Macro Practice for Community and Organizational Change

MACRO PRACTICE FOR COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Necessity of Acknowledging Context

This is a book on community and organizational change, so knowing and acknowledging the context of my work feels important and relevant. So much of the context for community work includes tragic history and the strengths and resilience of the people who have survived unthinkable intentional acts at the hands of oppressors who abused their power often for hundreds of years. It is baked into the fabric of our communities and incorporated into the DNA of our children. My community is no exception, so it needs to be acknowledged. If ignored, because it is too hard to hear, then expect to be less effective in your work. Period.

As I am a settler in the region where I live and work, there are a few critical place-based and people-based acknowledgments that I need to make in order to provide some context for this text.

My Community

Figure 0.1 Young woman and Hmong paj ntaub (story cloth); photo by Ivy Vainio

These images reflect the beauty of the community that I call 'home.' It is rich with stories, recent and past, and filled with people who are active in creating the community that they want to live in—one in which they feel welcomed and able to thrive and lead.

Region as Home to the Anishinaabe

I am writing this book from the shores of Lake Superior, in a region that is the current home to the Anishinaabe people[1]. Specifically, we are located in the treaty-ceded territory of the 11 Ojibwe Tribes of Minnesota and Wisconsin. As identified in the treaties, particularly from 1854, the Nations ceded the land in northern

1. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. www.glifwc.org

Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, but retained the rights to hunt, fish, and gather in the ceded territories[2]. This agreement must be honored and remains critical to health and healing.

This knowledge is critical for any of us who work or live in the Upper Midwest, as it helps us to understand the life-giving Manoomin (wild rice); the enormous cost of the tragedy of the Sandy Lake Massacre, and the horrifying actions preceding the massacre; the legacy of the boarding school era on families and communities; the reality of missing and murdered Indigenous people; the necessity of food sovereignty; the ingenuity of culturally-relevant human service strategies; the importance of language revitalization as empowerment and resilience, and so much more.

Figure 0.2 Manoomin harvesting; photo by Ivy Vainio

Region as Site of Community Violence

I am also writing this book from a community that engaged in an incident of lynching during the Jim Crow era of three African American men over 100 years ago[3]. A mob of 6-10,000 people came together in a matter of hours to murder three African American men who were in Duluth, Minnesota with a traveling circus. Clearly, the circumstances of hate and tension already existed when the men were wrongly accused of raping a white woman was made. Just think….the mob was gathered primarily by word-of-mouth as people drove around the city exclaiming that they needed to take justice into their own hands.

2. http://glifwc.org/TreatyRights/

3. Duluth Lynchings: Resources Related to Tragic Events of June 15, 1920. www.mnhs.org

Figure 0.3 Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial; photo by Fibonacci Blue

Often people are very surprised to know that this occurred in such a Northern state, far from the Jim Crow South. This is a part of the myth of the progressive North.

So. . . what is the history of your community that shapes the context for your work?

My Help and Inspiration

In addition, I want to recognize some of the people who have individually assisted or inspired my work. This includes former social work students like Vanessa Sowl, who read through this text and provided critical honest feedback; my amazing niece, Kate, who worked most closely with me to edit the entire text; Jax Kobielus and Sara Valentiuk ,the technically talented and very kind copy editors at UW-Superior who edited and polished the entire draft; the staff at the UW-Superior Markwood Center for Learning, Innovation & Collaboration (Emily, Stephanie, Del, Travis, Jamie, Natasha); my closest friends—Emily, Patty, Shari, Dana, Sandra, Erik, Kevin—who were endlessly encouraging; more friends, community organizers and mentors like Carl Crawford, LeAnn Littlewolf, Nevada Littlewolf, Ivy Vainio, Treasure Jenkins, Emma Carroll, Henry Banks, Steve O'Neil, Erik Peterson, Denny Falk, Jenny VanSickle, Matt DeCarlo and many more who I have learned from and been challenged by in necessary ways over the years; amazing coworkers at UW-Superior (Mimi, Mandy, Cherie, Haji, T, Laurel, Kennedy, Salisa, Ina, Rachel Rachel…), all the amazing changmakers at Ashoka who I recently became connected with and of course my family—Mom (Kathy), Brother (Richard), Eric, Ian, Cy, and Cal. It wasn't important that they understood what I was working on, but I did need the encouragement and space for me to do my 'thing.'

Finally, I am inspired by the youth! All change-making efforts should keep youth at the center of our work. We have an opportunity and responsibility to shape the world in which they can be their authentic selves and live out the dreams they have for themselves and their families.

Figure 0.4 Photograph by Ivy Vainio

MOTIVATIONS FOR THE TEXT

"In the 75 years since the United Nations was founded, the human race has never had to face a set of challenges like we do right now. But together, we can overcome them".

-Urgent Solutions for Urgent Times (2020)

What are my motivations?

I began writing this text on the one-year anniversary of the Insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. The dramatic and tragic event is a fitting backdrop to a text on community and organizational change. It is also fitting that I am currently quarantining with one of my family members who tested positive for COVID a few days earlier; as these are some of the intense stressors of our times.

The anniversary has been sharing the headlines all week with COVID-related news which has been focused on the Omicron variant and spike in cases. It feels like around the globe we have been in a slow-moving storm for the past two years, which has shown minor signs of letting up but is constantly in the atmosphere above us. As I peruse the daily print and online news, the headlines are focused on multiple storylines that have dominated the news for over a year.

So, I am primarily motivated by the urgent and complex problems that are dominating the headlines and getting my attention.

I am also motivated by the value of ***Ubuntu***, which I was first introduced to by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) in *No Future without Forgiveness*[1]. He says, "A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who

1. Tutu, D. (1999). No future without forgiveness. New York: Doubleday.

they are (pg. 31).” The value of *ubuntu* expresses our connected humanity, and serves as an inspiration and motivation to me in my life and work. If my neighbors are suffering then I cannot be thriving.

Today’s urgent problems I am paying attention to

The current problems are wicked and vexing, which demands innovation and collaboration. That makes me excited; and slightly overwhelmed. Most of us could identify some of the most critical problems of our day and likely come up with similar lists. We may use different terminology but the problems would likely be similar.

So, here are some of what I consider the top problems of today that seem to dominate the headlines, our conversations, the meetings I go to, and my thoughts. You may not share the same observations of current issues but it is important that I share mine.

- Climate crises and weather catastrophes impacting communities across the globe and causing unprecedented migration
- Mental health and substance abuse crises, particularly with youth and young adults who are languishing and feeling disconnected
- Housing instability and income and wealth inequality, which are rooted in pervasive systemic racism and capitalism
- Unfettered criminal justice system and need for police reform
- Policy discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, especially trans and gender-nonconforming youth
- Land and water rights, Indigenous rights, and food sovereignty
- Voting rights and challenges to foundations of democracy
- Healthcare access, especially for reproductive health
- Lack of opportunities for people with differing abilities to live as independently as possibly

What are the problems that dominate YOUR thoughts? What are the problems that motivate YOU toward change?

PURPOSE AND FRAMEWORK

Audience for this Book

This open-source textbook has been intentionally created and compiled for an interdisciplinary course at a small Midwest university on community and organizational change. The course is cross-listed with the social work program and a new major at the university called, *Public Leadership and Changemaking*. The course has historically been the foundational macro skills course for undergraduate social work students and then recently modified to be inclusive of other community change professionals. So, when you review the content, you will see less of an emphasis on references specific to social work students and professionals as the primary audience of the text and an intentional expansion of references. Therefore, a broad range of disciplines who have a responsibility to be aware of community change strategies to fulfill their professional mission are encouraged to consider this material for their curriculum (nursing, public health, environmental studies, social entrepreneurs, etc.).

Grant Writing as Framework

The steps and skills of grant writing are used as the framework for an entire course. I started to teach grant writing to our BSW students when I began teaching the community and organizational change course a few years ago. As a longtime grant writer myself, I am convinced that the skills can be economically and professionally empowering for students, whether they pursue an MSW or other graduate degree or not. (reference article background info).

Each semester, the students learn grant writing by working on a grant for a local organization. One completed grant is submitted to the organization on behalf of the class. Most of the grants were submitted to a philanthropic organization, resulting in the acquisition of over $200,000 for local organizations.

Foundations for My Knowledge

When this project began, I based the content on about 20 years of experience working in the field of macro community and organizational change work, partly as a human services planner for a development organization but mostly as a human services consultant. After I graduated with my Master of Social Work (MSW) in 1997, I started down the path of macro social work and never looked back. This project is also built from about 10 years of teaching coursework on community and organizational change, where every year I would try a few new things while keeping and tweaking the strategies and assignments that seemed to be leading to meaningful learning and skill development.

Thankfully, I am still very much a work in progress and have even more knowledge than when I began this project because I continued to read, attend workshops, and try out some community change strategies that expanded what I know and see as meaningful and useful. That is one of the many reasons why I have chosen the open-source textbook route; because this work is intended to evolve by myself but more importantly—YOU.

PART I

COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW

Welcome!

Together, we will be familiarizing ourselves with community and organizational change work and creating a foundation for the rest of our learning.

Learning Objectives

- Identify some of the professions who are engaged in community change work
- Recognize some of the community issues and problems
- Describe community change strategies

1.

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE

"We are all going through a significant period of evolution, and it means, that there's an opportunity in that, it feels burdensome right now, because so much has been taken from us. But there's such an incredible opportunity, to decide how you want to show up in the new world.

Because it will be a new world. And my greatest hope is that we don't reach for normal, that we reach for better."

-Michelle Norris, Michelle Obama Podcast – August 2020

Importance of community and organizational change

I cannot think of a more exciting or important time to develop community and organizational change skills than NOW. The issues are overwhelming and are very apparent to us; they are staring us down, impacting our day, increasing our stress, impacting our health, reducing our opportunities, and demanding our attention. At a time like this, which can easily be overwhelming and paralyzing, I tap into a deep reserve of hopefulness and macro practice skills to keep moving forward, persevere, and stay afloat. We need to implement formerly learned and known macro practice skills while at the same time exploring new ways of working in our communities and organizations.

The issues that we are facing have likely been in existence for a while and are only exacerbated by current conditions, which means that they need to be tackled with new energy, hope, and wisdom. If we tackle current complex problems with the same toolbox that has been used for decades, I am convinced we are going to fail. That is not an option right now—at least, it shouldn't be an option.

So, macro practice focuses on the theories, skills, and practices that contribute to improving the lives in the community by focusing not on an individual, family, or group, but on the systems and organizations that can improve or hinder a community's well-being.

Who should be engaged in community change work?

The importance of social workers engaging in macro practice is written into the professional mission which can be found in the preamble to the National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics:

> The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.[1]

The type of mission is not unique to social work. There are many other professions that focus on individual and societal health and well-being, requiring attention to macro issues in order to achieve the mission. Some of these are obvious, such as public health, but other professions such as education, environmental science, criminal justice, law, and business are working on issues in areas that are complex and systemic in nature.

Criticisms & challenges of 'helping' professions like social work

Despite a clear directive to focus on the individual and societal context, the profession of social work has long been challenged publicly as a profession of middle-class 'stretcher-bearers' who often contribute to the very problems and issues they intend to address (Alinsky, 1971[2]; Courtney and Strecht, 1994[3]). Are social workers looking too closely at individual needs rather than systemic causes of problems? Are we gazing and looking in the 'right' spaces?

Homan (2016) reminds us that we find it hard to ignore things once our eyes are open to them—but we

1. National Association of Social Workers. (2021). Preamble to the code of ethics. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics
2. Alinsky, S. (1971). Rules for radicals. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing.
3. Courtney M., Specht, H. (1994). Unfaithful angels: How social work has abandoned its mission. New York: The Free Press.

need to do more than just look[4]. In order to support the systemic needs that children, families, neighborhoods, and organizations require, we need to have our eyes open to the multitude of factors that are likely to help them as well as hinder their well-being. We need to see the issues. We need to be willing to get uncomfortable—and often emotional. We need to consider culpability. What I want others to understand, however, is that this discomfort can be very empowering because it is also motivational.

Critical social work theorists such as Baines (2007)[5], Carroll and Minkler (2000)[6], and Nicotera and Kang (2009) are working to guide the profession toward effectiveness during a period of globalization and in a world that is increasingly interconnected. They argued that in order for the profession to fulfill its mission, it will need to move toward an increased commitment to social justice and transformation, requiring critical consciousness-raising versus contentment with the status quo (Baines, 2007; Nicotera & Kang, 2009).[7]

These criticisms stem from a place of hope and aspiration for what social work can and should be. I have always looked to these criticisms as a source of motivation. How can we liberate ourselves from the part of our profession or professional strategies that perpetuate inequality, continue to provide charity as a solution, harm families who are seeking help but can't access it, or contribute to harmful overregulation of people's lives?

What is macro practice?

'**Macro'** is the term used to describe the large and systemic level on which we are going to focus, which is differentiated from a micro level of practice. As a social worker, if I were to engage in micro-practice, I would likely be referencing working with an individual, a child, and/or their family. Figure 1.1 shows a simplified explanation of macro practice as related to micro and mezzo practice levels.

4. Homan, M. (2016). Promoting community change: Making it happen in the real world. 6th edition. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

5. Baines, D. (Ed.). (2007). Doing anti-oppressive practice: Building transformative politicized social work. Black Point, Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood.

6. Carroll, J., & Minkler, M. (2000). Freire's message for social workers: Looking back, looking ahead. Journal of Community Practice, 8(1), 21-36.

7. Nicotera, N., & Kang, H. (2009). Beyond diversity courses: Strategies for integrating critical consciousness across social work curriculum. Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 29, 188-203.

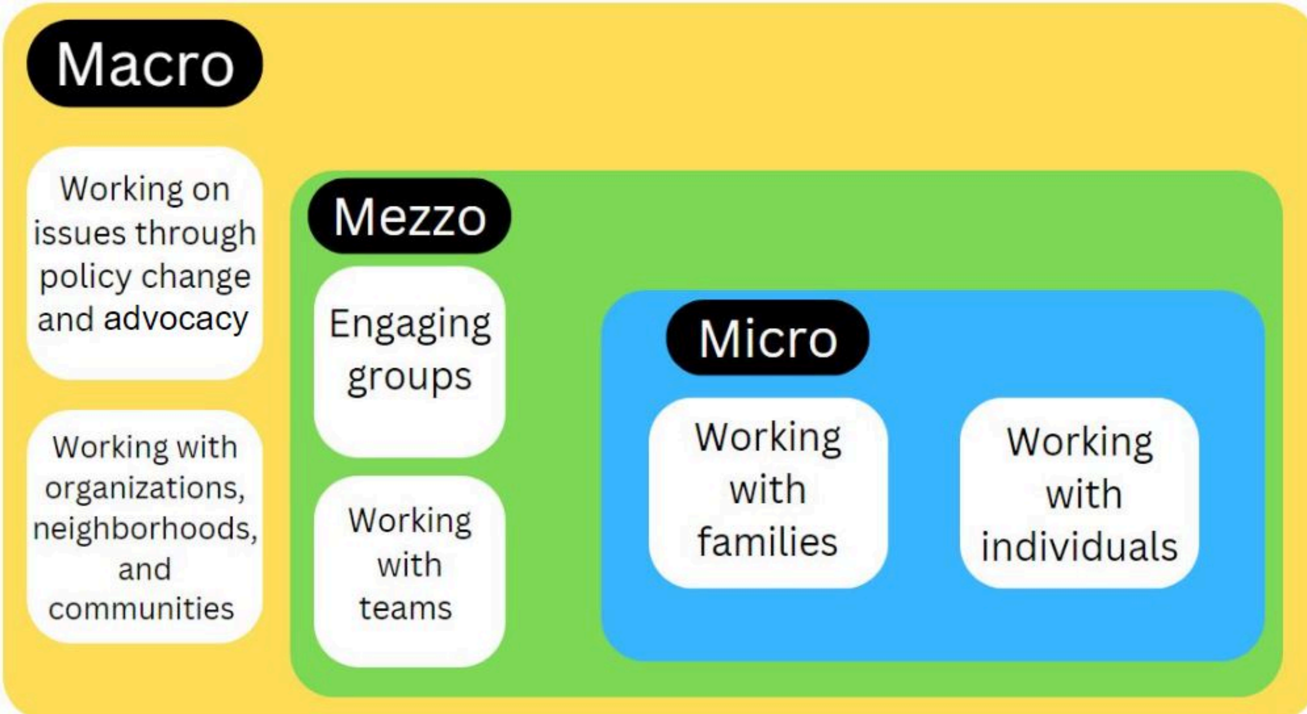

Figure 1.1 "Macro Practice Simplified"

Engaging in macro practice requires an in-depth understanding of *systems theory* which will be introduced in Chapter 6. In addition, we will explore the application of systems theory into systems thinking and design thinking; methods of understanding in-depth causes of complex problems as well as strategies for identifying optimal solutions.

Generalist skills applied to macro practice

Community and organizational skills for macro practice in our case will follow the generalist social work practice steps (figure 1.2). Whether or not you are entering the social work or another change-making profession, the language and steps should be understandable and relatable.

Figure 1.2 shows the cycle of generalist practice steps.

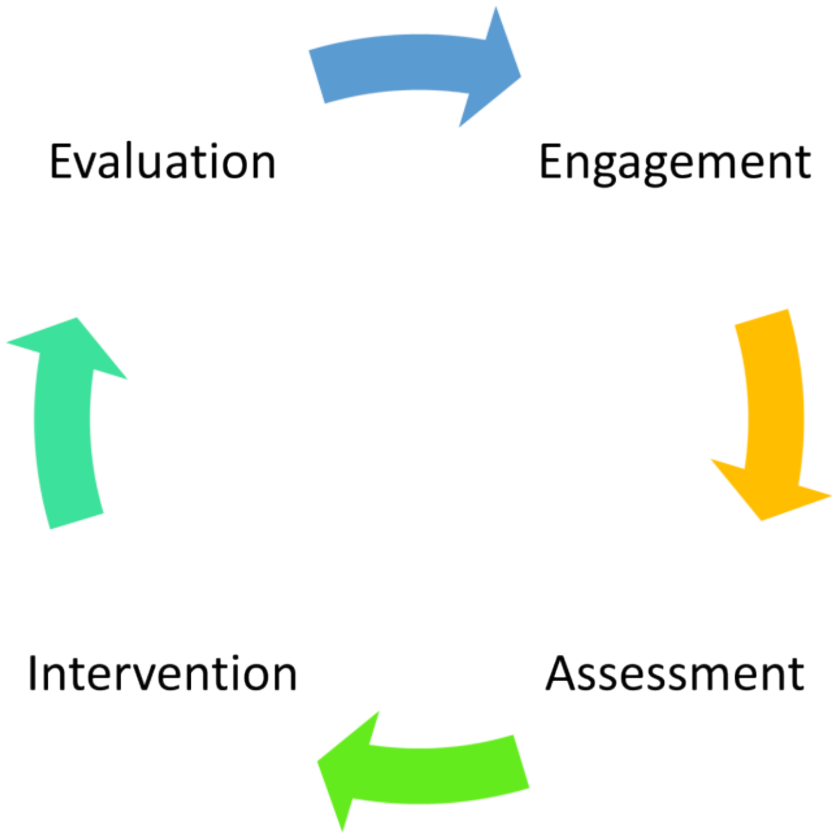

Figure 1.2 "The Cycle of Generalist Practice Steps"

Together, we will be referencing these generalist steps as we embark on our journey of developing community and organizational change. As we do this, please keep at the forefront the issues that have motivated you to be a change-maker, a social worker, and a leader in the first place. You clearly are here, studying this material for a reason. You want to make a difference in your community and in the lives of others. So, keep a hold of that.

I am excited to be on this journey with you.

2.

SEEING AND DEFINING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

Community change work is directed at solving or eliminating social problems or issues that impact our communities. First, we need to understand what the problems are. The following section is material from the open-source text, *Social Problems: Continuity and Change.*

What is a social problem?[1]

A social problem is any condition or behavior that has negative consequences for large numbers of people and that is generally recognized as a condition or behavior that needs to be addressed. This definition has both an objective component and a subjective component.

The objective component is this: for any condition or behavior to be considered a social problem, it must have negative consequences for large numbers of people. How do we know if a social problem has negative consequences? Reasonable people can and do disagree on whether such consequences exist and, if so, on their extent and seriousness, but ordinarily a body of data accumulates—from work by academic researchers, government agencies, and other sources—that strongly points to extensive and serious consequences. The reasons for these consequences are often hotly debated, and sometimes, as we shall see in certain chapters in this book, sometimes the very existence of these consequences is disputed. A current example is climate change: Although the overwhelming majority of climate scientists say that climate change (changes in the earth's climate due to the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere) is real and serious, fewer than two-thirds of Americans (64 percent) in a 2011 poll said they "think that global warming is happening" (Leiserowitz, Maibach, Roser-Renouf, & Smith, 2011).[2]

This type of dispute points to the subjective component of the definition of social problems: There must be a perception that a condition or behavior needs to be addressed for it to be considered a social problem.

1. Steven E. Barkan. (2012). Social Problems: Continuity and Change. Boston, MA: FlatWorld
2. Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., Roser-Renouf, C., & Smith, N. (2011). Climate change in the American mind: Americans' global warming beliefs and attitudes in May 2011. New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Change Communication.

This component lies at the heart of the social constructionist view of social problems (Rubington & Weinberg, 2010).[3] In other words, ***When is a social problem a social problem?***

According to the social construction theory, negative conditions and behaviors are not a social problem unless they are recognized as such by policymakers, large numbers of lay citizens, or other segments of our society; these sociologists would thus say that rape and sexual assault before the 1970s were not a social problem because our society as a whole paid them little attention. Other sociologists say that negative conditions and behaviors should be considered a social problem even if they receive little or no attention; these sociologists would thus say that rape and sexual assault before the 1970s were a social problem.

This type of debate is akin to the age-old question: if a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, is a sound made? As such, it is not easy to answer, but it does reinforce one of the key beliefs of the social constructionist view: perception matters at least as much as reality, and sometimes more so. In line with this belief, social constructionism emphasizes that citizens, interest groups, policymakers, and other parties often compete to influence popular perceptions of many types of conditions and behaviors. These groups try to influence news media coverage and popular views of the nature and extent of any negative consequences that may be occurring, the reasons underlying the condition or behavior in question, and possible solutions to the problem.

Social constructionism's emphasis on perception has a provocative implication: Just as a condition or behavior may not be considered a social problem even if there is a strong basis for this perception, so may a condition or behavior be considered a social problem even if there is little or no basis for this perception. The "issue" of women in college provides a historical example of this latter possibility. In the late 1800s, leading physicians and medical researchers in the United States wrote journal articles, textbooks, and newspaper columns in which they warned women not to go to college. The reason? They feared that the stress of college would disrupt women's menstrual cycles, and they also feared that women would not do well in exams during "that time of the month" (Ehrenreich & English, 2005). [4] We now know better, of course, but the sexist beliefs of these writers turned the idea of women going to college into a social problem and helped to reinforce restrictions by colleges and universities on the admission of women.

In a related dynamic, various parties distort certain aspects of a social problem that does exist: politicians can give speeches, the news media can use scary headlines and heavy coverage to capture readers' or viewers' interest, and businesses can use advertising and influence news coverage. News media coverage of violent crime provides many examples of this dynamic (Robinson, 2011; Surette, 2011).[5]

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3. Rubington, E., & Weinberg, M. S. (2010). The study of social problems: Seven perspectives (7th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

4. Ehrenreich, B., & English, D. (2005). For her own good: Two centuries of the experts' advice to women (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Anchor Books.

5. Robinson, M. B. (2011). Media coverage of crime and criminal justice. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press; Surette, R. (2011). Media, crime, and criminal justice: Images, realities, and policies (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Community needs versus social problems

Regardless of whether or not you choose to adopt a social construction view of social problems, you need to be able to sift through the political discourse, rhetoric, and media coverage to see that a problem exists. From there, we will work to uncover the *community need*, which is the gap or service that is needed in order to address a social problem. We then need to gather and examine the evidence of the problem as it is experienced by the community. This evidence is essentially what we see at the 'tip of the iceberg' and often what we observe before even recognizing the problem exists. It is the inequities, the chronic health conditions, and the alarming disparities in wealth and education achievement.

3.

LEARNING FROM COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKERS

"Changemakers build communities of trust that fuel a beautiful kind of change—change for the good of all".

Henry F. De Sio, 2021[1]

Community Changemakers of Today

I have been a macro-focused social worker for over 20 years now. I find myself extremely motivated now by who I see as community change-makers and how they are engaging in their work. It is exciting. It is motiving. De Sio (2021), author of *The Changemaker Playbook*, expresses that we are in a period of significant societal transition which he describes as a 'new game' (pg. 5). He uses three primary characteristics:

1. Increase in personal agency and individual ability to lead and contribute to change
2. Technology which can efficiently be used to communicate messages to masses of people and mobilize quickly
3. Leadership which can be accessible to most people rather than only those who historically possessed social or economic capital

This is partly what is so exciting about our current times. The issues are complex and can quickly be overwhelming, but the reality that leadership is more expansive and likely much more diverse in perspective

1. De Sio, H.F. (pg. 210, 2021). Changemaker playbook: The new physics of leadership in a world of explosive change. Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

should translate into solutions that are much more innovative and, dare I say, radical. Could the next 10-20 years be a time of liberation from oppressive forces that have perpetuated the injustice that we are witnessing and experiencing now? We desperately need this.

4.

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY CHANGE STRATEGIES

What are the primary community change strategies?

In reviewing the literature and current textbooks for community change work, there are four different models for change that are most commonly referred to: community development, community organization, social action, and organizational change. The title may change slightly, but the descriptors are consistent.

- Community Development
- Community Organizing
- Social Action

Community Development

Community development (also referred to as locality development) is what seems to be most closely ascribed to social work and other community change professions. This model focuses on intentional involvement with the community impacted by an issue, to identify its own needs, and to be supported in the identification and development of solutions. The goal is to create or modify a strategy in order to improve the conditions/issues in the community.[1] [2]

This community change model has likely resulted in your local domestic violence shelter, legal advocacy program, refugee resettlement agency, re-entry program for people returning from incarceration, youth after-school programming, etc. At some point, people came together, likely because there was a problem that, upon close analysis with community members, identified a need for a program or agency to help address the problem. When they did, it took a lot of time and many, many steps and resources to move from the identification of a problem to the development of an actual organization to address the problem.

1. Brueggemann, W.G. (214). The practice of macro social work, 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

2. Homan, M. (2016). Promoting Community change: Making it happen in the real world, 6th Ed. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

A critical component of community development is systemic and environmental change so that the strategy(s) are long-lasting, not just focused on alleviating the short-term impacts of community problems. The Lutpon Center describes community development as "compassion + strategy + evidence".\[3]

Community Organizing

Community organizing is a model widely used in community change work. This model focuses on engagement with people directly impacted by an issue that is usually systemic in nature (oppression, poverty, safety, etc.) and uses organizing tactics to achieve change and justice. The structure is less formal and usually involves mobilizing people to collaborate together on short-term successes to improve their own quality of life and that of their neighbors and community.[4][5]

Community organizing could lead to a more formal strategy like community development but that isn't required and often isn't desired because of the interest for the local community or neighborhood to be empowered (Brueggemann & Homan).

Community development and **community organizing** are the community change models that are focused on in this book. I have chosen to focus on these two because they require some very specific theoretical knowledge and skill development and are not likely to be incorporated into any other course or curriculum.

Social Action

Social action is a model that is also focused on social justice, and addresses change through the redistribution of resources, policy changes, and political empowerment. This is a very important aspect of community change work and also requires very specific theories and skills but is typically the focus of social policy and/or policy advocacy courses, which are commonly incorporated into the curriculum of social work and other community change professions.

You will find other important models described in community change textbooks and articles, including research and planning; social work administration; and community empowerment are important.[6] However, they are what I would consider approaches and embedded into the models will be focusing on.

