personal interviews. We'll talk more about baseline data in Chapter 5: Evaluating your project.

You can also use information that has already been collected. Public libraries, local government, social service agencies, local schools or health departments may already have the information you want. especially if similar work has been done previously in your community.

Set the objectives

The fourth step is to set the objectives for your initiative. Once you have collected some baseline data, you can decide on what short-term goals and objectives are realistic and feasible for you to achieve. Remember, objectives refer to specific measurable results. They should help you to track
how and how much change has occurred.

The objectives of the Helping Skills project were built on its goal, but provided a concrete indication of how that goal would be reached:

- to develop and pilot a "train the trainers" program for service providers which will enable them to facilitate the learning of effective helping skills by community volunteers;

- over an 18 month period, to establish a corps of trainers and volunteer helpers with the skills to appropriately refer or otherwise assist people with emotional or social needs;

- to use and teach others how to use a mentoring model to teach skills in areas such as active listening, empathy and setting boundaries, focusing on learning from personal experience through small group discussion, role play and debriefing.

Indicators

For each of your objectives, you need to identify criteria, or indicators, which will provide reliable and valid measures to show you if you're making progress toward your objectives. By gathering "before" and "after" statistics on your chosen indicators with baseline data, you can use them to help you determine whether your initiative made a positive difference in your community.

The indicators for the Helping Skills project included:

- number of people who had completed the training program;
- number of referrals to the volunteer helpers;
- number of volunteer helpers who used their training to assist others.

Step 3: Select A Strategy To Achieve Your Goals

A strategy describes how you are going to get things done. It is less specific than an action plan (which tells the who, what and when); instead, it tries broadly to answer the question, "How do we want to get there from here?"

A good strategy will take into account existing barriers and resources (people, finances, time, and materials). It will also be in keeping with the overall mission, goals and objectives of the initiative. Often, a mental health promotion initiative will use many different strategies - enhancing support, removing barriers, providing resources, etc. - to achieve its goals.

Objectives outline the aims of your initiative - what success would look like in achieving your mission. In contrast, strategies suggest paths to take (and how to move along) on the road to success. That is, strategies help you to determine how you will realize your mission and objectives through the nitty-gritty world of action.

What Should Your Strategy Do For Your Initiative?

Strategies for your mental health promotion initiative should meet several criteria. Strategies should:

Give overall direction

A strategy, such as increasing opportunities and resources or enhancing coping skills, should point out the overall path without dictating a specific narrow approach.

Fit resources and opportunities

A good strategy takes advantage of current resources and assets, such as people's willingness to act, or a tradition of self-help and community pride. It also embraces new opportunities such as emerging public concern for specific mental health issues.

Minimize resistance and barriers

New initiatives that propose to change attitudes and circumstances often meet with some degree of resistance from the community. This can be especially true of initiatives which focus on mental health. The lingering stigma that surrounds many mental health and illness-related issues may make mental health promotion initiatives particularly prone to opposition. Creative strategies can help to attract allies and deter opponents.

Reach those affected
To address the issue or problem, strategies must connect the initiative with those it's designed to benefit.

Advance the mission

Taken together, are the strategies likely to make a difference in terms of reaching your goals and objectives? Are you casting your net wide enough by including several different strategies?

Why Develop Strategies?

Developing strategies is a way to focus your efforts and figure out how to get things done. By doing so, you will be able to:

- take advantage of resources and emerging opportunities;
- respond effectively to resistance and barriers;
- use your time, energy and resources more efficiently.

Developing strategies is the essential step between figuring out your objectives and making the changes you'll need to reach them.

How Do You Develop Strategies?

Similar to the process that you followed in setting your mission, goals and objectives, developing your strategy involves brainstorming and talking to community members. You might want to organize a brain-storming meeting with members of your group and members of the community.

Some of the questions you will want to keep in mind during your brainstorming process are:

- What resources and assets can be used to help achieve the mission, goals and objectives?

- What obstacles or resistance exist that may make it difficult to achieve your goals? How can you minimize or get around them?

- How can you involve as many different sectors of the community as possible?

- What are community members going to contribute to reaching the goals of the initiative?

- What kind of strategies have other communities developed to take action on similar issues?

In the case of Helping Skills, the strategies chosen reflected the goals and objectives of the project. The major strategy of the project was to draw out and build on the innate knowledge and skills of participants. To do this, it was necessary to:

- Connect with people with the interest and motivation to help others, who wanted to be able to help more effectively;

- Use experiential, not academic, approaches to learning;

- Find partners and facilitators who were strategically positioned to connect with and bring others on board;

- Address any concerns about using volunteers as community helper's

- Emphasize how closely the project fitted with new health policy directions of partnerships with communities and strengthening community capacity.

Step 4: Identify Your Resources - Both Assets And Needs

Accumulating resources is an essential part of expanding your options for action and increasing your ability to move effectively into taking action. There are a wide variety of resources that may be helpful to you in planning your mental health promotion initiative. They include people, facilities, services, material resources and policies.

What Kinds of Resources Will You Need?

What resources are you going to use for your mental health promotion project? Because your mental health promotion initiative can benefit from all of the potential resources that are available, it's a good idea to be as thorough as possible in making the "wish list" for your project.

Some resources may be readily available in your community (more than you might think), and some you will need to acquire.

The Needs Assessment for Community Self-Help had identified community capacity to provide support (family members supporting each other, a strong volunteer and community service tradition) as well as people in need of support.

To tap into the community support base, facilitators were needed as catalysts. Community-based service providers were well-placed to play this role -- to connect with community networks and to promote the new initiative among their colleagues.

To make the project happen, it was essential to secure the support of the new Community Health Boards who employed the potential facilitators. The fact that community development was part of the boards' mandate was strongly in the project's favour. From the outset, it was hoped that the boards would see the Helping Skills networks as a valuable community resource which they would want to sustain over the long term.

How Do You Identify And Secure Resources?

In the previous chapter, we discussed several ways of assessing the resources that are already present in your community. In the next chapter we will take a closer look at how to go about acquiring the resources you will need to support your project.

Step 5: Create A Plan For Evaluation

At the beginning of this chapter we posed three questions that are central to the process of planning your mental health promotion initiative:

- What am I trying to achieve?

- What am I going to do?

- How will I know whether I've been successful?

The third question means that you will need to include plans for evaluation in your overall plan for your project. Evaluation is an integral part of your overall plan, and shouldn't be added as an afterthought If you plan a project, carry it out, and then think about evaluating it, it's often too late to capture the information you need to do so.

Why Develop An Evaluation Plan?

If you spend some time planning the evaluation before the project actually gets under way, you will be sure to produce an evaluation that tells you what you really want to know about your project.

It's worthwhile to develop an evaluation plan because it:

- guides you through each step of the process of evaluation;

- helps you decide what kind of information you and your stakeholders really need;

- keeps you from wasting time gathering information that isn't needed;

- helps you identify the best possible methods and strategies for getting the information
- you need;

- helps you come up with a reasonable and realistic timeline for evaluation;

- is required by most funders;

- will help you improve your mental health promotion initiative!

When Should You Develop An Evaluation Plan?

It's best to develop an evaluation plan before your begin to implement your initiative. The earlier you develop and begin to implement it, the better off your initiative will be, and the more positive the outcomes will be at the end. As you are developing and writing your goals and objectives, you should be anticipating the end of the project, especially since you will be relying heavily on your goals and objectives to carry out the evaluation.

Where Do You Begin?

Evaluation is a huge topic, and it can be pretty intimidating, especially to those of us who don't have an extensive background in research. It needn't be intimidating, however, because the basic techniques that you will need to conduct an effective evaluation of your initiative are really very straightforward.

Your evaluation should address the simple questions that are important to your community, your partners, and your funders. The following five key evaluation questions can be applied to a variety of different project activities. Seeking answers to these five key evaluation questions [1] will help guide the evaluation process throughout your project

1. What?
Did we do what we said we would do?

2. Why?
What did we learn about what worked and what didn't work?

3. So what?
What difference did it make that we did this work?

4. Now what?
What could we do differently?

---

[1] Adapted from The Program Evaluation Tool Kit: A Blueprint for Public Health. Ottawa: Ministry of Health 1996

5. Then what?
How do we plan to use evaluation findings for continuous /earning?
We will return to these questions in Chapter 5, where we will look more closely at developing the specific questions that will guide your evaluation.

Who Are Your Stakeholders, And What Do They Want To See In An Evaluation?

For your evaluation to be effective and helpful in terms of finding out the kind of information that you want to know, it should be designed specifically to fit the needs of your stakeholders, and the realities of your project.

Each type of stakeholder will have a different perspective on your project, and will want to know different things in the evaluation. It would be helpful to take some time to brainstorm about who your stakeholders are, and what they might want to know about the evaluation, before you begin making your evaluation plan.

- **Community stakeholders** are people like you, volunteers and staff of community agencies who are involved in your initiative. They are all those people in your community who could benefit from or contribute to your project Most often, community stakeholders will want to use the results of the evaluation to guide them in making decisions about the project, and where they are putting their efforts.

- **Funders** are those people or organizations that donate financial and in-kind resources to your project. Most funders want to know how their money is being spent, so you'll find that they often have specific evaluation requirement [2]. Generally speaking, though, most funders are interested in knowing how many people were reached and served by the initiative, as well as whether the initiative had the community-level impact it intended to have.

- You may have decided to work with **University or College-based researchers** on your mental health promotion project Not all groups will have access to, or desire to collaborate with outside researchers [3] and evaluators. Those who do choose to work with research teams will have an additional stakeholder, with their own concerns, ideas and questions for the evaluation. Researchers may be interested in finding out whether any improvements in community mental health were a result of your initiative. They might also want to study the overall structure of your initiative to identify the conditions under which these improvements were achieved.

You and your stakeholders will probably be making decisions that affect your initiative based on the results of your evaluation. Your evaluation should therefore yield honest and accurate information - it should be structured in such a way that it captures both the successes and limitations of your initiative. Planning well in advance is one way to ensure that your evaluation meets everyone's expectations.

---

[2] Each funding agency has a unique approach and demands, so you'll have to check those out specifically. We'll talk more about funders' requirements in Chapter 3: Securing Resources.

[3] Contact departments of social services and social work, and community health at local colleges and universities to find out about research and evaluation teams that may be interested in collaborating with your project.

Step 6: Identify An Action Plan

What is An Action Plan?

Developing an action plan is the next step in the process of turning your ideas about promoting mental health in your community into reality. An action plan describes the ways that you will use your strategies to meet your objectives. An action plan consists of a number of action steps or changes to be brought about in your community.

Why Develop An Action Plan?

Developing an action plan is a crucial stage in the overall planning of your mental health promotion initiative. There are many good reasons to work through the details by creating an action plan before you actually take action.

Builds credibility

Having an action plan lends credibility to your initiative; it shows members of the community (including funders) that you are well organized and dedicated to getting things done.

Keeps you grounded

Going through the process of developing your action plan helps to ensure that you have a realistic understanding of what is and isn't possible for your project to accomplish, and also that you don't overlook any important details.

Saves time, energy and resources

Although developing an action plan takes some time, in the long run it will save you time, energy and resources.

Ensures greater accountability

Having a detailed list of action steps that provides explicit information about the who, what, when and how, will ensure greater accountability in your project. It will increase the chances that people will do what needs to be done.

How Do You Develop An Action Plan?

Your action plan will be an invaluable tool if it provides a complete list of the steps that need to take place, is written in a clear and straightforward manner, and reflects the larger context in which you are operating (e.g. emerging opportunities and barriers).

Much like creating your mission, goals and objectives, developing your action plan is an activity best done with the group of people who will steer your initiative. This may be a fairly small group at first, but will grow as you move from defining and analyzing the issue to taking action on that issue.

With your planning group, think about the steps you need to take to carry out your objectives:

- What actions or changes will occur?

- Who will carry out these changes?

- By when will they take place, and for how long?

- What resources are needed to carry out these changes (funding, time, etc.)?

- Who should know about these changes?

Your initial discussions will probably be about the issue and the contemplation of action then they are about any particular action. It can be difficult to move from analysis and information gathering and into action for several reasons -- the potential risk of failure, and the fear of tacking a complex mental health issue before you have much experience working as a group.

There is a delicate balance between taking immediate action and acting without a clear sense of the overall direction of the effort when your group is thinking about what kind of action to take, it's a good idea to consider the following questions:

- What is likely to happen if we take this particular action?

- Whom might we unintentionally harm?

- Whom might we unintentionally provoke?

By thinking through these questions with your group and developing a clear action plan, you may head off some of the unintended, perhaps unpleasant consequences of acting without a careful plan.

When Should You Develop An Action Plan?

Ideally, you should develop your action plan near the beginning of the life of your project, after you have determined the mission, goals, objectives and strategies of your group. This way, it will provide you with a blueprint for running your project.

Once you've developed your action plan, don't shelve it. Display it prominently so that you can refer to it often, and update and revise it to fit the changing needs of your project and community.

Step 7: Implement Your Plan

Your action plan clearly sets out the tasks that need to be done and who has been assigned to carry them out. You want to make sure that the action plan you've worked so hard on is going to be followed, but you are also aware that many of the people who are involved in your initiative are volunteering their time and energy How can you make it easier for members of your group to get things done? Here are some helpful hints:

Circulate the plan

Give written copies of the action plan to all members of your group, with clear timelines attached. This way they will be able to refer to it when they need to, and they'll also be able to provide you with feedback on the plan.

Keep in touch

Call them regularly to ask how they're doing with their tasks. The call will be much more effective if it's supportive, rather than demanding, in tone. The person calling can offer some emotional support as well as see if the group member needs any other assistance. This type of friendly call can be helpful in several ways: it can give the member the sense that he or she is an important part of the group, and it can serve to gently remind that person to do what they agreed to do.

Report regularly

Ask members to report on accomplishing the tasks that they have set out to do. This could become a regular, and valuable, part of your group meetings. Together the group can brainstorm ideas about how to overcome the barriers that certain members are encountering in trying to accomplish their tasks.

Celebrate!

Make sure to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of your group. Keep track of what (and how well) you've done.

This chapter summarizes information found in the Community Tool Box, Chapter 6. Section I through 5, which address the planning process in more detail. You can find these resources on-line at http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c6

Summary

- There are many good reasons to take the time to think through your vision, mission, goals and objectives -- it helps to give direction to your project, helps to build ownership among group members, and provides the groundwork for eventual program evaluation.

- Developing a plan should help you to be clear about what you are trying to achieve, how you are going to achieve it, and how you will know if you've been successful.

- Brainstorming with members of your group is an essential part of the planning process.

- Developing a thorough plan before taking action will help your group to determine potential obstacles and strategize about how to get around those obstacles.

- It's important to think about and plan for evaluation right from the beginning of your project

Tips
For Successful Planning

Keep any initial actions taken by your group small scale and concrete. This will help you to make progress by putting ideas into action while drawing supporters to your initiative.

People work best in a relaxed and welcoming environment. You can help achieve this by:

- making meetings a place where people feel like they are being listened to and where their ideas are valued, and where constructive criticism may be openly voiced. To help meet these goals, you might want to make some "ground rules" so people feel free to express themselves (e.g. one person speaks at a time, no interrupting, speaker's list, etc.);

- providing refreshments such as drinks and snacks - a very simple and effective way of making people feel welcome;

- asking members to escort each other home or to the subway or bus, if the meeting runs late;

- wherever possible, covering expenses of attending meetings, transit fare, babysitting, etc.

Checklist

- Your group has defined its vision, mission, goals, objectives, indicators, strategies and action plans.

- Each of your objectives is specific, measurable, ambitious while being realistic, and relates directly to the original project goals.

- Your mental health promotion project mobilizes, enhances and expands these local capacities.

- You have identified the resources you will need to take action.

- You have made plans to evaluate your project.

- You are promoting group ownership and pursuit of goals.

- You are collecting baseline data on the mental health issue that your project will address.

Annotated Resource List

Health promotion planning: an educational and environmental approach. 2nd edition. Green, L.W., and Kreuter, M.W. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, I99 I.

This book provides the foundations of health education and promotion, as well as developments in policy, research and practice. It emphasizes an initial educational approach but expands to include the political, managerial and economic actions needed in health promotion using the PRECEDE-PROCEED model. Topics include quality of life, epidemiological, behavioural and environmental assessments; educational, organizational and policy diagnosis; and applications in community, school and health care settings.

0rganizing: A guide for grassroots leaders. Kahn, S. New York: McGraw Hill, 1981, revised 1991.

The chapters in Kahn's easy-to-read book are broken down into many subsections. Each subsection addresses a particular question such as "What makes a good issue?" and "How to get people to come to a meeting". You don't need to plow through the whole book to find material relevant to your situation.

Planning program development and evaluation: A handbook for health promotion, aging and health services Timmreck TC. Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett, 1995.

A concise, accessible book which provides a thorough orientation to the methods used to plan, implement and evaluate health promotion initiatives. The book is structured around a ten-step planning model, with each chapter corresponding to a particular step. All of the chapters contain a set of learning objectives, key planning questions, and an overview of key concepts and methods to guide the reader through each stage of the program development process.

Program planning for health education and promotion. 2nd edition. Dignan, M.B., Cat-r, PA. Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1992.

This useful book provides a straightforward model for planning, developing, implementing and evaluating programs. Topics include community analysis and definition of target groups.

Roots to power: A manual for grassroots organizing. Staples, L New York Praeger, 1984.

Roots to Power is a good text on nuts-and-bolts organizing. It is especially good on recruiting, strategies and action plans, and dealing with counter-tactics. Top practitioners have contributed special sections on meetings, memberships, coalitions, public relations, negotiating, action ideas, and carrying out action plans.

Mental Health Promotion Tool Kit. Taking action: Working together for positive change in your community. Amen E.Toronto: Self Counsel Press, 1992.