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3. Lupton Center. 2023. https://www.luptoncenter.org/community-development-overview/

4. Brueggemann, W.G. (214). The practice of macro social work, 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

5. Homan, M. (2016). Promoting Community change: Making it happen in the real world, 6th Ed. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

6. Brueggemann, W.G. (214). The practice of macro social work, 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

Next Steps for All Three Strategies

Regardless of which community change strategy you end up taking, or a combination of a few, you will still need to take the same next steps. Each of these is explained in the next few parts of the book. They are:

- Engaging with community
- Assessing community
    - Identifying assets
    - Assessing need
- Scenario and strategic planning
- Planning the change strategy
- Evaluating the change strategy

PART II
SYSTEMS THEORY AS FOUNDATION OF MACRO WORK

Foundational Ideas and Theories

Before we proceed onto change-making skill development we need to ground ourselves in the foundational ideas and theories which are necessary for addressing the complex issues facing our communities. The theory that is the basis for much of our community change work is **Ecological System Theory**.

This section will also introduce the best tools for applying Ecological Systems Theory to facilitate social innovations; **systems thinking** and **design thinking.** These two frameworks are fueling contemporary community change work.

Learning Objectives

1. Ground community change work in Ecological Systems Theory
2. Explain systems theory
3. Explain design thinking

5. ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

The Ecological Systems Theory

The root of **Ecological Systems Theory** is attributed to Bronfenbrenner, a Russian-American psychologist, who presented a model in the 1970s for understanding the influence of multiple factors and context on the well-being of a child[1]. Bronfenbrenner argued that these varied and critically influential environments are nested within each other and therefore have profound influences on a child. He did not see this level of analysis in other child development theories, so he developed his own. They explained that a change in one of the environments can have a significant impact on the child, eliminating the sole focus of intervention on just the specific child's behavior or characteristics. Bronfenbrenner describes influences between many of the system layers are bidirectional, meaning the systems or center (child) is likely just as able to be influenced by the next level of the system as they are to be influential (see diagram)[2]. This insight is enormously helpful in identifying the parts of the system where change efforts should be directed to leverage the influence and therefore maximize impact.

The 5 Levels of Environment

Bronfenbrenner identified 5 different levels of environment and context:

1. **Microsystem:** immediate environment where the child spends much of their time (family, school, daycare, neighborhood, etc.)
2. **Mesosystem:** interactions between the entities in the microsystem (family interactions with school, etc.)
3. **Exosystem:** influential environments on the microsystem (parent's workplace, school board, etc.)
4. **Macrosystem:** attitude and cultural ideologies (beliefs regarding poverty, racist attitudes, etc.)

1. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. American Psychologist, 32(7), 513–531. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.32.7.513

2. Guy-Evans, O. (2020, Nov 09). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Simply Psychology. www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html

5. **Chronosystem:** environmental changes that occur over the lifetime (technological advances, etc.)

This diagram in Figure 5.1 illustrates Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory[3]

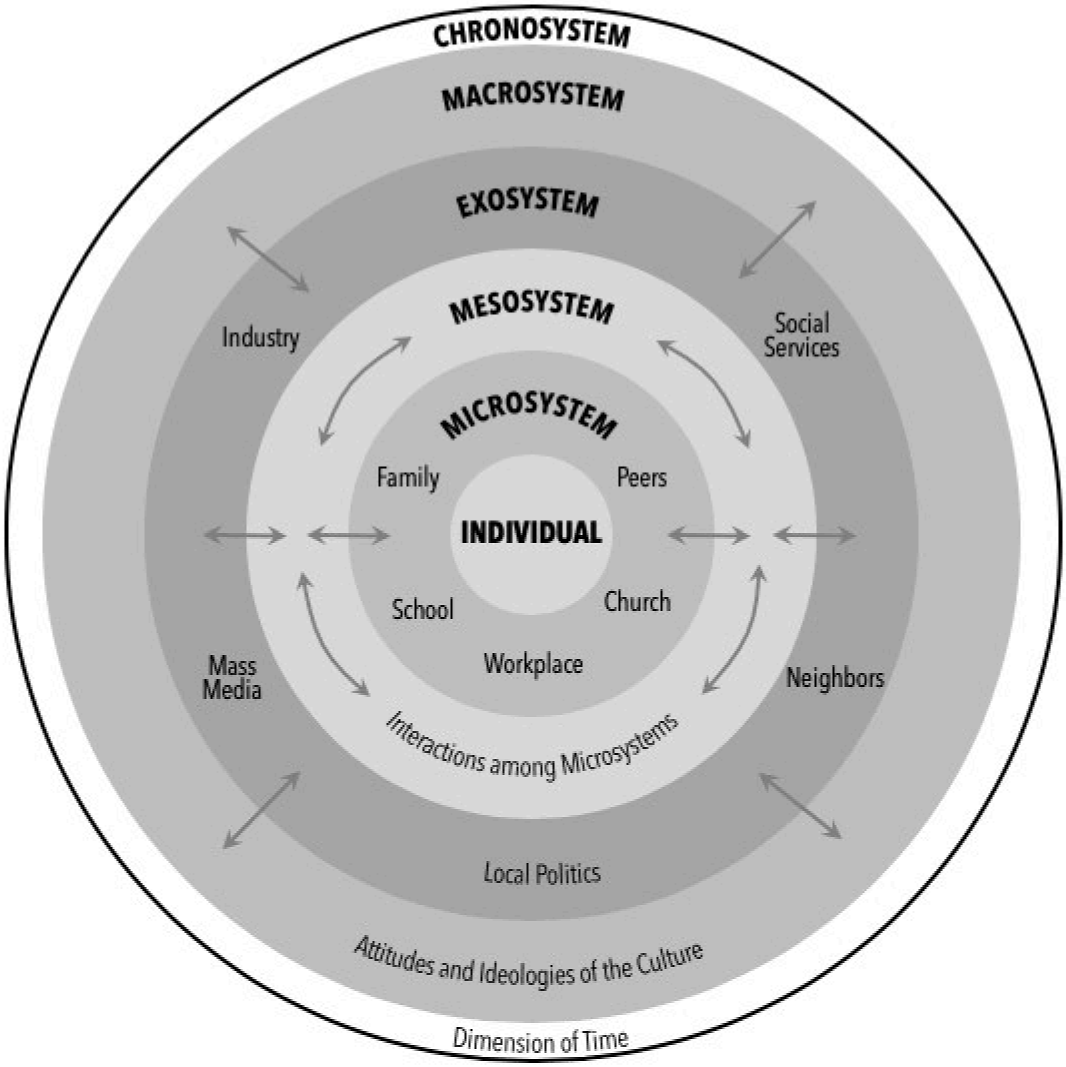

Figure 5.1 "Illustration of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory"

Meadows, as referenced in David Peter Stroh's book, *Systems Thinking for Social Change*, defines a system as "an interconnected set of elements that are coherently organized in a way that achieves something". (pg. 16)[4]. This could be a system focused on education, delivering health care, incarcerating and rehabilitating

3. Davis, B., & Francis, K. (2023). "Ecological Systems Theory" in Discourses on Learning in Education. https://learningdiscourses.com.

4. Stroh, D.P. (2015). Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

individuals, etc. Systems thinking, Stroh explains, is the "ability to understand these interconnections in order to achieve the desired purpose" (pg. 16). They point out that often a system ends up with outcomes different than what they are intending or even espousing.

When we begin to first understand a community or organizational problem, we need to map out the system in which the problem exists. This provides an understanding of the context and likely influences but doesn't quite yet tell us how to solve the problem or what the influences mean. To do that, we need to apply *systems thinking*, which is explained in the next chapter.

6.

SYSTEMS THINKING

Systems Thinking

Systems thinking is a framework for understanding and addressing social problems and is founded on the principles of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory. The framework focuses on the relationship between the parts of the system (micro, meso, exo, macro, chronosystem) instead of the individual system levels or environments.

The general idea of systems thinking is that every problem needs to be analyzed by examining it systemically and identifying the systemic levels and the relationship between them. If we re-examine the Ecological Systems Theory graphic (figure 6.1) from the previous section, this version highlights that the examination is not about the system as a whole but about the interaction and relationship between the levels, as shown with the darker arrows.

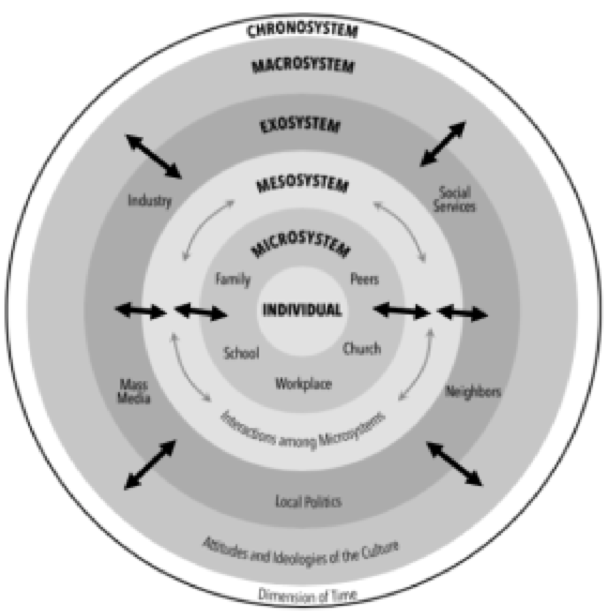

Figure 6.1 "The Ecological Systems Theory"

In other words, systems thinking is a method of analysis to understand how the systems function and what type of feedback and influence is likely to be exchanged between system levels, providing a framework for what should be the focus of the social change work.

Using the Ecological Map

An ecological map is in itself an extremely useful tool in order to understand the context of a community and to provide critical insight to individuals at the center of the ecological system who likely experience a problem or issue in intense ways and may feel responsible for their experience.

An initial step in applying systems thinking is to name the parts of the ecological system that can influence or be influenced by subsystems. You can identify a specific community (sharing geography or identity) and begin to name and define the components of the ecological system that represents the community, writing them directly on the map.

As you are working with individuals, it helps to share insights from this ecological perspective to demonstrate that they exist in a larger context and their experience is impacted by layers of influence. This in itself could be helpful to alleviate the complete burden of responsibility but also demonstrate their potential influence and agency.

Analyzing Forces Between Subsystems

The iceberg metaphor helps explain the necessity of examining the problem and the system in order to effectively analyze it. The iceberg demonstrates that what we see as evidence of a problem represents just the systems and not the forces, structures, or mindsets that perpetuate the problem. In order to address the complex problem we need to understand the ways it appears, is perpetuated, and reinforced. These levels are **events**, **trends and patterns**, **system structures,** and **mental models/maps**.

Next, you will see an image that combines the two graphics: Ecological Systems Theory and the Systems Thinking Iceberg. This highlights where we are focusing our analysis on in the system. You will notice on the tip of the iceberg (figure 6.2) are the behaviors or observations we make about individuals, but it is the attitudes and mental models of the macro system that we really need to understand because of their profound influence on the rest of the system.

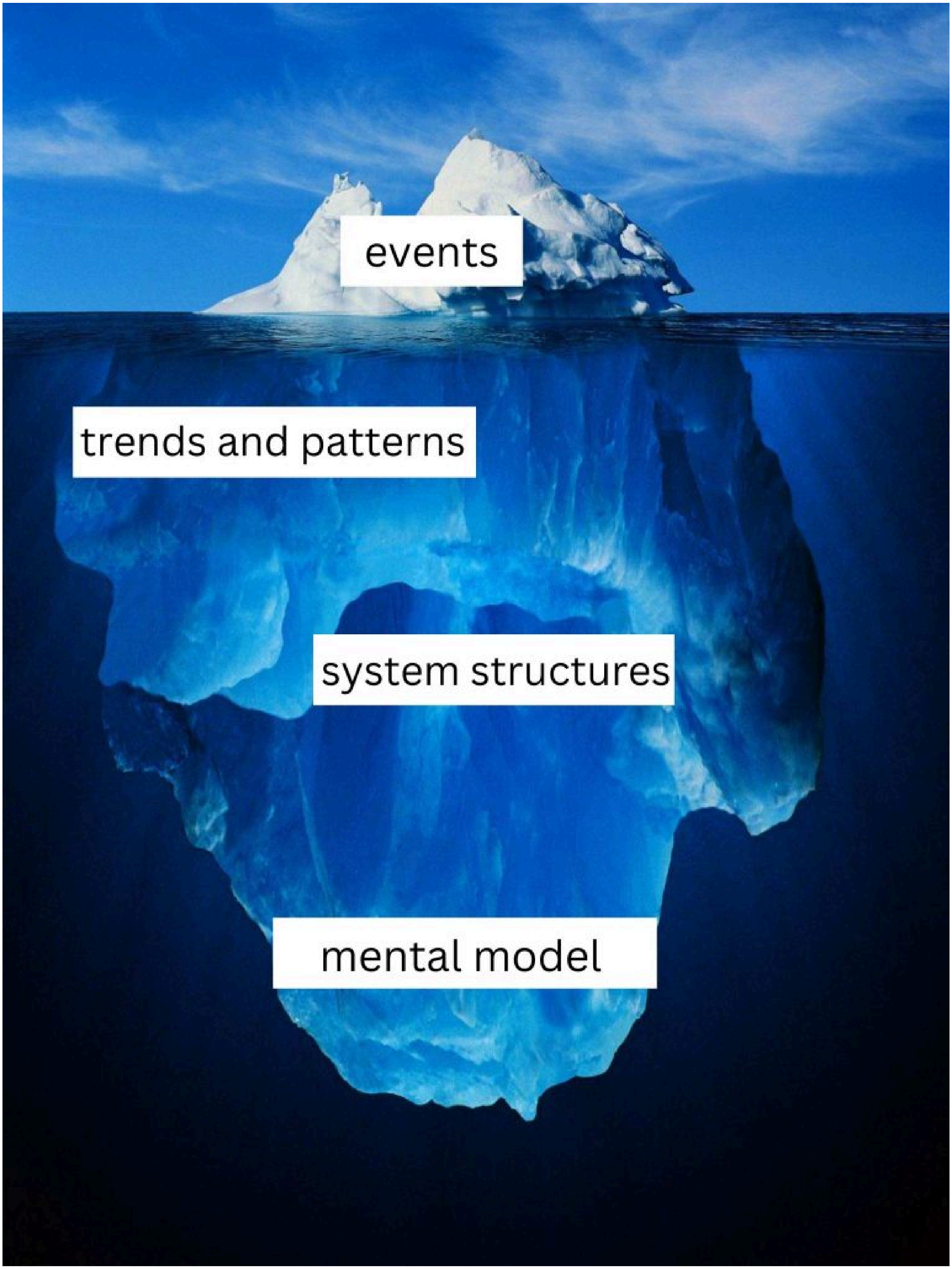
events
trends and patterns
system structures
mental model

Figure 6.2 "The Iceburg Metaphor"

The questions to ask in order to gain the insights represented by the iceberg metaphor include:

- What is the evidence of the problem? How is this visible? What do we see?
    - This insight is provided at the center of the ecological system and often by the people who are directly experiencing a problem or represent the problem as most people describe it.
    - For example, "*Students are struggling with anxiety.*"
- What are trends and patterns that are also visible? What are the organizations that are responsible for addressing or are impacted by the trends?
    - This is typically the way people describe the impact of the problem.
    - The answer is found in the **microsystem** and **mesosystem**.
    - For example "*Student anxiety is leading to their disconnection from school and higher truancy rates.*"
- What are the institutions, structures, or policies that influence or are impacted by the problem?
    - These institutions often are already concerned about the problem and experience a sense of responsibility but are often unclear on their role or opportunity in addressing a problem.
    - These can be found in the **exosystem**.
    - For example, *"The student and family health insurance rules limit access to care that would be helpful in addressing their anxiety."*
- What are the mindsets, attitudes, or cultural norms that impact how people see the problem?
    - These are the aspects of culture that aren't visible but that impact the entire context of the ecological system.
    - These can be found in the **macrosystem.**
    - For example, "*The stigma about mental health impacts demands greater health insurance access and parity with physical health.*"

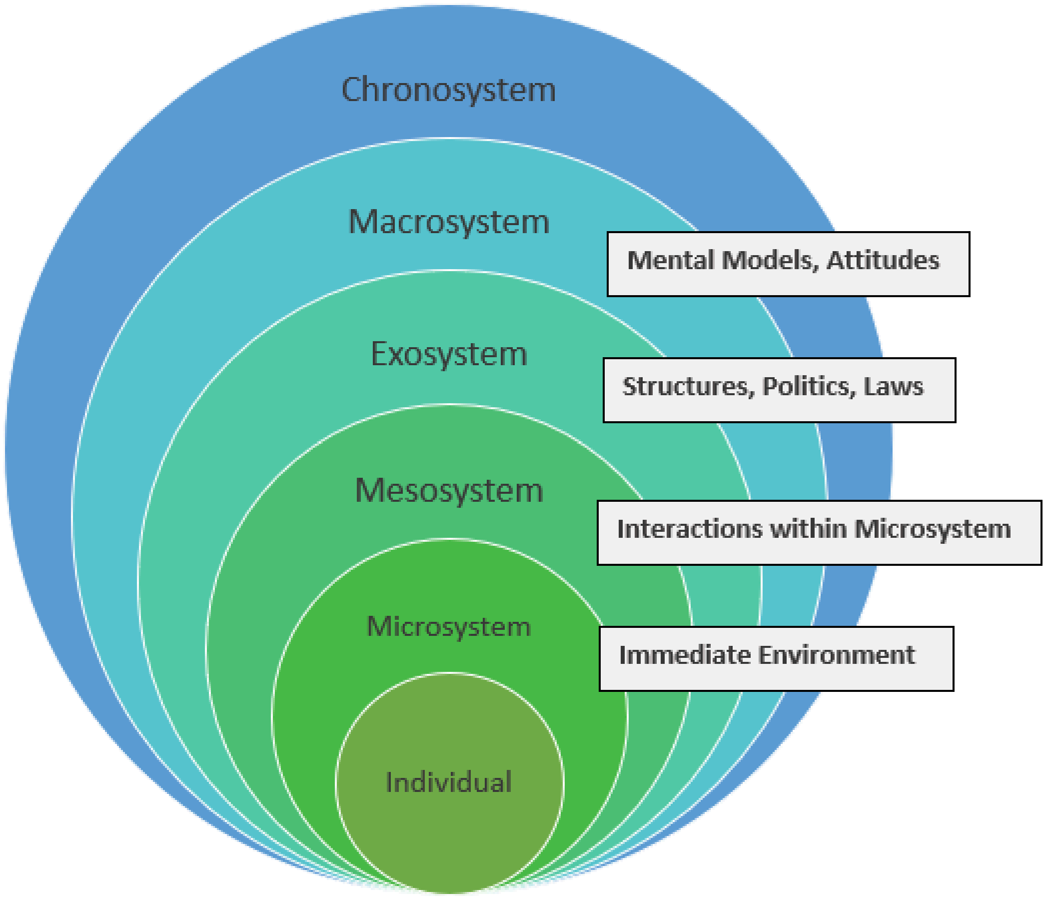

Figure 6.3 "Ecological Systems Theory combined with the Systems Thinking Iceberg"

Let's apply systems thinking to an example of a local mental health project. In this scenario, we are applying systems thinking to understand the in-depth causes of some of the student anxious behaviors that were being observed and causing concern with teachers and families. We need to understand the systemic influences on a student's mental well-being. Using the iceberg metaphor, figure 6.4 shows examples of how systems thinking could highlight underlying causes by understanding the interactions between parts of the system. This information is gathered by reviewing different types of data, including surveys (like student surveys), community public health data, as well as interviewing students, school mental health professionals, and community mental health professionals, parents, and community leaders.

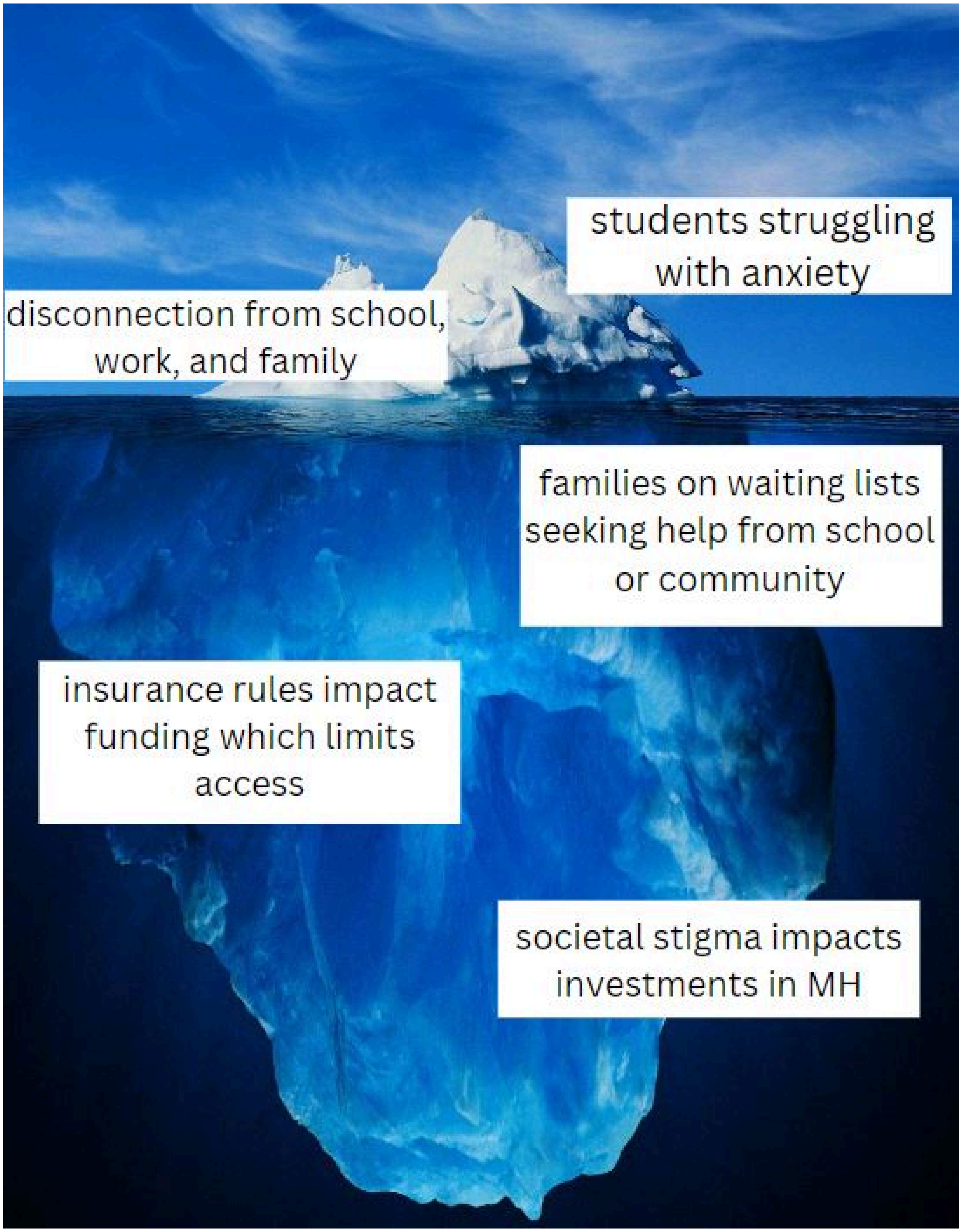

Figure 6.4 "The Iceburg Metaphor"

The analysis of this graphic should highlight the strong influence that societal stigma has on the extent to which we are investing in mental health services, including the extent to which health insurance covers mental health services, and the continuum of services that exist in a community. If there is limited access to critical services, such as mental health, it is likely that children will be placed on a waiting list for support instead of being able to access the help when it is needed. When children cannot access help when it is needed, then it is likely that their symptoms of mental health are likely to become worse before they become better, increasing the likelihood of struggle and a negative impact on their lives like sleep, concentration, sense of hopefulness, etc.

7.

APPLYING SYSTEMS THINKING

Four-Stage Process for Applying Systems Thinking

Stroh provides a four-stage change process of leading systemic change by applying systems thinking. You will see similarities between this process and Design Thinking, which is the focus of the next section.

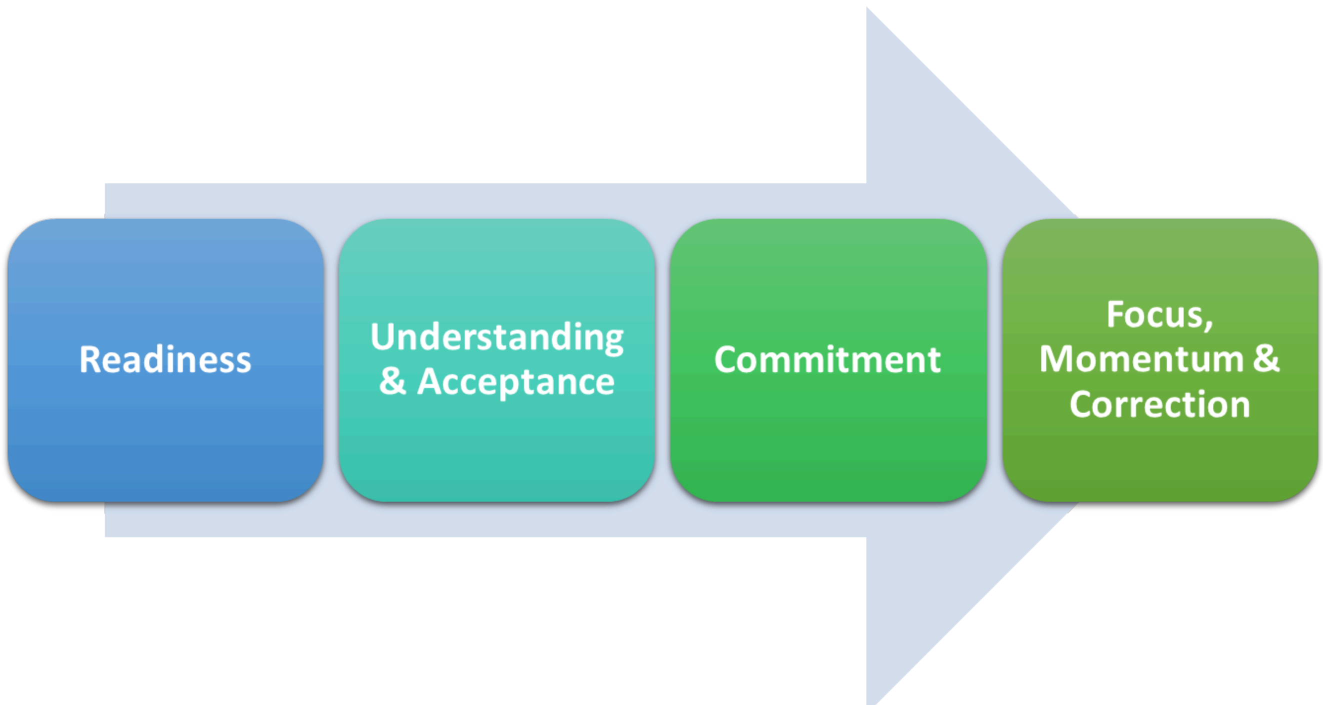

Figure 7.1 "Four-Stage Change Process"

1. **Readiness:** Building a foundation for change by engaging critical stakeholders and collaborators
2. **Understanding and Acceptance:** Facing and understanding the current situation at all levels of the iceberg
3. **Commitment:** Making an explicit choice for change and clarifying the aspirational vision
4. **Focus, momentum, and correction:** Bridging the gap between the current situation to the preferred one by engaging a diversity of stakeholders, focusing on high-level interventions, and learning from the experience

By applying this process, system thinking has the capacity to revolutionize community change by:

- **Motivating** people by situating them within the problem as well as the solution
- **Catalyzing collaboration** due to the insights that are gained
- **Focusing** efforts on those with the most impact and sustainability
- **Stimulating continuous learning** by building feedback loops into the process, acknowledging that knowledge is not static and neither are the solutions [1]

1. Stroh, D.P. (2015). Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

8.