Taking Action is a very useful book on grassroots organizing in a Canadian context. The author, Elizabeth Amen organized the battle to save her Toronto Island neighbourhood from the bulldozer, and went on to become a member of the Toronto City Council Taking Action is easy to read, full of examples and practical tips not found in other books.

The program evaluation tool kit: A blueprint for public health. Ottawa: Ontario Ministry of Health. 1996.

This practical, step-by-step guide to evaluating programs is presented in a series of short modules with simple explanations and specific tools. It includes examples from health promotion programs, and worksheets for each step both in hard copy and on disk. An order form can be obtained from Debora Dover at the Ontario Ministry of Health: doverde@rmoc.on.ca Tel: (6 13) 724-4 I22 x3752 Fax: (6 I 3) 7244 152.

Chapter Three: Securing Resources

Introduction

Introduction

When we think of securing resources to help us promote mental health in the community, we generally think primarily of finding - that is, financial backing from government, social service agencies, business and industry, and public and private foundations. In this chapter we will explore various funding sources and ways of approaching them, but we will also look at alternatives to traditional funding sources and relationships -- new places to look for resources and support in your own community.

3.1 Grants

What Are Grants?

A grant refers to a financial award to your group or organization to carry out the mental health promotion project you have proposed. Grants are sometimes given in resources other then cash (e.g. travel expenses, time off work) and occasionally, especially for research, are made to individuals as well as groups. In this section we'll focus particularly on cash grants to groups, because they are the most relevant to local-level mental health promotion initiatives.

Show me the money

There are many reasons why a grant could be helpful to a mental health promotion initiative -- getting a grant may enable you to do work that might never get done otherwise. Mental health promotion projects take time. Receiving funding may allow you to pay salaries and cover expenses that arise as a result of starting a new community venture. In many situations, grants are desirable; in some, they are essential.

There are cases, however, when securing financial resources is not necessary to build an effective community response to a mental health problem. Many local mental health promotion initiatives can and do operate with little or no funding. When you think about it, there are times when you can do a great deal of work to promote mental health with very little money, or no money at all. Organizing a meeting, holding an event, getting local policies changed -- these and other community actions are either cost-free or come with very modest price tags.

Be careful what you wish for

There are also times when having funding can become an actual drawback. Someone has to figure out how to spend the funds, make the payments, keep the records and be accountable for it. Also, when money becomes a part of the equation, the all-volunteer, let's-everyone-pitch-in spirit of the project can become threatened. Sometimes we are better sticking to the non-cash resources that are available to us. We will talk about the benefits of alternative sources of support later in this chapter.

Before you decide to apply for a grant, you should be clear about your reasons for applying. The following questions might help you to clarify those reasons:

- What are my true long-term program goals?

- Can I do the same work as well, or almost as well, without grant money? What will I actually use the money for?

- Am I planning to apply simply because the grant funds are potentially available?

- Is a grant the only way (or the best way) to do what I want to do?

- Are there other (and perhaps better) ways of getting the money I need?

- Am I clear on my realistic chances of success in being awarded a grant?

- Am I prepared to commit the time and energy to producing a top-quality grant proposal?

You should discuss these questions with the members of your group and come to a decision together. Your group's careful and honest answers to these questions will shape your next steps, which might or might not involve grant writing.

When Could A Grant Be Helpful?

There are a number of scenarios where applying for a grant might be your best course of action:

- when you want to start a new mental health promotion project, or expand an existing project, and financial costs are involved;

- when these costs cannot be covered by accessing existing community resources;

- when you know of a granting agency that makes awards to cover the types of costs you envision;

- when you know you meet the eligibility requirements for such awards;

- when you are able to commit the needed time and energy to the grant-writing process.

After considering the above questions and guidelines, perhaps your thinking about funding will change, or you'll decide to support your work in some other way. There may be a number of options besides grants available to you, such as support from local service associations such as Rotary and Lion's Club. It's worth looking into all of the potential sources of support that are out there.

But perhaps, after assessing your resource needs, you'll decide that you want to write a grant proposal after all.

How Do You Apply For Grants?

Grants can be a wonderful way of supporting community mental health promotion work, but obtaining and administering a grant can be a real challenge.

There are two main steps involved in seeking a grant. The first is the preliminary work - preparing and researching, and the second is writing the proposal itself.

First of all you have to find the right source. There are three main sources of grants:

- the government often federal, sometimes provincial and occasionally local;

- private business and corporations;

- foundations.

Before you begin the process of finding the right funder for your mental health promotion project, it's helpful to think strategically about how you are going to proceed.

There are many thousands of potential granting agencies[1] -- how can you find the ones most suitable for your mental health promotion project? It takes some research, but there are many resources you can use to make your search easier. Some of those resources are located in the Tools section of this chapter, where you will find a section covering guidelines for grantsmanship, and a short list of potential funding contacts and helpful fundraising websites.

After completing the preliminary research, you're ready for the second step - writing the grant proposal. You'll find a number of helpful tips ahead in the section called "Tips for writing a proposal".

When the Funder's Perspective Doesn't Not Quite Fit Yours

We may have come a long way in changing our approach to mental health issues from a deficiency focus to one that builds on individual and community capacity, but many funding programs have not kept pace with that shift Most funders of community activity have traditionally asked that proposals begin with a "needs" or "problem" statement, often reinforced with a "needs survey".

---

[1] For our purposes here, we will refer to all potential funders as "agencies".

A statement of community need is a value-laden statement. On one hand, it acknowledges people's rights and entitlements as citizens, and contains an implicit notion of what constitutes an acceptable minimum standard of personal and community well-being.

On the other hand, using the language of needs has often obscured the political or ideological nature of the issue. Instead of focusing on the particular problem or issue at hand, discussion of need can divert attention to the more technical (and safer) question of providing solutions. It draws us away from questions about why things are the way they are in our communities, and has often led to the development of more services, without first analyzing the root causes of the problem.

This needs or deficiency-based format is at odds with a capacity-focused approach of mental health promotion, which encourages people to maximize the use of their own skills and resources to solve problems. Because the criteria most funders use to assess eligibility continue to reflect a needs-oriented approach, sometimes we have to "play the game" and frame our mental health promotion initiative in the terms that they set out.

The original funding proposal for the Seniors' Medicine Wheel project differed quite substantially from the eventual project. The funder required that the issue be framed in terms of needs/services, but the staff at the Friendship Centre knew that the issue they were confronting was not one of a shortage of services. The project thus proposed the need to link the Elders to the available but underused community services, rather than creating new services.

Once the funding was received, the project was carried out according to the plan stated in the proposal. The funding also served another purpose however: it supported the Friendship Centre to bring the Elders together on a weekly basis, which resulted in the next stage of the project, where mental health promotion became the focus.

3.2 In-Kind Support

Besides applying for grants, you might also want to look at other available resources. For example, you may want to explore the use of non-cash contributions, or "in-kind" support.

What is In-Kind Support?

In-kind support refers to the resources other money that are available to you. In-kind resources might be the things you would otherwise pay for with dollars, or they might be the things that money can't buy. When a member of the community offers to give you a service, supplies or volunteers their time, you're receiving in-kind support. This kind of resource should not be seen as inferior to dollars, but as an equally important part of the resource pool available.

You are probably already familiar with some of the forms of in-kind support. From your experience working in your community, you have most likely already received some free photocopying from a local organization, free meeting or office space or goods donated for a fundraising raffle.

These are all examples of in-kind support, which you may or not be counting as contributions to your initiative. When you think about it, you'll probably be able to come up with dozens of things that you could ask for, rather than pay for.

Seeking in-kind support should be an integral part of your plan for action and sustainability. In order to succeed in promoting mental health in your community, you'll need more than just

financial support, you'll need people, goods and services. Let's look more closely at the three basic types of in-kind resources.

Goods are just about anything that isn't money - for example, paper equipment, furniture, food, etc. Donations of goods are often made by businesses, governments, civic groups and even private homes.

Services refer to the things that people do for you. The donation of services, or the provision of services for a reduced fee, can happen in many ways throughout the community. Examples include transportation, public relations and promotional activities, construction and renovation, printing facilities, etc.

People are the key to all resources in most mental health promotion activities. People who volunteer their time, or provide assistance for a small fee, can be very important resources for your project. But volunteers are not the only people resources that can contribute to your project; some employers may 'loan' their paid employees to work on community efforts.

A few examples of the resources people can provide include clerical assistance, legal advice, and people who volunteer their time to sit on the steering committees that guide local mental health promotion efforts.

Why Should You Solicit In-Kind Support?

- Many groups and individuals can't donate cash, or feel uncomfortable about doing so, but if asked would be happy to give supplies, space or time. Since mental health promotion initiatives often need these kinds of resources, this can be a great match.

- Generating in-kind resources helps to build community support for your work. When someone donates a computer or some staff time, their connection to your project grows stronger. They have more of a stake in seeing you succeed. In the end, it's not only goods and services you are receiving; you're also fostering good will and developing new allies.

- In-kind supporters can also steer you to other sources of in-kind support sources that you might not have been aware of. By using their connections, you might be able to acquire that support as well. In this way, both your in-kind supporters and overall community support can grow.

- Although you might be uncomfortable at first asking businesses and organizations for donations, remember that seeking in-kind support is generally easier than asking for cash. Many businesses and corporations are looking for groups and projects to donate to, because they can use it as a tax write-off, and because it shows their involvement in, and generosity to, the community.

- Many grants require that your group raise a certain number of matching dollars. Often you'll be able to count in-kind donations as part of that sum. Even if your grant applications don't ask for matching dollars, in-kind contributions are an impressive demonstration of community support.

How Do You Solicit In-Kind Support?

- First, during a meeting of your steering committee, discuss your non-cash resource needs. Then brainstorm to determine which members of the community might be able to donate some or all of the resources.

- Set clear goals for your group's campaign.

- Plan ways to approach various members of your community. Do people involved in your project have good relationships with particular businesses, companies, institutions, or individuals? Have those people approach the businesses where they are known and respected.

In-kind donations received in the project were varied. In the Timmins site, the editor of the local newspaper offered to supply meals for the participants who came to the lunchtime planning meetings held at the Inclusion beginning of the project. Other in-kind donations included professional services such as computer training and teaching role-playing, as well as office space and photocopying.

Summary

- Securing resources for your project can involve applying for grants and other sources of financial support, but may also include a campaign to raise in-kind resources.

- A great deal of community-based mental health promotion work can be done with little or no money. Thinking creatively about how to use the resources that are already present in your community helps to increase community participation and support

- Applying for a grant is a two-part process that involves both preparation and research as well as the proposal writing itself.

- Before they applied for funding, the people responsible for each project were able to demonstrate evidence of significant investments of resources and time by local residents and organizations. This helped to ensure that their proposals were successful.

- Many granting agencies require that grantseekers express their proposal in terms of "needs". Although this format is not in keeping with a capacity building approach, it is possible to express your mental health issue in such a way that it meets the funders requirements.

- In-kind support forms an integral part of the resource base for mental health promotion projects.

- Seeking in-kind resources will help you to expand the community networks that are essential to supporting and maintaining your project over the long run.

- Each project operated with limited financial resources, and made the most of available community assets and in-kind resources. Funding covered some start-up costs, but most of the resources used to carry out the projects were contributed directly from the communities themselves, in the form of people's time and energy, as well as material resources such as computers, photocopying, etc.

Tips
For Raising In-Kind Resources

- **Keep track of your successes and failures** in obtaining in-kind support, and measure your progress in reaching your goals.

- **When you receive an in-kind donation, put a dollar value on it**. When a local organization agreed to type and photocopy your newsletter, estimate how much it would have cost you to have paid someone to do it. You just generated that amount, rather than having spent it!

- **Keep a careful accounting of the dollar value of your in-kind solicitations**. This will be important for your project if you decide to apply for grants and when you compile your annual financial records.

- **Make sure to send thank-you notes to your donors!** Remember to explicitly acknowledge your appreciation for the contributions you receive. If people feel appreciated, they are more likely to contribute towards your initiative again in the future.

For Writing A Proposal

What do funders like to see in a proposal? The following list suggests principles to keep in mind as you proceed:

Frame your project as an innovative and unique initiative

Does your proposal reflect that your project is unique, cutting edge and innovative? Or could you project simply be an extension of a local agency that already has a budget to provide similar services to community members? The funder's perspective is that they can only make a perceptible difference by reserving their support for programs or projects that might not be undertaken or completed without their assistance.

Fit the funder's mandate, not yours

Funders prefer to support projects that are expressed in simple terms, and which meet a clearly identified need. Proposals that appeal to funders will speak to your needs and their interests, and will be based on a complete review of the funder's printed and published materials.

Funders must balance competing interests through their funding decisions. Whereas funding agencies used to have general categories of support such as social sciences and humanities, today the divisions reflect a more mission-oriented approach to grant support with the current trend toward narrowing the parameters of grant support, you should make an extra effort to relate your project to the interests and aspirations of the funder.

Express your ideas clearly and thoughtfully

If the mental health promotion project you are proposing is well planned, the application should reflect that. Agencies fund projects that build on logical arguments. They don't fund good ideas; they fund projects they can defend.

Watch your language

Write your proposal using simple and understandable language. Where appropriate, use the terms used by the funding agency, and change your language to match the purpose of each section of the application. Every sentence should be calculated.

Build community support

Most organizations that make grants will want to know that your ideas have community support. This is because, generally speaking, part of a funder's mission is to serve the community. If you can build support before you start, that can be a big point in your favour.

> " One thing I find compelling is some indication of community support or involvement in programs we are being asked to fund. I would encourage anyone who has newspaper articles about the importance of the organization or a special program, or unsolicited letters of praise, to send us copies of those" [2]

There are several ways of generating community support for your project If you've followed the steps outlined in the previous chapters of this tool kit, you've undoubtedly already got a great deal of community support, from organizations and individuals in the community.

Identify your group's contribution to the project, and demonstrate this support to the funder through a detailed account of in-kind and other resources promised or already contributed to the project.

Keep track of the time you and others have spent researching and planning your mental promotion project. If you are working for an organization that supports your work, your hours will count as donated staff time. If you are volunteering, think about how much it would cost to purchase your time, and include this dollar figure as your group's contribution to the project.

Circulate an outline

Circulating an outline of your proposal as a rough draft, and seeking feedback will help build community support for your ideas, and will also serve to:

- validate (or occasionally, fail to validate) community interest in the idea;
- get others actively interested in the project;
- make it easier to obtain formal letters of support in a full-scale application, if they are needed;
- provide useful corrective feedback about your idea - others may think of points you hadn't thought of before.

Seek the input and advice of others

Most of the time, you'll want to gather the input of others in planning your grant application. Even if those people aren't experts in proposal writing, they may have interesting content ideas, good strategic thoughts, and often bits of specialized knowledge which one person alone will rarely have. And even if they don't provide input on any of those areas specifically, they can provide you with the support you need to get the job done.

When you do have a proposal draft, perhaps you know of a person with expertise in the area who would be willing to review your draft and give advice. Their expertise could take several forms - knowledge of the field of mental health promotion, a general understanding of how funding agencies work, or a particular familiarity with the funder you're applying to.

Tell them a little bit about yourself

Funders are very interested in finding out about you, the people responsible for carrying out the proposed mental health promotion project. They want to know if you have the experience and competence necessary to carry out the project. It's important, therefore, to describe the 'human

---

[2] Quote from a grants officer of a funding agency, from the CTB, Chapter 28, Section 8: Applying for a grant - the general approach. See annotated resource list for more info.

element' of your project - the background and accomplishments of those individuals who will play a leading role in the project.

Identify organizational commitment

While it may not always be possible, or even preferable, for mental health promotion projects to be affiliated with a certain institution, funding agencies tend to prefer to support projects that have some measure of organizational or institutional commitment

This commitment can take several forms. It may mean that the project is actually housed within a certain organization[3], (such as Inclusion in Community and Helping Skills projects, which were housed within CMHA). Or it may simply mean that you have established a relationship with local institutions and organizations that will lend your project conceptual credence and some material support.

Either type of commitment provides funders with evidence of your project's accountability, as well as an indication that the activities of the project will be sustained after the initial funding runs out. Make sure to refer to in-kind support you have received for examples of concrete kinds of organizational commitment.

Include a budget

Funders need to have a clear understanding of what they are being asked to support and what others (both additional outside sources and, if there is one, the sponsoring organization) will contribute. That's why it's important to include a simple line item budget along with your proposal, to show how you intend to spend the funds you are requesting.

What financial or in-kind contributions (such as staff hours, administrative assistance, goods and services) are being made from other sources? Provide a detailed account of any other funds or resources you have accessed. Putting a dollar value on these resources demonstrates that you have already raised both funding and community support for your initiative.

Although the kind of items that will appear on budgets will vary greatly across projects, there are a few helpful rules of thumb and new ideas to help you set up there are a few helpful rules of thumb and new ideas to help you set up your budget:

- A minimum of 10% of the total financial resources should be allocated to evaluation;

- You might want to include an amount for honouraria, to recognize the hard work put in by your volunteers - especially those with limited incomes;

- Many funders will support the development of internet-based resources, such as a project web page. This will help you to publicize and disseminate the learnings of your project, and the funder will appreciate the publicity they will receive by having their name on your website.

Include an evaluation plan

The ability to critically assess the value of the process and the outcomes of your project is crucial to its overall success, and funders want to see that you have a well-thought-out plan for doing so. Your proposal should include a detailed breakdown of the procedures you will use to evaluate the success of the project.

---

[3] If your project is housed within a specific organization, you should provide an overview of the needs served by that organization, and what it does, much like we provided in the introduction to this Tool kit.

Have a plan for spreading the word

It's important to address how the results and learnings from your project will be disseminated. Funders are increasingly interested in finding ways in which the results of their funded activities can be shared with a larger audience than just those receiving the grant. They want to see how you can generate broadly applicable themes, wide participation and meaningful impact from the thoughtful use of scarce resources.

Funding agencies often want to support projects that can serve as models or examples that could help other communities and organizations achieve similar goals. Try to articulate why you are in a good position to take a leadership role in mental health promotion, how your project has evolved, and its potential to contribute innovations well beyond your immediate community.

Ensure sustainability

Just as crucial as providing a clear explanation of the importance of you project is including a discussion of how your project will be supported when the funding period ends. Funders prefer that community mental health promotion initiatives an activity that they may have helped launch.

Tell them if you're applying for other sources of funding
Funders are interested in knowing if you are submitting requests for funding to other agencies, of if you have other parallel fundraising strategies on the go. Try to show them that you are thinking creatively about how to leverage funds from a variety of sources.

Make a visual impact

Your proposal should be clearly laid out and double-spaced, with an introduction, a statement of need, and a plan of action. Appropriate headings and sections should be included so that the reader can easily identify each major point that is being made.

The proposal should be submitted with a cover letter[4] highlighting the main points of the proposal, and most importantly, indicating why the project is a priority and has the support of the community. A statement such as this is important because it calls the funder's attention to the significance of the project and implicitly, suggests that the proposal should be reviewed with the same amount of attention that went into the preparation.

Follow up with the funder

It's a good idea to work with a grants officer at the funding agency as much as possible through the entire process of developing your request. Your proposal will have a much better chance of being considered for funding if it has been preceded by contact with staff of the agency and/or an inquiry letter.

In the Inclusion project, a CMHA staff member met with grants officer at the Trillium Foundation after having sent a letter of intent. They learned what was important to the funder (e.g. letters of support) and what was not allowed in the budget (e.g. rent).

Keep in touch with the potential funder to answer any questions they may have and update them on any new developments relevant to your proposal. Build in a strategy to seek the funder's advice and assistance in locating other funding sources, especially if your request is declined.

---

[4] from a highly regarded member of the community who supports your project, or a senior member of your sponsoring organization

Checklist

Before submitting your proposal, make sure you covered all the important steps. Your proposal should address the following basic questions:

- a statement of why the project is necessary;

- a plan for implementing;

- a specific timetable;

- a statement of how your project is unique, or groundbreaking in the field;

- the skills, capacities and assets which local residents will contribute to the project;

- a statement of how the project will be administered;

- a statement of how the project will be evaluated;

- a budget that is related closely to the proposed activities;

- all the elements required by the funder's guidelines.

Tools

You will find the following tools in this section:

1. Sample Fnding proposal of the Helping Skills Project;
2. Guidelines for grantsmanship;
3. Potential funding contacts;
4. Helpful fundraising websites.

1. Sample Funding Proposal

Here is a copy of the successful funding proposal for the Helping Skills project It was developed by Moyra Buchan, Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Division of the CMHA.

Building Helping Skills Executive Summary

1. Applicant

The Canadian Mental Health Association, Newfoundland Division. Established 1964, incorporated May 11, 1984.
Mission: To promote the mental health of all people, through public education, advocacy, service, research and community development.

2. Project Partners

CMHA will be working in collaboration with Community Health Boards in two health regions, partner agencies involved in the provision of mental health services (mental health units, public

health nurses, social services offices. school guidance counselors) and with volunteers from various groups within communities (e.g. Women's Institutes, displaced workers, parent-teacher associations, retired teachers) who are interested in becoming peer counsellors.

3. Purpose and Reason

To build partnerships between the formal and informal sectors in the area of mental health; via a mentoring and skill transfer process, to increase the knowledge, skills and involvement of community members in supporting their peers and addressing the health needs of their communities.

The health care restructuring process in Newfoundland is taking place at a time when many individuals, families and communities are under unprecedented stress as a result of the failure of the fishery. Community health boards are seriously under-resourced, existing helping services are stretched to breaking point, and there is an urgent need to develop alternative support networks.

4. Benefits

The "Train-the-Trainers" and skill transfer process will develop understanding of the basic human skills of helping and clarify areas where professional intervention is needed. By mobilizing and strengthening informal helping resources, professional helpers will develop a network of alternatives and increase the efficient use of scarce services. Peer helpers will expand the knowledge and skill base within the community, increase the sense of community responsibility for and participation in health issues, and enhance the community's ability to identify and advocate for its needs. The process of collaboration between sectors will help to increase understanding on the part of all partners of the kinds of role shift required of them in the changing health care system.

5. Continuity

The support network established among local professional and non-professional helpers in the course of the project will be self-sustaining by its completion and the continued involvement of the peer counselors and the repetition of the training program for new recruits as required. The model and Resource Manual will enable the process to be replicated in other regions.

Sponsoring Organization

The Canadian Mental Health Association, Newfoundland Division, is a voluntary, charitable organization established in 1964, Registered Charity # 0008144-11. Its mandate is to promote the mental health of all Newfoundlanders through public education, advocacy, services, research and community development. It has local branches in Gander, Trinity-Conception and Labrador West which are represented on the 16 person provincial Board of Directors. Membership includes consumers, family members, service providers and members of the community.

The CMHA Division Office in St. John's serves as a mental health resource centre which provides information and referral services for the province at large. Through special projects, CMHA carries out research and community development and pioneers new responses to mental health needs. In the present environment of rapid social and economic change in the province, the Division is working to develop new ways for people to cope with the stresses of daily living, such as unemployment, family problems and illness.

Since 1990, CMHA has developed a province-wide self-help network for consumers of mental health services and a support network for family members and caregivers; has sponsored self-help initiatives in other areas including gambling addiction and sexual abuse: has completed a Community Needs Assessment which gathered information about the effects of the fishery crisis

on people in rural communities; and has published a Directory of Counselling Services and a Directory of Self-Help Groups for the St. John's area.

The present proposal responds directly to information gained through the above activities. CMHA's "Needs Assessment for Community Self-Help" (1994), an earlier project supported by the Health Promotion Contribution Program, documented the tensions and anxieties caused by the collapse of the cod fishery, the stresses of financial hardship and loss of occupation, the conflict within communities between those who are on "the package" and those who are not. We have heard from community members, professional and non-professional alike, about the need for social support networks and helping resources (see Appendix A).The lack of available, affordable counseling services has been demonstrated through the Directories we have compiled, as welt as by many of the over 3000 inquiries received in the last year. As the restructuring of health care services progresses, the need for a range of community alternatives becomes increasingly urgent.

CMHA Newfoundland Division is well placed to sponsor an innovative response to these issues. The Division has had substantial experience in the development of the informal sector and the processes through which individuals become empowered to assume responsibility for their own health issues, through self-care, mutual aid and advocacy. The proposed project represents an extension of previous initiatives in that it aims to mobilize informal resources and facilitate skill development within communities to address the emotional and social problems that people are experiencing.

The Division is grounded in the principles of community development that are needed in a mentoring and skill transfer process. As well, it is known for its work in self-help development, and will be a credible facilitator for a cooperative effort between the formal and informal sectors.

Because of its limited resources and the wide range of issues and concerns that come within its mandate, collaboration is a basic mode of operation for Newfoundland Division. It has a web of working partnerships with other organizations and agencies in both the formal and informal sectors, which enable resources to be maximized and duplication of effort avoided (e.g. Coalition of Mental Health Partners, CMHA Coalition for Families, Women's Health Network). CMHA is thus attuned, from hands-on experience, to the key concepts governing the restructuring of health care services.

Issues To Be Addressed

The restructuring of health care services is taking place in the context of particular needs in Newfoundland and Labrador. The shift to a community-based, health promotion perspective is happening in the midst of a painful transition resulting from the cod moratorium and the reduction in transfer payments. This pain is felt at every level - individual, family, community, region and province.

The community health boards charged with the responsibility to implement the health promotion mandate are seriously under-resourced. In the area of mental health, the coordinators recently appointed in three regions are reporting social and emotional distress in communities to which they have no means of responding. Affordable counseling services are desperately lacking in this province and are virtually non-existent in rural areas. The priest, the family doctor and the public health nurse are the local overstretched resources, and people wait up to a year to see psychiatrists and other mental health professionals.

There is an urgent need to develop the capacity of communities to respond to their immediate needs and in so doing identify the issues which have to be addressed at a systemic level. When people have an opportunity to deal with their immediate distress, it becomes possible to mobilize energy to address the larger advocacy issues.

Isolated Newfoundland communities have historically been extraordinarily resourceful in dealing with their own human problems and survival issues. Helping skills, indeed, are natural human abilities possessed by many individuals and readily recognized by those who turn to them for support. In recent decades, however, such skills have been defined and taught by professions such as social work, psychology and nursing, and developed to a high level of sophistication by psychotherapists and counselors. This "professionalization" of helping, and the placing of ultimate trust in the expert, have in many ways undermined the role of informal resources. There exists a kind of mystique about professional counseling that engenders lack of confidence for many people in their own helping abilities. As a result there is great anxiety about the changes in service structures and reduced access to institution-based services.

Just as, at the macro level, institutions are returning to communities the responsibility for maintaining health, so at the micro level individuals will have to reassume some of the knowledge and control over their health issues that have been vested in professionals and "experts". The purpose of this project is, therefore, via a mentoring process, to regenerate and develop the informal human resources existing within communities for peer helping and supportive counseling.

Project Rationale

Rural communities are facing unprecedented challenges in dealing with the emotional and social problems people are experiencing as a result of the fisheries disaster and the consequent stresses on their finances, relationships and morale.

The helping resources that exist are limited and overburdened -TAGS employment counselors, public health nurses, social services workers, school guidance counselors. Many of these helpers are feeling overwhelmed by the range and intensity of the personal and family problems that people are bringing to them, and they need additional human resources and a network of support.

Effective supportive counseling involves skills which can be taught and learned. Within Newfoundland communities, there are individuals with the time and interest, along with a natural aptitude and experiential knowledge, who can be recruited as peer counselors - for example, retired teachers, former fisheries workers, volunteers with the Women's Institutes. Local helping professionals have the background, together with knowledge of the current situation, which provide a strong basis for modeling helping skills and passing these skills on to potential peer-counselors. The process of skill transfer also provides the basis for the development of a support network and access to informal helping resources for those providing the front-line response to social and emotional needs.

Project Description

Over an 18 month period, this project will establish a corps of community trainers in two health regions, and provide training, consultation and guidance to these individuals in developing and sustaining a network of peer counselors within their regions. Using a process of skill transfer and mentoring, the project will create and pilot a model for skill development in the informal sector, and will also build networks of support for those involved in dealing with emotional and social problems in communities where few other resources exist.

The project will be divided into three phases. In the first six months, contacts will be established with the Community Mental Health Co-ordinators and candidates sought from partner agencies in the region which will be asked to commit a portion of their employee's time to this project. Consultation will be carried out with the Co-ordinators as well as with the ten counsellors selected as trainers regarding their learning needs. The training program will then be prepared, along with a Resource Manual for the trainers' use. The ten trainers will spend two weeks in full-time learning with the consultant. They will then return to their regions and, over a period of ten weeks, recruit interested and appropriate people from the community to become peer

counselors. Teleconferences will be held twice during this recruitment period for consultation and discussion of issues arising.

During the second six months, the focus will be on the transfer of skills by the trainers to the peer counselors within their area. This will be accomplished through 20 weekly group sessions, using the teaching and mentoring methods modeled by the consultant in Phase I. Back-up will be provided by the consultant throughout this period via teleconferences, individual contact as required, and two visits to each of the ten areas to attend a group session. In the final month of this phase, the ten trainers will again spend three days full-time with the consultant, to evaluate the training process and plan ahead for the monitoring and maintenance of the peer counseling network.

In the final six months, the peer counselors will receive referrals from various sources, including self-referrals. Consultation will be carried out via monthly support meetings, facilitated by the trainers. During this time the project consultant will be available for problem-solving and guidance, and will make two further visits to each area. At the end of this period a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the skill transfer process will be carried out by an independent evaluator.

Participation Of Target Population

The project will involve the building of active partnerships between the formal and informal sectors in the area of mental health. The cooperation of agencies in the areas of health, social services and education will be enlisted to commit a portion of selected employees' time to being community trainers of peer counselors. Volunteers from the community at large will be recruited as peer counselors. At the project's completion, there will be five trainers and fifty peer counselors active in each participating region.

Project Goals And Objectives

Goals:

- To create a model for developing informal helping resources

- To build partnerships between the formal and informal sectors in the area of mental health

- Under the direction of an experienced mental health professional, to pilot a training program and learning process involving mentoring, skill transfer and consultation; to establish a corps of trainers who are helping professionals in two health regions; and to develop a network of rural peer counselors with the skills to appropriately refer or otherwise assist people with serious emotional or social needs

- to develop a network for support, referral and on-going consultation for helping professionals and peer counselors

Objectives:

- To develop and pilot a "train the trainers" program for a selected group of professional To develop and pilot a "train the trainers" program for a selected group of professional counselors from two health regions, which will enable them to facilitate the learning of effective counselors from two health regions, which will enable them to facilitate the learning of effective helping skills by peer counselors helping skills by peer counselors

- To use, and teach how to use, a mentoring model in transferring learned skills in the following areas:

    - recognizing and dealing with people's anger, frustration and despair

    - helping people express their feelings in a way that prevents them from getting "stuck"

    - helping people to keep moving on emotionally so that they can make appropriate decisions for themselves

    - dealing with the lack of other helping resources

    - dealing with "casualties"

    - making conscious use of one's own responses in helping others

- To provide support and consultation during the skill transfer period and develop a network for on-going support and consultation, addressing issues such as:

    - dealing with the counselor's own anger and feelings of helplessness

    - creating a safe environment in which counselors can get and give support to each other and reduce burnout

Work Plan

Method

Mentoring is a process whereby a person with expertise and experience enables others to learn through a combination of direct teaching, modeling behaviour and providing support to the learners in their development. In this case, a professional counselor with extensive experience in teaching the skills of helping to non-professionals, will share the modeling and skill-transfer process with the group of trainers, including the struggles, risks and difficulties, and provide support to the trainers in carrying through this process.

The Project Consultant will work with a group of approximately ten counselors (five from each of two regions) who will be selected by the Community Health Board Mental Health Co-ordinators on the basis of demonstrated aptitude for the skill transfer process. The issues the counselors are facing will be identified through group discussion. They will then identify and practice skills in responding to these issues, using a combination of role-playing, observation, feedback, modeling, case consultation, and group and individual problem-solving.

Skills focused on will include:[5]

- active listening;

- reaching for feelings;

- sitting with discomfort ;

- problem solving:

- partializing (breaking problems down into components that can be tackled);

---

[5] These are based on the model described in Lawrence Shulman, The Skills of Helping. Peacock Publishers: Illinois 1979.

- reaching for strength;

- recognizing and trusting people's ability to get through setting mutual boundaries of responsibility;

- confronting effectively;

- self-care.

The training program will also deal with:

- the process of assessment and referral;

- how to use the range of resources available:

- recognizing and avoiding "rescuing";

- recognizing and avoiding "victimizing";

- how to make helping contracts;

- how to deal with the pressure to find solutions in a situation where there are no solutions.

Throughout the training the emphasis will be on modeling and teaching these skills to peer counselors without the same professional background. The community trainers will be provided with a resource manual, consistent follow-up and consultation as they implement the training with peer counselors in their areas.

Roles and Responsibilities

The project consultant will be responsible for orienting partner agencies to the project and developing the "Train-the-Trainer" program and Resource Manual in response to learning needs identified. This person is the pivot of the learning and skill transfer process.

The community trainers will be responsible for recruiting peer counselors, for implementing the skill-transfer process over a series of 20 sessions, and for facilitating follow-up support sessions for the peer counselors.

Model

The project would serve two health regions in the province via the following model, with a view to replicating the process in other regions of the province or country:

Timetable

PHASE I: TRAINING THE TRAINERS

Month 1

Contact with Mental Health Co-ordinators and partner agencies (Mental Health Units, Social Services Offices, Guidance Counseling Program)

Selection of trainers

Consultation re: learning needs

Month 2-3

Preparation of Training Program and Resource Manual

Month 4

2 weeks full-time "Train the Trainer" program

(20 half-day units)

teleconference follow-up

Month 5-6

Recruitment and orientation of Peer Counselors

Two teleconferences and individual consultation as needed

Evaluation of Phase 1

PHASE II: TRANSFERRING THE SKILLS

Months 7- 12

20 weekly group training sessions (trainer and ten peer counselors)

One teleconference per month for trainers with consultant; individual contact and consultation as needed

Two visits to each area by consultant; attend group consultation sessions; individual sessions with trainers

Evaluation of Phase II
Three day planning session (consultant and trainers)

PHASE III: MAINTAINING THE NETWORK

Months 13 - 18

Peer counsellors in action

Monthly support sessions with trainer

Monthly teleconferences (consultant and trainers) and individual contact as needed

Two visits to each area by consultant Comprehensive evaluation

Opportunities For Collaboration

This project provides the opportunity for innovative partnerships between different parts of the formal sector involved in responding to mental health needs (hospital mental health units; school

guidance counselors; social services, etc.) and individuals with various backgrounds in the community women's Institutes, churches, service groups, parent-teacher associations, etc.) Mental Health Advisory groups which bring various agencies together already exist in several areas, and with the support of the Regional Mental Health Co-ordinators, these would be an avenue for securing the involvement of local professionals in the project. This will also be an arena where commitment to involving members of the community in meeting health needs could be developed and engaged.

Dissemination Of Results

The Final Report and evaluation of the skill transfer model will be circulated to all health boards and their mental health advisory bodies within all five health regions of the province, and to all Ministries of Health and CMHA Divisions across the country. The Resource Manual will be made available to jurisdictions wishing to replicate the process of developing the informal sector.

Evaluation

The evaluation will address the following components:

1. Training Program
2. Trainers evaluation of skill transfer process
3. Peer Counselors evaluation of skill transfer process
4. Consumers response
5. Community response
6. Partner agencies perspective

The evaluation will take the form of questionnaires and personal interviews, administered to the trainers at the end of Phase I and to the trainers and peer counselors at the end of Phase II. The questionnaires will address both content and process. There will also be an oral evaluation during the three-day meeting at the end of Phase II. In the final months of Phase III, information would be gathered from all participants, including consenting consumers, members of the community and partner agencies about the overall effectiveness of the skill development process and the use of peer counseling resources in rural communities.