DESIGN THINKING

Solving Complex Problems with Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a process for solving complex problems and, similar to system thinking, design thinking relies on **feedback loops** and steps that require **stakeholder** input. Design Thinking is intended to foster innovation because it essentially democratizes the problem-solving process. Engaging in Design Thinking requires a mindset for experimentation, the necessity of collaboration, and optimism. At the end of the day, there needs to be a sense of hope and necessity for something better.[1]

Liedka, Salzman, and Azer (2017) describe Design Thinking in four primary stages while recognizing that the steps are not intended to be linear. There should be regular opportunities for feedback to loop back to a previous stage, which will return the process to various steps. The stages are:

1. **What is?** This stage starts with the Systemic Thinking framework for analyzing a problem. It requires that the systems thinking process engage the perspective of a diversity of stakeholders in order to accurately understand the current situation or problem. This stage requires the analysis of data, conducting research with stakeholders, and the analysis of assets and unmet needs. The stage concludes when criteria are established for the solving of the problem and leads into the brainstorming phase.
2. **What if?** This is where stakeholders generate ideas for addressing the problem or issue. It is necessary that stakeholders most closely impacted by the issue are at the forefront of the brainstorming and that there are no constraints put on them. The ideas themselves are reviewed, combined, and reshaped into possible solutions.
3. **What wows?** At this stage, the ideas are compared against the criteria that were established at the conclusion of the What Is stage. You are looking for the "sweet spot" for ideas most closely aligned with the criteria and the capabilities of the organizations or people involved. Again, stakeholders are at the center of this process and participate in the narrowing down of ideas that become "prototypes."
4. **What works?** At this stage, prototypes are tried on a small scale and evaluated with the expectation that the ideas will need to be further refined or eliminated before identifying strategies to scale up to

1. Liedtka, J.; Salzman, R.; Azer, D. (2017). Design thinking for the greater good: Innovation in the social sector. New York: Columbia University Press.

larger interventions. The stakeholders co-evaluate and co-create the ideas which are tested.

The innovative solutions are not only those that are launched after this entire process but also those that are generated along the way.

PART III
ENGAGING COMMUNITY

Importance of Community Engagement

This part is foundational for changemaking work. Building trust, finding common ground, establishing relatability, is critical for any meaningful work together and all occurs within a caring and authentic relationship.

Learning Objectives

- Describe importance of building relationships through engagement
- Describe necessity of connecting to community through stakeholders
- Explain how to engage stakeholders
- Identify how philanthropy is involved in community change work
- Describe how to leverage key organizations in community change work

9.

ENGAGEMENT IS THE FOUNDATION

"You can say 'all are welcome here' but that is different from saying 'this space was created for you in mind'"

-Marnita Schroedl, CEO and Cofounder, Marnita's Table[1]

People are at the heart of community change since everything that is done is for the betterment of the people who live there. Engagement—in a very authentic way—is absolutely necessary. This is also the first step of any helping relationship—whether between a social worker and a client, a medical professional and a patient, a business owner and a customer, etc. —as shown in the following graphic depicting generalist skills.

1. This is Civity. Episode 25. Marnita's Table on Helping People in Communities SEE Each Other. September 29, 2020.

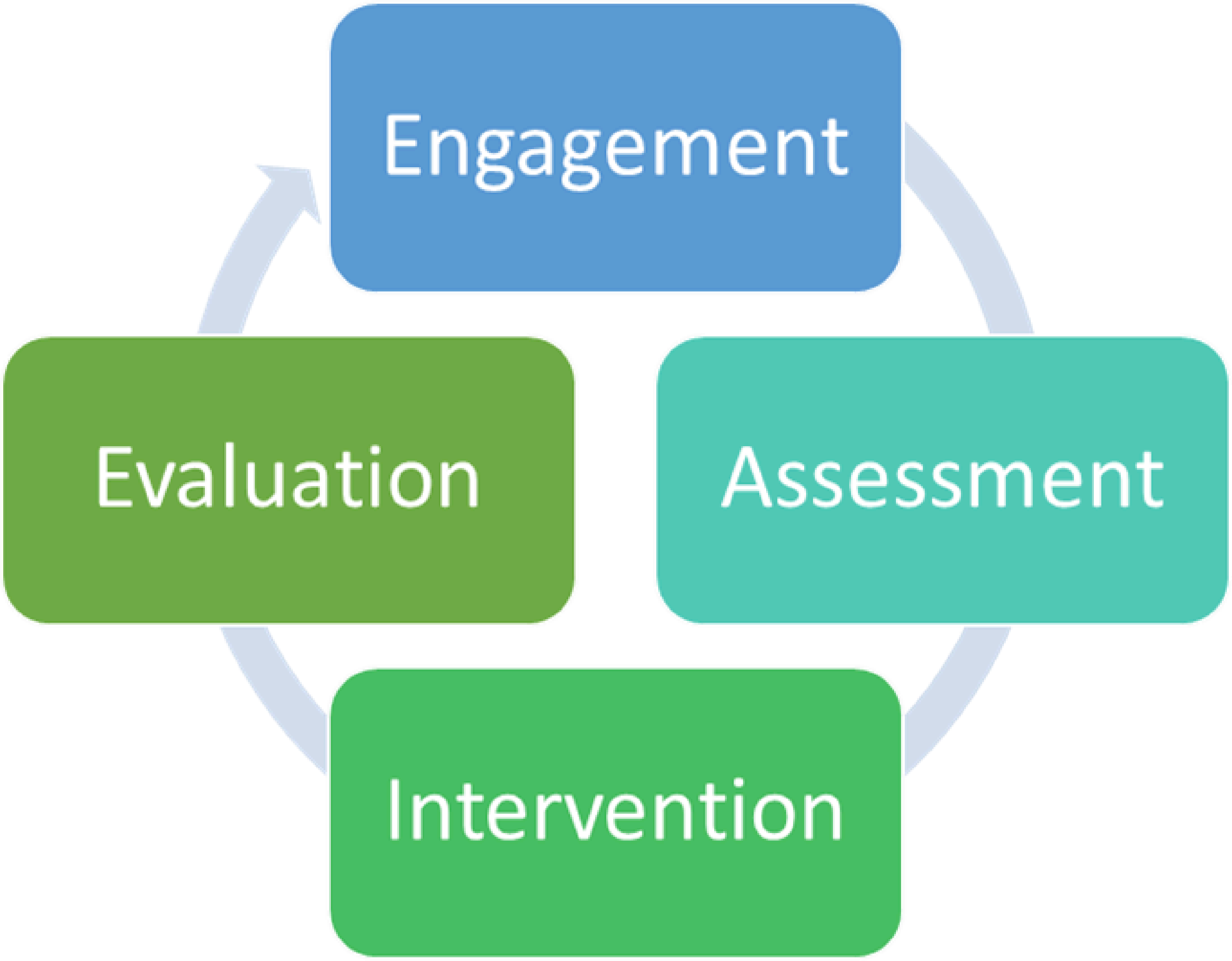

Figure 9.1 "Generalist Skills"

The generalist skills are just as relevant to macro practice as they are to working with individuals and families (micro practice), as described in the following graphic.

Identifying Community

Community can be used to describe the many ways that people are connected. This could be through place, experience, history, identity, etc. Before engaging in community change, it is necessary to identify the specific community you are referring to. Examples of communities include:

- Neighborhood
- Parent group
- City or town
- Identity group
- Apartment or housing location
- Group of people who share a common experience

Engagement

- Getting to know organizations and communities
- Establishing trust with organizations and communities

Assessment

- Understanding and assessing organization or community needs

Intervention

- Implementing the intervention that is most likely to address the organizational or community need

Evaluation

- Evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention(s)

Figure 9.2 "Breakdown of Generalist Skills"

Engaging in Proximity

Proximity to the community is critical. The closer you are to the actual people who are likely to benefit from your work, the more likely it is that the intervention will be desired and impactful. Engaging from a distance perpetuates distrust. Engaging with proximity fosters trust and relationships, which is foundational to community change work. Would you want a stranger to come into your home to tell you what needs to change in order to have a better living environment? Likely not.

Engaging to the extent that you need to will likely take a while so you need to be patient. Don't force the engagement because there are often decades of reasons for suspicion and distrust. This is particularly the case if your organization represents an institution (including government, school, law enforcement, social welfare services, health care services, and others) in your community that has committed harm, whether to a specific community member or not. This leaves a legacy of distrust.

It is very important to have an open mind when you first engage with a community. Coming to a community with ideas already formulated or rushing to solutions before engagement will usually lead to failure at some point; you will likely lack buy-in from the community, and your ideas or interventions will be based on outside perceptions of what is needed and desired, not the specific ideas or needs as articulated by the community. Being open to new ideas and new perspectives will almost always lead to better outcomes, and likely solutions that you on your own would not have considered. That should excite you, not intimidate you.

So, again, practice patience and enjoy getting connected to the community. It is often the most enjoyable part of community change work. This section will cover three primary ways that we engage with others in our community as we embark on community change work:

- Identifying, inviting, and listening to stakeholders
- Engaging philanthropy as stakeholders
- Working in collaboration

10.

IDENTIFYING, INVITING, AND LISTENING TO STAKEHOLDERS

"People don't commit to things they don't co-create."

Vanessa Westley, retired Chicago Police Department Community Engager[1]

How to Engage Stakeholders

Engaging with stakeholders is one of my most cherished parts of community change work because it is the most meaningful and the most personal. It gets me out of my office, away from conference rooms, and into coffee shops or libraries. It can also be one of the most challenging parts because of the time it often takes for meaningful engagement. However, the outcome will always be better. Always. This is true because community stakeholders hold the key to unlocking the solutions to the problems that impact them. This should make sense, but unfortunately community stakeholders historically often weren't viewed as experts. Liedetka, Salzman, and Azer (2017) remind us that change-makers would often engage with the community only once a solution or solutions were planned out and only to receive validation. This is not true engagement or brainstorming. The mindset behind this was that expertise was held by academics or people in positions of political power and that problems could be solved through very careful analysis of the data. The impact of this is that the next time engagement happens, the intent and authenticity of the person initiating the engagement (social worker, public health professional, community correctional officer, etc.) will likely be questioned and it will be even harder to establish trust. This may not feel valid or fair to the person doing the engagement, but if you take a step back and assess the historical perspective, it is very fair.

Instead, contemporary theories of change-making celebrate the wisdom of the community, particularly

1. Join the Table. Podcast Episode 2. November 4, 2021

people who are most directly impacted by an issue or the people who are unlikely to be engaged in traditional ways but who would have thoughtful opinions on the problem. The process of authentic engagement leads to the democratizing of problem-solving and innovation, which results in solutions that are more likely to have buy-in and are more likely to be effective. Both systems thinking and design thinking not only emphasize authentic engagement but also reinforce the idea of engaging diverse stakeholders at the beginning of a problem. This will help 'produce a richer picture' of the system that is being analyzed in the problem-solving (pg 92). With design thinking, everyone is involved in the innovation, which is one of the primary principles of this newer model of change-making. The diversity of the discussion will result in better solutions.

Identifying the Stakeholders

A stakeholder in community change work is someone who has a vested interest in a problem, often because they are directly impacted by it. Basically, they have a 'stake' in the problem and in the positive resolution of the problem. They likely have a story to share, opinions that have formed, and ideas for how to address the problem. Some people tend to equate a stakeholder with formal political power, like the mayor of a community or the school board, but the stakeholders are so much more diverse in perspective.

Let's take the issue of youth mental health, which is currently in a state of crisis. The stakeholders on this topic should include:

- youth who have been mentally well and those who have been struggling
- youth who are more likely to be at risk of mental health struggles, including those who are or beginning to identify as LGBTQ+
- parents of these youth
- sibling and friends
- teachers and school administrators
- school counselors and school social workers
- therapists
- pediatricians
- youth social service agency staff and youth advocates
- community leaders
- certified peer support specialists, often working in mental health substance use

The stakeholder list should be diverse in perspective, always include people personally impacted by the issue that is being examined, and always include people who are personally invested in an outcome or resolution of an issue.

Inviting the Stakeholders

Once the stakeholders have been identified, the next step is to determine the most effective way to engage with them. This typically includes the step of inviting them to a conversation. This is a very, very important step which requires thoughtfulness and patience.

Before you can invite someone to a conversation you need to determine the best way to engage with them in an authentic way that is respectful and likely to foster trust. This should include thinking about the natural ways of engaging with the stakeholders that would increase their comfort and sense of welcome, and therefore increase their likelihood of participation. If you invite them to a meeting, are they likely to come? Put another way: if you were invited to a meeting by someone you had never heard of before and possibly questioned their motivation—would you attend? Hopefully, the answer is "maybe," depending on how they invited you.

There are many considerations of effective invitation, including:

- ***Extent the stakeholder will feel welcomed:*** As Marnita's Table reminds us, we can create a space that is welcoming and inclusive—not just say that it is important. Is the person going to be in a space that is physically welcoming to them? Are they going to be in a space that would likely include other people with similarities to them?
- ***Extent participation is a burden:*** Should you provide transportation, pay for transportation, or perhaps select a place that is particularly convenient for them? Is engaging with you going to cost them anything? If so, you should compensate them for this cost if possible.
- ***Considering accessibility:*** Are you identifying a space that is physically accessible? Is the time convenient? If the meeting is virtual, does the person have access to the Internet?
- ***Convenience of engagement:*** Could you talk on the phone instead of an in-person meeting? Would they appreciate a virtual conversation, using something like Zoom? Would they like to meet at a coffee shop or at their own home? Would they like to bring a friend or child, or be in a group?
- ***Benefit to the stakeholder:*** In what ways will they benefit from the engagement? What is in it for them, either in the short term or long term?

Example: Marnita's Table – IZI

Marnita's Table utilizes a very intentional set of expectations for establishing an inclusive process before they engage in a community. They call this IZI, pronounced "izzy." They require that at least 51% of participants have to be people of color or immigrants and 25-33% have to be under the age of 24[2].

Listening to Stakeholders

When you are successful in inviting stakeholders to a conversation about an issue—whether to an individual phone call, community meeting, virtual focus group, or other method—you need to plan for how you are going to listen and document what you hear. People deserve to have their time to be used in a valuable way, so you need to be prepared to listen.

Preparing to Listen

One aspect of preparing to listen to stakeholders is to identify the goal of the stakeholder conversations and which questions are likely going to help you achieve that goal. Typically, you will want to understand their experience or how they are impacted by an issue, as well as their ideas for solving it. Those are likely also the things they are going to want to share. People are less likely to want to just talk about issues without sharing ideas.

So, have only a few questions to ask and make most of them open-ended so that the answer could include a story, ideas, examples, or other descriptive ways of communicating. Samples of helpful questions are shared in the next chapter.

Preparing to Document what you are Learning

You also should be prepared to document what you are learning without being too intrusive or impersonal. This likely would include just bringing a notebook with you or having one handy. I discourage audio taping the conversation and instead, focus on listening and handwriting notes. This is also explained in more detail in the next section. Since stakeholders deserve to have their time used in a valuable way, you need to ensure that you are not just enjoying the conversation you are having with them but actually taking notes so that the information can be used after the conversation. Most of us are unable to remember an entire conversation after

2. This is Civity. Episode 25. Marnita's Table on Helping People in Communities SEE Each Other. September 29, 2020.

it occurs, so it is best to document during it. And, it demonstrates to the person that what they are saying has meaning and value. It also presents an opportunity for you to ask them to validate what you are writing down.

Returning to the example of youth mental health and well-being; just imagine how rich the insight would be if we were able to hear about the current reality regarding mental health and well-being from each stakeholder group on our list. The reality would likely include stories about the factors that contribute to someone's positive mental health, stories about struggles to access traditional care for mental illness, stories about seeking crisis care—what worked and what didn't work, as well as what it is like to be a part of delivering mental health care and observing the development of mental well-being. All of this is important.

11.

ENGAGING PHILANTHROPY

Who is invested in community change?

There are people and organizations in your community who are also invested in the community change work you are involved in or leading. They may not be directly impacted by the issue but they care about the community and are motivated to support endeavors that will have a positive impact. They likely include:

- Business owners and community leaders
- Non-profit leaders
- Social service agencies
- Elected officials
- Philanthropy

According to the organization Giving USA, Americans provided more than $471 Billion to charity in 2020, a 5% increase from the year before. The top donor group were individuals and the second was philanthropic foundations, providing $88.5 Billion, a 17% increase from the previous year.[1]

Philanthropy

It is important to focus on the role of **philanthropy** which will likely play a critical role in community change work as the funders of the work. The term is used to describe either a person or organization that contributes financial resources towards efforts that benefit the community.[2] Contemporary philanthropy is provided either by individual people who possess financial resources and motivation to invest those in the capacity of others, or organizations whose mission is to distribute financial resources to benefit the community. Most of us refer to these organizations as 'foundations', which are designated by the IRS as either private or community

1. Giving USA (2021). Infographic of Annual Report. https://givingusa.org/

2. McCully, G. (September 15, 2015). The unity of philanthropy and education.

foundations that distribute financial resources for charitable purposes [3]. The first foundation in the US was created in 1907 in order to contribute to the growing social welfare needs as well as to protect financial earnings of some of the largest corporations.[4]

Within the first decade, however, the US Commission on Industrial Relations filed a report raising concern about the impact of the concentration of wealth and power and called on Congress to regulate the newly formed foundations.[5] The regulation was quite minimal until the passing of the 1969 Tax Reform Act, which included a requirement for a foundation to spend 6% of its net investment income (which is now at 5%).[6]

Whether or not you are likely to need financial resources for your community change work, it is important to be familiar with the philanthropic resources in your community and consider representatives as stakeholders in your work. It also may be that you will need financial resources at some point, particularly if community planning and development becomes your community change strategy at some point in your work. In that case, it would be valuable to have already engaged with the foundations or philanthropists in your community to determine if possibly seeking their support would be beneficial to your endeavors. Before proceeding, however, you need to be aware of the benefits and challenges.

Benefits and Challenges of Philanthropy

Due to the nature of philanthropy as a tool to both contribute to charitable purposes as well as shield financial assets from being taxed, there are definite cautions to consider when engaging with philanthropy. According to the 2021 Giving USA Annual Report, contributions to 'public society benefit organizations' received the largest increase in donations compared to other categories of recipients, at a 15.7% increase from the previous year.[7] This represents a benefit to organizations engaged in community change work, such as community development organizations, human and civil rights organizations, and United Ways.[8]

Since the invention of philanthropy, cautions have been expressed about the impact that reliance on philanthropic resources can have on the ability of an organization to carry out its mission and on the drift

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3. Cadrin, M. (February 21, 2022). Private foundations vs. public charities: What's the difference? Investopedia. https://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/1112/the-difference-between-private-foundations-and-public-charities.aspx

4. Incite. (2007). The revolution will not be funded: Beyond the non-profit industrial complex. Cambridge, Mass: South End Press.

5. Frumkin, P. (1994). Left and right in American philanthropy [Review of Giving for Social Change, by A. K. Nagai, R. Lerner, & S. Rothman]. Minerva, 32(4), 469–475. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41820953

6. Incite. (2007). The revolution will not be funded: Beyond the non-profit industrial complex. Cambridge, Mass: South End Press.

7. Giving USA (2021). Infographic of Annual Report. https://givingusa.org/

8. Philanthropy Outlook. (2022). http://philanthropyoutlook.com/

of accountability to constituents. If organizations rely on philanthropy for their existence, they are likely to direct their proof of viability and effectiveness to the sources of funding rather than to the constituents they are designed to serve—a well-documented phenomenon of social justice organizations.[9] So, organizations should be considerate of the extent to which philanthropic resources can benefit their stakeholders but be cautious about any potential mission drift or impacts on accountability.

Engaging Philanthropy through Grant Writing

The financial resources of either private or community foundations are typically accessed by submitting a grant, which is essentially a compelling written explanation of a community need, the intentional ways in which your organization intends to address the need, and the resources needed to complete the work. The Common Grant Application (2014), a nationally accepted format for grant writing includes six sections for a general operating grant, which is relevant to most non-profit organizations:

1. Organizational background
2. Statement of need
3. Project goal and design
4. Timeline and strategies
5. Funding plan
6. Evaluation plan[10]

Since grant writing is a framework for this book and my community change teaching, each grant section is referenced in the part of the text where it is relevant.

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9. Incite. (2007). The revolution will not be funded: Beyond the non-profit industrial complex. Cambridge, Mass: South End Press.

10. National Network of Grantmakers. Common Grant Application (2014). https://www.fracturedatlas.org/site/fiscal/National%20Common_Grant_Application.pdf

12.

ENGAGING COLLABORATORS

> ***"Creating space to tell disability justice stories and telling disability justice stories is a way that we remake the world, and it's a way that we do disability justice activism because we are creating space to show different ways to be disabled, sick, neurodivergent, and deaf people of color. We are creating space for other disabled Black and brown queer folks to be like 'Oh my God, that's my story,' or 'That's part of my story, and I can tell it, and I can ask for what I need, and I can create the movements that are gonna save my life, that aren't gonna leave me behind.'"***
>
> Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, on Disability Justice[1]

As you begin to engage with key stakeholders in your community, you also need to identify the key organizations and people who are also invested in solving or addressing the same problems that you are focused on. If you work with these organizations beyond the initial engagement stage, you will need to consider them as collaborators and create space to engage in this work together.

To work in **collaboration** means that you are engaging and working with two or more other organizations on the same issue or problem. You are all invested in the work and recognize that there is a benefit to working together.

Working in collaboration is not easy, and is often not very efficient. But, it is necessary and inevitable because there is almost always more than one organization that is invested in addressing similar issues. Collaboration can be done informally and with short-term expectations, or it can require a formal structure for a longer-term commitment.

1. Hannabach, Cathay. (Host). (2018, May 2). Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha on Disability Justice (62) [Audio podcast episode]. In Image Otherwise. Ideas on Fire. https://ideasonfire.net/62-leah-lakshmi-piepzna-samarasinha-part-2/.

Strategic Collaboration

- To collaborate is to work strategically with others towards a common goal. Collaboration is necessary, optimal, and possible.
- The key is that the work is strategic; the collaborators are stakeholders and have a responsibility to work on the goal, vision, and support.
- Successful collaboration works to address issues at the root, rather than addressing just the symptoms of the root cause.

Systems Thinking for Community Change[2] provides a model for working collaboratively on the numerous complex issues or problems impacting our communities.

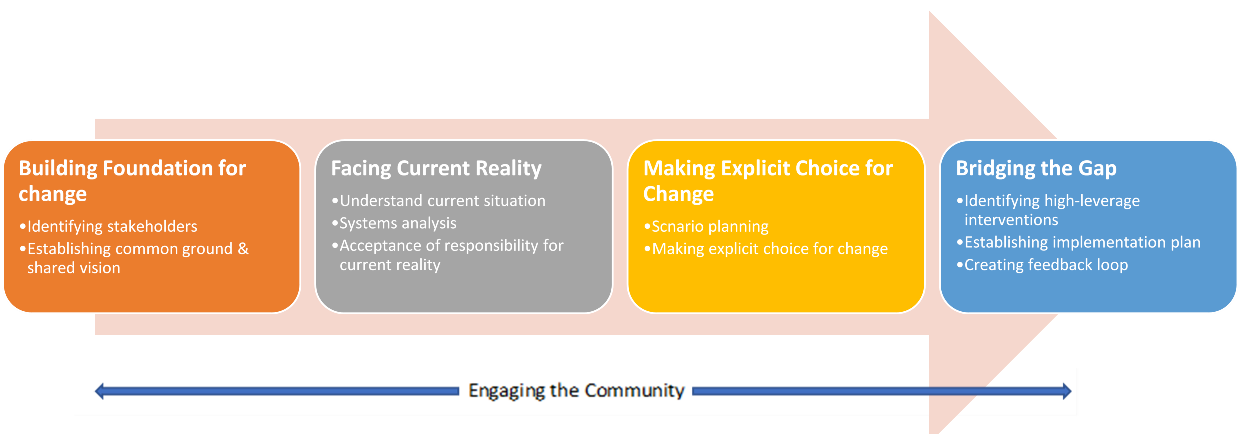

Figure 12.1 "Model for Working Collaboratively"

No matter the length of commitment, to work effectively in collaboration, you need to consider the following:

1. The people and organizations invited to the collaboration should have a vested interest in addressing a community issue or situation.
    - They likely witness the evidence of the problem.
    - They likely contribute in some capacity to the problem.
    - The issue or situation may keep them from realizing their mission.

2. Stroh, D.P. (2015). Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

- They are willing to do some work as part of the collaboration.
- The size of the collaboration should be small enough to be nimble but diverse in perspective.
- The collaboration should be willing and able to dissolve when it is no longer necessary or effective in its current structure.

2. The facilitator is there to help the collaborators move through the community change process and should be all of the following:

    - An effective communicator
    - Able to engage in systems thinking in order to help the collaboration move forward in their strategic thinking and steps (i.e. use iceberg metaphor)
    - Willing to ask the collaboration challenging questions
    - Prepared to establish agendas, document the meeting decisions, conduct research, and establish a structure for information sharing

3. The collaborators should function as a core team while regularly learning from community stakeholders

    - Engage data and wisdom (within and outside the collaboration) to understand the context in which the issue or situation takes place (social, political, economic, etc.).
    - Engage diverse stakeholders early to gather insights into how they are impacted by the issue or situation.
    - Engage diverse stakeholders to hear their ideas for solutions, without constraints.

4. The collaborators need to be willing to change and participate in intervention feedback loops

    - Be willing to engage with their own agencies/organizations to identify the benefits and costs of change
    - Be open to mindset shifts
    - Be honest about limitations and constraints
    - Be willing to participate in or support new interventions, knowing some will fail or need to be modified in order to be successful

PART IV
ASSESSING COMMUNITY

The Assessment Phase

The assessment phase of community change work is crucial to our ability to address the problem or issue we are focused on. The more investment we put into thoughtful assessment, the more likely we are to have an impact on the problem at hand. Since our goal is to help and have an impact, then we should be very motivated to be thorough and thoughtful in our assessment approach. As Mr. Shorters reminds us, this should begin with seeing strengths and assets before looking for deficits. Otherwise, changemakers are going to focus on "fixing" rather than "building up." To do so, it is imperative that you find sources of data as close to those experiencing the problem as possible, seek diverse perspectives, and engage a systemic thinking approach.

This part of the text will focus on developing your understanding of the optimal sources of data for us to access as we engage in the analysis steps of community change work. We will also focus on the ideal and ethical uses of the data you are able to gather.

Learning Objectives

- Introduce how to assess community through various levels
- Identify secondary data sources, advantages and disadvantages
- Identify primary data sources, advantages, and disadvantages
- Introduce varying methods to gather primary data
- Present strategies to identify and organize strengths of the community
- Present strategies to identify and organize needs of the community

13.

COMMUNITY DATA SOURCES

"How can you tell our story if you don't know it? Who do you really think that we are, when you can only tell the story of our deficits and not our assets? When you can only seek to fix us rather than build with us?"

-Trabian Shorters, founder of BMe Community[1]

Clarification through the use of Data

The second stage of the systems thinking community change process includes clarifying the current reality at all levels of the 'iceberg.' Before you begin this process, however, it is critical to remember that the current reality needs to be viewed through multiple lenses. This means identifying various experiences of the current reality—including seeing strengths.