The responsibility for administering the evaluation would be sub-contracted.

Project Consultant

The Project Consultant will be Susan McConnell M.S.W. Ms. McConnell is a practicing psychotherapist with many years of experience in counseling, teaching and consulting on a wide range of social/emotional issues. She has extensive experience of teaching helping skills to people who do not have a formal background in counseling, and served as consultant and trainer for a CMHA project on self-help for survivors of sexual abuse. Ms. McConnell's resume is attached.

The position will be full-time for a total of 20 weeks (eight weeks for consultation and development of training program and resource manual; two weeks for training program; ten weeks travelling, covering five visits each to two regions and five areas within each region). Follow-up consultation and teleconferences are estimated to require an average of six hours per week for the other 58 weeks of the project's duration.

2. Guidelines For Grantsmanship

The following are some general guidelines and steps to consider when you're ready to approach funding agencies for grant support.

We hope this section provides you with a realistic idea of the work that is involved in applying for a grant, and guides you away from some of the potholes on the road to getting funding for your project. We focus here on general principles of grant writing, so that the information is relevant to a variety of different sources.

Find out who the agencies are:

Before you even consider applying to a granting agency, learn as much as you can about it. How can you find out? The simplest way is to contact the agency directly, either by visiting their website (an increasing number of granting agencies are on-line) or calling and asking for information. They probably have a standard package of information that they send out to those who are interested in applying for funds. It will probably include: basic application guidelines, an application form, and an annual report and/or grants list, which will tell you more about the agency's goals and organization, to whom it has made recent grants, and so on.

Another good reason to call is to make personal contact with staff at the granting agency In some cases you may find someone who can tell you if your plans fit generally with their criteria, and they may even provide tips for the application process. If you're lucky, you'll be able to stay in touch with an individual who will continue to answer your questions and guide you along the way.

> "Call first and ask for a copy of our report, which describes
> previous grants, so people get a sense of what the amounts are,
> and what kinds of projects we've been supporting" [6]

Narrow the field
Your research may turn up dozens of agencies that could potentially support your mental health promotion project. That's encouraging, but you are probably not going to apply to them all. It's time to narrow the field further through some careful checking:

- Check the fields in which grants are offered. Are you sure you're barking up the right tree?

- Check the purpose of the grants offered. You may want part of the funds to cover staff salaries, but the agency may not fund salaries, and will only provide start-up or seed money.

- Check the size of the grants offered. You may be looking for $25,000, but the maximum award size of a promising-looking granting agency might be $10,000. Keep in mind, though, that it is possible to apply to more than one funding agency at the same time.

- Check the locations where grants are offered. Are you sure the agency covers your geographic area? Some have geographic preferences, as well as restrictions.

Through checking and re-checking, you can narrow the field to a manageable number of leading candidates. Now you are ready to do some further investigation of your leading prospects.

Learn the guidelines

Each granting agency does business in a slightly different way. Some agencies will ask for a short one or two page "letter of intent" describing your proposal, and nothing else to begin with. Others prefer to get the whole application upfront. Certain agencies are interested in knowing

---

[6] Quote from a grants officer of a funding agency, from the Community Tool Box, Chapter 28, Section 8: Applying for a grant - the general approach. See Annotated Resource List for more info.

your credentials, while others are primarily interested in your ideas. Some want detailed budgets, and for others, the discussion of budget comes later.

It never hurts to write a short letter of intent before embarking on a full proposal. If you're turned down at that point, you're saving yourself a lot of time; if you're given the go-ahead, you'll know that you're on the right track.

> "DO your homework, not just in finding out how to apply, but in making the match between your needs and our needs. Although we have a broad giving program, it's very clear in our annual report that we're most interested in funding what's important to us."[7]

Follow the guidelines

Now that you know what the guidelines for application are, follow them closely. If the agency asks for a two-page letter, make sure to keep it to that length. This brief letter should contain a fairly complete description of the project, with headings pointing out the major points of interest, and a basic line-item budget, if they've requested one.

State clearly the amount of money that is requested and the time period in which it will be spent. Staff at the agency will then read these letters, screen out inappropriate inquiries, and request more information if your proposal is of interest.

If the agency wants the application to be submitted, without first receiving an introductory letter, then read through the guidelines very carefully, and follow them as closely as possible. If there is an area you are not clear on, it's best to clarify it before continuing. This leads us to the next point:

Ask questions, if needed

Even though funding agency guidelines are usually clear, you may still have a few questions. Some issues may not be covered by the guidelines, or you may be puzzled by a certain section of the application. In such cases, the best thing to do is call and ask. The agency will no doubt have someone on staff to respond to calls like yours.

Think before calling, though. A call (or other contact) generally means that you have to identify yourself. Since first impressions are important, you will want to present yourself in the best possible light. Be sure you don't ask questions that are clearly covered in the guidelines.

> "Read our guidelines. We have a number of printed materials related to our programs. Study our past history and then contact us with a specific request based on an understanding of our guidelines." [7]

However, if you have a good reason to do so, there are advantages to making a personal contact. Discussing the project with the funding agency can be helpful for several reasons. First, the staff person may give you some information not explicitly contained in the guidelines, which may be helpful to you. Also, in the course of conversation, you can ask other questions or check on other guidelines to make sure you're on the right track.

Sometimes it's also possible to set up a meeting with an agency staff person to explore your idea before a proposal is written or delivered. If you see value in a pre-application meeting, and if the guidelines don't tell you otherwise, consider making a request to meet with someone.

---

[7] A grants officer of a funding agency, quoted in the Community Tool Box.

If you do arrange a meeting, you can have your questions answered, which will help you either improve your application, or prevent you from wasting your time. You will also have made a personal contact, and perhaps gotten some tips along the way.

3. Potential Funding Contacts

There is a broad range of potential funders for your mental health promotion project Depending on the particular issue your project focuses on, and where you are located, you will be able to some more detailed research into your particular area, and contact funders who work in that area.

Because funding agencies change their programs and requirements vary frequently, we cannot provide you with a complete list here; there will no doubt be many changes in the time that elapses between the writing of this kit and your quest for funding. What you'll find here is a very brief list of some potential funding contacts to get you started.

Federal Government:

Population Health Fund

The goal of the Population Health Fund is to increase community capacity for action on the determinants of health. To achieve this goal, the PHF supports projects that facilitate joint planning and co-ordinated actions among voluntary organizations, service providers, governments and the private sector to improve population health. Fund activities focus on addressing the health issues of vulnerable populations.

Eligible applicants include: Canadian voluntary and non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Requests for proposals (developed by Health Canada) will specify which categories of eligible sponsors will be considered. Projects may be funded for a period of up to 36 months.

For further information on the Population Health Fund, please contact your regional or the national Health Canada office.

> 7 Population Health Directorate
> Health Canada
> 8th Floor - PL 1908C1
> Jeanne Mance Building
> Tunney's Pasture
> Ottawa, ON KIA IB4
> Tel: (6 13) 957-3507
> Fax: (6 13) 952-53 IO
> Website: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/phdd/geninfo.html

Opportunities Fund For Persons With Disabilities - Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)

The objective of the Opportunities Fund is to assist persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain, and keep employment or self-employment. The fund supports a broad range of employment activities for persons with disabilities who are not eligible for employment benefits under the Employment insurance Act.

Examples of suitable activities include but are not limited to the following:

- encouraging employers to hire workers with disabilities;

- assisting individuals with disabilities to start their own business;

- providing work experience that can lead to ongoing employment;

- assisting persons with disabilities increase their employment skill level;

- assisting their integration into the workplace through services tailored to meet their special needs;

- providing personal supports required to enable persons with disabilities to participate in employment and employment services.

Persons with disabilities may request assistance at any HRDC office. In many places, community-based organizations may provide specialized employment services and may have information available.

Call I-800-788-8282 for further information on the Opportunities Fund, or visit the HRDC website at http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/stratpol/edd/OFPD

Helpful Websites

A Canadian Centre for Philanthropy - http://www.ccp.ca

This website contains a goldmine of fundraising information, some of which is free, and some of which is available for a reasonable fee. They offer a Directory of Foundations, online databases, foundation search services, further information on proposal writing, etc.

Canadian Municipal Information Service - http://internov.gc.ca/mun/index.html

This website provides a listing of all Canadian municipalities that are currently online, and links to their websites. The listings are provided alphabetically or by Province/Territory.

CharityVillage - http://www.charityvilliage.com/charityvillage/main.html

This website provides a huge array of resources to community groups, not least of all a listing of Canadian grant-giving foundations. Visit their website for detailed information on the eligibility criteria for particular foundations.

In-Kind Canada - http://vwvw.inkindcanada.ca/inkind/index-e.html

In-Kind Canada is a national "Gift-In-Kind" program, matching the material surpluses of business to the needs of the non-profit sector. In-Kind Canada is a registered charity, with an innovative program that ensures the efficient, effective donation of goods and services.

The Foundation Centre - http://fdncenter.org/

This website covers a massive range of information on foundations, although mostly those located in the United States. They offer information on proposal writing, current trends in philanthropy, grantseeking on the web, etc. Certain information is available free on their website, and they offer publications that can be ordered at reasonable prices.

The Grantsmanship Centre - http://www.tgci.com

The Grantsmanship Centre (TGCI), founded in 1972, is a leading source of fundraising training and information for non-profits. TGCI produces a wide range of low-cost publications, including Program Planning and proposal writing, a widely used proposal format.

UBC Office of Research Services and Administration - http://orsil.ubc.ca/owa/progquery.query

This website provides an interactive online search of the Office of Research Services database of research granting agencies. The search will give you information on the funding programs offered by those agencies, and also offers an online help service.

Annotated Resource List

A guide to approaching foundations for grant support. Fetner, G. - http://www.rgo.ualberta.ca/rgodocs/sources/udar.html

Although this guide was prepared primarily for those seeking support for research or academic programs, it will nonetheless be helpful to a wide variety of grantseekers. It offers some general principles and observations about the interests and preferences of foundations, and guidelines for approaching them for grant support.

A Community Tool box. Chapter 28, Section 8 - Applying for a Grant: The General Approach. By Bill Berkowitz. - http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c28/c28s8.html

In this section of the Community Tool Box, the author provides a realistic picture of the granting process. This information will help people decide if they are prepared and/or willing to put in the work to apply for a grant. Those who decide to apply for funding will benefit from the tips and examples that are provided.

Community Tool box. Chapter 28, Section II - Soliciting In-Kind Support. By Rebecca Wolff. http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c28/c28sII.html

This section of the Community Tool Box discusses the value of in-kind resources, and features some helpful planning tools and worksheets to help others lead a successful campaign to raise in-kind resources.

Program planning and proposal writing. Kiritz, N.The Grantsmanship Centre. 1980. http://wwwtgci.com/

Program planning and proposal writing contains a widely used format for grant proposals. Many foundation and government grantmakers have adopted it as their official application format.

Program planning and proposal writing includes information on: summarizing your project, writing an introduction, needs assessment objectives, determining methods, planning evaluation, other sources of funding, and budgeting.

A Understanding the funder and the proposal. In Canadian Fundraiser, Nov. 13, 1995. http://www.charityvillage.com/charityvillage/research/rpropI.html

A helpful article that provides information on how to prepare yourself in order to write a successful proposal.

Winning grants step by step. Carbon, M.Toronto: Jossey-Bass/Prentice Hall, 1995.

A complete workbook for planning, developing and writing successful proposals, Winning Grants Step By Step will help you to improve your ability to turn funding ideas into proposals that merit financial support. Written for all levels of expertise, this book will be especially useful to those with limited experience in the field.

Of special note is the section on Special Resources that covers how to research funders, how to write a letter of intent, and how to evaluate a proposal through the funder's eyes.

Chapter Four: Carrying Out Your Project

Introduction

4.1 Generating And Sustaining Commitment

- WHY is commitment important?
- WHAT makes people become committed?
- WHO will become committed?
- HOW do you foster and maintain commitment in your project?

4.2 Keeping Track

a. Obtaining feedback about your project

- WHY should you obtain feedback?
- HOW do you obtain feedback?

b. Recording meetings

- WHY should you record meetings?
- WHAT are the advantages of recording meetings?
- HOW do you record meetings
- WHO should record meetings?
- Tips for recording meetings effectively
- WHAT to do with what you've recorded

4.3 Dealing With The Unexpected

- Losing participants
- What if your project changes course?

Summary

Tips
- For Carrying Out Your Project

Checklist

Tools
- Asking The Right Questions

Annotated Resource List

Introduction

Once you have finished planning your mental health promotion project, and you have gathered the resources you will need, you are ready to carry out your project.

Each mental health promotion project is uniquely designed to respond to the reality of a particular community at a certain point in time. The activities you have planned for your project will reflect

both the mental health issue you have chosen to focus on and the strategy you have selected to address that issue.

Because each initiative will be unique, there really isn't a standard set of activities that you should consider implementing in your project. Rather, there are a few key areas that you should keep in mind during the implementation stage:

- generating and maintaining the commitment of the community,

- keeping track of the day-to-day operations of the project, including, recording meetings, and getting feedback from participants;

- dealing with the unexpected, e.g. problem solving issues that may arise;

In this chapter, we look at each of those areas in a little more detail, and we provide tips and tools that will help to making your mental health promotion project a success.

4.1 Generating And Sustaining Commitment

Commitment forms the backbone of community-based mental health promotion. It is what gives an initiative its strength. In this section we'll discuss why it's important to build and sustain commitment, and suggest different ways of doing so.

Everyone has the potential to become committed to the goals of your mental health promotion initiative. Your project will no doubt strike a chord with many people in the community -- and you want to make sure those people get involved and stay involved so that you can work together to accomplish as much as you can.

Why Is Commitment Important?

People who are committed to your mental health promotion project care about the goals of the group, and they also care about the people in the group. They show up, follow through, and stick with it.

Committed people contribute an enormous amount of their time, energy and spirit, in many d different ways. They:

- arrive at a meeting early to make sure that the room is set up and the coffee maker is working;

- actively promote your mental health promotion project in the community;

- stay late to stack chairs and clean up after a community meeting finishes;

- hang in there when the going gets tough.

Here are a few other reasons why having committed people involved is an essential ingredient for reaching your community mental health promotion goals:

Committed people can be effective in influencing others -- people take note when someone speaks or acts with resolve. If a whole group acts with determination and commitment, great numbers of people can really pay attention.

People who are committed don't give up easily, but persist in the face of discouragement. They set an example for those who don't have the confidence or experience to go through the difficult times and hold out for the rewards of success.

Commitment inspires co-operation. It fosters camaraderie, trust and caring -- the stuff your project will need to keep it going over the long run.

What Makes People Become Committed?

How do you get people to come forward and join your efforts to promote mental health in your community?

People aren't born committed to a community or a cause. They become that way. Commitment grows within people over time, as they gain experience:

- working together;

- feeling successful at what they do;

- making decisions together;

- working through conflicts;

- supporting each other's leadership;

- having fun together;

- overcoming obstacles;

- appreciating and respecting each other;

- challenging each other;

- building relationships;

- having an impact on something they care about;

- learning from mistakes and setbacks;

- having solid, committed leadership.

People commit to a group because they gain something important from their involvement. When you invite someone to become involved, you are offering them an opportunity to:

- take action on an issue that's important to them;

- do work that helps others;

- meet and spend time with like-minded people;

- be part of a team;

- be challenged and held to high standards;

- learn how to lead;

- do something significant.

Your mental health promotion project will be an important contribution to the life of your community. When you invite people to become committed to initiative, don't feel that you are imposing something on them, but rather, that you are offering them something of value.

Who Will Become Committed?

As you mobilize people to become involved in your community effort, you may not know at the start who will become committed and who won't. The factors that inspire participants to become committed to an initiative may not reflect the reasons they initially became involved.

Sometimes people will surprise you. There might be person who is quiet and shy at first, but who, over time, becomes a pillar of your initiative.

In the Forest site of the Inclusion in Community project, a group of people came together and sat around a table discussing ways to promote the mental health of people in their community. There were a number of people present: the local minister, staff from the community health centre, members of the nearby First Nations community, and people who themselves had experienced mental health problems. The group brainstormed different strategies for raising the awareness of community members of the importance of mental health, and the need to support people who had experienced mental health problems, and who were trying to take part in community life. One young man, who had firsthand experience on the need for this kind of support, sat quietly through the discussions, listening and observing more then taking an active part in the meeting.

After a long discussion, the group voted to use theatre, specifically role plays, to address the issue of providing support and understanding to people in the community who had experienced mental illness. The group was very excited to have chosen a strategy that fit so well with the needs of the community, and there was great enthusiasm to move ahead with the project. The quiet young man didn't share the same infectious enthusiasm for the idea - in fact, he had some doubts about it -- but said that he would like to continue to attend the meetings, as an observer rather than an active participant.

As the group moved from sitting around planning tables to developing and performing the role plays for various local organizations and groups, the young man became an increasingly involved and committed member of the group. He began by helping out with the technical aspects of the group's work, such as setting up the space before the role plays began.

Eventually, he became the group's narrator -- skillfully handling the interaction between the players and the audience, leading the discussions after the role play ended, and contributing the insights he had gained through his own experience to captivated audience members.

How Do You Foster And Maintain Commitment To Your Project?

Although commitment grows in a natural way, there are a number of things that you, as a leader or group member, can do to foster commitment to your initiative.

The first thing to do is to think about why people become involved in and committed to a group. Start with yourself. Why are you committed to your mental health promotion initiative? What is most important to you?

- the goals of your group?

- your vision of what's possible?

- the time you've invested in the group?

- your role in your group?

- what you've learned in your group?

- the satisfaction you get from doing significant work?

- other reasons?

Once you've thought through those questions yourself, it will become easier for you to express your commitment to others, and thus encourage them to become committed, too.

Here are some other practical suggestions that will help you find and keep committed participants.

Welcome people into your group

> Something all people need in order to become involved is to feel genuinely welcome - and if people don't feel welcome, they will not stick around. Try to personally welcome people when they arrive, and ask questions and get to know them.

> Make it part of the culture of your initiative to provide a welcoming environment to newcomers, as well as those who've been involved since the start.

Be sensitive to cultural diversity

> Those involved in community mental health promotion initiatives need to explicitly communicate their openness to cultural diversity. People will become committed to your initiative if they feel they are respected and their cultural identity is valued.

> Try to be aware of how different cultures might interpret the language, symbols and process used in the initiative, which may have different meanings to people of different cultures.

Be open and clear about your mission, goals and objectives

> People have to know what they are committing to. They will want to join your initiative if they share the same principles and goals. In fact, people will be more committed if they have gone through the process of naming the goals and objectives themselves.

> Post your mission, goals and objectives in your meeting space, so that everyone will be familiar with them. Talk openly about why they are important to your group.

Model commitment yourself

Everyone looks to the leader or leaders of a group to see if they are committed. If you care about the work of the initiative, it will show in your attitudes and actions. People will watch to see how you act, and they will follow your lead. If they can count on you, it's more likely that you will be able to count on them. Commitment is contagious.

However, if you are working so hard that you are burnt out and unhappy, people will take note of that too, and they will shy away from following your lead. Remember that the process of mental health promotion is as valuable as the outcome!

Give people the right kind of work to do

People need to feel they're making a significant contribution in order to feel committed. Find out what they are interested in doing and see if you can match their interests to some work that needs to be done.

Pay attention to picking the right level of challenge for people, so that they don't end up feeling either overwhelmed or bored. As you get to know people better, you can give them increasingly challenging work to do. Being challenged keeps people excited about the work they're doing.

Sometimes people will need encouragement to try things they have never before considered. Talk to people about what kind of jobs they would like to try. Also give people jobs that bring them into contact with other people involved in the initiative, so that they will begin to feel they're a part of the group as quickly as possible.

Build a culture of appreciation and respect

People need to feel respected and appreciated in order to stay connected and committed to your project. Try to create an environment where people treat each other well, and appreciate each other's work.

In heated discussions or conflicts, make sure that people continue to show respect for each other Conflicts are natural and can provide important growing periods. Conflicts need to be acknowledged and openly addressed by recognizing the legitimate interests of those involved and the goals of the group.

To ensure that they are useful rather then destructive, do not let people personally attack each other. Keep discussions focused on the issues. Remember your ground rules, and hold people to them!

Listen!

Since an important key to mental health promotion is participation in decision-making about issues which affect one's life, it's important to ensure that everyone's voice is heard when those decisions are being made. Active and respectful listening is a crucial element of creating the kind of initiative that people will want to commit to.

As we've seen in the Helping Skills project, listening is a powerful tool. Everyone could use someone to listen to them. When you listen to others with respect, they sense that you have confidence in them and are interested in what they think. In turn your interest and confidence in them helps them to think clearly and creatively.

Support people's leadership

Even though people have different levels of leadership skills and experience, everyone can contribute something of importance. To help sustain commitment in your initiative,

think about each person as a potential leader, and help them to recognize their leadership talents. Leadership means more than chairing meetings -- the person who informally resolves conflicts is performing an important leadership function, and so is the one who gets everyone laughing during a long meeting, when the group's energy is at a low.

If people view themselves as leaders, they will develop a sense of ownership, and will be more likely to take initiative to make sure things work well.

Have fun together

Last, but not least, don't forget to celebrate your accomplishments and enjoy each other's company! Spending some social time together helps people to get to know each other better and feel more a part of a cohesive group.

> "Commitment requires hard work in the heat of the day; it requires faithful exertion in behalf of chosen purposes and the enhancement of chosen values." [1]
> Gardner,J. 1990

4.2 Keeping Track

A. Obtaining Feedback About Your Project

Getting people's opinions about the issue your project is addressing, and how well your project is doing to address that issue, can be very helpful to the work you're doing in the community.

Why Should You Obtain Feedback?

Obtaining feedback can help you to better understand a number of things:

- how your project is perceived;

- what the community really needs;

- how to prioritize tasks;

- how to generate renewed interest and excitement in your project;

- how to increase community awareness of who you are and what you're doing;

- how to improve your program.

You should try to obtain informal feedback about your issue and mental health promotion initiative from participants and the broader community on an ongoing basis. This may be as simple as having a casual conversation with a community member or monitoring articles or editorials in the newspaper.

More formal feedback - data that you can measure -- may be needed at various points as well, and is usually obtained through personal interviews, questionnaires and surveys. This information often forms a part of the project evaluation, which we'll talk more about in the next chapter.

---

[1] On Leadership. Gardner, J. New York, N.Y. The Free Press 1990

As you go about gathering feedback about your initiative, you should always keep in mind how you will actually use the information you obtain. Nothing will be more frustrating to your participants than giving feedback that is not used.

How Do You Obtain Feedback?

Before you begin asking others questions, you should begin by asking yourself a few:

What do you want to know?

Make sure you questions are clear and framed in such a way that the information you gather will be useful to you.

Whom do you want to ask?
Make a list that includes a variety of people you want to get feedback from, so that you can be sure you will be getting a wide range of input and opinions.

What's the best way to ask?

In some cases it may be best to simply ask a few questions informally, as part of a conversation, for example "How did you find the meeting?" At other times, a more formal method such as an interview or questionnaire would be more appropriate. Be sensitive to the people whose feedback you are soliciting by giving some thought to what the best way of asking your questions would be.
Have you considered literacy level, cultural background and language preference?

For the staff of the Friendship Centre who worked with the in the Medicine Wheel program, using an informal, conversational style was the best way to find out how the Elders felt the program was going, and how they would like to see it change.

If staff had presented the Elders with a questionnaire, they would no doubt have had little success in getting their feedback, because many of the Elders would not have been comfortable using a written format to express their opinions, but were willing to express their thoughts on the program through informal discussion.

For further information on asking questions, please see the tools section at the end of this chapter.

B. Recording Meetings

Why Should You Record Meetings?

Trying to remember all of the important points that were raised during a lengthy meeting can make the already challenging job of promoting mental health even more difficult. That's why it's good to get in the habit of recording your meetings, so that later, you'll be able to review the notes and follow up on what was said.

This section will focus on the benefits of recording meetings - to help your initiative move forward and solve problems effectively.

What Are The Advantages Of Recording Meetings?

- Recording a meeting lets people know that they've been listened to and heard;

- It provides a historical record that can be used at future meetings for verification of decisions, and evaluation and serves as a reminder of past events and outcomes;

- It can provide important information to people who weren't able to attend;

- It helps to keep everyone on track. If everything is written down, people are more likely to stick to the agenda, or get back to the agenda when they've strayed. It's quite easy to note that things are getting off-track when the recorder is no longer writing things down, or if they're writing things unrelated to the day's agenda.

And for visible recording, on a flip chart or board, there are several other advantages:

- It provides a visible running record - everyone can see what has happened, and what is happening, as you go along;

- During brainstorming activities, having the group's ideas in front of everyone can help the group stay focused. People are also less likely to repeat themselves.

- It demonstrates that people's contributions were heard and acknowledged.

- It can increase people's attention to, and interest in, the meeting.

Although your meeting notes can be an invaluable resource, it's a good idea to ensure that everyone knows in advance that the meeting will be recorded, and agrees upon the intended use of the material that is recorded. Is it just for the use of the group, or will it be made public? In order for everyone to feel at ease, these issues should be decided collectively at the outset

How Do You Record Meetings?

Let's look at the different methods of recording that you are most likely to consider using:

Written notes

Written notes are most commonly used if the meeting is a regular or routine meeting of the group, with no major decisions or actions on the agenda

Visible recording (flip charts)

Visible recording is most appropriate when:

- the group is engaging in problem-solving, decision-making or brainstorming;

- there are several options for solution or decision;

- the problem or discussion topic is complex, controversial, new or unfamiliar to the group;

- the decision to be made is important;

- group members do not know each other well;

- there is low trust among the members of the group, and/or a history of conflict

Tape recording

Tape recording is most appropriately used when:

- the discussion moves too fast for a person to keep up with;

- it's important to capture the exact language used;

- it's important to listen to vocal tone, as well as verbal content;

- other group members, who will be making decisions on the topic, cannot be physically present

- at the meeting.

Who Should Record Meetings?

There is an art to recording meetings, so when your group is choosing a recorder, try to make it a person who has some experience, who knows the group well, who has clear handwriting, and who works well with the facilitator.

If possible, it's preferable not to combine the roles of facilitating and recording a meeting. Your meetings will probably be more productive and successful if the facilitator can concentrate on facilitating, and someone else does the recording.

Tips For Recording Meetings Effectively

Regardless of who is chosen to record your meetings, there are several things that person should keep in mind:

- having the proper tools:

- working effectively with the group;

- choosing what to record;

- recording effectively.

Now we'll look at each of these points in more detail.

Having The Proper Tools

For visible recording, the best (and cheapest) tools include pads of large newsprint, or flip chart paper, mounted on a portable easel, and magic markers that write clearly. Once a sheet of paper is filled, the recorder can tape it to a wall so that it is still visible to the group.

Arrange the room before the meeting begins, so that everyone will be able to see what's being recorded. You might try testing out your writing, to make sure that everyone will be able to read it from the most distant chair.

If you choose to tape record your meeting, it's important to make sure that the equipment is working before you begin. Try doing a few tests and playing them back, so that you'll know if the machine is picking up your voice, or if you need to change its position or raise the recording level. Be sure to have extra blank tapes so that you can capture the whole meeting.

Working Effectively With The Group

listen actively

The role of the recorder may be quiet, but it is anything but passive. The recorder needs to listen hard at all times, to make sure that quiet comments don't go unheard, and that points briefly made don't go unnoticed or unrecorded.

remain neutral

Generally, the recorder doesn't interject his or her own opinions into the conversation. Like the facilitator, the recorder draws out the opinions of the others in the group.

communicate with the group

It's important for the recorder to interject. however, if the group is going too fast to write everything down, or if people are speaking too quietly. If the recorder is unclear about what someone has said, he or she could step in and ask for repetition of the point.

If the recorder didn't understand something, or didn't have a chance to write it down, there's a good chance that other members of the group would benefit from slowing the pace down a little as well.

accept corrections gracefully

The recorder may have heard something wrong, or made a spelling mistake that someone feels compelled to point out. The recorder should simply thank the person for pointing it out, correct it, and move on.

work with the facilitator

The facilitator can repeat or check the speaker's statement before the recorder writes it down. It will clarify what has been said for the recorder as well as for the rest of the group.

Choosing What To Record

In general, the recorder will write down what is often called the "group memory", or what it will be important to remember from this meeting. Each meeting is different, but the points that are recorded will often include:

- questions:
- answers;
- feedback;
- concerns;
- ideas from brainstorming sessions;
- decisions.

How do you decide if a comment or question is important enough to write down?

Record a comment if it:

- is a specific suggestion made by a member of the group;
- is stated several times;
- introduces a new idea, or gives new information;
- is a decision made by the group;
- describes any action to be taken by the group;
- states who will be doing the action.
- If in doubt, it's fine to ask the group to help you to decide what to record.

Recording Effectively

The following tips can make the job of recording easier:

Don't try to write every word - you'll never keep up. Paraphrase what's been said. If you have changed the speaker's words, check to make sure you have captured the idea correctly.

- Use high-energy words, such as active verbs (e.g. contact, organize);
- Write large, legibly, and fast;
- Don't worry about spelling - you'll get the point across;
- Label and number your sheets. This will make it a lot easier to write up the notes later;
- Use colour, symbols and underlining to highlight your points. Separate thoughts and topics with symbols, such as stars. Save numbers for larger items, such as agenda items, or for ordering pages.

What To Do With What You've Recorded

You will probably want to type up what has been written and add it to your files, and possibly distribute them to all the members of your group. These notes are an important part of the recording process, and will help you to keep track of the different activities of your project for the process evaluation. The notes generally follow and parallel the items on the meeting agenda and generally include:

- the name of your group;
- the date;
- the time and place;
- the names of those present and absent;
- the key points made for each agenda item;
- specific decisions that were made. You might want to underline, or highlight these in a different way, so that they stand out.

The meeting report is then distributed to all those present at the meeting (as well as those group members who were unable to attend), along with an agenda for the next meeting. The preparation and timely distribution of accurate reports can add to the effectiveness of your group, provide a historical record, lead to better decisions, as well as more effective follow-up to those decisions.

Your group should adopt its own policy regarding reports. Not every group needs detailed reports, and not every meeting may need written reports at all. You can adapt these tips to the situation in your project. The most important thing is that action is taken on the basis of the decisions made

at meetings. Distributing meeting reports serves as a reminder for group members to follow through on what they agreed to do.

4.3 Dealing With The Unexpected

Often the greatest learning from a mental health promotion project is the difference between what you plan and what you actually do -- the proposal for a project is really just a "best guess". Although planning is very important, it's done in the abstract. The ability of your project to adapt to the changing issues and realities of the community is the best indication of successful implementation.

There are bound to be changes in your mental health promotion program during the implementation stage. Although change is a natural part of the process and shouldn't necessarily be perceived as threatening, unexpected change can be disconcerting. In this section we'll look at a few of the most common changes that your initiative may be faced with and some ideas about how to deal with these changes.

Losing participants

Most community groups go through a stage when they begin to lose members and flounder a bit, as the initial energy and enthusiasm gives way to more tedious tasks. This can be compounded by the perceived risk of failure. Any difference in perception of goals will become evident at this stage, and sometimes conflicts arise among group members.

This stage is a normal part of the community process -- some turnover should be expected, and may even be healthy. Unfortunately, the loss of some participants may be discouraging to those who are sticking it out.

In order to keep the energy and momentum of your group alive during those times when people are starting to drift away, it's important to keep in mind that some loss is natural. If you make sure to develop new leadership and involve new people as you go, you will be able to take these changes in stride.

When your project changes course

A project may take on new meanings and direction as it progresses; it may spark a new initiative, one that more closely reflects the mental health needs of the participants. The Seniors Medicine Wheel project did just that, as we'll see in the following example.

The Elders who attended the Medicine Wheel program came to receive information on the services and supports that were available to them in the community, and to spend time with others who shared their culture and concerns.

While the program was successful in sharing this important information, and providing Aboriginal Elders a welcoming and warm environment in which to meet, staff and participants were left feeling that information alone would not help to empower the Elders to take greater control of their health. Something was missing.

The Eiders continued to come to weekly meetings, along with the staff member who had started the group. The program had initially brought them together to talk about their own health needs, but increasingly, the Elders began to discuss their shared concern for the children in their community, and their sense of responsibility for the emotional, spiritual and physical health of the younger generations.

Simply by meeting and sharing their feelings and experiences, the Elders gained the confidence to become more involved in the lives of young people in a positive way. The Medicine Wheel project was conceived as one that would bring Elders and services together, but became one that brought generations together. The Elders transformed the Medicine Wheel project into an initiative that addressed the needs of the community in a truly holistic way.

As the story of the Seniors' Medicine Wheel program illustrates, things don't always turn out exactly as planned. Sometimes community initiatives veer off course and lose momentum, but other times, instead of fizzling out, they grow and transform into new, more meaningful projects that genuinely improve life for people in the community.

Summary

- Committed community members are the most essential resource that your project needs. People are often eager to contribute to their community, and by asking them to participate in your mental health promotion initiative, you are offering them something of value. Appreciate whatever level of commitment a person can make.

- Obtaining feedback is essential to: understanding community needs; generating interest; increasing awareness; improving your program; and finding out how your project is perceived.

- Recording your meetings will help to ensure that you to take action on your group's problem-solving, decision-making and brainstorming ideas, and will help you to evaluate the process of your initiative.

- There is often a difference between what you plan and what you actually do. The ability of your project to adapt to the changing issues and realities of the community is the best measure of successful implementation.

- Simply bringing people together can produce almost magical results. New ideas are born, new opportunities are seen, and a new belief in possibilities can take hold.

Tips
For Carrying Out Your Project

Focus on the positive. Notice what's going well, as well as what needs to be improved.

Try to recognize progress, even when the going is slow. Take satisfaction in the good things that happen, including your decision to act in the first place.

Keep people informed. Members of the group, your stakeholders and community members need to be kept apprised of progress and challenges. The more people know, the more they can contribute to the effort.

Recognize contributions and let people know they are valued. Make gestures to show people they're appreciated, e.g. certificates, acknowledgements, etc.

Acknowledge when things are going differently than planned, and discuss the change in direction with your group. Determine if it's a desirable change or not, and hence how to deal with it.

Distribute leadership. Different people can provide different forms of leadership that your group will need. Leadership is an action, or a set of actions, not a person. Because no one will be able to provide all the leadership necessary, it's a good idea to encourage all members of your group to take on leadership roles.

Checklist

- You have a plan for building the interest, leadership and commitment of other people.

- You anticipate some unexpected setbacks.

- You are respecting the different interests and time availability of your group members.

- You are managing conflicts constructively.

- You are taking action on the plans and decisions made by your group.

- You are recognizing contributions and letting people know they are valued.

- You are keeping people informed of what's happening in your project

Tools
Asking The Right Questions

Skillful questioning will help you to gather the information you need by encouraging people to give clear, full, and honest replies. There are several different things you should keep in mind when you are formulating your interview questions:

Open questions
If you want people to talk at length and give full, detailed answers, you should ask open questions, such as "What do you think the project has done to make the community a more welcoming place for people with mental illness?"

Closed questions

Closed questions elicit short, factual answers, usually expressed as yes/no, for example "DO you think the project has contributed to making the community a more welcoming place?"

If you require brief, factual information, then closed questions could be what you're looking for. If you want more detailed information, however, be careful to frame your questions in a way that will ensure that you get more than a yes/no answer.