1. De Sio, H.F. (2021). Changemaker playbook: The new physics of leadership in a world of explosive change. Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing. (pg. 91)

This can be accomplished in a few different steps using various types of data while applying systemic thinking as shown in the iceberg graphic. Applying systemic thinking is accomplished in several steps and uses multiple types of data. See the iceberg graphic (figure 13.1) as an analogy. Remember, our goal is to examine the current reality by examining four levels of information:

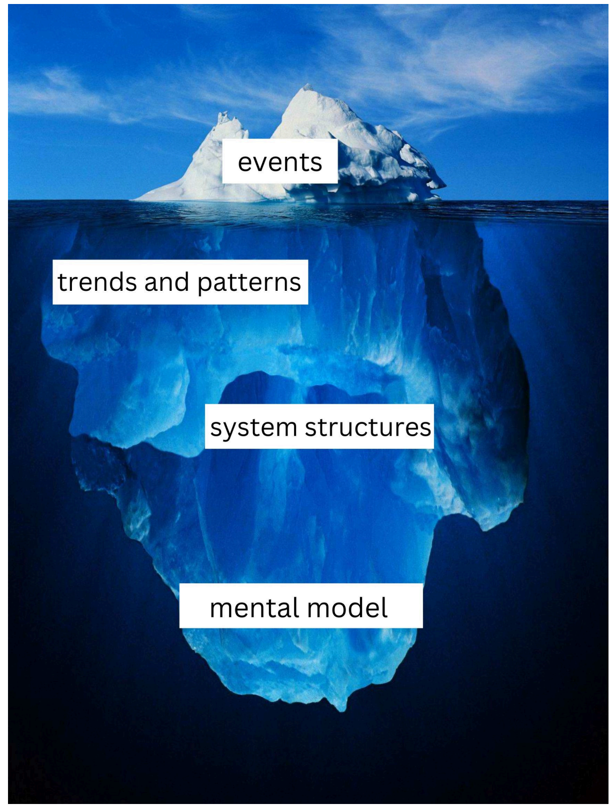

Figure 13.1 "The Iceberg Metaphor"

1. **Events.** Evidence of the community situation is often identified in visceral experiences, events or things we witness in our lives and jobs:
    - children in crisis who cannot get help
    - rise in **mutual aid** to address basic needs
    - seeing people without a home
    - experiencing or witnessing violence
2. **Trends and Patterns.** Evidence that demonstrates a problem that has existed for a period of time is shown through trends and patterns. This is often identified through **secondary data**:
    - public health data
    - agency program and service data
    - case notes
3. **System Structures.** A problem is usually perpetuated by policies and power dynamics of the structural systems. These are typically identified through:
    - data analysis
    - interviews with key stakeholders
    - focus groups
4. **Mental Model Maps.** At the very root of a problem are underlying assumptions, mental models or mindsets that contribute to the perpetuation of a problem or issue. These are typically identified through:
    - interviews with key stakeholders

- focus groups

It works well to begin the assessment stage by considering what type of evidence from the above list you currently have access to in order to answer the more complex systemic questions about the causes of the current reality. Then, identify which data you need to collect to continue your analysis and get to deeper levels of understanding. To do this, changemakers need to access different types of data—which I describe as **secondary data** and **primary data**.

Changemakers often begin with reviewing secondary data, getting as close to the level of community being focused on, analyzing this data, and then supplementing with primary data—which is most often collected next in the process. Together, these sets of data should paint a clearer picture of the strengths and assets of the community, the need for change, the causes of the change, and the mindsets that contribute to the perpetuation or resolution of the problem being examined.

14.

SECONDARY DATA

Types of Data

Secondary Data

Secondary data is what you already have access to. It is typically used to provide evidence of the community's strengths and weaknesses and to identify trends. It provides context and an opportunity for comparison. It should never be relied upon to present the entire picture of a problem and point to a solution. But, it presents a very important part of the picture. Secondary data helps illuminate the evidence for community change.

There is an immense amount of secondary data that is already available to us to use as described below.

Global Data

Global data is that which is collected all around the world and typically expressed in formats that allow the user to compare data across nations. Here are three examples:

- **United Nations Children's Fund** collects and shares data on the well-being of women and children.
  - https://data.unicef.org/
- **World Health Organization** "works worldwide to promote health, keep the world safe, and serve the vulnerable."
  - https://www.who.int/
- **United Nations Refugee Agency** "works to ensure that everybody has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge, having fled violence, persecution, war, or disaster at home."
  - https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/

A limitation of global data collection is ensuring that each country uses the same method of operationalizing the data that is collected and shared. Any concerns about data collection measures are typically explained by the organization sharing the data.

National Data

Similar to global data but on a smaller scale, national data is collected and expressed in formats that allow the user to compare data across states and in smaller jurisdictions. National data has similar limitations to global data: the user of the data needs to consider if each state collects the data using the same or comparable measures.

Here are three examples of national data:

- **The United States Census Bureau** collects and publishes data related to the US population. The data is collected every 10 years by contacting each household in the US, as well as persons who are homeless at the time of the count. The US Census also conducts an annual survey of random households, called the American Community Survey. The data collected by the US Census is typically considered demographic, including information on age, gender, ethnicity, race, economic status, housing, disability status, etc.
    - Census Bureau Quick Links
- **Annie E. Casey Foundation** and the Kids Count Data Center are "devoted to developing a brighter future for millions of children and young people with respect to their educational, economic, social, and health outcomes."
    - Kids Count Data Center
- **The Sentencing Project** "advocates for effective and humane responses to crime that minimize imprisonment and criminalization of youth and adults by promoting racial, ethnic, economic, and gender justice."
    - The Sentencing Project

State/Regional Data

Each state collects and shares data that is public and typically shared through government agencies. Here are a few examples:

- State Departments of Health
- State Department of Human Services
- State Department of Corrections
- State Department of Transportation
- State Department of Education

Local Data

Local data is typically collected and shared by county government as well as through surveys conducted by local agencies. Considering the concept of proximity, it is important to seek data that most closely represents the community that you are focused on while also supplementing this data with that which provides a broader perspective. Typically this means finding data that is as local as possible, since often changemaking is focused on geographic areas.

Local data can be identified by accessing national or state sources of data (i.e. the US Census or State Department of Education) and selecting local geographic units that can be identified by searching for local survey data. Here is one example of this:

- **The Bridge to Health Survey** is conducted by the Generations Foundation and surveys randomly selected households in Northeast Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin on the health status of adults.
    - The Bridge to Health Survey results can be viewed for the entire region, individual counties, or some more urban cities or specific neighborhoods.

Caution about Data Inclusivity

Be very intentional about finding secondary data that includes data on the populations of interest in your work. If the data doesn't include the population categories, then it is mandatory that you supplement it with additional sources of data. For example, if you are working on the issue of educational achievement in your community and are specifically interested in supporting Indigenous students, then the data you find and use must include the educational experiences of Indigenous students. If you are using data that isn't inclusive, then it is all too easy to identify solutions that will not be relevant to the population or community you're working with, thus not actually benefiting them or solving the problem at hand.

15.

PRIMARY DATA

Gathering Meaningful Data

Primary data is new data, mostly subjective, that you gather in order to contribute to your assessment of the community and the understanding of an issue. The ability to gather meaningful primary data is directly related to the effectiveness of your engagement. The more effective your engagement, the more meaningful the data.

Remember, your goal is to get as close to the experience of the issue or problem as possible so that you can gain an understanding of the assets that could be enhanced, as well as the reasons for the problem or issue to exist.

Be cautious when contacting people so that you are not exploiting them at a time of crisis. For example, if you want to understand the strategies and resources that are helpful to people in your community during a time of mental health crisis, you should wait until the crisis has been resolved or they are in a period of recovery before attempting to engage with them. You need to be careful so you are not putting someone at risk by engaging with them as a source of primary data.

This is why organizations have Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) which review plans for human subject research. Their primary role is to evaluate the research plan to avoid unnecessary risks to people, particularly those considered most vulnerable to harm (children, people with disabilities, pregnant people, incarcerated individuals, etc.).

The first step in gathering primary data is identifying what else you need to understand about the community to complete your assessment. So, begin by reviewing your stakeholder list and asking yourself: Who could help answer these questions? Who has a story to tell about their community that would help us understand it more clearly? Who else is working on this issue? Who should we be listening to and collaborating with?

Data Gathering Strategies

There are many strategies for gathering primary data; each will be described here and in more detail in the chart at the end of this chapter. You can also find more in-depth information about most of these data-gathering strategies at YPAR Hub, which started through an ongoing partnership between the University of California, Berkeley, and San Francisco Peer Resources.

I recommend using a combination of data-gathering strategies and spending enough time in the planning phase, especially with questions you may be asking, to ensure you are able to gather valuable insight into the community problems you are examining.

Types of Primary Data Gathering Strategies:

- **Focus groups:** Meeting with a group of stakeholders to gather their perspectives about community conditions. Typically, the stakeholders have their own individual experiences with the problem at hand. Their shared background enhances their trust and comfort in sharing their ideas with other people.
- **Interviews**: One-on-one meeting to gather perspective on community conditions.
- **Observations:** Intentional and systematic process of watching and documenting groups, phenomena, or behaviors.
- **Surveys:** Soliciting input from stakeholders by asking them questions which are responded to either via paper or electronic format.
- **PhotoVoice:** Photos that are intended to capture an idea or a phenomenon, typically taken by the stakeholders themselves. The photos give a ‘voice’ to an idea or experience.
- **Stories/Vignettes:** A detailed narrative expressing someone’s first-hand experience or observation that is related to the community condition being examined.
- **World Café:** A World Café is a specific method of engaging a large group of people in an intentional, action-oriented dialogue. There are 5 primary components to a café but the process is intended to be modified to fit the purpose of the person or group gathering insights. The components are: setting, welcome and introductions, small group rounds, questions, and harvesting of information. More detailed information can be found at The World Café.

Example: **Assessment of Behavioral Health Crisis Care in Northeast Minnesota**

In 2017, our team embarked on an assessment of behavioral health crisis care in Northeast Minnesota and sought to gather as much insight as possible into the experience of seeking care during a time of mental health crisis. Since providers of mental health care are more likely than consumers to have opportunities to share their experiences and ideas for change, our goal was to hear from more people who needed care than those who were involved in the delivery of care.

After carefully reviewing and analyzing national, state, and regional secondary data, we set out to facilitate what we called "listening sessions." These were a combination of focus groups and interviews with consumers and providers of crisis behavioral health care, resulting in 121 listening session participants, 54% of whom identified as consumers.

We asked consumers:

1. Please describe what it has been like to seek help when you feel you are experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency.
2. Do you think that the crisis could have been avoided? If so, why or how?
3. What types of services or types of people ended up being the most helpful in resolving the crisis and helping you gain stability? What is less helpful?
4. How do you tend to find out about the mental health care that is available to you? If there were new services, what would be the best way for you to learn about them (word of mouth, websites, flyers, mental health clinics, etc.)?
5. Did those service providers or people recognize any part of your culture that is important to you (your cultural history, traditions, practices, etc.)? If so, what did they do?
6. What makes access to mental health services difficult, if at all?
7. What ideas do you have for improvement in your mental health care?

We asked providers:

1. Based on your experience, summarize the strengths and community assets you've observed that support adults who may experience a mental health crisis or help to avoid a crisis.
2. Based on your experience, summarize major gaps you've observed in adult mental health crisis care in your community, including any policies that present a barrier to providing services.
3. In your community, what factors significantly contribute to a return to a state of crisis for adults who have had a mental health crisis previously?
4. A previous assessment identified a need to increase the extent to which mental health services are compassionate, culturally responsive, and consumer-focused. From your experience, do you think this has improved? Why or why not?
5. What would be your top recommendation(s) for improving adult mental health crisis care in your community?

The results of the assessment were rich in detail, inclusive of numerous recommendations, and distributed widely to the entities with the power and influence over behavioral health crisis care as well as those who participated in any of the listening sessions.

Considerations, Benefits & Limitations of Methods

Below you will find additional details about the considerations, benefits, and limitations of each primary data collection method.

Focus Groups

Considerations

- A group that already meets might be willing to be a focus group
- Ensure the focus group will prove diverse perspectives
- Ensure the time, location and format is most convenient for the participants
- Eliminate barriers and provide an incentive if possible
- Ideally there is a facilitator and notetaker to improve efficiency and accuracy

Benefits:

- Scheduling with one person is usually easier
- Potential for in-depth perspectives and stories

Limitations:

- Interviewee doesn't benefit from ideas shared by others
- Separate interviews take more time compared to one group meeting

Interviews

Considerations:

- It is easier to ask follow-up questions during an interview, which could add to the depth of the information shared
- Schedule the meeting at a time, location and format that is most convenient for the interviewee.
- Eliminate barriers and provide an incentive if possible

Benefits:

- Scheduling with one person is usually easier.
- Potential for in-depth perspectives and stories

Limitations:

- Interviewee doesn't benefit from ideas shared by others.
- Facilitating interviews can take a lot more time than focus groups because each meeting is done separately
- Interview may ask more questions than in a focus group since there an interview is one-on-one

Observations

Considerations:

- There are community conditions or settings which warrant seeing firsthand
- Observations should be planned and organized, anticipating what you are looking for while also being open to what you see'

Benefits:

- Observation provides context of place
- You can see dynamics that are not understandable by reviewing data

Limitations:

- Observations have the potential to be intrusive if the observers impact the dynamics of what is being watched

Surveys

Considerations:

- Design the questions to be understandable and valuable
- Include qualitative and quantitative questions to increase the value of the insight gained
- Identify a method of distribution and collection which is efficient, such as email

Benefits:

- There is the potential to reach more people via surveys than through focus groups or interviews if you have a method of reaching people and if they have an incentive to respond

Limitations:

- Surveys are challenging to deliver and collect. Often return rates are much lower than anticipated, limiting the value of the results
- There is no opportunity to follow up with additional questions so information may be limited
- Surveys with many qualitative responses may be difficult to summarize

PhotoVoice

Considerations:

- You should provide an explanation as to the intent or assignment, so the stakeholders have enough guidance for their photos

Benefits:

- This can be a fun way to collect insight into community conditions
- Stakeholders will likely enjoy participating in PhotoVoice and be empowered
- The results are usually visually interesting and can result in visceral responses, which can often be a motivator for support and action

Limitations:

- If the stakeholders are the ones documenting the photos, they need tools to do so, if they do not have their own cameras
- PhotoVoice results would likely need to be supplemented with additional primary data since the insights gathered would be limited to the photos received

Stories / Vignettes

Considerations:

- Vignettes or stories should arrive organically and be less planned. They are a potential outcome of an interview, focus group, or observation
- An effective story/vignette supplements other sources of data and illuminates the condition rather than explaining it

Benefits:

- Documenting and sharing stories or vignettes can be very effective at sharing the nuance of community conditions
- Similar to PhotoVoice, a story or vignette can result in visceral responses, which can often be a motivator for support and action

Limitations:

- The story or vignette should not appear forced or coerced, but rather a more natural explanation of the community condition
- These can be difficult to collect organically

World Café

Considerations:

- This method should be considered if you can engage a large group of people
- There are online tools which can be utilized to facilitate the World Café method virtually if needed. Mural is one example.

Benefits:

- This allows for the insights of participants to be shared in a fun and creative way by moving the group through a process. This allows for the dialogue results to be deeper

Limitations:

- The World Café method takes time to plan and usually requires facilitation materials if done in person. The results are likely proportional to the effort put into preparation.
- The method requires space and table set-ups that allow people to move during the process

16.

IDENTIFYING AND MAPPING ASSETS AND NEEDS

Importance of Strengths-based Perspective

Social workers and other 'helping' professionals are taught to work from a strengths-based perspective, meaning that we should always start with helping the client recognize their strengths, instead of focusing only on deficits or areas of need. This is just as applicable to community work as it is when working with individuals. One of the ways in which we integrate a strengths-based approach into our work is by identifying the assets of a community. These are the services or resources existing in a community that have a positive impact on the well-being of community members—whether it be a geographic or identity-based community.

So, we will begin by examining what to look for in community assets and then look at the variety of ways we are able to display both assets and needs as we analyze the information.

Identifying Assets

Multiple types of assets could be important to a community, including people, physical assets, services, history, traditions, events, and services. An asset could be a person who is known to be someone who steps up in times of need and will make things happen (i.e. quickly getting face masks to people during the early stages of COVID-19). Or, an asset could be the laundromat or a taxi service. It depends on the problem that you are focused on.

So, if you are focused on the isolation of older adults in your community, your asset list may include the following:

- Senior dining program
- Aging social service programs
- Home care agency
- Taxi company known to be elder-friendly
- Aging Resource Officer for the county
- Meals-on-wheels

- VA services
- Friendly visitor program
- Churches and parish nurses
- Park where many older adults walk during good weather
- YMCA
- Social media page dedicated to support for elders

It is important that you engage stakeholders in the identification of assets rather than generating the list in isolation. It is inevitable that the list you would generate as the change maker would not include some specific assets that the members of the community would see as critical. That is especially the case if you are not a member of that community. You would be viewing the assets through your own lens of what would likely be helpful to you and not based on first-hand experience.

Mapping Assets

Once the asset list is generated, the next step is to map the assets as a way to create a visual representation of the information and see if there are gaps. In many types of communities, the assets are not accessible to everyone who needs them, so the solution may not be in needing more assets but in making the ones that exist more accessible.

There are multiple ways to display the mapped assets. Two common ways include:

- organizing the data and listing the assets
- overlaying the information on a map of a community

If your community has a geographic boundary, I suggest overlaying the asset information on the map so that you can identify if access to the assets may be an issue for some parts of the community.

Below you will find two sample maps that have been made available online from generous organizations engaged in community change work. The first one is derived from the Asset Based Community Development Institute, which published the tool Discovering Community Power: A Guide to Mobilizing Local Assets and Your Organization's Capacity. The second is derived from the Asset Mapping Toolkit which is a project of the Advancement Project- Healthy City Community Research Lab. You will find additional information about steps to facilitate asset maps on their website.

Sample A: Organized data and listing of assets

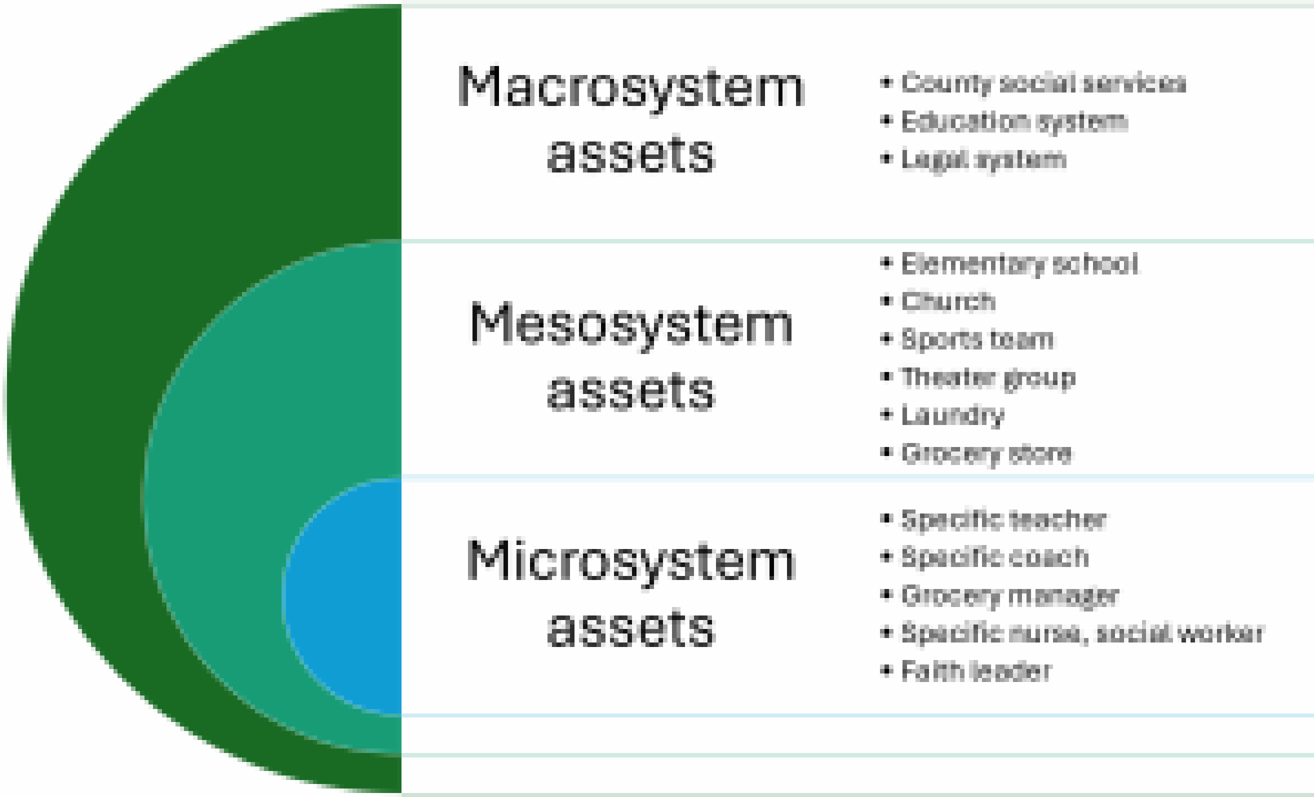

Figure 16.1 “Organized Data and Listing of Assets”

Sample B: Overlaying information on map using color-coded dots

Figure 16.2 "Overlaying Information on Maps Example"

Identifying Needs

Similar to assets, when identifying needs you are looking for evidence of the community situation that points to a gap or a problem that needs to be addressed. The need is identified through close examination of secondary and primary data. These types of questions can guide your examination:

- What evidence do we see that tells us a problem exists?
- Are some people or groups more likely to be impacted by the problem? Who are they?
- What is their experience like? What are some of the stories?

Mapping Needs

Similar to assets, it is important to organize the needs in a way that makes sense and ideally presents some context or comparison. This is usually used when displaying the evidence for a situation.

Some of the sources of secondary data, like the US Census, provide mapping capabilities for the data we are examining. This is a common way for people working in community change to create maps of data for analysis purposes. Here is an example of mapping the need for food access.

Example: Mapping Food Access in the US

Access to stores that provide affordable, healthy food options is often an issue in high-density and urban areas. To help develop a visual representation of the issue of food access, the US Department of Agriculture created the Food Access Research Atlas using data from the US Census. The atlas creates a visual map of locations in the US with census tracts that have low access to affordable and healthy foods. A census tract is a geographic unit that represents a segment of the population (between 1,200-8,000 people). The graphic below shows a map of the majority of the continental US generated in March 2022, showing "Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket." Here is an example of a map using the [Food Access Research Atlas](#) for portions of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

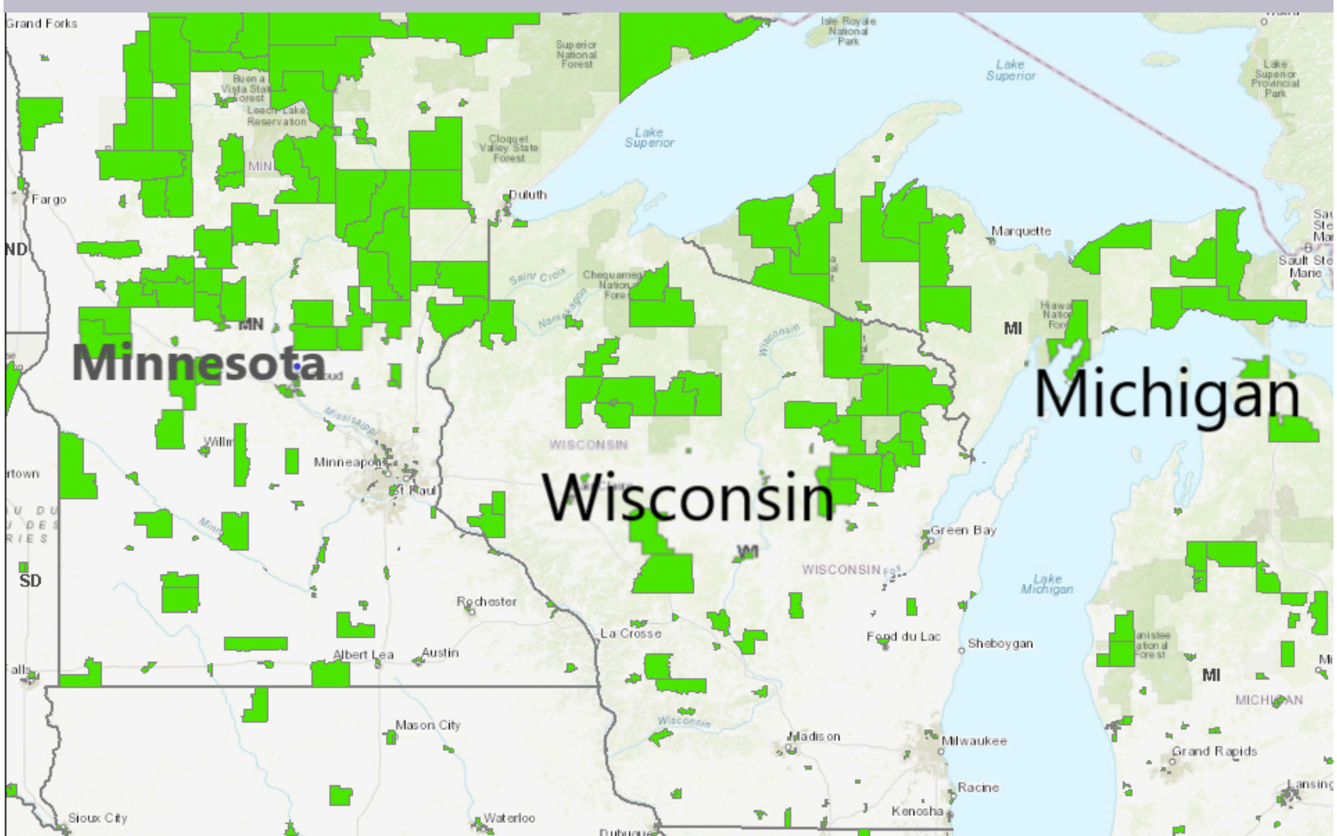

Figure 16.3 "Map of Food Access"

17.

RELEVANT GRANT SECTION: STATEMENT OF NEED

Statement of Need

Assignment Timing

This part of the grant is assigned in week 5 (in a 16-week semester) after reading the **Assessing Community** section. Students should take two weeks to complete the assignment.

Assignment Overview

The **Statement of Need** is intended to explain the current needs of the community that will be addressed in the grant proposal. The **Statement of Need** should be compelling and clearly based on current or recent evidence. This section should be approximately 1.5 pages long. The evidence should include secondary and primary data and provide clear citations for both.

Common sources of secondary data:

- Public health data
- Community surveys
- Health surveys
- School student data
- Public safety data
- Organizational data to document participants and their needs

Common sources of primary data:

- Interviews with persons impacted by the problem
- Interviews with staff
- Stories from the community
- Observations

Assignment Detail

- One to two paragraphs describing the problem that the proposal is focused on; referencing the secondary data.
    - It helps to provide context for the problem, especially if it is unique to your community or if it is representative of a regional, national, or global trend.
- One to two paragraphs describing how this problem impacts people, families, and the community while referring to the primary data.
    - It is helpful to share stories or narrative examples that humanize the problem.
    - Permission is mandatory and someone's story should never be used to sensationalize a problem or exploit a person.

PART V

SELECTING COMMUNITY CHANGE STRATEGY

The Steps of Scenario Planning

This part will cover the critical steps of scenario planning and then selecting the ideal community change strategy. As noted, these steps may not take long but are a necessary and very intentional part of the community change process.

Learning Objectives

- Identify possible community scenarios based on your analysis
- Analyze possible future scenarios to identify appropriate options for community change
- Select community change strategies

18.

SCENARIO PLANNING

"As you enter positions of trust and power, dream a little before you think".

-Toni Morrison

Once you have completed a thorough and in-depth analysis of the community situation, you need to go through the steps of scenario planning in order to identify the optimal community change strategy to use and more importantly to make an explicit choice about moving forward. This step may not take a lot of time to complete but is still a very intentional part of the process of community change work.

I was also recently reminded, by two amazing changemakers from the UK at Wellbeing Enterprises, Mark Swift and James Smith, about the power of dreaming at this stage. When we allow ourselves to collectively dream, we envision what is optimal and best for everyone without constraint, setting a goal of where we need to be. If we don't allow dreaming then we will always be limited by our lack of imagination and logistical constraints, and we won't get to our desired future; we will get to our likely or probable future.

Since this step is explicitly about intention and buy-in, it is critical that this be done with a core team of dedicated collaborators rather than in isolation.

Scenario planning involves:

1. Identifying a few scenarios on the future of the community situation based on your analysis
2. Reviewing the scenarios with your stakeholders
3. Discussing the benefits of changing and the costs of maintaining the status quo
4. Making an explicit decision between two potential scenarios; either towards change (preferred future) or the status quo (probable future)

Describing Two Potential Scenarios

The two potential scenarios are about the probable future and the preferable or ideal future and incorporate elements from both design thinking and systems thinking[12].