Biased questions

Biased questions indicate the answer that the questioner wants, or expects, to hear. In other words, biased questions (sometimes called 'leading questions') are likely to bias the response by leading the person who answers in a particular direction, for example "Tell me how you think the project has been successful in making the community a more welcoming place . . . "

Asking the question this way assumes that the project has been successful, whereas that's exactly what you're trying to find out. Try to make sure the questions you ask are as neutral as possible, and that they don't lead the interviewee in a particular direction.

Multiple questions

Multiple questions contain more than one question. Multiple questions are likely to confuse, because the person being questioned will not know which question to answer, and probably will not remember each question. An example is "What has the project done to make the community a more welcoming place for people with mental illness, and could it have done more to promote inclusion?"

Making your questions as clear and straightforward as possible will help to ensure that you obtain the kinds of information you'll need to develop and evaluate your mental health promotion project.

Annotated Resource List

Community tool box. Chapter 10A, Section 4. Capturing what people Say: Tips for recording a meeting. Nagy, J. and Berkowitz, B. http://ctb.ukans.edu/ctb/c10as4.html

> This section of the Community Tool Box focuses on ways to record meetings effectively, to help community groups in planning and implementing initiatives. It discusses the advantages of recording meetings and presents different options for doing so. The section on "Recording Meetings" in this Tool kit was modeled on the Community Tool Box section

Community tool box. Chapter 10, Section 5. Building and sustaining commitment. Wadud, E. http://ctb.ukans.edu/ctb/c10s5.html

> The concept of commitment and why it is necessary to generate commitment to your project is the topic of this section of the Community Tool Box. The section provides a straightforward and comprehensive guide to help you build commitment to your initiative. Much of the information is summarized in this Tool kit's section on generating and sustaining commitment.

Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving In. Fisher, R. and Ury, W. London:Penguin, 1983.

> This bestseller on conflict resolution shows how conflict can be quite healthy if you can separate the people from the problem and focus on interests rather than on positions. This book will help you to identify unexpressed interests so that your group can create options that will benefit everyone.

When everyone's a volunteer: The effective functioning of all-volunteer groups. Sheier, I. Philadelphia, PA: Energize, Inc. 1992.

> This booklet written by an expert on building organizations with volunteer support. Sheier covers goal-setting, distributing work, getting members, working with no money, and cooperating with others. He also details a collection of group exercises and networking ideas.

Working collectively. Women's self help network. Courtenay, BC: 1990.

> Six British Columbia womens' collectives contributed material to this condensed, spiral-bound booklet on working in an atmosphere of democracy and cooperation. Using straightforward language, it covers decision-making and overcoming common problems, and provides tools to help ensure a happy and productive group. It is available from the ComoxValley Women's Resource Centre, PO Box 3292, Courtenay, BC V9N 5N4.

Chapter 5: Evaluating Your Program

Introduction

5.1 How to Evaluate

- WHAT is evaluation?
- WHY should you evaluate?
- WHO'S afraid of evaluation?
- HOW does participatory evaluation help?
- HOW will the results of your evaluation be used?
- WHAT are the different types of evaluation, and how are they used?
  a. process evaluation
  b. outcome evaluation

5.2 How To Evaluate

- HOW do you gather evaluation information?
- HOW do you evaluate your mental health promotion project:
  A review of main steps

Summary

Tips
- For Successful Evaluation

Checklist

Tools
- Sample Impact Questionnaire

Annotated Resource List

Introduction

How will you know whether your mental health promotion initiative is successful? And how will you measure success? These are the important questions that conducting an evaluation will help you to answer.

Traditional evaluation has often been seen as the domain of "experts", a particular and specialized form of research. As such, it has often emphasized on understanding and improving programs, but has not always reflected the interests and needs of people involved in those programs.

Evaluation concepts and methods can, however, be used to promote the empowerment and self-determination of participants. In this section we will focus on the basic information your group will need to conduct an effective and meaningful evaluation of your initiative.

5.1 About Evaluation

What is Evaluation?

Put simply, evaluation means making a judgement about the value of something - in our case, the value of a mental health promotion initiative. Evaluation is the process of assessing what has been achieved and how it has been achieved. It means looking critically at your mental health promotion project, working out what was good about it, what was bad about it, and how it could be improved.

When you evaluate your initiative, you are gathering information to help you draw conclusions about the efforts of your group. By using that information, you can decide what aspects of your plan are working, and which areas need improvement. You can then make any necessary changes to your action plans so that you will be more likely to reach your goals.

The evaluation information you gather can be used to improve your current initiative or the next community initiative you undertake, and can also be useful to help others who are trying to develop similar initiatives in other communities.

But there's more to evaluation than simply finding out if you did your job. It's also important to use your evaluation data to improve your initiative along the way. This is especially true of mental health promotion projects; it's essential that the process, as well as the outcome of your project promotes the mental health of those who are participating.

Why Should You Evaluate?

You need to be clear about why you are evaluating your work, because this will affect the way you do it and how much effort you put into it. It's a good idea to evaluate your mental health promotion initiative:

to improve your work

>   Completing evaluations helps you to build on your successes and learn from your mistakes. Evaluation can document your success with facts, figures and examples, which in turn will lead to more support and encouragement from the community.

>   Evaluation can also help to point out where you have fallen short of your goals, so that you will learn from your mistakes. Negative evaluations should be seen as an opportunity to learn about what works, not as a failure.

to help other people improve their work

>   It's important to think about and plan for disseminating your findings, or sharing the results of your initiative with others. Completing a thorough evaluation will help you to present your project in a way that will help other people learn from your experiences. It is important to publicize failures as well as successes, to prevent other people from repeating your mistakes.

to justify the use of resources

>   You will need to be accountable to those who provided your initiative with monetary or in-kind resources. Most funders require you to conduct a thorough evaluation as a part of your reporting procedure. A positive evaluation also provides evidence to support the case for doing mental health promotion work in the future.

to recognize the value of your work

Engaging in the process of evaluating your initiative gives you the satisfaction of knowing how useful or effective your work has been. Being able to see the success and value of your work will boost your spirits and motivate you to continue with your work.

to identify unexpected outcomes

Your mental health promotion initiative may produce some unplanned or unexpected outcomes. Whether those outcomes contribute or detract from the goals of your initiative, conducting a thorough evaluation will help you detect these outcomes and respond to them.

Who's Afraid of Evaluation?

Despite all of the benefits that evaluation can bring to your initiative, you may still meet with some resistance in carrying out an evaluation of your project In order to gain the greatest benefits from evaluation, you might have to overcome some common misperceptions about it.

Evaluation can be threatening to many people. Generally, their fears fall into three broad categories - "I don't know how", " I don't have time", or "The results might be negative and hurt us". All of these are valid concerns, but they shouldn't be so discouraging as to outweigh the benefits of doing an evaluation. Here are some responses to those concerns:

"I don't know how to do on evaluation. It's too complicated"

While it may be true that you don't have an extensive background in evaluation, you can still do a good job evaluating your mental health promotion initiative. This chapter will provide you with some practical ideas and tools to help you become familiar and comfortable with evaluation.

"I barely have time to keep track of the different activities in the project I don't have the time to do an evaluation on top of all the other things I have to do".

If you have gone through a careful and thorough planning process, you have already completed many of the tasks involved in conducting an evaluation. Once you begin to record the kinds of information you will need for your evaluation, it will become just a regular part of the everyday life of your mental health promotion initiative.

Although it can take some time to plan, an evaluation can end up saving you time by pointing out potential problems while they're still small, instead of waiting until they become disasters.

"What if the evaluation ends up being negative?"

Although this is a possibility, it is fairly unlikely if you start to evaluate early on, and pay attention to what the evaluation is telling you. Remember that any negative results you may find should actually be helpful to you, at least in the long run. They will help you to improve the overall quality of your mental health promotion initiative.

How Does Participatory Evaluation Help?

By incorporating participatory approaches into your evaluation, you will be able to overcome many of these common fears. Participatory evaluation is the direct involvement of group members and other stakeholders in a way that enables them to learn from their experience.

In participatory, or empowerment evaluation, participants work together to identify and implement appropriate criteria and methods for assessing the process and impact of their efforts. This approach has many potential benefits for mental health promotion projects. Participatory evaluation:

- legitimizes community members' experiential knowledge:
- recognizes the role that values play in carrying out evaluation research;
- empowers community members;
- demystifies the concepts and process of evaluation;
- enhances the relevance of evaluation data for communities.

Given the emphasis on participation in mental health promotion projects overall, the evaluation also needs to involve community participation. You will want to engage your members, community partners and stakeholders in designing and carrying out your evaluation and in disseminating your evaluation findings.

How Will the Results Of Your Evaluation Be Used?

Who will be using your evaluation data, and what will they do with it? The answer to this will no doubt affect the kinds of questions you ask, how much depth and detail you go into, and how you present the information you gather.

If you are conducting the evaluation solely for use by your own group, in order to find out how to improve a session or workshop for the next time, you could probably rely on observation and informal feedback as a means to assess how well it went. In most mental health promotion projects, however, the evaluation results will be shared with a wide range of community partners and networks, so a more formal component might also be necessary.

If you are writing a report for your funder, or a community agency that has supported your work, you will need to think through what questions those people will expect to be answered, and how much detail they will require.

The following tips might help you deal with questions about how to tailor your evaluation to so that it's useful for everyone who is interested in your results.

consider your stakeholders

> Now is a good time to think back to what we talked about in the section on planning your evaluation: Who are your stakeholders? What kind of information do they want to get out of the evaluation? Being clear on the answers to these questions is essential to devising an effective evaluation.

change the emphasis

> When you communicate the results of your evaluation, you can stress different aspects, depending on the needs and interests of your stakeholders. Whereas community members may be most interested in whether the participants felt the project was beneficial, your funding source might want to see if you reached all your objectives.

share your results broadly

> You should be prepared to share the results of the evaluation with all of your stakeholders, and potentially, anyone else who is interested in your project. We will talk

more about sharing your evaluation and other aspects of your project in the next chapter, Disseminating your Results and Ensuring Continuity.

What Are The Different Types Of Evaluation, And How Are They Used?

Although there are many different types of evaluation, we will highlight only two of them, process and outcome evaluation, because they are particularly relevant to community mental health promotion initiatives.

Process evaluation looks at the activities that take place during your mental health promotion initiative, to help you determine how well things are going. Documenting the implementation of your project by conducting process evaluation not only helps the operation of your program, but it can also help to make sense of the outcome evaluation.

Outcome evaluation is very important for mental health promotion initiatives, because it highlights the changes that happen in your community as a result of the work done by your mental health promotion initiative. These changes, which are tracked using outcome measures, can take several forms, including impacts on individual participants, and impacts on the broader community.

In this section we'll discuss why it's important to keep track of both process and outcomes in your evaluation.

A. Process Evaluation

The task of promoting mental health in your community is a complex one, and the immediate results of your efforts may not always be clear. It is often a challenge to frame mental health promotion projects in terms of outcomes, because many of the results of such projects are things like increased empowerment and self-determination - results that are very hard to measure in concrete terms.

Evaluating the process of your initiative, therefore, has special significance for mental health promotion, for it provides an alternative way of tracking your progress toward your objectives.

From the beginning of your initiative, you need to collect information that shows how you are doing in terms of fulfilling your objectives and reaching your goals - basically, whether you're on the right track. Collecting this information is part of process evaluation.

The information gathered through process evaluation serves a number of key purposes:

provides positive reinforcement

> Process evaluation provides the reinforcement that you'll need to keep your project going; there is nothing like positive feedback to boost your morale and that of your group members.

highlights errors

> It will reveal the errors and miscalculations that are bound to arise. Although it may seem threatening to have your mistakes highlighted in this way, the negative feedback that comes up through the course of the process evaluation can actually provide you with great insights, and help to ensure the quality of your project.

promotes self-analysis

> Process evaluation sets up a healthy climate of self-analysis and reflection that is essential in any community-based mental health promotion initiative. Sometimes it's helpful to set up regular review sessions, where you can monitor your progress on reaching the goals and objectives of your project.

provides a historical record

> If your project achieves good outcomes, those wishing to replicate it would need a clear description of exactly what was done, and how it was done. If your project does not achieve its objectives, keeping track of the implementation will help you to pinpoint why - whether your objectives were unrealistic, or whether the implementation did not go as planned.

keeps you on track

> Without conducting frequent internal checks, it's easy for community-based mental health promotion initiatives to lose their momentum and drift off target. Regular, informal evaluations at the end of meetings (How are we doing? Is everyone feeling well/being heard!) or even more formal (brief evaluation forms for participants) will help to keep your project on track.

B. Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation focuses on the impact your work is having on the participants and the community. It helps you to know if your work is effective, and if your have achieved the objectives you set out to at the beginning of your initiative. An outcome evaluation is most meaningful when contrasted with baseline measures, so that you have a point of comparison that allows you to gauge the impact your mental health promotion initiative has had on participants and on the broader community.

The information gathered through outcome evaluation serves a number of key purposes:

justifies use of resources

> Conducting an outcome evaluation helps you to justify the effort and resources that went into your project, and to demonstrate to the community, to the others who worked on it, and to the funding source, that it was worthwhile and effective.

demonstrates accountability

> Evaluating the outcomes of your project demonstrates that you are accountable to those who supported your initiative - the community (and perhaps funding agencies) contributed a lot into your project. Outcome evaluation provides you with a way of showing that they are getting something of value out of it.

5.2 How To Evaluate

How Do You Gather Evaluation Information?

Just as there are different types of evaluations to assess the various components of your project, there are also different ways of collecting the information you will need. Here is a brief overview of some common evaluation methods and what they work best for.

Interviews with key participants
(used for process and outcome evaluation)

> Conducting face-to-face interviews is one of the most effective ways of gathering detailed, information-rich data for your evaluation. Interviewing people will help your to capture people's experiences participating in activities, of their feelings of empowerment, of their sense of community, of well-being, and so on.

> Because people often express their views and opinions more easily orally then in writing, you will probably find that interviews generate a greater volume and depth of information than questionnaires or evaluation forms.

> For more information on conducting key informant interviews, please refer to the Community Tool Box, Chapter 3 I, Section 8: Interviews with key participants. http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c31/c31s8 or to other resources listed at the end of this chapter.

Focus groups
(used for process and outcome evaluation)

> A focus group is a small-group discussion guided by a trained leader. It is used to learn more about opinions on a certain topic, and then to guide future action.

> The group's composition and the group discussion are planned to create a comfortable environment where people will feel free to talk openly. Members are actively encouraged to express their opinions, and to respond to other members, as well as to questions posed by the leader.

> Because focus groups are structured and directed, but also expressive, they can yield a lot of information in a relatively short time. For more information on conducting focus groups, please refer to the Community Tool Box, Chapter 2, Section 4: Conducting Focus Groups http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c2/c2s4 or to other resources listed at the end of this chapter.

Participant observation
(used more for process evaluation)

> Participant observation allows you to gather information about how your project as it is actually happening, from the point of view of a participant. The participant is trained in writing descriptively, perceiving detail (and separating it from trivia), and recognizing the subjectivity of their own perceptions.

> Observational evaluation reports should be detailed enough that the reader develops an understanding of what happened, how it happened, and the context in which it happened.

The evaluation of the Inclusion project hinged on the role of the "site historian". In each of the project sites, a community member, usually a consumer/survivor, was selected and trained in participant observation, so that they could monitor and evaluate the process and outcomes of the project.

The site historians took part in an intensive training session, which included an overview of qualitative methods. In this training, which was provided by the CMHA national[1], site historians learned that their own observations and insights were an integral part of the overall project evaluation.

By using participant observation techniques, site historians were able to record the development and implementation of the project in a way that captured the nuances of the process in each site.

Event logs
(used more for process evaluation)

Event logs are written accounts of the activities of the initiative. They might also be used to record any changes in the community brought about by the initiative, such as new policies, programs, or practices related to the initiative's goals and mission.

An event log usually contains the following information:

- when the event took place;
- why it was important;
- what happened as a result
- who was involved;
- what organizations contributed people and resources.

The people who fill out event logs will be those members who are taking action on behalf of the initiative. The log should be completed soon after the event takes place, so that the details are still fresh in the mind of the person who is recording them. Thee event logs can then be given to the people in the group who are responsible for compiling evaluation information.

Questionnaires and surveys
(used mainly for outcome evaluation)

Questionnaires and surveys can be used when you need to get information quickly. They don't necessarily capture the same richness of detail as interviews, focus groups and participant observation, but they can be helpful in gathering baseline data and rating participant satisfaction.

You'll find an example of a participant satisfaction survey in the tools section at the end of his chapter.

Baseline data

A baseline provides you with a snapshot of the community at the beginning of your project. By collecting the same data several times through the life of your project, you will be, in essence, doing time-lapse photography. This will help you to see if changes came about in your community, and you'll have a better chance of knowing if those changes were a result of your project.

---

[1] For more information on the site historians' training, please contact the CMHA national office.

Some things you might measure with baseline data include numbers of partnerships, numbers of participants, etc.

This is not a separate strategy, but should be used when you are conducting questionnaires and surveys, and sometimes with interviews and focus groups.

How Do You Evaluate Your Mental Health Promotion Project?
A Review of The Main Steps

There are three main steps to developing the evaluation for your mental health promotion project:

- Clarifying your project goals and objectives;
- Developing your evaluation questions and select evaluation methods;
- Developing a framework for collecting evaluation data;

1. Clarifying your project goals and objectives

The first step in any evaluation is to clarify the goals and objectives of your initiative, for it will help you identify which components of your project should be evaluated.

You have probably already completed this step, if you've been following the planning model we've set out in this tool kit. Now is a good time to revisit those objectives, and see if they are still relevant. If you haven't yet set your goals and objectives, now would be a good time to consider the following questions:

- What are the main things you want to accomplish?
- How do you propose to accomplish them?