Probable Future

The **probable future** is the future that would exist if the current conditions and trends in the community continue along the same trajectory they are now. So, to describe the probable future you need to answer these questions:

- What is this condition/issue/problem likely to become if we do nothing new (business as usual)?
- What is LIKELY to happen?

Preferable Future

The **preferable future** is the future in which the current conditions and trends in the community shift to an improved and ideal level. This is where you need to dream. So, to describe the preferred future you need to answer these questions:

- What is the desired future with this condition/issue/problem?
- What do we WANT to happen?
- What is the ideal?

Once you have described your probable and preferable future, you and your stakeholders need to answer the following questions:

- What are the costs of not changing? Are there financial, political, social, or other costs?
- What are the benefits of changing?
- What are the circumstances like for people in the ideal future?

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1. Liedtka, J.; Salzman, R.; Azer, D. (2017). Design thinking for the greater good: Innovation in the social sector. New York: Columbia University Press.
2. Stroh, D.P. (2015). Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

- What might they be doing, saying, and feeling?
- How might this ideal future impact other parts of the community?
- How might you and your work also be different?

The choices being made may seem obvious, but this is a very intentional and important step in community change work. It is critical that the collaborators make a deliberate decision to improve the conditions to a preferred future rather than allow conditions to remain the same. It is a way to establish deeper buy-in to the community change process.

19.

SELECTING COMMUNITY CHANGE STRATEGIES

"When we only name the problem, when we only state complaint without a constructive focus on resolution, we take away hope. In this way critique can become merely an expression of profound cynicism, which then works to sustain dominator culture."

-bell hooks, p. xiv, Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope

In the above quote, bell hooks challenges us to consider the impact of only stating a problem and not moving forward with identifying a strategy to address it. This should give us pause if we were to select the status quo as a viable option, which is typically done because selecting the preferable future means that there is a lot of work ahead. It is hard. It sometimes includes risks. There are costs. But, by selecting the status quo, we are agreeing to allow the issue to exist and essentially "sustain dominator culture" as she so effectively states.

Selecting Community Change Strategies

Assuming that the probable future is not desired and that you and your collaborators are willing to engage in additional work, then the next steps involve identifying ways to achieve the preferred future and selecting community change strategies. Here is a set of questions to consider as you and your core team of collaborators decide the best way to proceed.

Community organizing

- Is this an issue that directly impacts a group of people that form a community (geographically or through shared interest)?

- Is there likely a group impacted by the issue that could be mobilized?
- Are there short-term successes that could be achieved and may have an impact on the issue such as improving access, fixing something, expanding assets, or temporarily improving a condition?
- Does the issue involve an unfair power dynamic that needs to be analyzed in order to have an impact on the issue?
- Do these successes need formal structure, or could informal structure be successful and more nimble?

Social action

- Does the preferred future require systemic change?
- Are the solutions likely policy-related?
  - Are there laws or decisions which, if changed or made, would have a positive impact on the issue or problem?
- Can you identify the target for the policy change (city, school district, county, or state levels)?

Community planning and development

- Does the preferred future likely require structure, like a service, program, or organization?
- Does this structure likely need significant resources (funding, staff, location, equipment, etc.)?

If you answer YES to any of these questions, then you should focus on that strategy for your community change effort. Oftentimes, community change work involves a combination of strategies; in this case, community organizing is the beginning step of the community change strategies.

The next parts of the text will provide a guide for how to implement the strategies, focusing on Community Organizing and Community Planning and Development. As noted earlier, Social Action is critically important, but is a focus of policy coursework, so it is not reviewed in depth in this text.

PART VI

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AS A CHANGE STRATEGY

Learning Objectives

- Describe the history and importance of community organizing
- Explain how to identify and frame issues with stakeholders
- Describe power and how to harness it
- Present how to engage with stakeholders
- Present how to leverage power to advance community change

20.

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Community organizing is a:

"Process of building power through collective action in order to address shared grievances or advance shared interests. Organizing of this sort is characterized by an emphasis on power relations and aligning interests. Conflict and negotiation tactics, then, are fundamental."

Dan Jasper, Street Civics[1]

Importance of Community Organizing

Community organizing has been a necessary strategy for change due to the historical and contemporary systemic oppression driven by colonization. This practice and mindset of conquering has exploited people, damaged their health, destroyed livelihoods, reduced safety, and decreased well-being for the benefit of others – almost always a financial benefit. The people impacted have quite naturally organized themselves against this to resist the oppression and exploitation. The exploiters intentionally removed access to tools that inherently included political, social, and economic power (voting, lawmaking, buying, educating, etc.) and intentionally made change-making within traditional systems difficult. Eliminating access to these still remains an early target for marginalization.

Therefore, community organizing usually works outside of the traditional systems and relies on more informal (yet powerful) networks of people.

Saul Alinsky, who began his organizing in Chicago, is typically credited with introducing the term

1. Jasper, D. Community organizing basics: Power, interests & Saul Alinsky. Community Involvement and Organizing. Retrieved April 1, 2022 at https://streetcivics.com/community-organizing-basics-power-interests-saul-alinsky/

"community organizing" in *Rules for Radicals,* published in 1971, which was written to help younger radicals develop rational tactics to guide their social change efforts[2].

There are so many historical and contemporary examples of groups engaging in community organizing, including:

- Farm labor
- Tenant unions
- Civil rights
- Treaty rights
- Water rights
- Disability rights
- Anti-war resistance

Community organizing is an exciting and dynamic part of community change work and could easily take a full semester or multiple resources to effectively teach about the various tactics used by effective organizers. However, there are some very fundamental approaches used by community organizers which will be described here in detail:

- Issue identification and issue framing
- Mapping and analyzing power
- Mobilizing stakeholders and advancing support

Often community organizing is done exclusively by volunteers, but some are professional community organizers. These may be social workers, criminal justice advocates, public health workers, etc. Their role is typically to facilitate the community organizing steps and keep the momentum, but they are not intended to be the token leader or only spokesperson for any community organizing work. That type of elevating role would defeat the essential nature of community organizing to be done BY and FOR the community.

A community organizer is also a hired position, one of the most famous organizers being former United States President Barack Obama. According to Jacoby Brown, a community organizer "Builds community with a purpose. An organizer provides a means (an ongoing group) by which people solve their own problems". [3]

You are encouraged to supplement with these additional resources as you consider using community organizing or learning more about the work:

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2. Alinsky, S.D. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals*. New York: Vintage Books.

3. Jacoby Brown, M. (2006). Building powerful community organizations: A personal guide to creating groups that can solve problems and change the world. Arlington, Massachusetts: Long Haul Press, p. 15.

- Communitychange.org
- Native Organizers Alliance
- Re: Power
- Organizing for Power
- The Commons: Social Change Library

21.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND ISSUE FRAMING

Identifying the Issues

As noted, community organizing arises from shared grievances or interests that have not been addressed, so it makes sense that issue clarification and framing would be one of the first steps. This needs to be done WITH the community and not FOR the community. Clarifying and framing the issue needs to be done with community stakeholders and supporters since the issue being worked on is directly impacting them. Their voice and perspective is critical. As a reminder, there are three categories of people who you could interact with in different ways, given their passion, degree of support, capacity, and skills. This is also included in the **Mobilizing Stakeholders and Advancing Support** chapter.

- **The core leadership group** is the primary group of about 5-15 people who are committed to this community change effort to the extent that they are willing to show up regularly and engage. This is the group that would initiate a meeting or process for identifying the shared grievances or interests.
- **Accomplices** are people who are not only invested in the community issue or impacted by it but who are willing to engage in advocacy and take some level of risk (political, economic, social, etc.). These are likely people who are impacted by the issue, not interested or able to attend regular meetings, but can be counted on to take action.
- **Supporters/allies** are people who support your community issue or cause and would be interested in taking some less risky level of action, but likely not action that involves risk.

Gather as many of these stakeholders or community members (prioritizing the core leadership group and accomplices) together to review the primary and secondary data you compiled to answer a series of questions that will help you to identify the issues that are the most pressing and urgent:

- What are the issues that are shared by the community?
- How are your lives impacted by the issue(s)?
- What are the most urgent issues to be addressed?
    - Define the issues and provide as detailed a description as possible.

Even if people who would identify as supporters or allies don't attend a meeting or process, it is very important that they are still invited so that they are aware of the work you are doing. They are likely a group that will become important as you identify community change tactics.

Framing the Issues

"You can only understand what the frames in your head allow you to understand. If the facts don't fit the frames in your brain, the frames in your brain stay and the facts are ignored or challenged or belittled".

George Lakoff, 2014[1]

People in community change work are great at listing facts and assuming that this will get people's attention and inspire them to participate or support change, but that often is not what happens. Lakoff [2]helps us to understand why that is not the case.

A frame is a "mental structure that shapes how we see the world." [3] As a cognitive psychologist, Lakoff explains that frames exist in the cognitive unconscious and are not actually still cognitively accessible, but they influence how we relate and respond to information all the time. If you communicate with someone and negate their frame, that still activates their cognitive unconscious and will counter your intentions.

Lakoff's famous example is telling someone to not think of an elephant and then the first thing someone does is think of an elephant. The cognitive unconscious frame is accessed just through the word "elephant."

Therefore, framing an issue as a way to gain attention or influence must be done with your own language and not the language of someone whose opinion you are trying to change.

In the book, *How to Be an Activist*, Holburn describes the critical step of framing an issue as a way to bring it to other people's attention. They list the types of information used in framing an issue, including facts, statistics, data, and opinions. I suggest adding personal stories or examples and perhaps photographs to the list.

Lakoff explains that facts matter, but they will only be heard if they are framed in terms of moral importance and reflect held values. These values may include security, freedom, opportunity, kindness, integrity, loyalty,

1. Lakoff, G. (2014). Don't think of an elephant: Know your values and frame the debate. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

2. Lakoff, G. (2014). Don't think of an elephant: Know your values and frame the debate. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

3. Lakoff, G. (2014). Don't think of an elephant: Know your values and frame the debate. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, p. xi.

etc. Lakoff encourages the use of rhetorical questions to begin the framing, such as "Wouldn't it be better…" This then naturally initiates an answer or response, even if one is not verbalized.

So, you need facts, statistics, data, opinions, and examples, all framed in a way that is likely to resonate and be heard by others. Once the framing of an issue is accepted by the receiver, it changes the conversation after that point. Everything else you say becomes common sense.

Example: **Framing Issue of Toxic Garbage Dumping in Neighborhood**

Issue: There is an empty lot in our neighborhood that has become a dumping ground for people's trash (beds, tires, bags of garbage, appliances, etc.). Despite the continued cleaning up of the space, this has been an ongoing issue and is causing a lot of problems in the neighborhood. Members of the community are angry and very concerned. The lot is dangerous for the 20+ kids in the neighborhood and there is residue leaking from the lot that appears to be toxic.

Sample framing: *Wouldn't it be better if the children in our neighborhood could safely play in their own backyards, rather than in a dangerous dump of outsider's toxic junk? Isn't this what you would want for your own children?*

22.

MAPPING AND ANALYZING POWER

"Power is a tool used by a few to maintain wealth, position, and control over many, but it can also be a force shaped by the many that brings liberation and equitably-shared resources to all."

Robert Linthicum (pg 263) Practice of Macro Social Work

Discussing and Defining Power

Power is one of my favorite topics to discuss with students because they tend to equate 'power' with 'politics,' both feeling equally overwhelming and nebulous to them. Consequently, they tend to respond with apprehension. But, when students realize that power can be measured, identified, mapped, and manipulated, they perk up to the conversation and it quickly becomes a more interesting and fruitful discussion. It is a very dynamic part of community change work but needs to be carefully understood.

Consider that:

- POWER is the ability to influence
- POWER makes things happen
- POWER stops things from happening
- POWER is held by individuals as well as collectives
- POWER is distributed unevenly and unequally—intentionally

There are two stages of power. POWER that initiates and POWER that maintains. A goal for community organizers is to build and foster collective power with stakeholders who are willing and interested in maintaining a project or initiative. It is common for a project to be successful initially but fail after a few years because the people who control the resources were not considered or were not a part of the collective power that was intended to maintain it.

Types of Power

There are three primary types of POWER that I will be referencing: political, social, and economic. Typically, people tend to think of political power in the traditional sense of elected officials, but these other types of power are extremely important and critical to effective community organizing because they are being used all the time to change communities or maintain the status quo.

- **Political Power** is the ability to influence using political power, typically in an elected or appointed position (mayor, sheriff, school board, superintendent, etc.).
- **Social Power** is the ability to influence using social connections. People with significant social power are usually known and respected in their community or have access to social networks (faith, business, family, social media influencers, etc.).
- **Economic Power** is the ability to influence using financial resources. People with significant economic power may be more willing to use their financial resources for causes they support (business owners, philanthropists, elite, etc.).

Mapping Power

There are numerous steps to go through when mapping power. Since this is a dynamic process, it is best to document the map in a way that can be shifted as power is redistributed or it is shown to influence levels of support. I suggest using a large board, wall, or sheet of paper with sticky notes that can be seen but also moved. If you are doing your work virtually, use tools like Jamboard to create a virtual collaborative workspace with virtual sticky notes.

Step 1: Identify the stakeholders for the issue/project

- People who are directly impacted
- Decision makers
- Influencers
  - **Allies:** people who care and who will consider engaging consistently
  - **Accomplices:** people who care, share interests, and are willing to engage
  - **Opposition:** people who have an opinion against the interest of the organizing group and are willing to engage

Step 2: Identify the power that someone has or anticipate the power

- Political power

- Social power
- Economic power

Step 3: Identify the position or opinion that someone has on an issue/project

- Level of support vs opposition

Step 4: Place them on the map according to their level of power and position[1,2]

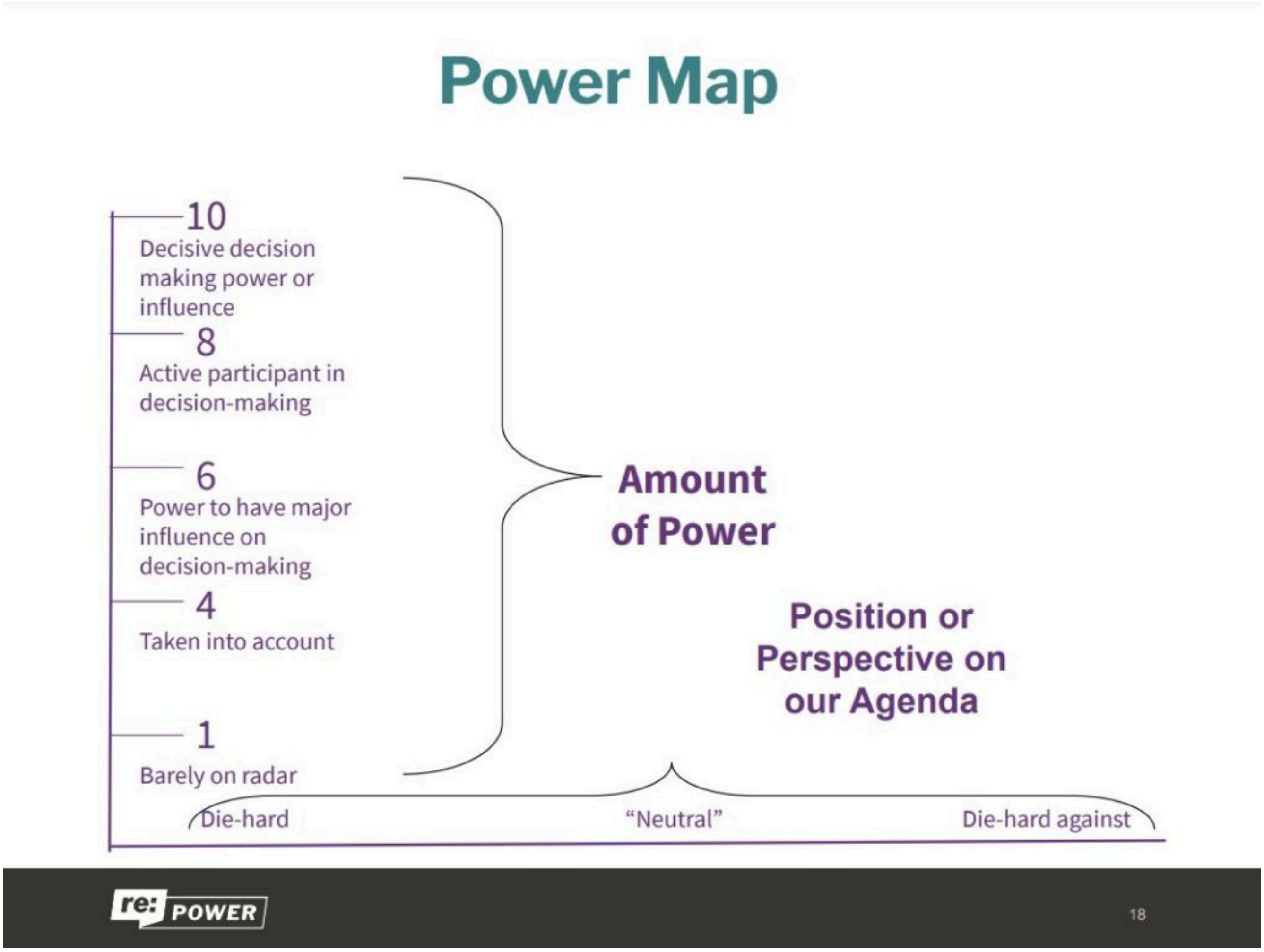

Figure 22.1 "Power Map"

1. Strategic Concepts in Policy and Organizing Education (2023). https://scopela.org/
2. Re: Power (2023). https://repower.org/

Step 5: Analyze the map

- What does the map tell you about the level of power and extent of support?
    - Of the people/groups who strongly support your issue or idea, how much power do they have?
    - Of the people/groups who have a lot of power to influence, how supportive are they of your issue?

The analysis of the power map will then direct your tactics for mobilizing support for your issue or for solving your problem.

23.

MOBILIZING STAKEHOLDERS AND ADVANCING SUPPORT

Once you have analyzed the power map, the next step is to recruit and mobilize stakeholders and identify tactics that will advance support for your issue or solve the problem you are engaging with. Based on the analysis of the map, the tactics you identify will need to:

- Increase the individual and collective power of those who support
- Increase support for those with the most power

Recruiting and Mobilizing Stakeholders

At this point, you should consider your stakeholders as existing in three different groups, each having a self-interest in the issue or problem.

- **The core leadership group** is the primary group of about 5-15 people who are committed to this community change effort to the extent that they are willing to show up regularly and engage.
- **Accomplices** are people who are not only invested in the community issue or impacted by it, but are willing to engage in advocacy and take some level of risk (political, economic, social, etc.). These are likely people who are impacted by the issue, not interested or able to attend regular meetings but can be counted on to take action. These are also people who not only care about the issue for their own self-interest because they are directly impacted by the issue, but also care about other people in the community and are willing to work for their benefit too.[1]
- **Supporters/allies** are people who support your cause, recognize the problem, and would be interested in taking action, but likely not action that involves risk.

You will want to engage with this group likely in a few different ways, all focused on communicating with them

1. Jacoby Brown, M. (2006). Building powerful community organizations: A personal guide to creating groups that can solve problems and change the world. Arlington, Massachusetts: Long Haul Press.

and providing opportunities for them to be involved. People tend to get involved because they were asked, particularly if they have motivations to contribute to the resolution of an issue or cause.

Recruiting Stakeholders

There are a few primary ways that community organizers recruit and engage with stakeholders; always relying on listening as the primary skill. One of the 'rules' is the 80/20 rule; listen 80% of the time and do 20% of the talking[2]. What you are listening for is how the issue impacts them, how the issue may impact their neighbors/family/friends, what their ideas are for change, and how they might be willing to help.

Recruiting often involves two main strategies:

- Door-to-door visits
  - When an issue is likely impacting a neighborhood or group of people who live in proximity, then going door-to-door can be very useful.
  - Be prepared to introduce yourself, explain what issue you are working on, ask 1-2 questions, and then just listen.
  - Bring a notebook to document where you have been, who has self-interest in the issue, and who could be recruited for the core leadership group, an accomplice, or a supporter/ally.
- One-on-one visits
  - When an issue likely impacts people across a community, then inviting people for one-on-one visits can be very useful.
  - Find a location that is convenient and does not require a significant financial investment (coffee versus lunch). The time and place should be decided by the person you are inviting.
  - The strategy is similar to door-to-door organizing, although you have already introduced yourself to the person in order to set up the meeting. So, more time can be spent asking them a few questions, listening, and documenting.
  - You should also bring a notebook to document their responses and whether they should be recruited for the core leadership group, as an accomplice, or a supporter/ally.[3]

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2. Jacoby Brown, M. (2006). Building powerful community organizations: A personal guide to creating groups that can solve problems and change the world. Arlington, Massachusetts: Long Haul Press.

3. for the core leadership group, accomplice, or supporter/ally

Mobilizing Stakeholders

- Communicate
  - Communicate regarding the cost/benefit of the issue, in a way that will resonate with them.
    - Create a policy brief
    - Use social media as a platform to communicate
  - Connect the issue with the person's interests.
    - Hold a meeting or workshop for stakeholders
    - Use social media as a platform for communication and engagement
- Document
  - Communicate information about the issue or problem in a way that is understandable and relatable. Infographics, short issue briefs (no more than 2 pages), or a short video/social media message can be an effective way to do this.
    - Invite testimony
    - Gather stories
- Practice advocacy
  - Support stakeholders to share their own stories

Figure 23.1 "Not Your Mascot March"

Advancing Support

Once you have mobilized your stakeholders, you need to identify tactics that will advance support for your issue or cause and bring resolution. You need to go back to your power map and determine who to engage with and what tactics to use to advance support. These are broken into two goals:

- Increase the individual and collective power of those who support
- Increase support for those with the most power

Increasing the power of those who support is usually about building collective power, considering political, social, and economic power. As you analyze the map and identify the specific people or groups who need to be targeted, consider the following tactic options for your next steps:

- Leveraging **political power** by engaging in activities of political influence
    - Attending and speaking at public meetings
    - Letter writing campaigns
    - Initiating letters to be published in local print media
    - Initiating and circulating petitions to then be presented to elected officials
- Leveraging **social power** by utilizing influential social connections and networks
    - Use social media to educate others about the issue or cause
    - Access social media influencers (people who are particularly active on social media and have high levels of followers)
    - Present the issue and cause to organizations or networks that might be sympathetic and interested
    - Invite the media to profile the issue, ideally following the way your core group has framed it
- Leveraging **financial power** by using economic resources to bring attention to the issue
    - Invite economic influencers (business leaders, etc.) sympathetic to the issue to frame the issue publicly in economic terminology (financial risks and benefits)
    - Use collective financial power by either encouraging community members to direct their resources to businesses that support the issue or direct resources away from businesses that do not support the issue.

Community Organizing Successes Beyond Issue Resolution

There are many successes in effective community organizing, beyond the obvious one of addressing the issue which brought stakeholders together in the first place. They include:

- **Engaging new stakeholders** in the process and encouraging them to remain engaged in a variety of capacities going forward—running for elected office, initiating their own issue organizing, etc.
- **Redistribution of power** by systematically empowering those whose power was elevated during the community organizing process to maintain that power.
    - #PassTheMic Climate is a great example of this redistribution

"Empower us by silencing the room. Empower us by amplifying our voices. Empower us by passing the mic."

Mitzi-Jonelle Tan, Climate Justice Activist, Philippines

PART VII
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS A CHANGE STRATEGY

Community Development

Often, we find ourselves engaged in a community change effort that requires structure. The type of structure could be a new or modified service, a program, or an actual organization or business. Creating this type of structure requires us to utilize planning and development skills so that we can systematically create the service, program, or organization in a way that is directly tied to the community's assets and needs. This type of work is what we call **Community Development.**

You can think of it as assembling the materials and structure that is needed to successfully address the need. This type of work requires a systematic planning approach that includes:

A. Selecting and describing the intervention, structure, and mission:

- Investigating the range of interventions to address the need
- Identifying and describing the selected intervention, structure, and mission

B. Planning for implementation:

- Creating a work plan for implementation
- Developing a budget based on resources identified in the work plan
- Determining the initial methods of evaluation

Learning Objectives

- Describe steps for advancing community change
- Explain how to research intervention options
- Introduce prevention vs. response interventions
- Recognize the right intervention to suit your needs
- Define and describe the intervention you have chosen
- Introduce existing organizational structures
- Create effective organizational vision and mission statements

24.

INVESTIGATING A RANGE OF INTERVENTIONS

One of the most important and exciting parts of community planning and development work is the investigation of interventions. It is in this phase of work where you need to be expansive in considering what is possible—not just look to evidence of what has been done. You need to look wide and far for ideas to address community issues, including looking globally, while also listening carefully to the wisdom that will come from your own community.

We will focus on two primary ways to go about the investigation, each feeding into the other:

1. Engaging with the community to hear ideas
2. Conducting additional research on intervention options

Listening to Community Intervention Ideas

This step requires engagement from the community who will be served by the service/program/organization. When I conduct any type of primary data collection with a community in order to learn about their needs, I always end with a question asking their ideas for solutions. It is amazing the types of thoughtful responses you will receive. I have also heard more than once that people appreciate being asked for their ideas and that being asked is uncommon or unheard of for them. This is so unfortunate and is shortsighted because of the untapped wisdom of the persons most directly impacted by the issues we are focused on.

In design thinking, this stage is called the "What if" stage[1]. It is an intentional step for brainstorming ideas from the community without the same constraints as the core leadership team is likely bound by.

When I have engaged communities about intervention ideas, often they are very specific and very feasible: aesthetic or cosmetic requests related to space (warm, welcoming, comfortable), requesting culturally relevant services, asking for a location that is accessible, etc.

When you are soliciting ideas, it is very important to not limit those ideas but also be upfront about any

1. Liedtka, J.; Salzman, R.; Azer, D. (2017). Design thinking for the greater good: Innovation in the social sector. New York: Columbia University Press.

parameters you are constrained by. Once you state your constraints (geographic, financial, etc.) ask for ideas and then listen and document.

You may also find intervention ideas from reading reports or meeting notes. For example, your community may have boards or commissions that are comprised of—or take special care to acknowledge the needs of—members of a minority or marginalized community that you are planning for, such as people of color, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, etc. You can often find public meeting notes and reports from these boards and you can review these documents in case they reference ideas for services, programs, or organizations.

Conducting Research on Interventions

Where to Look

The second part of the investigation requires us to conduct research on interventions that have been tried somewhere else. "Somewhere else" is very intentional and does not mean only in the next town or city from you. I am convinced that research on interventions must include a global look at what other countries and communities have tried as ways to address the same problems or needs that we are looking at addressing. We need to expand what we consider possible, so we are not limited by our myopic, single-focus views on solutions. Often, we can accomplish this by looking internationally.

I typically utilize a 3-part approach for where to look:

1. Domestically at communities in the same country with similar demographics as the one you are working with
2. Domestically at communities with similar geography as the one you are working with
3. Internationally for communities or countries addressing the need or situation in similar described in a similar way as you are describing it

How to Look

We should look for interventions that have been tried and were shown to be successful as well as those which were determined to be unsuccessful. The latter can be challenging to find, however, because most people or organizations are motivated and encouraged to share their successes but not their failures. This is unfortunate for the rest of us because we could learn a lot from their experiences and the information could avoid a repeat of their experience.

Most of us engaged in community change work do this research by examining published material and by conducting Internet searches. There are benefits and limitations to both which is why you should use both strategies.

Benefits and Limitations of Research Searches

Traditionally published materials (typically accessed through a library database)

Benefits:

- Likely to be peer-reviewed
- Likely to include an evaluation of the intervention
- Sources for the author's background information will be listed and can be very helpful to your own research

Limitations:

- Likely to be published years after the intervention is implemented
- Not inclusive of the breadth of intervention ideas since many successful programs do not participate in traditional publishing methods.
- Many impactful strategies do not meet the criteria for "evidence-based" therefore excluding them from strategies that are published and promoted. We need to expand the criteria for "evidence" so that we are benefiting from all experience and wisdom.

Internet searches (typically accessed through a web browser)

Benefits:

- Likely to be timely and include relevant information like contact information, etc.
- Possibly funded or disseminated by entities who can be invaluable resources to your work, such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Limitations:

- May not be peer-reviewed and include an evaluation of the intervention
- May not include the author or evidence of credibility
- May be older and less relevant than it appears, since internet content is often not updated or removed

Again, the goal is to engage in both methods of research and not rely on just one or the other.

Documenting Intervention Research

It is very helpful to create an easy way to share the results of your intervention research. You want to do this in a way that is informative to the people you are collaborating with but also easy to digest. I suggest using a matrix that includes the following information:

- Name of program or service
- Geographic location
- Web address/citation and contact
- Description of the service
    - Use quotations if using the description provided by the organization
    - Be sure to include aspects of the description which are particularly relevant to the issue you are working on
- Observations of relevance or other notes
    - Include observations of why this service or program is noteworthy
    - Include any reasons for enthusiasm or concern

This type of matrix needs to be very easy to read, so avoid writing in complete sentences or paragraphs. Use common abbreviations if possible and bullet-pointed or listed information. Here is a sample matrix including one researched program idea for community mental health crisis response models.

Name	Location	Web Address & Contact	Description	Observations
Iris Place	Appleton, Wisconsin	www.namifoxvalley.org/iris-place/	Peer-run 24/7 crisis respite location for MH or substance use Short-term stay (1-7 nights) in a "home-like healing environment" Peer crisis line Run by NAMI Fox Valley Facilitates group activities for current & previous guests	All staff are certified peer support specialists Evaluation shows reduction in ER visits Recovery-focused

25.

SELECTING AND DEFINING THE INTERVENTIONS

The group of people who are leading the community planning process, are often referred to as the Core Leadership Team, also needs to identify the criteria for evaluating potential interventions. This is the team that has been working on this community change project from the beginning and is more aware of the context behind the project than the general public. The criteria should be based upon the root causes of the issue or situation you are attempting to address and has to be grounded in the needs, goals, and ideas shared by the community stakeholders.

These root causes were identified through the systems thinking process of analyzing the community's needs, as described through the iceberg metaphor.

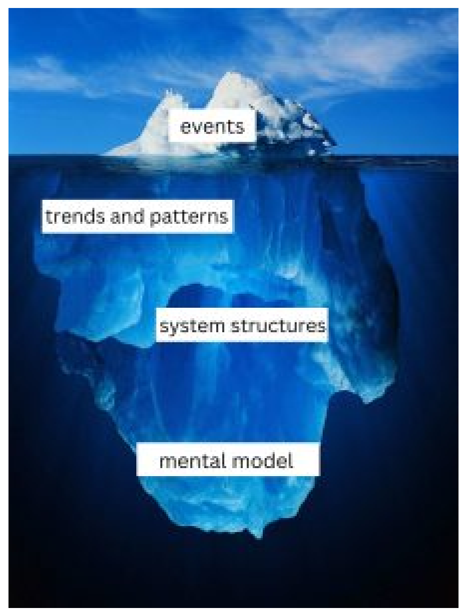

Figure 25.1 "The Iceberg Metaphor"

Prevention vs Response Interventions

The most effective interventions are those that focus on leverage points, using minimal resources for long-term effects. These leverage points are focused on the systemic structures that demonstrate the cause of the symptoms, evidence, or events. These interventions are typically considered preventative in nature. Stroh (2015) calls these '**high-level interventions**'[1]. The most powerful interventions are going to be preventative in nature because they reduce or eliminate the risks that come from unaddressed symptoms that will likely get worse. Prevention saves lives, saves money, and is empowering.

A common way to explain the need for prevention and response is with the **principle of "upstream."**

1. Stroh, D.P. (2015). Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Figure 25.2 "Social Determinants and Social Needs: Moving Beyond Midstream"

A familiar method for explaining this uses the imagery of a river, as shown in the graphic, "Social Determinants and Social Needs: Moving Beyond Midstream".[2] Imagine you are standing on the side of the river, likely

2. Campbell, L.A., & Anderko, L. (2020). Moving Upstream From the Individual to the Community: Addressing Social Determinants of Health. NASN School Nurse, 35, 152 – 157.

minding your own business, when you see someone in front of you in crisis. They are struggling to survive in the water. If you don't do something, they may not make it. You pull that person out and get them to safety, providing them warmth, dry clothes, etc. You essentially save them and treat their symptoms. Unfortunately, this keeps happening and you cannot move from your place at the side of the river where person after person needs your immediate help. This is a crisis that appears not to have an end. However, to end the crisis means that someone—you or someone else—needs to travel 'upstream' to see why people are falling into the river in the first place.

What is the cause of the crisis? What system is failing all of these people? What assumptions or mindsets are influencing people to enter the river or throwing them into the river? In order to address the crisis downstream, you have to address the causes and prevent the crisis from occurring in the first place.

In the area of mental health and well-being, a list of brainstormed 'upstream' or preventative interventions could include any of the following strategies:

- Mindfulness skills and practice
- Support groups
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skill development for all youth
- Wellness and recovery planning
- Opportunities to be in healing spaces, like outdoors or inside nurturing spaces
- De-escalation training for first responders
- Coping mechanism development
- Social-emotional learning in schools
- Wraparound support for families
- Encouraging outside play, sports, and hobbies
- Annual mental health check-ups
- Integrating primary and mental health care
- Ending stigma

These are the types of ideas that may address some of the underlying or root causes of mental health crises. There are also models for us to use or reference which help point us in the direction of prevention vs response interventions. One of these models applied widely in community change work related to health is the **Social Determinants of Health**.

Example: ***Social Determinants of Health***

The social determinants of health model, established by the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Initiative, is an excellent explanation of the various factors that impact a person's health. It includes factors that are commonly attributed to health and therefore receive an enormous amount of investment, which is clinical health care. What this model demonstrates, however, is that social and economic factors (employment, income, family and social support, and community safety) have an even greater impact on overall health than clinical care. This can help identify the interventions at the 'leverage points' for the greatest impact[3].

3. The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2023. www.countyhealthrankings.org

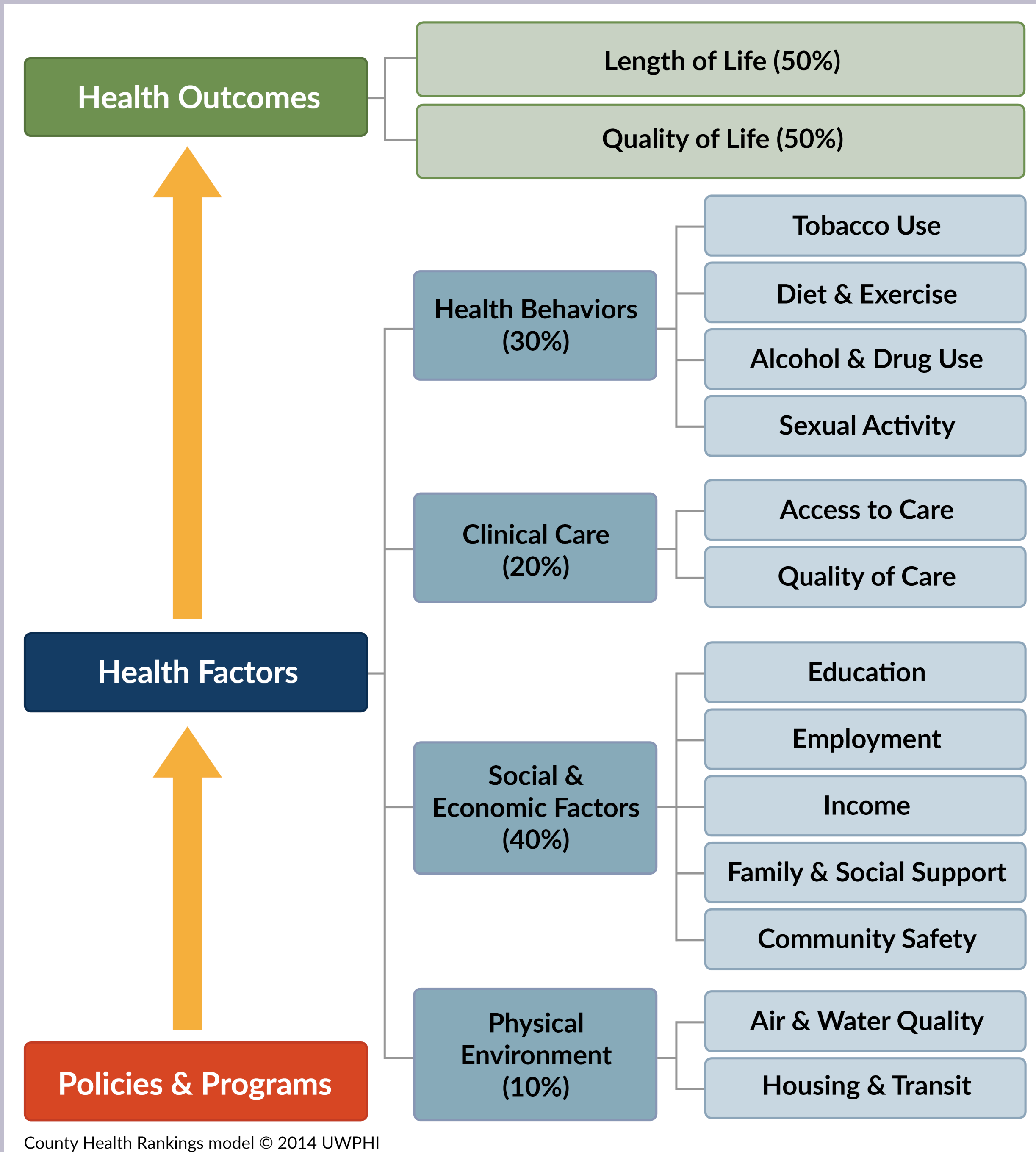

Figure 25.3 "County Health Rankings Model"

Selecting the Wow interventions

One way to select the community change strategy intervention is to ask, *What wows*? Once there is a significant list of brainstormed ideas, and there are criteria established for the factors most likely to positively impact the issue, you now have the opportunity to select the intervention(s) based on the **'wow zone,'** as used in design thinking[4]. This is the zone for interventions most closely aligned with your selection criteria (address root causes), is feasible to implement, and is innovative in its scope.

You can facilitate this step by evaluating each intervention idea based on its feasibility and how likely it is to have a significant impact. It is helpful to arrange these factors on a matrix, which is shown here. You could do this by placing each idea on a sticky note, an individual piece of paper, or writing it directly on a matrix.

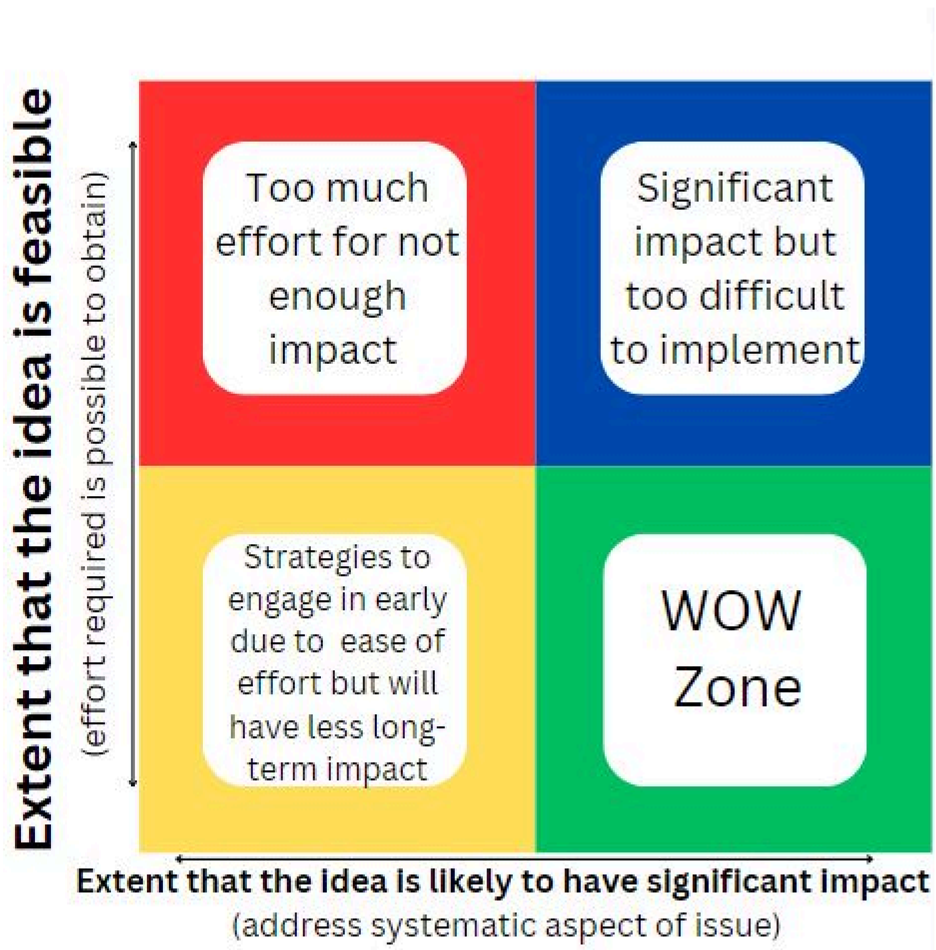

Figure 25.4 "Design Thinking"

4. Liedtka, J.; Salzman, R.; Azer, D. (2017). Design thinking for the greater good: Innovation in the social sector. New York: Columbia University Press.

Adding Definition & Description

The ideal interventions are those in the Wow zone and the '**early engagement zone.'** Once you have established these ideal interventions, they need to be defined and described in a way that others can understand, imagine, support, and implement. The intervention needs to be explained to fit the context in which it will be used. Initially, defining the intervention means establishing its scope and connecting it to the need or situation. To do so, you need to answer these questions:

- How will the intervention impact the needs or situation?
- Who is it intended to serve?
- For the intervention to have its intended impact, what does it need to look like?
    - What should it include (space for gathering, training/education, a building with services, collaboration, etc.)
    - Where should it be geographically/virtually located to meet the intended impact?
- How would the intervention build on assets that already exist?
- What is the likely impact of the intervention?
- How would it be sustainable?

Understanding these answers will help guide the next community planning steps, which are to essentially create the infrastructure in order to implement the intervention. The planning steps involve establishing the organizational structure, mission, work plan, and budget.

26.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND INTERVENTION STRUCTURES

Overview of Strategy Structures

The interventions that are identified to address community needs and situations will either need to fit within an organizational structure or may require the establishment of a new organization.

So, let's review some of the most common organizational and intervention structures in which people facilitating change find themselves working or volunteering. They include:

- Mutual aid
- For-profit
- Non-profit
- Government and Tribal Nations

Mutual Aid

Mutual aid is a method of collective action to meet people's needs, often during a time of crisis. It is a method of aid that does not require (nor desire) formal intervention or funding. It is designed to be built on collective goodwill and support. In *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (and the Next),* Spade explains that this type of collective support is very common during social movements and the types of activities that are "based on the shared understanding that the conditions in which we are made to live are unjust." [1]

In my home state of Minnesota, we have witnessed so many powerful examples of mutual aid in just the past few years, as neighborhoods and groups came together to keep each other safe and fed during the aftermath of the George Floyd murder and then the pandemic.

1. Space, D. (2020). *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (and the Next).* New York: Verso (pg. 7.)

For-profit Organization

An organization that operates to improve people's lives but also can generate a profit and reinvest those funds into the services or for any other purpose. A **for-profit organization** does not benefit from tax-exempt status which may significantly limit funding opportunities but does retain flexibility with how funding is expended. This includes salaries.

Non-profit

A **non-profit** or **non-governmental organization (NGO)** describes a category of organization that has been designated by the IRS as having tax-exempt status, most commonly receiving the 501(c)(3) designation due to its charitable mission and documented purpose to address a social need. The expectation for the organization is that it invests any profit back into the services. Nonprofits are typically eligible to receive donations from charitable philanthropic organizations and financial donations from individual investors who may be able to receive tax deductions for their contributions.

In order to start a nonprofit, you need to work through a series of very important steps, since the organization needs to demonstrate its ability to follow strict guidelines and oversight as defined by the IRS. The steps include the following:

1. Establish the charitable purpose; community need and impact
2. Create a clear and succinct mission statement
3. Recruit board of directors
4. Create and file the Articles of Incorporation
5. Establishes the organization as a legal entity in the State where it will operate
6. Create bylaws
7. Rules governing the organization and the Board of Directors
8. Secure tax-exempt status
9. Develop Strategic Plan (3-5 year plan) and Initial Work Plan (1-year plan)
10. Secure funding, location, and staff
11. Marketing

The **Board of Directors** is responsible primarily for the fiscal oversight of the organization as well as the hiring and supervising of the executive director. It is important that a board of directors includes the perspectives that are critical to the work of the organization (geographic representation, life experience, professional experience, demographic, identity, etc.). For example, the board of directors for an organization whose mission is to contribute to the vitality of persons with differing abilities should ensure that people on the board of directors also have experience living with a disability.

Many helping professionals serve on the board of directors as a way to meet other people who share a similar interest in community change work, and to contribute to the social service sector of their community.

Example: in*diGO*.

indiGO is the Regional Center for Independent Living (CIL) located in Wisconsin that serves Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer, and Washburn counties, as well as the Bad River, Red Cliff, Lac Courte Oreilles, and the St. Croix Tribal communities.

CILs are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agencies designed and operated in our local communities by individuals with disabilities to maximize their ability to live independently.

indiGO's board of directors and staff are comprised of at least 51% people with disabilities. It is part of their way to ensure consumer control of the organization. They strongly believe that the lessons we learn from our disability experience provide valuable information to other consumers. They are also intentional about seeking geographic representation. As of 2022, they have parents, Native Americans, city counselors, bankers, community advocates, and people from a variety of backgrounds serving on their board.

Their mission is to ***Empower people living with disabilities to thrive independently.***[2]

Government and Tribal Nations

Government human services departments, such as **county** or **Tribal Nations human services**, are frequent employers of social workers and other helping professionals. The objective of a county government is to provide services to people identified as most vulnerable, particularly children, older adults, and people with disabilities. The types of services typically include economic assistance assessment, food support, child protection, elder protection, foster care recruitment and training, etc.

The objective of a Tribal human services department is also to provide services for persons enrolled with

2. https://indigowi.org/about/

the Tribe and other Native residents. There are currently 574 federally recognized Tribes who have sovereign nation status and negotiate with the US federal government. The services provided are identified through federal policy through negotiated agreements or supported by the Tribal government. Often Tribal human services will also receive grants or contracts from the state in which they are geographically located to support the cost of services that are aligned with state goals. [3]

Structures

There are a variety of ways in which organizations or services are structured to carry out the mission of the organization, ranging from hierarchical to distributed power. The structure typically reflects the mission and how the organization envisions carrying out the work.

Traditional Hierarchical Structure

The **traditional hierarchical structure** is typically found in nonprofits and governmental organizations and is the most common organizational structure. This structure typically involves a board of directors who provides oversight to an executive director, who supervises a series of managers, who supervise specific programs. This structure reflects focused leadership at the top of the organization and management levels.

Non-Hierarchical Structure

A **non-hierarchical structure** is less common but can be very effective. Essentially, the structure eliminates any centralized authority, instead, providing decision-making authority and responsibility to each program or department. Decisions are typically made together and foster a more inclusive work environment.

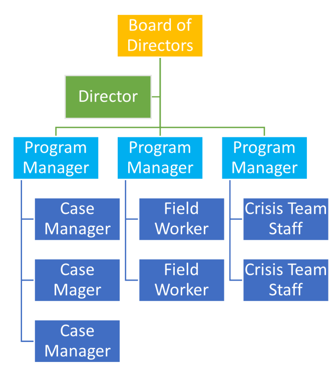

Figure 26.1 "Traditional Hierarchical Structure"

3. Tribal Self-Governance. https://www.tribalselfgov.org/

Non-hierarchical or a 'flat' structure can be particularly useful for organizations that exist in an environment that frequently changes, for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Non-hierarchical organizations were shown to be more nimble, which led to higher employee satisfaction during the crisis. Great Place to Work conducted a study of employees of non-hierarchical organizations in late 2020, learning that employees appreciated the following:

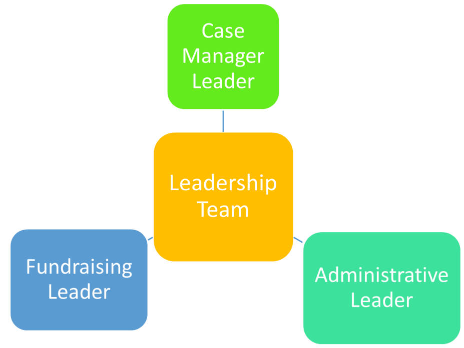

Figure 26.2 "Non-Hierarchical Structure"

1. Being treated as an equal member
2. Approachable leaders
3. Leaders who ask for genuine feedback
4. Feeling safe to express their opinions, even if different
5. Feeling that they are valued [4]

4. Martinez L., Frauenheim, E. (January 2021). COVID-19 Reveals Why Flat Organizations Thrive: Steal Their Secrets. Great Place to Work. https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/covid-19-puts-a-spotlight-on-why-flat-organizations-thrive

27.

ESTABLISHING THE VISION AND MISSION

Creating your organization's vision and mission statements are the first two steps in the action planning process. Developing a vision and mission statement is crucial to the success of community initiatives. These statements concisely explain your group's aspirations, help your organization focus on what is really important, and provide a basis for developing other aspects of your strategic plan. This section is from the Community Toolbox[1] and provides a guide for developing and implementing your organization's vision and mission statements.

What is a vision statement?

Your vision is your dream. It's what your organization believes are the ideal conditions for your community; that is, how things would look if the issue important to you were completely and perfectly addressed. It might be a world without war or a community in which all people are treated as equals, regardless of the differences that set us apart.

Whatever your organization's dream is, it may be well articulated by one or more **vision statements**—a phrase or sentence that conveys your community's hopes for the future. By developing a vision statement—or several—your organization clarifies the beliefs and governing principles of your organization, first for yourselves, and then for the greater community.

There are certain characteristics that most vision statements have in common. In general, vision statements should be all of the following:

- Understood and shared by members of the community
- Broad enough to include a diverse variety of local perspectives
- Inspiring and uplifting to everyone involved in your effort
- Easy to communicate—for example, they are generally short enough to fit on a T-shirt

1. Community Toolbox (2022). Proclaiming your dream: Developing vision and mission statements. University of Kansas. https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/vision-mission-statements/main

Here are some examples of vision statements that meet the above criteria:

"American Indian youth are acknowledged and honored for their sacred gifts and boundless potential, which they share—as leaders—with their communities and nations." – MIGIZI

"NAMI envisions a world where all people affected by mental illness live healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a community that cares." – National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI)

"One day, every teen in America will feel safe, respected, and empowered to achieve their potential." – Youth Celebrate Diversity

"We're excited to build a liberated multi-racial democracy, free from the oppressive systems of white supremacy and patriarchy." – re:power

What is a mission statement?

The next step of the action planning process is to ground your vision in practical terms; this is where developing a **mission statement** comes in. An organization's mission statement describes *what* the group will do and *why* it will do that.

Mission statements are similar to vision statements in that they, too, look at the big picture. However, they're more concrete and more "action-oriented" than vision statements. Your vision statement should inspire people to dream; your mission statement should inspire them to act.

The mission statement might refer to a problem such as inadequate housing, or a goal such as providing universal access to health care. While they don't go into a lot of detail, they hint—very broadly—at how your organization might fix these problems or reach these goals. In general, a mission statement should be all of the following:

- **Concise:** While not as short as vision statements, mission statements generally still get their point across in one sentence.
- **Outcome-oriented:** Mission statements explain the fundamental outcomes your organization is working to achieve.
- **Inclusive:** While mission statements make statements about your group's key goals, they must do so very broadly. Good mission statements are not limited to the strategies or sectors of the community that may become involved in the project.

The following examples should help you understand what it means to be an effective mission statement:

"YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all." – YWCA USA

"Ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities." – Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind

"Committed to supporting the wellness of young people, and empowering them to create a kinder and braver world." – Born This Way Foundation

"Committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society." – Equal Justice Initiative

Why should you create vision and mission statements?

Why is it important that your organization develops vision and mission statements like those above? First of all, these statements can help your organization focus on what is really important. Although your organization knows what you are trying to do to improve your community, it's easy to lose sight of this when dealing with day-to-day organizational hassles. Your vision and mission statements remind members what is important.

Second, your vision and mission statements give others a snapshot view of what your group is and what it wants to accomplish. When your vision and mission statements are easily visible, for example, if they are on the letterhead of your stationery, people learn about your organization without having to work hard for the information. Then, people who your statements resonate with can take the time to learn more. This efficiency is very helpful when you are recruiting other people and organizations to join your effort.

Finally, vision and mission statements focus members on their common purpose. Not only do the statements themselves serve as a constant reminder of what is important to your organization, but the process of developing them allows people to see the organization as "theirs." Creating these statements builds motivation, as people tend to believe in something more completely if they have a hand in developing it.

Having a clear and compelling vision statement has other advantages:

- Drawing people to common work
- Giving hope for a better future
- Inspiring community members to realize their dreams through positive and effective action
- Providing a basis for developing the other aspects of your action planning process: your mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans

Having a clear and compelling mission statement also has more advantages:

- Converting the broad dreams of your vision into more specific, action-oriented terms
- Explaining your goals to interested parties in a clear and concise manner
- Enhancing your organization's image as being competent and professional, thus reassuring funding sources that their investment was (or would be!) a smart choice

Values or Guiding Principles

Another common way that organizations communicate with the public regarding their work is to create a set of guiding values, often consolidated into a list of **guiding principles** or a **values statement**. These are similar to vision and mission statements since they are all used to communicate which values drive the work of the organization. It should also be used for ethical decision-making and accountability.

Here is an example from the Trevor Project, whose vision is: ***A world where all LGBTQ+ young people see a bright future for themselves.***

The Guiding Principles evident from their vision are the following:

- Diversity & Inclusion
- Youth-centricity
- Growth
- Quality
- Innovation
- Best-In-Class Team

28.

RELEVANT GRANT SECTION: ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Organizational Background

Assignment Timing

This part of the grant is assigned during week 7 (of a 16-week semester) and after reading **Community Development as Change Strategy.** Students should take one week to complete the assignment.

Assignment Overview

The Organizational Background becomes the first section of a grant and is intended to describe the organization that is applying for the grant. It should establish the credibility of the organization and demonstrate the capacity and experience that are related to the grant.

Common sources of information:

- Organizational website
- Organizational marketing materials
- Organizational chart
- Previous grants

Assignment Detail

- This section should be up to one page in length.
- It should include:
    - Mission
    - Geographic location of their building and services
    - Vision and Core Values
    - Date of 501c3 (non-profit) status
    - Overview of services
    - Overview of current staff (number, types of positions)
    - Overview of persons served
    - Identification of community partners
- This section can incorporate creativity to bring attention to the mission statement and values by using color, bold, italics, or text boxes.

29.

RELEVANT GRANT SECTION: INTERVENTION

Intervention

Assignment Timing

This part of the grant is assigned during week 8 (of a 16-week semester) and after reading **Community Development as Change Strategy.** Students should take two weeks to complete the assignment.

Assignment Overview

The Intervention Section of a grant describes the strategies that will address the needs summarized in the Statement of Need section. It is typically the third section of a grant, following the Organizational Background and Statement of Need. This section should be very compelling and describe an intervention that is evidenced-based or grounded in a logical theory of change.

Common sources of information:

- Online resources focused on the specific intervention.
- Published reports describing the intervention and outcomes, ideally from other organizations who have implemented them.

Assignment Detail

- This section should be 1 to 1.5 pages long
- Interventions should be evidence-based and include citations to research or sources of evidence.
- The section should describe the intervention that is intended to address the need that you summarized in the Statement of Need section.
  - How will the intervention address the needs?
  - How will the intervention improve people's lives?
- Creativity can be used to describe the intervention using graphics or bullet points as appropriate.