The kinds of things you'll want to keep track of in your mental health promotion initiative include the following:

- what you did to implement your initiative;
- the events and process of the initiative as it's happening;
- what the results of your project were.

2. Developing evaluation questions and selecting evaluation methods

The following questions[2] can be used as a template to develop evaluation questions for your mental health promotion project.

Did we do what we said we would do?
"WHAT?" (description of activities)

The responses to this question describe the work done in your project and the relevance of this work in meeting your project goals and objectives. Your objectives provide the criteria against which you measure success.

What did we learn about what worked and what didn't?
"WHY?" (reasons for success)

The answers to this question will tell you about people's perceptions of what worked well in your

---

[2] Adapted from the Program Evaluation Tool Kit: A Blueprint for Public Health. Ottawa: Ontario Ministry of Health. 1996 (see Annotated Resource List for more information.)

project and what didn't work well, so that you can take action to improve your efforts.

"What difference did it make that we did this work?
"SO WHAT?" (outcomes)

The answers to this question measure your project's success in changing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour. Again, your objectives provide the criteria against which you measure change both during and at the end of your project.

"What could we do differently?
"NOW WHAT?" (the future of this and other projects)

This question examines the challenges that your project presented, which often provide a rich learning opportunity.

How do we plan to use the evaluation findings for continuous learning?
"THEN WHAT" (use of evaluation results)

This question looks at how will you use your evaluation results throughout the project as well as at the end, and whom you will share them with.

If you think about your project in terms of the five questions, it should help you to design your process and outcome evaluation effectively, so that you capture the information you need, and it will help you choose the most appropriate methods for going about collecting that information.

3. Developing a framework for collecting evaluation data

The table below summarizes the different components of developing an evaluation framework. It combines information on evaluation questions and methods as well as timelines for collecting evaluation data.

You can use the table as a guide to help you through the process of developing a framework to evaluate your own mental health promotion project

Key Evaluation Questions For Your Project	Type Of Information Needed To Answer Questions	Method Used To Gather Information	Time Frame For Gathering Information
WHAT **Did we do what we said we'd do?** • What activities were undertaken, and how did they link to meeting project goals and objectives? • What were the major achievements of the project, and what resources did they require? • Did the objectives change during the project? How and why did they change?	**process and outcome measurements that describe the project's activities, including:** • community services provided - workshops, publications, communications... • community actions taken - to encourage change in the community • products of planning processes - written objectives, committees, action plans... • community resources and assets identified and used - grants, donations, in-kind resources... •	• event log • participant observation • observational data	• throughout

WHY **What did we learn about what worked and what didn't?** • Who participates? • Is the group diverse? • Do participants remain involved? • Why do people enter and leave your project? • Are community members satisfied that your project meets local needs? • What strategies worked well/didn't work well for involving community members? • What strategies worked best/didn't work best for broadening the base of community support? • Which strategies and activities did you change? Why? • How realistic and relevant were your project goals and objectives? • In what ways did the planning process work most effectively? • What did you learn about working together as a group?	**process and outcome measurements that examine reasons for success, including:** • people who participate - information on who participates, how often, why people leave • media coverage - publicity given to your initiative	• basic demographic data on participants, e.g. age, gender, economic status, ethnic background, disability, etc. • key informant interviews • focus groups • questionnaires and surveys • observational data	• throughout • beginning, middle and end of the project
SO WHAT? **What difference did it make that we did this work?** • What has changed as a result of the project? • What evidence is there to attribute any of attitudes, behaviours, policies, these changes to the project? • What evidence is there to attribute any of these changes to the project? • What other factors outside the project might through have contributed to these changes? • Have participants been involved in the entire	**process and outcome measures that examine outcomes, including:** • changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours, policies, practices.. .	• participant observation **baseline data gathered** • key informant interviews • focus groups • questionnaires and surveys	• throughout • end of project

process of the initiative, including defining the issue? • How has participants' mental health been promoted as a result of participation in the initiative? • Are participants satisfied with their experience? • Were there any negative results from participation in the initiative? • In what ways did the project contribute to increased community participation/ strengthening community capacity? • What new partnerships were developed in the project? • What was the nature of these partnerships, and what was their contribution? • Did the project have any negative results?			
NOW WHAT? What could we have done differently? • What effective ways fir achieving objectives emerged from this project? • What additional support and resources are required to do the work more effectively in the future? • What could be done to expand the network of people involved in the project? • Could the project have been better planned?	**process and outcome measures that examine outcomes, including:** • products of the planning process - action plans, evaluation plans	• key informant interviews • focus groups • questionnaires and surveys • event logs • participant observation	• end of project • throughout
THEN WHAT? How do we plan to use	**process and outcome measures that examine**		

evaluation results?	outcomes, including:		
• How were evaluation results used on an ongoing basis to contribute to the planning and implementation of the project? • How will final evaluation results be documented and disseminated? • How will evaluation results be used for renewed project planning?	• products of the planning process - dissemination plans • meeting reports	• participant observation • focus groups	• throughout

The framework for evaluating Inclusion in Community was based on the broad program goals, and was in place before the project actually got under way. A variety of measures were used to determine the success of each site's efforts, and the as well as the success of the project as a whole.

The project was evaluated according to key outcome measures such as:

• number of community partnerships formed;
• stakeholder participation in design and implementation of an action plan in each community;
• extent of shift in focus among participants from service model to community process model.

Outcome

Key indicators were evaluated using a number of measures such as pre and post-project questionnaires and focus groups of stakeholders. and end-of-project evaluation meetings in each site.

Process

A number of steps were taken throughout the course of the project in order to monitor the effectiveness of its ongoing activities. These included participant evaluations of workshops and meetings, written evaluation of the process by local participants and a continuing log of experiences, learnings and activities kept by a site historian.

Summary

Evaluation is a way of making sound decisions regarding the value and effectiveness of your mental health promotion program, to meet the requirements of funding sources, and to share information about your project with others.

The evaluation process takes place before, during and after the implementation of your project. If your evaluation is well planned and conducted, your findings will be extremely beneficial to all of your stakeholders.

Building community capacity is an important aspect of carrying out an evaluation. That's why it's crucial to involve community members and stakeholders in evaluation.

Using participatory approaches helps to overcome people's skepticism and resistance to evaluation. Participatory approaches will help your group choose appropriate evaluation methods, and will ensure that the evaluation takes place according to your plan.

The most important part of developing a useful evaluation is asking the right questions and presenting the results in such a way that they are useful and informative for all stakeholders.

Project evaluation should be careful and rigorous, so that it produces convincing results.

Evaluation results will often help to sustain and renew community initiatives. The information gathered in evaluation can be used to obtain resources, show how to improve, and offer an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments

If evaluation information shows the initiative to be successful, disseminating this information will help to sustain the effort.

Tips

Make evaluation part of your group's culture

Make a habit of asking what worked and what could be better in all aspects of your project. Consider doing a "check-in" to evaluate group process at the end of meetings. Evaluate the actions taken by your group.

Compare results with objectives

Is there a gap between what's happening and what you want to happen? If there is a persistent gap, you might consider revising your action plans and/or objectives.

Get feedback

Giving and receiving feedback on your evaluation creates an atmosphere of trust among your stakeholders; it keeps an evaluation on track by keeping everyone informed of how the evaluation is proceeding.

Follow up

Those who receive your evaluation findings will need some support in interpreting and using the results. Active follow-up will help to ensure that the learnings of your evaluation don't get lost or ignored.

Checklist

- You are using a mixture of process and outcome measures to evaluate your project.

- You have identified criteria or indicators that will provide ways to measure progress towards your objectives.

- You have collected data on each of these indicators.

- You are keeping track of project activities and events with an event log.

- You are prepared to share the results of your evaluation with your stakeholders and other interested individuals and groups.

Tools
Sample Participant Satisfaction Questionnaire

The following is a generic participant satisfaction questionnaire that you may want to use as a template to gather information to evaluate your mental health promotion project.

> We welcome your feedback on how (the name of your project) is doing to promote mental health in the community. You don't need to include your name. Your feedback will be confidential.
>
> For each item, please circle the number that best indicates your satisfaction with a particular aspect of the initiative. The results of this survey will be compiled by the Project's steering committee, and will be used to help us determine how effective the project has been so far, and what kind of changes we should make to improve the project for the future. Please provide additional comments if you wish.
>
> Thank you for your assistance with our questionnaire.

	(Very dissatisfied)				(Very satisfied)
Planning and implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Planning process used to prepare the project's goals and action plan					
Your personal experience as a member of the project					
Follow-through on project activities					
Comments					

	(Very dissatisfied)				(Very satisfied)
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Strength and competence of the project's leadership					

	(Very dissatisfied)				(Very satisfied)
Sensitivity to cultural issues					
Clarity of vision and goals of project					
Comments					

	(Very dissatisfied)				(Very satisfied)
Community involvement in the project	1	2	3	4	5
Participation of people from diverse backgrounds					
Participation of influential people from different sectors of the community					
Comments					

	(Very dissatisfied)				(Very satisfied)
Outcomes & progress towards goals the project	1	2	3	4	5
Success in generating resources for the initiative					
Progress in meeting the project's specific objectives					
Comments					

Overall, would you soy that the community is better of today because of the project?
Yes_____   No_____

Any further comments?

Thank you fir your assistance with this questionnaire. Please return it to (Name) in the enclosed self addressed, stamped envelope by (date).

This questionnaire was adapted from the Community Tool Box, Chapter 3 I, Section 4: Rating member satisfaction http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c31/c31s4 . To learn more about rating member satisfaction, please refer to that chapter.

Annotated Resource List

Community tool box. Chapter 30, Section 3 - Developing an Evaluation Plan. Hampton, C. http://ctb.lsi-ukans.edu/ctb/c30/c30s3 , Chapter 3 I, Section I. Measuring Success: Evaluating community initiatives. Whitman, A., and Wadd, E. http://ctv.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c31/c31s1

> These sections provide an overview of the reasons evaluation is an essential part of community initiatives, and should be considered from the beginning of the project. This Tool kit chapter draws on information contained in these two section of the Community tool box.

Empowering community health initiatives through evaluation. Fawcett, S. et al. Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and tools for self-assessment and accountability. Fetterman, D. and Kaftarian, S. (eds.)Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996.

> This chapter explores the concept of empowerment evaluation in the context of several community health initiatives. It outlines a conceptual framework, and illustrates the process of empowerment evaluation using case studies. It concludes with a discussion of the challenges and opportunities of empowerment evaluation.

Evaluation methods sourcebook 1& 2. (I 990 & 1995) Canadian Evaluation Society. 582 Somerset ST. W., Ottawa, ON. K I R 5K2 Tel. (6 13) 230- I007 Fax (6 I 3) 237-9900 http://www.unites.uqam.ca/ces/ces-sce.html

> These two books contain information that covers a wide variety of issues relevant to community initiatives, from conducting evaluation with limited human and fiscal resources to information on writing up the results of your evaluation.

Evaluation of health promotion, health education, and disease prevention programs. 2nd edition Windsor, R, et al. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1994.
> This book is intended for public health practitioners and trainees to develop their skills at planning, implementing and evaluating programs in different health promoting settings. Topics include promoting organizational change, qualitative process evaluation, evaluating effectiveness, data collection methods, and cost analysis.

How to use qualitative methods in evaluation. 2nd edition. Quinn Patton, M. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987.

> This text provides a comprehensive introduction on the use of qualitative methods in evaluation. It contains sections on deciding when to use qualitative methods, designing qualitative evaluations, and analyzing and interpreting qualitative data. Part of an excellent series on evaluation by Sage Publications called the Program Evaluation Kit.

Knowing your community, showing your community. Community Resources.

> This US-based organization has just developed a participatory community assessment method. It is a very useful tool for participatory empowerment evaluation efforts with urban and disadvantaged communities. Available from: Community Resources, 5 I3 I Wetheredsville Rd. Baltimore, MD. 21207, Tel: (410) 4480640, Fax (410) 448-0874 http://www.communityresources.org/naturalresourcean.html

Pathways to a healthy community: An indicators and evaluation tool kit. Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition. 1999.

> The OHCC has developed a tool kit to assist community groups and coalitions in choosing an appropriate tool for developing indicators and/or conducting an evaluation of

their initiative. The kit provides user-friendly evaluation methods and indicators with information on their specific applications. Available from OHCC 1900-180 Dundas St.W. Toronto, ON M5G 1Z8. Tel: (416) 408-4843 I Fax: (416) 408-4843.
Email: ohcc@opc.on.ca

The Empowerment evaluation institute

The Institute is devoted to developing and applying empowerment and self-evaluation activities. Empowerment evaluators can serve as coaches, helping others to evaluate their own programs and improve program practice. Contact: Andy Rowe, ARC.& Plank Rd. PO. Box 155, Stn C. St John's NF A1C 5J2 Tel: (709) 754-2065/ Fax: (709) 754-6303 / E-mail: arc@nf.sympatico.ca

The program evaluation tool kit: A blueprint for public health. Ottawa: Ontario Ministry of Health. 1996.

This practical, step-by-step guide to evaluating programs is presented in a series of short modules with simple explanations and specific tools. It includes examples from health promotion programs, and worksheets for each step both in hard copy and on disk.
An order form can be obtained from Debora Dover at the Ontario Ministry of Health: doverde@rmoc.on.ca Tel: (613) 724-4122 x3752 / Fax: (613) 724-4152.

Chapter Six: Disseminating Your Results And Ensuring Continuity

6.1 Disseminating Your Results

- WHAT is dissemination?
- WHY disseminate your results?
- WHO are your key audiences?
- HOW do you get the word out?
    - giving presentations
    - working with the media
    - other ways of getting the word out

6.2 Ensuring Continuity

- WHY should you ensure continuity?
- HOW do you ensure continuity?
- WHO can you work with to ensure continuity?

Summary

Tips
- For Disseminating Your Results and Ensuring Continuity

Checklist

Annotated Resource List

Introduction

You've finally completed your evaluation, and you've got lots of information about your initiative, about the perceptions and practices around your mental health issue in your community.

You can begin by using the information to improve your project, but there are many other people beyond your immediate group members and community partners who would be interested to hear about your results.

Sharing your results with a variety of people, both within and outside your community will help you gain the support and raise the awareness of a broad range of people - far beyond those you were able to reach through the day-to-day operation of your project.

This support and awareness, in turn, will provoke thinking and discussion about the mental health issue you've been working on, which will help you to nourish and maintain your efforts in the community.

This section gives you some guidelines on how to best present evaluation results to various audiences, and how to decide what those audiences will be. We also discuss ways of sustaining the work of your initiative and making it part of the ongoing life of the community.

6.1 Disseminating Your Results

What is Dissemination?

Dissemination is the process of communicating the lessons learned from the project and evaluation to relevant audiences in a way that is timely, honest and consistent. It means getting

the word out to all those who were involved in and supported your project. The strategy you'll use to disseminate your results should be designed in advance with your stakeholders and community partners.

Why Disseminate Your Results?

It's important to share the learnings of your mental health promotion project with as many different audiences as possible. Disseminating information about your project, including your evaluation findings, helps to:

- provoke thinking and discussion about the issues you're working on;

- encourage others to take action on the issue;

- attract volunteers, funding and in-kind resources from local citizens and agencies;

- maintain and renew interest and commitment to your project;

- raise the profile of your efforts, and lets people know what you've been doing to improve the
- quality of life for people in your community;

- establish a network of people and agencies with similar goals;

- encourage community partnerships to promote mental health.

Who Are Your Audiences?

Those who have supported your work in the community should be the first to know about your findings. Volunteers, funders, and others who have contributed to your efforts need to be kept up-to-date on your group's efforts and successes.

Sharing your results beyond the individuals and groups immediately involved in your efforts will help to raise interest and awareness of your mental health issue more widely. Some of the key groups that you might want to share your findings with will include:

- civic organizations;
- grassroots and advocacy organizations;
- business groups;
- church groups;
- the local press;
- health and social service agencies;
- elected and appointed local government officials;
- funding agencies.

How Do You Get The Word Out?

The best way to begin your dissemination strategy is to identify a variety of different avenues for getting the word out about your project. Some of these may include:

- **giving presentations** - to community members, local agencies, local politicians, civic and business groups, service clubs, etc;

- **working with the media** - newspapers, radio and television;

- **other ways of getting the word out:**

  - writing reports
  - creating newsletters
  - using the internet to create a website for your project,
  - accessing professional journals by collaborating with university or college based research teams.

In this section we explore the different avenues of dissemination, so that you can decide on the best way to get the word out about your mental health promotion project.

The plan for disseminating the final results of the Inclusion project was built in from the very beginning, and was included in the initial project proposal. A substantial component of the project itself involved documenting the experiences of the project as it unfolded in different communities.

In the 'Guide to Local Action', the resource guide developed by the participants and project staff, each site presented its own discussion of how the participants felt they had done in reaching the goals they set for themselves, as well as the overall goals set by CMHA National.

The guide tells the story of the different communities as a way to encourage others to create their own inclusion projects. Each site's section included participants' own reflections on their work: what worked, what didn't and why. These reflections form the basis of the broader analysis of the common issues raised in the sites. Each site also includes a short synopsis of the results of its Inclusion project.

A Guide to Local Action was distributed nationally to CMHA Branches and Divisions, as well as many other community groups. The inclusion project was featured in several newsletters, such as Community Action, the magazine of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, CMHA branch and division news-letters, and consumer/survivor newsletters.

Giving Presentations

Presenting information on your project in person can be a very effective way of getting the word out. You can tailor the information and the style of your presentation so that it is interesting to a variety of different audiences.

Thinking through the goals of your presentation will also help you to plan effectively. What do you hope to achieve through your presentation? How can you best present your information to get those results?

Here is a list of potential goals for your presentation:

- money and in-kind donations for your project;
- volunteers for project activities;
- input on how to make your initiative more responsive;
- influence in changing a program, policy or practice;
- overcoming resistance to your initiative;
- ideas on how the initiative can be more effective.