PART VIII

PLANNING THE CHANGE STRATEGY

Steps for Planning the Change Strategy

Whether or not you have selected community organizing, social action, or community development, you need to engage in planning for your intervention, not just talk about it. With community organizing, this means that you have already assessed the issue, analyzed power, and are ready to create a work plan and timeline. With community development, you should have defined the scope of service, identified a structure, and established a mission and vision. The next step is to plan the implementation. This establishes credibility and intentionality, identifies the length of time it will take to begin delivering services, and clarifies the resources that will be needed.

You are creating a road map for where you want to go. You can always adjust your plans because there are likely many ways or paths that you could go down to achieve your goal. However, you won't know what adjustments to make until you get it mapped out.

Learning Objectives

- Identify tools used to plan the intervention
- Create the budget for your intervention for the first year
- Create the workplan for the first year

30.

MAPPING THE WORK

"It feels like we are at a breaking point. Leaders know that more eyes are on them, much more pressure is on them, that they have to do something, they have to come up with some sort of solution. I want a concrete plan, not just nice words."

–Greta Thunberg, UNCOP24 Climate Summit

Work Plan Purposes and Styles

There are a few common styles of a work plan; each has a particular benefit to the type of community change strategy that has been selected. The creation of a work plan is a critical planning strategy; it establishes a list of specific steps that need to be taken and outlines the timeframe for implementation. An effective work plan becomes an invaluable tool for agency directors, staff, boards of directors, and funders because it communicates intention, thoughtfulness of the work, realistic timeframe, and measurable tasks.

This chapter focuses on two specific styles:

1. Common Work Plan
2. Gantt Chart

Common Work Plan

A common work plan includes specific information that establishes the steps and timeline for the implementation of a strategy or program. The work plan needs to be realistic and detailed enough to be useful. An effective work plan becomes an invaluable tool because it not only is a roadmap for implementation but is also used to build the organizational or project budget. The work plan is communicated in a spreadsheet-type format, usually using Microsoft Excel, Google Sheets, or Microsoft Word. The style of writing is abbreviated;

without using complete sentences, the space needed to communicate the work plan is reduced, making it very easy to read.

The work plan includes:

1. Specific steps for implementation
   - If this is a new organization, the steps would need to include those necessary to create a new organization, including the development of a board of directors, filing articles of incorporation, etc.
   - If the program is being implemented in an organization that already exists, then the timeline would be shorter and would likely include establishing an advisory committee, recruiting staff, training, etc.
2. The timeline for each implementation step often focuses on a 12-month timeline
   - Contacting people, scheduling meetings, recruiting and interviewing staff, and finding space for staff or services are all common steps in a work plan and require thoughtful timing so that the steps are listed in chronological order.
   - If the work plan is for a community organizing initiative, you would likely want the timeline to reflect short-term goals and might prefer a 6-month timeline rather than a 12-month one.
3. Resources that are needed to complete each step, focusing on those that require money, people, equipment, and space. Common types of resources include:
   - Volunteers
   - Space
   - Food
   - Supplies
   - Partners
   - Equipment
   - Staff
   - Trainers
4. Person(s) responsible for each step.
   - Be cautious about relying too much on the board of directors or advisory committee to complete the steps. Their role should be advisory and oversight, not day-to-day implementation work.
   - The person responsible should be the person who would complete the task rather than the

person(s) who would be consulted.

Workplan for first four months of new organization: Building Bridges Across the Ages

Steps	Resources Needed	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
Create advisory committee position description	Computer and printer	January	Program Director
Recruit members of advisory committee		January-February	Program Director
Meet with advisory committee to discuss program ideas and receive input	Conference room and snacks	March	Program Director
Modify scope of program based on advisory committee input		March	Program Director
Advisory committee meets to finalize parameters of program	Room and snacks	April	Program Director
Create marketing materials	Computer and printer	April	Program Director

Gantt Chart

A Gantt chart is another type of work plan that visually communicates the steps, tasks, and timeline for the implementation of a strategy. It is formatted in a way that is easy to follow and track. [1] The visual nature of a Gantt chart helps outline how long the implementation is going to take and how the steps are distributed over time. Color is often used to differentiate the types of tasks or the person responsible. The example below provides a list of steps necessary for the first four months of a new program, **Building Bridges Across the Ages,** a mentoring and relationship program pairing elders with youth. The chart uses three colors to differentiate steps:

- **Blue:** Tasks related to an advisory committee
- **Green:** Tasks related to program planning and definition
- **Purple:** Tasks related to marketing

1. Mind Tools (nd) Gantt charts: Planning and scheduling team projects. https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_03.htm

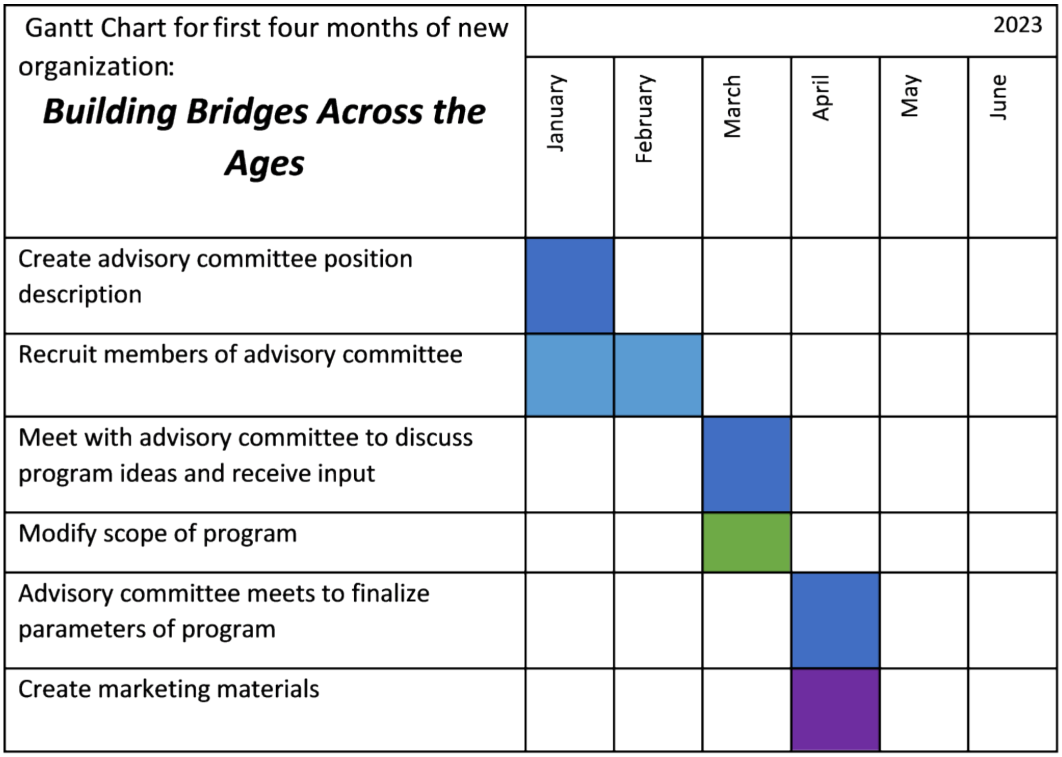

Figure 30.1 "Gantt Chart"

Establishing a clear and detailed work plan is a critical step that begins to identify not only the timeline for implementation but also the resources that are needed. The work plan needs to be realistic and detailed enough to be useful for staff, volunteers, the Board of Directors, and funders.

How to use the Work Plan

Work plans are intended to be dynamic and should be updated or modified as needed. Teams or groups working on implementing a project or program should refer to the work plan regularly, as well as track and communicate progress. For most projects, this is done every month.

A new work plan should also be created periodically, usually annually. Again, if you are creating a work plan for a community organizing initiative, you should look at the work plan regularly and update it frequently since your timeline would likely be much shorter than one year.

31.

DEVELOPING A BUDGET

Budget Overview

Once the work plan has been created, the next step is to develop a budget for at least the first year of the project, strategy, or organization. It is important to develop a detailed and realistic budget to provide a clear overview of the financial resources needed for your project, such as hiring of staff, leasing an office, purchasing equipment, printing materials, etc.

As Pakroo (2021) points out, creating a budget can be very intimidating, but it is very important to understand exactly which resources are needed to carry out the planned program or service. [1] Like the work plan, a budget is created in a spreadsheet format with a particular style of formatting. Thankfully, there are tools available to help with this important step, such as Microsoft Excel, Google Sheets, and QuickBooks.

The budget must be realistic, driven by organizational values, and developed based on an accurate cost of implementation. This is especially important as you consider the salaries, wages, and benefits of staff. The development of a budget is an opportunity to communicate and commit to fair and equitable compensation, but you have to do this with a plan for maintaining the revenue needed for the compensation so that you are considering retention and recruitment of desired staff.

If the organization is a non-profit, then the budget must also be approved by the Board of Directors and it will be used to communicate and justify financial need to organizations which you may be seeking funding from, like a philanthropic foundation. Keep in mind that budgets are often a very scrutinized part of the grant proposal and reviewers will look to ensure that the budget seems fair and feasible, and that it reflects the resources included in the work plan.

A budget consists of two primary components:

1. Estimation of expenses
2. Estimation of income

1. Pakroo, P.H. (2021). Starting and building a nonprofit: A practical guide. (9th ed.). Berkley: Nolo.

Expenses

There are typical categories of expenses that should be considered. According to Pakroo (2021), these should include:

- **Regular expenses:** These are expenses that would be needed during the year and likely ongoing.
  - Salaries and benefits
  - Rent
  - Utilities
  - Postage and phone
  - Office supplies
  - Insurance
  - Transportation and travel
  - Food
  - Printing and marketing
  - Training
  - Accounting/bookkeeping
  - Fundraising expenses
- **Capital expenses:** These are expenses that would likely be made within a start-up period and considered a long-term expense. The cost of the asset (initial cost, depreciation, maintenance, etc.) would be spread out over multiple years.
  - Vehicles
  - Computers
  - Large office equipment[2]

Each expense category needs to be clearly explained and directly related to the project work plan. This will be useful to the organizational and programming staff and administrators but also to any potential funder who may be reviewing the budget. For example, the salary amount and any employee benefits (health insurance, workman's comp, family leave, etc.) need to be clear as well as the additional amount for benefits.

Revenue

Like the list of expenses, the budget should also include a thoughtful, diverse, and realistic list of revenue

2. Pakroo, P.H. (2021). Starting and building a nonprofit: A practical guide. (9th ed.). Berkley: Nolo.

sources. You need to identify sources and amounts of income that are at least equal to or slightly greater than the amount of expenses to demonstrate the financial viability of the organization or program. The sources may be ‘pending’ or waiting for approval but you at least need to name them in your budget. For example, if you identify the expenses to be $230,000 for a year, then you need to identify at least $230,000 in revenue.

It is important to be creative and realistic as you consider income sources. You also need to consider the sustainability of the program. If your program or organization is initially grant-funded, you should attempt to diversify additional sources of funding for the future.

Finally, think about the revenue part of your budget as an opportunity to develop relationships and buy-in. A fundraiser may not raise a lot of money and may have a cost to organize but it may raise awareness and can be a helpful way to communicate about your work to the community.

Potential sources of revenue for your organization or project are:

- **Grants**
  - Grants are received from foundations, private donors, or units of government.
  - Grants are typically applied for by submitting a grant application.
  - They are for a specific timeframe, likely to fund a program or set of activities, and aligned with the values of the mission or priorities of the funding agency.
  - Often grants are accepted on a periodic basis or in response to a Request for Proposals.
  - Be sure to research the foundation you are interested in applying to so you can determine the likely grant award amount, timing, and funding priorities.
  - You may search for foundations through Cadid online (formally known as the Foundation Directory).
  - You may also want to examine comparable programs to the one you are designing the budget for and see where their funding comes from. Often this can be found on their website or in their annual reports.
- **Contracts**
  - Contracts are written agreements with an organization or unit of government to provide a certain set of services within a specific timeframe.
  - Contracts are typically applied for by submitting a contract proposal.
- **Fundraising and Cash Donations**
  - Common fundraising strategies include events (walk/run, auctions, dinners/lunches, showcases of program outcomes, etc.).
  - Donations of cash or stock are often solicited online or via mail from persons you have reason to think value your work enough to make a financial investment.
  - Remember, if your organization is a 501©(3) there are likely tax implications for persons who donate to you. You should consult a legal expert to ensure that you provide accurate documentation to the entity or person making the donation.

    - The cost of organizing and hosting the fundraiser needs to be clearly included in the expenses and referenced as 'funding expenses.'
    - Fundraising resources include:
        - The Network for Good (www.networkforgood.com)
        - The National Council for Nonprofits (www.councilofnonprofits.org)
- **Memberships**
    - A membership is a formal relationship between your organization/program and a third party. Typically, there are benefits to this relationship and there is a cost to becoming a member, which provides a source of revenue.
    - Possible benefits to membership could include items of value that reflect your organization and mission (clothing, bags, etc.), invitations to events or trainings, participation in strategic planning, etc.
    - The cost of membership should be enough to generate valuable revenue but not too high that it dissuades people from joining.
- **In-kind Donations**
    - In-kind contributions are non-cash donations of items that have value to your organization or program but for which there was not a cash transaction.
    - In-kind donations are often requested for specific needs that you may have, such as for a computer, office supplies, or a skill like website development.
    - These items need to be included as a source of revenue and be given a monetary value.

The sources of income need to be thoughtfully researched and realistic. For example, if you plan to hold a fundraiser you need to think through how many people are likely to attend, how much they are likely to contribute, and what it will cost to plan and host the fundraiser.

Budget Format

There is a preferred format for communicating information in your budget. They include:

- Using a table or spreadsheet
- Using a common title or label to identify the expense item
- Abbreviating the budget detail, using common symbols as appropriate
- Lining up (justifying) all total dollar amounts on the right side of the column
- Using the same timeframe for all expenses, which is commonly one year

Here is a sample budget using just a few common expenses and revenue categories, incorporating preferred format expectations. Pay attention to the expense/revenue titles, abbreviations, and how the dollar amounts are lined up to the right of the column (right-justified).

Table 31.1 Sample Budget

Expenses	Explanation	Total
Project Coordinator	Full-time @ $28.00/hour + benefits (.30/ wage)	$75,712
Project Staff	50% time @ 20/hour + benefits (.30/wage)	$27,040
Office Equipment	2 computers @ $800/each + printer @ $250	$1850
Fundraising Event	Walk/run in June. 100 people estimated. $6/shirt per person + $100 permit + $250 supplies (table, banner, first aid kit)	$950
Total		$105,552
Revenue	Explanation	Total
Grants	Local community foundation	$17,000
	Local health care foundation	$15,000
	Private foundation	$20,000
	State health care foundation	$30,000
Contract	County human services department	$20,000
Fundraiser	Walk/run in June. 100 people estimated @ $25/person	$2500
Inkind Donations	2 computers @ 800/each + printer @ $250	$1850
Total		$106,350

Budget Explanation

Some budget items will require more of a detailed explanation than you can adequately express in the spreadsheet or table. So, you are encouraged to create a document that is considered 'attached' to the budget spreadsheet which provides a narrative explanation for the specific items or categories that you think need more explanation.

For example, provide the rationale for a wage level or you could explain how you arrived at the lease amount for office space since that level of detail would not fit in a budget spreadsheet.

Additional Considerations

It is important that we pause at this stage of planning to consider some nuances and implications of budgeting, particularly on budgeting for wages and when seeking donations from local businesses. They include:

- **Method of calculating wages and employee (fringe) benefits:**
  - If you have full-time employees, you should calculate their salary or wage based on 2080 hours per year (number of hours per 40-hour work week), unless the organization had adopted or intends to adopt the 32-hour work week model.[3]
  - You should consult with your human resources department or professionals to identify the cost of the employee benefits (health insurance, workers' compensation, family leave, etc.). A typical benefit cost is 30% which needs to be clearly identified in the budget and incorporated into the expenses.
- **Public perception of wages for human services professionals:**
  - There is a public perception that people working in human services or community change should be motivated by helping others and not by money. This is not reasonable and not sustainable.
  - The gender and racial pay gap in the field of social work and other helping professions is well documented and has implications on the health, well-being, and wealth of the employees[4].
  - It is unfair and unethical to expect people to work in the field of human services—or any profession—to be compensated at a level that does not allow them to thrive.
  - It is optimal for an organization or program to plan salary and compensation based on what is best for employee recruitment and retention and not just based on historical compensation levels in the community.
- **Seeking donations from local businesses:**
  - There is a common mindset that businesses in our community should be partners in our change work and therefore should always donate to our 'cause.'
  - Community businesses do care about your cause, are likely very motivated to partner in your work, and are likely to contribute in some way to support you.
  - Local small businesses tend to make at least twice as many contributions to local organizations than large businesses, so they are very likely to contribute to your cause—at some point. [5]
  - Keep in mind, however, that a business also needs to make money, pay its employees, and plan for

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3. 4 Day Week Global. https://www.4dayweek.com/

4. Chen, Z., Zhang, Y., Luo, H., Zhang, D., Rajbhandari-Thapa, J., Wang, Y., Wang, R., & Bagwell-Adams, G. (2021). Narrowing but persisting gender pay gap among employees of the US Department of Health and Human Services during 2010-2018. Human Resources for Health, 19(1), 1–8. https://doi-org.link.uwsuper.edu:9433/10.1186/s12960-021-00608-w

sustainability. Often this means having a limit on the extent of their contributions.

- So, do not be surprised or offended if a business says no to your request. That may not mean that you shouldn't ask them the next year, especially if you have reason to think that their business or their employees value your work and your mission.

5. SCORE. https://www.score.org/resource/infographic-small-business-charitable-giving-big-impact-local-communities

32.

RELEVANT GRANT SECTION: WORK PLAN

Workplan

Assignment Timing

This part of the grant is assigned during week 9 and after reading section, **Planning the Change Strategy.** Students should take one week to complete the assignment.

Assignment Overview

The workplan follows the Intervention section and outlines the specific steps necessary for implementing the strategy that is the focus of the grant.

The workplan should not include details like specific office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) but primarily larger things or resources that will need to be acquired and likely included in the budget (office space, computer, etc.).

Assignment Detail

- Most workplans use a table format with common headers (timeline, steps, resources needed, persons responsible)
- Example is below

Table 32.1 Workplan for January to December

Timeline	Steps	Resources Needed	Persons Responsible
January-February	Form and meet with advisory committee to provide guidance	Outreach, space to meet, refreshments	Executive director

33.

RELEVANT GRANT SECTION: BUDGET

Budget

Assignment Timing

This part of the grant is assigned during week 9 and after reading section, **Planning the Change Strategy.** Students should take one week to complete the assignment.

Assignment Overview

The budget section of a grant outlines the expenses and sources of revenue for a project or organization and uses the work plan as the guide. The budget must provide enough details on the expenses and sources of revenue so that anyone reading or using the grant is clear on where the money is going (expenses) and where the money is coming from (sources of revenue).

Assignment Detail

Format considerations:

- You will have two parts to your budget: Expenses and Revenue.
    - Expenses are the costs that are required to operate the program or organization.
    - Revenue are the anticipated sources of income needed to cover the expenses.
- For each part, you will include abbreviated explanations for the expense and income categories.

    - Explanations should be abbreviated using symbols such as @.
- All numbers reflecting monetary values should be right-justified or left-justified and use the symbol $.
- Expense considerations:
    - Be sure to include benefits as well as salaries for any employees.
- Revenue considerations:
    - The revenue table should identify at least three different types of income.
    - Revenue should at least equal or be greater than the expenses.
- Use tables as shown below.
    - You can include details that wouldn't fit in the 'explanation' box, such as the type of positions you intend on hiring, the degree or qualifications required to do the job, the location of training sessions, the size of facilities needed, etc.
- Tables should be followed up with a Budget Explanation section which includes additional information to help justify some of the larger expenses (staffing, facilities, training, etc.).

Recommended format and examples:

Expenses

Table 33.1 Expenses

Item	Explanation	Total
Furniture	3 couches @ $400/couch, 2 tables @ $50/table	$1300

Income

Table 33.2 Income

Type	Explanation	Total
Grant	Community Foundation	$1300 (pending)

Budget Explanation

- Furniture will be purchased from a local retailer and used in a living room setting where residents gather for social activities.

PART IX
EVALUATING THE CHANGE STRATEGY

Methods for Evaluating the Change Strategy

Regardless of the change strategy you selected, you must determine if the intervention worked. What difference did the change strategy make in the lives of people in your community? This is a critical step in the community change process and the insights gathered in the evaluation phase feed back into the process. You should not be hesitant to engage in thoughtful evaluation of your work because it is inevitable that you will gain insights that improve your work and have a greater impact on the community for whom you are working.

Remember, the principles of Design Thinking are that most or many of our interventions won't be successful in the first iteration. That is why we are encouraged to consider them as **prototypes**. Most will need to be modified and improved upon if they will continue to be our community change strategies. Or, we will need to scrap the ones that are not effective at all, especially if they are seen to be doing harm rather than good. For that reason, our evaluation needs to not only focus on what difference we thought we were going to make but also on the additional impacts that we've had on individuals or the community.

We will only learn what needs to change if we engage in systematic evaluation. It is a matter of integrity and professional responsibility.

Learning Objectives

- Plan the evaluation of the intervention
- Recognize different types of evaluations
- Demonstrate method for conducting and reporting the evaluation

34. REASONS FOR AND TYPES OF EVALUATION

In the basket metaphor, the weaving of an inner and outer wall together gives the basket strength. To fully realize the power of Indigenous evaluation, we weave program implementation together with program evaluation. We start the weaving by describing the story of the program—the story we plan to tell as a result of doing activities that lead to outcomes. As the program is implemented (creating the inner wall), evaluation (as the outer wall), captures the story that emerges allowing for reflecting, learning, and improving the program.

-Joan LaFrance and Richard Nichols[1]

1. LaFrance, J. and Nichols, R. (2009). Indigenous framework for evaluation: Creating our story. American Indian Higher Education Consortium. https://portalcentral.aihec.org/Indigeval/Pages/Document-Collections.aspx.

Introduction to Evaluation

It is imperative for us all to remember that people's lives and well-being are at the core of what we are doing: infants, children, families, parents, elders, veterans, neighborhoods, business owners, etc.

You have a responsibility to determine if you are achieving your intended goals from your work, causing harm as a result of your work, and if you are actually improving the quality of life. You have an obligation to your stakeholders to figure this out, as identified in the generalist change-making process shown in the graphic below.

Figure 34.1 Photograph by Ivy Vainio

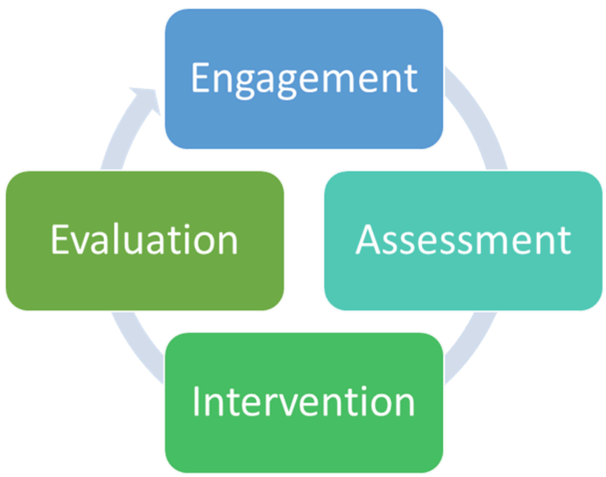


Figure 34.2 "Generalist Changemaking Process"

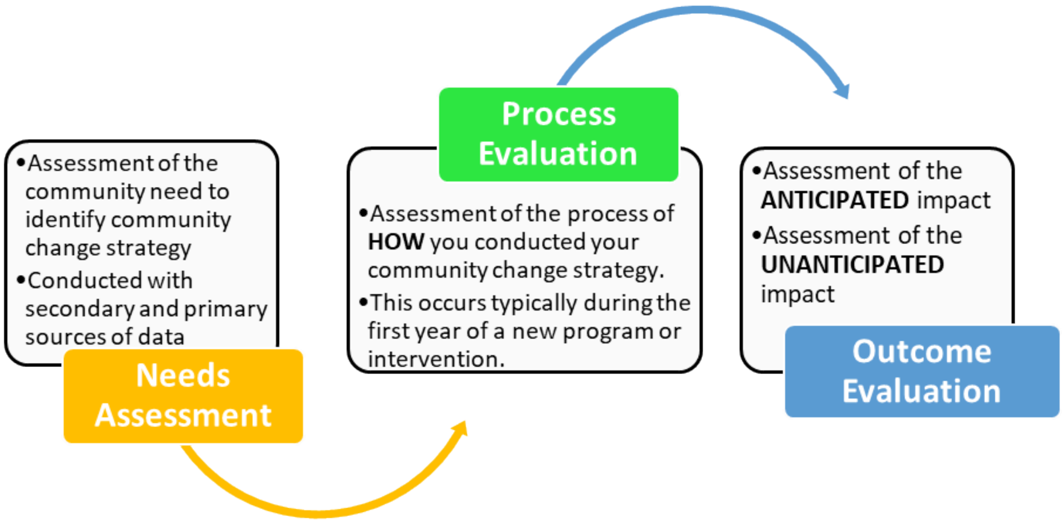
Your evaluation will also demonstrate accountability to:

- Consumers of your services
- Staff and board of directors
- Community stakeholders
- Funders, members, and other investors in your services.

Types of Evaluation

There are a few different types of evaluations, but we are going to focus on **Outcome Evaluation** because it is a systematic measure of the impact of a program or strategy. Other common types of evaluations are ***process evaluations*** and ***needs assessments***.

Figure 34.3 "Common Types of Evaluations"



An outcome evaluation is an assessment of two primary phenomena:

- The ***anticipated*** impact, based upon our best understanding of the needs of the population you are focused on.
- The ***unanticipated*** impact, based upon our best understanding of the changes that occurred as a result of your work.

Using and Sharing Evaluation Results

The results of your outcome evaluation need to be shared with the stakeholders who are invested in your work: staff, clients, people directly impacted by the strategies you are engaged in, board of directors or advisory group, and funders. The results of the evaluation will inform them of the results of your work and will often assist you in attracting new resources and support (economic, human, political, etc.).

Necessity for Culturally Relevant Evaluation

Evaluation of historically marginalized groups has often been invasive, intrusive, harmful, manipulative, judgmental, and exploitative. [2] It makes sense that there is significant mistrust in people conducting or requiring evaluations, along with their motivations. Therefore, it is imperative that the evaluation is crafted carefully to ensure that the results won't further exploit the group or point out deficits rather than strengths.

Culturally relevant evaluation recognizes that "demographic, sociopolitical, and contextual dimensions, locations, perspectives, and characteristics of culture matter fundamentally in evaluation" (p. 283).[3] Culturally relevant evaluation requires an understanding of historical and current context and should be grounded in the wisdom and values of the communities it is intended to serve.

Culturally relevant evaluation also needs to be designed by, with, and for the historically marginalized group. The evaluation methods, specific data collection tools, and implications should all be closely considered. The results of the evaluation should focus on gathering knowledge that will result in improvements in people's lives that they are seeking.

Evaluation Resistance

As mentioned, you have a responsibility to the stakeholders of your work to evaluate the effectiveness. This hopefully seems like common sense but I am amazed at how frequently there is resistance to this phase of community change work. The resistance seems to be primarily about:

- fear of what will be learned during the evaluation
- concern that the feedback will be difficult to address
- lack of staff capacity to carry out evaluation
- lack of trust

What if the evaluation demands significant change from the organization? My initial response is that this could be great! Receiving constructive feedback on the need for an organization to change can be intimidating but the outcome is likely to be very positive and, of course, helpful. That is the primary point of an evaluation. How effective are we? How can we be more effective?

Be open to the feedback you will receive and recognize that the stronger your evaluation methods, the more meaningful the results will be, and the stronger your program will become as a result.

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2. LaFrance, J.; Nichols, R. (2010). Reframing evaluation: Defining an Indigenous evaluation framework. Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, v23 n2 p13-31.

3. Hood, S.; Hopson, R.K.; Kirkhart, K.E. (2015). Culturally responsive evaluation; Newcomer, K.E.; Hatry, H.P.; Sholey, J.S. In Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation (4th Edition). Wiley Publishing.