It's best to develop a presentation format that can be lengthened or shortened depending on the amount of time available, and type of audience you will be presenting to. Remember to include information on:

- the mental health issue your project addressed;

- the goals and strategies of your initiative;
- the events and activities that your group carried out;
- your group's accomplishments;
- the outcomes of your efforts.

There are a variety of formats you can use to present your information. Depending on the goals of the presentation, and the crowd you'll be addressing, you can choose the one that best suits your needs. Here are a few suggestions of different approaches you could use:

Formal presentations are most affective and appropriate when you are addressing a large group, or a group that you haven't yet developed a relationship with. A formal presentation doesn't have to be a lecture, even if you will be doing most of the talking. Engage people's interest by using audiovisuals and other graphics.

Casual, conversational presentations would work well with smaller groups, and with those who are already familiar with the efforts or your initiative. Involve your audience by making your presentation interactive, and by arranging the seats in a circle instead of in rows.

Mentoring is an alternative way of presenting information on your project. Mentoring involves sharing the results and learnings of your project with other communities in order to stimulate people to develop unique initiatives.

You could invite people in an interested community to visit your project, and learn about your mental health promotion efforts on site. In this way, you could begin to establish mentoring relationships that will stimulate new ideas and innovations in your own and other communities.

Tips For Presenting Your Results Effectively

Understand your audience

What information does a particular audience need, and why do they need it? Try to understand the audience's viewpoint, and be sure to make the presentation to them in time for it to be useful.

Have a key spokesperson from your group present your findings

Make sure the person who your group selects knows your project inside and out, and took part in the evaluation. The presenter should be at ease in front of a group as well as comfortable with the content of the presentation.

Ask someone from outside your group to present your findings

Some audiences may initially be less than receptive to your findings, especially if they are critical of their group. If you are presenting to a challenging group (e.g. particularly uninformed or potentially hostile), it might be helpful to have someone from outside your initiative relay your findings. You try to get a member of that group on side and ask them to present the information.

Repeat key information

Hearing important information more then once will help your audience to better understand your findings.

Keep your cool
You may be confronted by difficult audience who does not immediately recognize the value of your efforts. Do your best to remain calm, professional and cordial.

Working With The Media

If you want to expand the number of people who know what you're doing, you need to get noticed. This usually means working with the media. Besides informing a larger public, the media can empower people, nudge politicians, and add momentum to your mental health promotion initiative.

When you understand the media, you can mental health public issues that are being ignored, and reframe those issues from a citizen's perspective. Be careful, however, if you are not used to dealing with the media. Some journalists may look for stories rooted in conflict, and may impose a confrontational agenda that can actually make it more difficult to move ahead with your mental health issue.

The following are some suggestions to help you make contact with local media, and work with journalists to share the results of your project.

Find the media professionals in your community

> Seek help from the people in your community who work for newspapers, radio and television stations. They can provide advice on what is newsworthy, how to get attention, and who to call.

Assemble a list of sympathetic journalists who care about community building

> Note their deadlines so you can call after a deadline.

Issue news releases

Send out a news release if you have fresh information you wish to publicize.

- Create your own letterhead, and send out your news releases on this letterhead with "For immediate release" and the date written at the top of the page.

- Create a strong newspaper-like headline that will interest an editor who has to shuffle through hundreds of news releases every day.

- The first sentence should contain the most important fact in your story. The rest of the release should cover the essentials of who, what, where, when and why. Don't forget to include a contact name and phone number for more information.

- Keep the whole thing short - 1-2 pages double-spaced. For big events send out a news release seven days prior, then telephone a reminder a few days before the event takes place. It's best to send a release after having made personal contact with the person who will be receiving it. For more on preparing press releases, see the Community Tool Box, Chapter 4, Section 2: Preparing press releases http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c4/c4s2

Organize a media event

A press conference is a media event in which you essentially present a statement, answer questions or make announcements to a group of people who represent different media outlets. Press conferences can be helpful in getting the word out quickly, to a broad audience. To generate interest, invite some high profile community members and local politicians to attend the event. For more on press conferences, see Community Tool Box Chapter 4, Section 7: Arranging a press conference http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c4/c4s7

Tips For Working With The Media

Define your objective, then your message

Don't rush off to the media without a clear idea of what you want to accomplish. Have a set of clear messages ready that you wish to project. If you intend to air a problem, one of your messages should suggest a reasonable solution.

Make actions newsworthy

To get media attention you need to tell a good story with a human focus which is happening now. The more creative, colourful and humorous, the better you coverage will tend to be. Getting noticed is largely a matter of dramatizing the issue.

Link your actions to other news events

Your actions will stand a better chance of being covered if they tie into other events in the news: holidays, local festivals, conferences, mental health week, government announcements, world events, hot issues, etc.

Don't rely on the media to educate

The mass media prefer to entertain. If you want to get out detailed information, you will probably have to do it yourself through newsletters and bulletins.

Practice your blurb

For regular TV and radio news you will have 15-30 seconds to make a statement. Practice what you want to say before the event!

Be honest with reporters

It's essential that any spokesperson for your group to have credibility with the press. Be sure to answer questions simply and candidly, and if you can't answer a certain question, explain why you can't, and tell them you will try to find out the information and get back to them. Most reporters will appreciate your honesty.

Try to get on live radio and TV shows

If you can get on a live show you will actually shape the news, because you won't be edited as you would on regular pre-recorded shows, or in the newspaper. Choose a good spokesperson, who has thought in advance about what they want to say.

Write a Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor of a small, community-run newspaper is an easy way to get publicity. Small papers will publish almost any reasonable letter that doesn't require a lot of fact checking.

Take advantage of other kinds of announcement.

Community bulletin boards run by local radio and cable stations will often announce your event Public service announcements (PSA's) on radio and TV offer another opportunity. Contact specific stations for details.

Consider alternative media

Buttons, window signs, posters, notices in laundromats.. these are all great ways of getting the word out.

To promote the project more widely, Helping Skills staff issued media releases at strategic points -- when the volunteers had completed their training and were beginning to work in their communities, and when the project was wrapping up, participants reflected on the experience of using their new skills. It was the volunteers that the media wanted to talk to, and several agreed to interviews that were widely broadcast.

Staff also organized an open house and news conference to announce the granting of phase 4 of the project, which was attended by the Provincial Minister of Health and the Minister of Human Resources and Employment, both of whom made statements applauding the program.

Other Ways Of Getting The Word Out

Writing reports

Your final report can be a short document summarizing the evaluation findings with an appendix for those who are interested, or a longer, more detailed report that covers all aspects of the project, much like a funding proposal. Depending on your audience, you may simply want to highlight the results, or you may want to go into more detail about what you found.

For a formal report, for funders or other community partners, begin with a summary of your project, addressing the following information:

- a statement of the problem, goal, or opportunity your project addresses;

- a description of the community context, which lists the important features of your community, including social and economic conditions, history, geography, politics, descriptions of previous attempts to address the issue, etc;

- your expectations, or your project's intended results;

- project activities, or everything that was done to bring about changes;

- project resources - the time, human and financial and in-kind resources, and other assets available to conduct program activities;

Following the summary, list the reasons your evaluation was done, what questions were asked, and why those were the questions chosen. Explain what your group wanted to learn from the evaluation and what methods were used to conduct the evaluation.

If you are writing a report for your funder, make sure to consult their guidelines. They may have a particular format they would like you to follow in presenting your results.

Creating newsletters

Newsletters are great tools for communicating information about your project both internally and externally. You can create your own newsletter, or use the networks of another group, and write an article in their newsletter.

A well-designed and written newsletter will show how well-organized your group is, and will help keep your members and colleagues up-to-date on your activities.

Newsletters can be particularly helpful in disseminating information about your project because they can reach a broad audience, but they do take money and skill to do well. For more information on creating newsletters, please see the Community Tool Box, Chapter 4, Section 9: Newsletters people will read. http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c4/c4s9\

Using the internet

The internet is gaining importance daily as a means of sharing information and gaining publicity. The internet is an indispensable resource for community projects for several reasons: it provides an access to a great deal of free and low-cost information that will help you implement your project; and it provides an almost unlimited network for you to use to get the word out about you project.

Local high school and college students may have the skills necessary to help you set up a website for your project for next to nothing. Get in touch with teachers and students to find out if they can help you get your project on-line.

Accessing professional journals

If you have been collaborating with community college or university-based researchers, you might be interested in working with them to write an article for a professional journal, which would help you to share your results with the academic community.

In addition to contributing to the Guide to Local Action, the participants in each Inclusion site also focused on creating their own dissemination networks, to communicate information about their individual project both within their own community and beyond.

The dissemination strategy developed in each site reflected the uniqueness of their particular project. The Forest site used several strategies to disseminate their learnings. They took their show on the road to neighbouring communities, where they shared their role plays with a variety of different groups, and they also produced a video of the role plays, so that it could be sent out to communities that they couldn't visit in person.

6.2 Ensuring Continuity

Planning for continuity and sustainability means more than simply keeping your project going, it also refers to the practices, values and relationships that become permanently entrenched in individuals, groups, organizations, and the community at large as a result of your project. It ensures that the positive changes your project has brought about will have a lasting effect.

Why Should You Ensure Continuity?

Seeing the work your project has accomplished flourish and continue in your community is undoubtedly one of your goals. You have worked hard to organize, gather information and resources, raise awareness and interest, and make positive change in your community. You have created something of value, and you don't want to see it disappear.

How Do You Ensure Continuity?

Your goal in planning for continuity is to convince people and institutions to make long-term commitments to promoting mental health, a concept that is not easy reducible to tangible products and services.

That means you have to take a step back from the daily details of running your project and look at the big picture. This will allow you to compile some solid evidence that your efforts are worth people's continued support.

Answering the following questions will help your group prepare to approach people in your community and beyond to begin or renew their support for your efforts.

What have you accomplished to far?

It's a good time to step back and survey how far you've come. By seeing your successes and reexamining your mistakes, you will better understand where you are and where you're going.

Is the community behind your efforts to sustain the initiative?

Is there ongoing enthusiasm and excitement about your project in the community? Do community members feel strongly enough to continue to support your efforts?

Have your goals and objectives changed?

Your group came together originally because you wanted to take action on a certain mental health issue in your community. Is your group still pursuing the same goal? Has the focus of your project shifted?

You might need to re-examine your objectives at this point, to see if they are consistent with your current focus and activities.

How have you promoted you efforts?

What kind of publicity has your project received? Who knows about you? What have you done to spread the word about your efforts?

How is your initiative structured?

Do you have a number of committed members? Do you have regular meetings? Have you developed policies about how meetings should run?

Once you've answered all these questions, you'll be prepared to approach a variety of people and organizations to ask them to work with you to sustain the work your initiative has accomplished.

Who Can You Work With To Ensure Continuity?

Disseminating your findings broadly not only ensures that your mental health promotion project has high visibility in the community and beyond, but it also helps to ensure that your project continues beyond the funding or pilot period, and becomes a part of the life of the community.

There are several potential sources of support, including local citizens' associations and institutions, that can play a role in establishing your initiative as a part of community life.

Citizen associations

One way of ensuring that your initiative has an ongoing identity and presence in the community is to become associated with a recognized citizen organization. This association could also result in additional funding for your group. A variety of citizen groups already exist in most communities, including service clubs such as Rotary and Kiwanis, local business associations such as the Chamber of Commerce, and self-help groups.

By affiliating with a local citizen association, your mental health promotion project could benefit enormously from the credibility and connections that that association has developed in the community. It would allow your project to gain committed and growing support from within an established organization, while at the same time not jeopardizing the non-service orientation of mental health promotion efforts.

Service agencies

Organizations such as health and social service agencies can also be powerful community partners. They often have access to many networks and resources that could benefit your project, and could themselves benefit greatly from the learnings of your project.

There are, however, a number of caveats to forming these relationships. Professional service systems are designed to facilitate professional-client relationships. While these relationships are useful in many circumstances, they do not reflect a mental health promotion approach, in which people define and control the methods and direction of community work. The agency may want the initiative to be staffed by one of its professionals, a move that might open the door for service-oriented methods to take over the community development approaches that are integral to mental health promotion efforts.

If you plan to affiliate with local institutions, you will need to make a special effort to use the language and methods of mental health promotion and to avoid the language and methods of agencies and services.

The Community Health Boards, the primary community partner in the Helping Skills project, recognized the value of the informal capacity building dimension of the project. At the end of the pilot, both of the Health Boards made the commitment of resources to sustain the existing groups and deliver further training.

The participants who became involved in Phase 4 of the Helping Skills program had clear ideas of how they would use their learning upon returning to their agencies. This indicated the commitment of these agencies to implementing the project.

There were community mental health workers who planned to share their new skills with volunteers and clients. There were public health nurses who planned to deliver the program to other rural nurses. There was a prison social worker who would offer the training to prison guards. In this way, the learnings of the project became a part of the culture of a variety of community associations and institutions.

Summary

Disseminating your results is an essential part of implementing your mental health promotion project. Sharing your results broadly is beneficial to your project in many ways.

Community partners should be involved in helping to plan a dissemination strategy early in the life of the project. You can access the networks of your community partners to help you

disseminate your results.

You can communicate your results in a variety of ways, according to the background and interests of your audience. The format and content of your presentation can be adapted, to ensure that it is relevant and appropriate for your audience.

The relationships that are created over the course of your mental health promotion project will continue for as long as benefit all the partners involved. In all of the sample projects, many participants continue to contribute time, energy and resources to the project, although the funded, pilot stage has ended.

Planning for sustainability is a process that should be a part of the overall planning of the project, Planning is important because it focuses on the set of steps that you will need to go through to reach your ultimate goal, a lasting improvement in people's mental health.

To ensure that your mental health promotion initiative maintains its identity as citizen-guided, rather than service-oriented, affiliate with community organizations that share a community-building orientation.

Tips
For Disseminating Your Findings And Ensuring Continuity

So what?

Be sure to explain what kind of implications your results will have both for your group, for the community at large, and beyond.

What do you want me to do about it?

If your evaluation results have led you to any particular conclusions or recommendations about what your group or others should do in the future, explain how you arrived at your conclusions.

Prove it!

Support your recommendations with evidence gathered through your evaluation. Pithy quotes from participants can be just as powerful an indication of success as numbers.

Use your networks

Your community partners and stakeholders have their own networks of connections. Ask them to help you get in touch with as broad an audience as possible by piggybacking on their networks.

Anticipate people's questions, concerns and objections

Think ahead about how a particular audience might react to your findings. Be prepared to respond with calm, logical, thoughtful and thorough answers to their questions and concerns.

Give your results to the right people

You don't want all your hard work to end up buried under a pile of papers on the wrong person's desk. When you're sending out the report, put it to the attention of a particular person, and follow-up to see that they received it.

Address issues which those people will find important

Make sure to take into consideration the type of group you're information to and tailor your presentation to that audience.

Present the information in time for it to be useful

If you wait too long to inform people, they will lose interest. Get the word out while there's still a buzz happening, and while it's fresh in people's minds. Sometimes funders require a report within certain amount of time after the funding period ends. Make sure to stick to that date.

Make sure the information is clear and easily understood

Present your information in such a way that someone who had never previously heard of your project would understand. Avoid using jargon, and tell the story clearly, beginning with a summary of the project.

Get the support of community leaders.

Having credible, high profile community leaders behind your project will go a long way towards getting your efforts noticed and welcomed as a part of the life of your community.

Checklist

- You have organized your evaluation data in a clear and straight forward manner that will be easily understood even by those who are unfamiliar with your project.

- You have supported the-conclusions drawn from your findings with evidence.

- You have shared your results with your members, community partners and stakeholders.

- You have used your community networks to disseminate your results broadly

- You have used a variety of mediums and methods to disseminate the learnings of your project.

- You have gained the commitment and support of community leaders.

- Your group has reviewed its goals, objectives and accomplishments, and feels that your project continues to be relevant and beneficial to the community

- Your community perceives the need for and supports your efforts to sustain your project.

- You have contacted a number of local citizen associations and community agencies to discuss ways of sustaining your project.

Annotated Resource List

Community tool box. Chapter 32, Section 3: Communicating information about the initiative to gain support from key audiences. Hampton, C. http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/ctb/c32/c32s3

> Contains straightforward and practical information on how to communicate evaluation results strategically to benefit your initiative.

Community tool box. Chapter 25, Section 2: Making friends with the media. Whitman,A.
http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edulctblc25/c25s2

> This section of the Community Tool Box provides information on how to develop a
> positive relationship with the media that will benefit your project. It gives a list of the pros
> and cons of different mediums to help you choose the best to increase the public's
> awareness of your group.

Community tool box. Chapter 36, Section I : Planning for the institutionalization of an initiative.
Krammer, R. http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edulctblc25lc25s2

> This section of the Community tool box discusses the considerations and issues that are
> part of planning to sustain a community initiative over the long run.

Media advocacy and public health: Power for prevention. Wallack, L. et al. Newbury Park,
CA: Sage Publications, 1993.

> This book considers media advocacy a blend of science, politics and activism that
> produces responsible media coverage and social revolution. It presents skills and
> strategies that serve community interests, especially in community health.

Prime time activism: Media strategies for grassroots organizing. Ryan, C. Boston, MA:
South End Press, 1991.

> PrimeTime Activism analyzes why grassroots organizations have a hard time gaining a
> hearing in mainstream media. It details how mainstream media's addiction to sound bites,
> their criteria of newsworthiness, their daily news gathering routines and their professional
> training and values marginalize grassroots groups while favouring powerful institutions.

> The author brings many years of practical experience to her topic and stresses a long-
> term media strategy for grassroots organizations. The book includes information on areas
> such as: planning a media strategy, mainstream notions of what's newsworthy, how to
> create news leads, and how to get into reporters' "golden rolodex". Ryan effectively
> shows how developing a long-term relationship with a reporter can provide insight into
> the reporter's slant, and therefore assist groups in getting the story "spin" they want to
> achieve their objectives.