Evaluation Resources

Amherst H. Wilder Research[4]

The Wilder Research division of the foundation provides extensive evaluation reports on numerous human service topics (early childhood, youth, homelessness, etc.) as well as useful evaluation tools.

Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment [5]

The Center is a part of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and is "grounded in the need for designing and conducting evaluations and assessments that embody cognitive, cultural, and interdisciplinary diversity".

Community Toolbox[6]

The toolbox is created and supported by the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas to "help taking action, teaching, and training others in organizing for community development."

Urban Institute's Outcome Indicator's Project[7]

Provides ideas for outcomes and indicators for a number of common human service sectors. One of their goals is to establish common measures for nonprofit performance.

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4. Amherst H. Wilder Research. http://www.wilder.org/research.0.html

5. Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment. https://crea.education.illinois.edu/about

6. Center for Community Health and Development. (n.d.). Chapter 36, Section 5. Developing an Evaluation Plan. University of Kansas. Retrieved November 3, 2023, from the Community Tool Box: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/evaluate/evaluation/evaluation-plan/main

7. Outcome Indicators Project. (n.d.). Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/performance-management-measurement/projects/nonprofit-organizations/projects-focused-nonprofit-organizations/outcome-indicators-project

35.

PLANNING THE OUTCOME EVALUATION

Introduction to Outcome Evaluation

Putting together a thoughtful **outcome evaluation** can provide such rich data for you, the participants in your intervention, your staff and volunteers, the advisory board, and your funders. It is an opportunity to answer questions such as:

- What evidence do we have that our strategies are appropriate?
- What evidence do we have that our strategies are working?
- What evidence do we have that our strategies need to be changed?

Two important concepts are necessary to understand as you plan your evaluation:

- Outcomes
- Outcome indicators

Outcomes

Outcomes of community change work are likely to be:

- Health outcomes (i.e. reduced levels of anxiety)
- Behavior (i.e. social connection)
- Attitude (i.e. happiness)
- Condition (i.e. violence reduction)
- Knowledge (i.e. awareness of child development needs)
- Status (i.e. improved economic well-being)

First, you need to be clear on what your anticipated outcomes are for your community change project or program. What difference are you trying to make? What is the benefit or change for the participants in your program? What may they know at the end of your workshop that they didn't know before? How might they behave differently? How might a population at risk have improved safety after the implementation of your strategy?

Sample outcomes:

- Students developed new friendships
- People feel an increased sense of connection to the outdoors
- Families feel like they belong in their neighborhood
- Participants increased their economic vitality

Outcome Indicators

Outcome indicators are the observable, measurable characteristics or changes that represent the achievement of an outcome. In other words, how are you going to know if the outcomes were achieved? What evidence is most closely related to your intervention? What are you going to listen for? What are you going to look for? What are you going to ask? Who are you going to ask?

Sample outcome indicators:

- When asked, students were able to name one new friend
- Participants identified examples of how they have increased their connection to the outdoors
- When surveyed, families identified a greater sense of belonging in their neighborhood
- A survey conducted before and after a program demonstrates an increase in economic vitality

Considerations for Evaluation Planning

Set up the evaluation systems before you begin the program

- The evaluation plan and systems of data collection need to be set up before beginning the program. This ensures that the data collection method can be used consistently and results in data that can be accessed at the time of data collection.
- This is especially important for programs that intend to measure goals and goal attainment, common with housing, health, independent living, recovery programs, or housing support programs. Be sure to set up:
  - a system of initial assessment
  - initial goal identification
  - ongoing documentation of needs, challenges, goal achievement, goal adjustment

Measuring change

- If your outcome indicators include any behavior change, affect, or condition, it is optimal to include measures pre and post-intervention. Often, this is done by including a pre and post-questionnaire that is distributed to participants at the beginning and end of a defined period of time (like one year).
- If you include any initial sign-up for your programming, the pre-program survey could be included.

Use existing assessment interactions to collect data

- For surveys and questionnaires, it is ideal if you can modify data collection tools, such as existing satisfaction questionnaires or initial assessment tools.
- For interviews, it is ideal if you can use times when you already interact with participants (like when they attend meetings or events).

Ensure access to data

- Avoid relying on other people for the data you need to collect so that you can control the evaluation schedule and process.
- Ensure that the data you identify as critical for your evaluation is data you have access to. For example, student grades or attendance are typically unavailable unless they are provided by a parent.
- Ensure that you have permission to gather the data you intend to collect. This is first and foremost considering the people represented by the data.

Ensure the indicator you are planning to measure is directly related to your intervention

- Programs often measure what they think they should rather than the indicator that is most closely correlated to their strategy.
- This is particularly the case with programs focused on children. Programs often want to measure a change in grade, school attendance, etc. However, you should only measure those if they are directly related to your work. If not, you cannot say that the change was a result of your work.

Schedule and communicate the evaluation plan

- Everyone who will be involved in the evaluation of your program needs to be informed about the timing and their role.
- This is particularly important for staff and program participants.

Sample Evaluation Format

As you plan your evaluation, you want the format to be clear and easy to follow, since you and your coworkers are likely to be responsible for implementing the evaluation. Below is an example directed at evaluating the community education program “Age Well Together” which focused on reducing social isolation in older adults.

Evaluation Method: Questionnaire distributed at the conclusion of each activity.

Indicator A: When surveyed at the end of each activity, participants describe one new connection that was made.

Evaluation Method: Pre-post questionnaire distributed prior to and at the conclusion of the Age Well Together activities program.

Indicator B: A pre-post survey demonstrated an increase in the extent the participants increased their social connection through their participation in the Age Well Together activities.

Outcome: Participants in the Age Well Together activities increase their social connection.

36.

CONDUCTING AND REPORTING THE EVALUATION

Implementing and Reporting Evaluation Plan

When you're getting ready to implement your program there are a few critical steps to consider, related to the evaluation plan, which are outlined in this section:

- Finalizing data types and sources
- Identifying and operationalizing variables

Finalizing Data Types and Sources

Similar to a community needs assessment, a strong evaluation will often include two types of data: **primary** and **secondary**.

Secondary data is what you already have access to and is typically used to provide evidence of the community's strengths and issues and to identify trends. It provides context and an opportunity for comparison. It should never be relied upon to present the entire picture of a problem and point to a solution, although it presents a very important part of the picture. Secondary data helps illuminate the evidence for community change.

Primary data is new data, what you gather to contribute to your assessment of the community and the understanding of an issue.

These types of data are described in more detail in the earlier chapter **Assessing Community.**

Since one of the important goals of the evaluation is to identify any impacts of the intervention that were not anticipated, it is important to include a data source that will uncover this information. It makes sense that this would include some type of open-ended qualitative data collection since you are unable to identify exactly what the response would be. For example, you could include questions on a survey which ask:

- Please describe other ways that this program impacted you, either in a good way or negative way.
- Do you have other ideas for how we should improve this program? If so, please share.

Common sources of primary data:

- focus groups
- questionnaires
- interviews
- pre-post tests

Uncommon but meaningful sources of primary data:

- observations (see example below)
- document review
- stories

Common Sources of secondary data:

- case notes
- ongoing data collection
- goal progress reports

You are encouraged to be creative in your data collection and identify the sources of data that will provide the most meaning to the experience.

Example observation written as vignette: *From YWCA Duluth's Spirit Valley Young Mothers Program*

What we saw was remarkable. Six young women shared their insights about the Expansion project while demonstrating unconditional love and concern for each other. Nothing short of that.

The women hugged each other's children, laughed at each other's jokes, and spoke up when someone's child needed to be redirected. Two women held infants on their laps, one of whom was not her son. He looked curiously at her shirt which read, "I Love Consensual Sex."

One of the women who had minimal contact for many months interacted with the others as if they'd seen each other just yesterday. The other women were excited to see her children, commenting on how much they've grown since they last saw them. The bond she has developed with the other women has clearly passed the test of time.

In addition to answering questions, they shared some stories with us about things they have done in the last year and their plans to change the world.

These women are clearly empowered, they are young, they are brave, they are nurturing, and they are compassionate.[1]

Identifying and Operationalizing Your Variables

Each of the factors that you have identified in your outcome indicators would be considered a variable. It is helpful if you go through and underline each of these so that you are very clear about what you need to measure.

The next step is to **operationalize** each variable by defining how you will measure it and what you will look for. For example, if you are measuring 'belonging', you need to define what 'belonging' means. Then, you need to identify the question(s) or instruments that accurately measures 'belonging'.

Considerations for Successful Data Collection

Evaluation questions and methods have to be meaningful, relevant, and inclusive

As you get ready to implement your evaluation plan, pause to ask yourself if each aspect of your plan will have meaning to the stakeholders, and if it is culturally relevant, inclusive, and accessible (the language should be accessible and include everyone's perspective that is needed, etc.).

1. Outcome Evaluation (2009). https://www.ywcaduluth.org/

Example: *Participant survey at an Indigenous Food Expo*[2]

2. American Indian Community Housing Organization; www.aicho.org

INDIGENOUS FOODS EXPO

EXPO SURVEY

RETURN THIS COMPLETED SURVEY TO WELCOME/SIGN IN STATION TO BE PLACED INTO A PRIZE DRAWING.

MIIGWECH/THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO PROVIDE US IMPORTANT FEEDBACK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE INDIGENOUS FOODS EXPO! MIIGWECH FOR ATTENDING!

RANK YOUR EXCITEMENT ABOUT INDIGENOUS FOODS!

CIRCLE A BLUEBERRY.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

NOT EXCITED — VERY EXCITED!

WHAT'S YOUR AGE GROUP?

A. 0 – 10
B. 11 – 17
C. 18 – 35
D. 35 – 50
E. 50 +

WHAT'S YOUR HOME COMMUNITY?

A. DULUTH
B. TRIBAL COMMUNITY
C. METRO AREA
D. OTHER:

HOW MANY VENDORS DID YOU VISIT?

A. 1-3
B. 4-6
C. 6 OR MORE
D. NONE

WHAT ACTIVITIES DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN OR GO TO? PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

A. NIIWIN MARKET PRESENTATIONS INDIGENOUS FOOD/PLANT DEMOS IN THE PARK
B. CULTURAL ART FAMILY ACTIVITY AREA
C. BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
D. INDIGENOUS MUSIC CONCERT
E. OTHER (PLEASE SHARE):

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS EVENT?

A. SOCIAL MEDIA
B. NEWSPAPER
C. BILLBOARDS
D. RADIO
E. TV
F. FRIEND
G. OTHER:

HAS YOUR INTEREST IN BUYING INDIGENOUS FOODS GROWN AFTER ATTENDING THIS EVENT?

YES NO

Figure 36.1 "Example Participant Survey"

Secure commitments for gathering data

- Communicate with those you are collecting data from before you begin your activities, particularly the program participants. They should be aware that evaluation is a part of the process.
- Secure written commitments as necessary.

Create protocols for collecting and storing the data

- Often, the staff will be the ones to gather the evaluation data. They should be clear on the expectations for how this is done so they do not unfairly influence the results.
- Consider the ethics of gathering data where you are asking people to be honest about how they have been impacted by your work (positively or negatively). This needs to be done with a lot of sensitivity.
- The protocols should outline:
    - the message to participants when the evaluation is conducted
    - the importance of the data
    - how the information will be stored
    - how the information will be used

Train your data collectors and pilot the process

- Pilot-test your collection processes and see if the questions and methods are clear.

Be very careful about the anonymity and confidentiality of stakeholders

- The need to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of stakeholders during an evaluation process often depends on the number of people you serve and the number of staff you employ. People are often reluctant to be honest in their assessment of a program unless they are assured their comments will be protected and they will not be able to be connected to their comments.

Reporting and Sharing Evaluation Results

An evaluation is only valuable if you actually utilize the information that you have gathered. This may seem very obvious, but organizations will occasionally conduct evaluations because they are a requirement, and then not consider the recommendations or ideas that are shared for purposes of improving or changing their services. This is disingenuous to the feedback loop process, likely unethical, and counters what stakeholders expect from an organization.

Prior to sharing the results, however, it is necessary to write them into a report so that you can easily share and communicate the findings with others. Here is a simple outline for report writing:

- **Background:** A short history of the organization and the program that is being evaluated.
- **Summary of evaluation findings:** This section mirrors the abstract of an article, with two to three paragraphs highlighting the evaluation methods, results, and conclusions. For some people, this is the only part they will read, so it should still be detailed enough to be informative.
- **Evaluation Methods: A** lengthier description of the evaluation (people involved, types of data collected, timeline, etc.).
- **Evaluation Results:** This section provides detailed tables and descriptions of the qualitative and quantitative results from the evaluation, mirroring the evaluation plan you put together. Methods for analyzing the data should be included. Make sure that you include results of both anticipated and unanticipated outcomes.
- **Evaluation Conclusions and Recommendations:** This is one of the most important sections because it includes the conclusions from the result analysis and recommendations for program changes (if any). This should be relevant to all stakeholders of the program and organization (program participants, staff, volunteers, board of directors, funders, etc.).
- **Attachments:** You should attach copies of any instruments (surveys, interview questions, etc.) that were used in the evaluation as well as data tables and note summaries from interviews or primary data.

Sharing Evaluation Results

Three primary groups should receive the results of an Outcome Evaluation:

1. **Stakeholders who participated in the evaluation:** This could be staff, program participants, community partners, volunteers, etc. Sharing the results communicates respect and honors their participation. Plus, if they agreed to participate, they are likely interested in the findings and invested in the outcome.
2. **Anyone involved in reviewing and implementing recommendations:** Every outcome evaluation will result in some level of recommendations, and these should be reviewed by the staff, volunteers,

board of directors, and advisory councils who would be involved in implementing the recommendations. Sharing the results will help communicate the rationale behind the recommendations and should include their buy-in.

3. **People and organizations who funded or invested in your program:** All funders of your work should receive a copy of the evaluation. They clearly care about the work you are doing, the problems, and the community conditions you are working on, so they will be curious about how the work is going. They will not expect you to be perfect in your work but they will expect you to be transparent about what is working and what is not, and most importantly what you intend to do differently. Typically, conducting and sharing the evaluation results is a requirement for receiving funding.

The easiest way to share the outcome evaluation results is to send the report to all the relevant stakeholders listed above. I strongly encourage you to follow up with a conversation about the findings and recommendations so that it is clear to the stakeholders that the results are being listened to and considered.

37.

RELEVANT GRANT SECTION: EVALUATION PLAN

Outcome Evaluation Plan

Assignment Timing

This part of the grant is assigned during week 11 and after reading section, **Evaluating the Change Strategy**. Students should take one week to complete the assignment.

Assignment Overview

An outcome evaluation plan is a systematic measure of the anticipated and unanticipated impacts of your work. It is done to:

- Know you are making a difference
- Demonstrate accountability to:
    - Consumers of your services
    - Stakeholders (staff, volunteers, community)
    - Funders
- Determine how you should modify your programming
- Attract new resources and support (economic, human, political, etc.)

Assignment Detail

- The evaluation plan is typically put into a table, like the one shown below. It should be clear, easy to follow, and include the following information:
- Create an Evaluation Plan for the project which is the focus of the grant. There should be at least 1-2 outcomes for the project and each outcome should have 1-2 indicators.
- The evaluation plan should specify the source of the data. This is all communicated in a table format, similar to the one below.
- Following the table should be an explanation of how the evaluation results would be used and who they will be shared with.

Table 37.1 Evaluation Plan

<table>
<tr><th>Outcomes and Indicators</th><th>Evaluation Method & Data Source</th></tr>
<tr><td>Outcome A:</td><td rowspan="2">Method of data collection for Indicator A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator A:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Outcome B:</td><td rowspan="2">Method and data for Indicator B</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator B:</td></tr>
</table>

38.

RELEVANT GRANT ASSIGNMENT: FINAL COMPLETED GRANT

Final Grant Assignment

Assignment Timing

This part of the grant is assigned week 13, after the Evaluation Section is completed and reviewed by the instructor. Students should take two weeks to complete the assignment.

Assignment Overview

The final grant is the combination of each individual part, edited into a 7-8 page document.

Assignment Detail

- Combine your draft of each of the grant sections in this order: 1) Organizational Background, 2) Statement of Need, 3) Intervention, Goals and Objectives, 4) Workplan, 5) Budget, 6) Evaluation Plan.
- Add a title to the top of the first page.
- Remove any directions or headers (class title, etc.) that may still be on your draft sections.
- Edit each section based upon instructor feedback.
- Make sure font size and type is consistent throughout the document.
- Resources should be either kept as footnotes or all moved to the end.

PART X
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AS STRATEGY

Facilitating Change at the Organizational Level

Organizational change as a course of action is one of the most important aspects of community change work. Often the most needed change is at the organizational level. It also is the area that you likely will have the most influence—if you are strategic. But, the resistance to organizational change can be fierce. So, it is important to understand the theories behind likely resistance so that YOU can stand on the side of change rather than stagnation. As you read this part, it's important to apply the theories and knowledge to organizations that you are a part of or that you find yourself getting ready to be a part of (like entering an internship or job).

What I find exciting and motivating about some of the latest research and work on organizational change is that there is strong evidence that involvement from the organization's periphery might be optimal for change. For someone who will likely be new to an organization upon graduation, this is good news. It is rare that someone immediately becomes an organizational leader or a director. Instead, focus on the first part of your career on the 'front lines' or the 'periphery'—from the edge of an organization or in a secondary position. So, I encourage you to read this section with that in mind—you will likely be in a position to support, participate, or lead meaningful organizational change even at the beginning of your career.

This part of the book is intentionally last because I think it is the hardest. It is very difficult to change a system that we are a part of. This is inherent in the design and function of a system. To understand why, we need to form a base understanding of theories and concepts relevant to organizational and individual function, and behavior relevant to change.

Learning Objectives

- Describe forces that influence or demand organizational change
- Apply social science theories to describe organizational change or stagnation

- Apply methods to engage and assess organization for change
- Recognize organizational interventions and strategies for change
- Recognize why YOU are needed to help us Reach for Better

39.

FORCES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

What informs an organization that it needs to change? What are the driving forces or events that require an organization to shift how they do their work, how they interact with the community, how they can be more effective, and question if they should even exist?

The forces for organizational change come from both external and internal forces.

External Factors or Forces for Change

There are so many external impacts on an organization, which require a shift in strategy and will likely include:

1. **Demands by the community, often in response to tragedy:** One example is the demand for justice and police accountability after the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and far too many others who lost their lives to law enforcement officers. Other examples include climate-related impacts on the local environment, mass shootings, mental health crises, etc.
2. **Change mandated by policy:** Policy-making bodies (school boards, city councils, county boards, state government, Tribal government, Federal government, etc.) pass laws and policies on a regular basis that require an organization at the local level to change how they do their work. These policies could expand access to services, such as policies directed to increase equity, or they could reduce access, such as adding eligibility guidelines for accessing needed supports such as food assistance.
3. **Trends or shifts in context or funding that require a shift in strategy:** One example is the COVID-19 pandemic which required a shift in service delivery, scope of work, and work environment due to public health concerns and economic impacts. Some organizations quickly established remote work environments, used technology to maintain service delivery or connection with colleagues, or expanded services to address unmet needs (like food insecurity). Other examples include social media or technology trends, demographic shifts, etc.

Internal Demands or Forces for Change

Internal demands or forces for change are often responses to thoughtful outcome and process evaluations. As noted in the Evaluation chapter, one of the primary reasons to engage in evaluations is to identify how your organization needs to shift how they engage in their work to achieve your intended outcomes or in response to unanticipated harmful impacts.

Common evaluation results that demand change include:

- **Evaluation results show the intended outcomes were not achieved**. This requires an analysis of factors impacting the lower achievement.
- **Evaluation results demonstrate that your organization is consistently not culturally relevant to the community that you serve**. In other words, your organization is either not serving particular populations or they are not being served effectively, which requires a change in tactic, education, and accountability.
- **Evaluation results show inconsistent results between staff and/or services.** Inconsistent results (either positive or negative) should be closely examined and understood; they may require stronger training, assessment tools, and consistent work structures. This is often referred to as 'positive outliers'—positive outcomes that are clearly evident but not consistent—which may point to outcomes that could be achieved for others if changes were made in the delivery of services.
- **It is difficult to recruit and retain staff and/or board members.** This hinders your agency's ability to consistently provide the needed service and requires a close examination of recruitment, retention strategies, reputation, and competitiveness.
- **After examining your agency's data you realize you are serving a different population than you had intended or planned for.** This tells you that the need is growing and you likely need to expand your services.

40.

UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONS

This section introduces various theories and phenomena to help us understand how organizations and individuals may be predisposed to hinder or support change.

Understanding Organizations as Social Systems

It is helpful to consider that organizations are a social system and to apply social science wisdom to understand their norms, how they engage in resistance, and factors that help facilitate change. Since these phenomena are driven by individual and collective action or inaction, social science theories are particularly relevant.

Organizations have the power to facilitate immense benefits to the community as well as perpetuate immense harm. Some law enforcement, health care, and child welfare organizations are examples of this. They share common missions—to protect, help, and serve—but have been known to do quite the opposite and cause harm to the people, families, and communities they're meant to help.

Allen Johnson (2006)[1] reminds us that organizations need to be understood as social systems in order to understand the dynamics of change. As a social system, organizations exhibit a culture that is known to possess the characteristics likely to support or resist change.

The culture of an organization defines the norms of appropriate behavior, motivates individuals, and offers solutions where there is ambiguity. These are the norms related to what people wear, how people interact during their work, the tone of the in-person communication (casual vs. strictly professional), comfort with humor, whether people socialize during the work day (like at lunch), and many other workplace behaviors.

Organizational Culture Supporting Change

Some organizational cultures value innovation and change, while others value stability and equilibrium. The culture may not be clearly visible when you enter but it is likely felt. The culture governs the way a company

1. Johnson, A. G. (2006). Privilege, power, and difference. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw Hill.

processes information, its internal relations, and its values. Often, the culture becomes tangible or visible when it is violated, evoking a response like, "We just don't do that here."

It is important to understand how and why an organization may be predisposed to support rather than resist change. In the open source textbook, ***Focusing on Organizational Change***, Judge (2012)[2] describes eight dimensions of an organizational culture open to change. They include:

1. **Trustworthy leadership:** A trustworthy leader is someone who is not only perceived to be competent in leading the organization but also as someone who has the best interests of the organization as their priority.
2. **Trusting followers:** People are predisposed to trust others. When an organization is filled with a critical mass of individuals who are hopeful, optimistic, and trusting, it will be well-positioned to experiment with new ways of operating.
3. **Capable champions:** Since organizations tend to keep doing things how they are accustomed, they must identify, develop, and retain a core group of capable change champions in order to lead the change initiative(s).
4. **Involved middle management:** Middle managers are pivotal figures in shaping the organization's response to potential change initiatives, so their involvement is crucial to the organization's capacity for change.
5. **Systems thinking:** The mindset and infrastructure that support organization-wide engagement (budgetary, communication, collaboration, etc.) rather than isolating departments or organizational segments.
6. **Communication systems:** Effective networks of information sharing and knowledge transfer (e-mail systems, face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, methods of announcement sharing).
7. **Accountable culture:** System for tracking deadlines, whether outcomes are achieved, and evaluating impact.
8. **Innovative culture:** An organization that emphasizes and values change rather than stability and equilibrium motivates individuals and offers solutions where there is ambiguity.

Organizational Communication Supporting Change

Centola (2021) contributes insight into the ways in which an organization can be more able to adapt to change, focusing on how information shared between system or organizational parts facilitates or hinders communication as well as what happens when we rely on the 'social influencers.'

2. Judge W. Q. (2012) Focusing on organizational change. Saylor Foundation. https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/128

Myth of Social Star

Centola describes the concept of highly connected people, often identified as influencers—those who may seem logically helpful in spreading information that would facilitate change—but that is often not the case. Highly connected people or the **"social star,"** as Centola points out, are often not helpful at spreading innovation because they may be reluctant to embrace the idea, end up forming roadblocks, and slow down the spread of information rather than speed it up.[3] Centola suggests that it is more important to look for the special 'places' in a network rather than 'people' to facilitate change. An example of a special place in a network could be the front desk and administrative staff where all staff walk by and often interact with daily.

Narrow vs. Wide Communication Bridges

Centola also introduces the concept of ***'wide bridges***' and ***'narrow bridges***'—communication channels between parts of an organization or system as the most effective for facilitating change. **Narrow bridges** are represented by an individual person who is relied upon to facilitate information between parts of an organization, as shown in the graphic below. This is a weak bridge because it relies upon one person to communicate information, focusing on their reach rather than the width of the connection.

3. Centola, D. (2021). Change: How to make big things happen. New York: Little, Brown Spark.

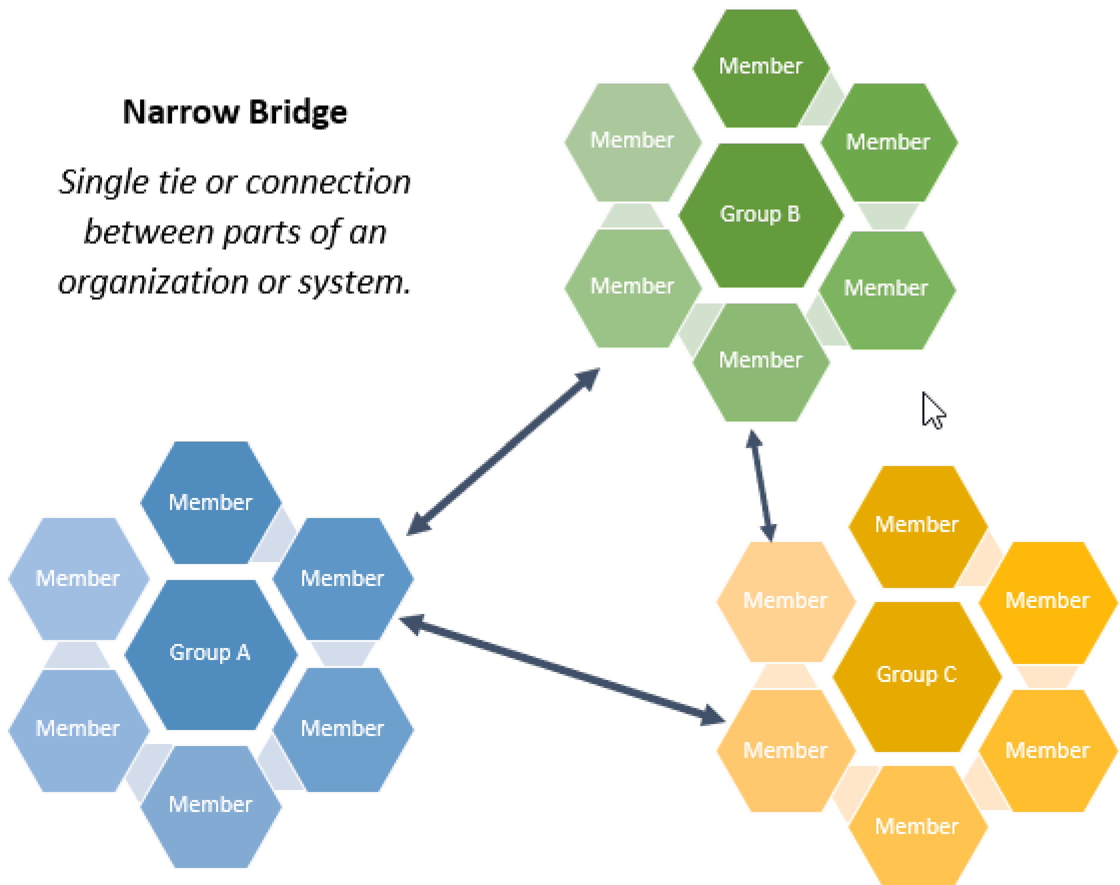

Figure 40.1 "Narrow Communication Bridge"

In contrast, a **wide bridge** involves multiple connections of multiple people between organizations, which may represent a diversity of perspectives considered credible and relatable, resulting in a stronger connection.[4]

4. Centola, D. (2021). Change: How to make big things happen. New York: Little, Brown Spark.

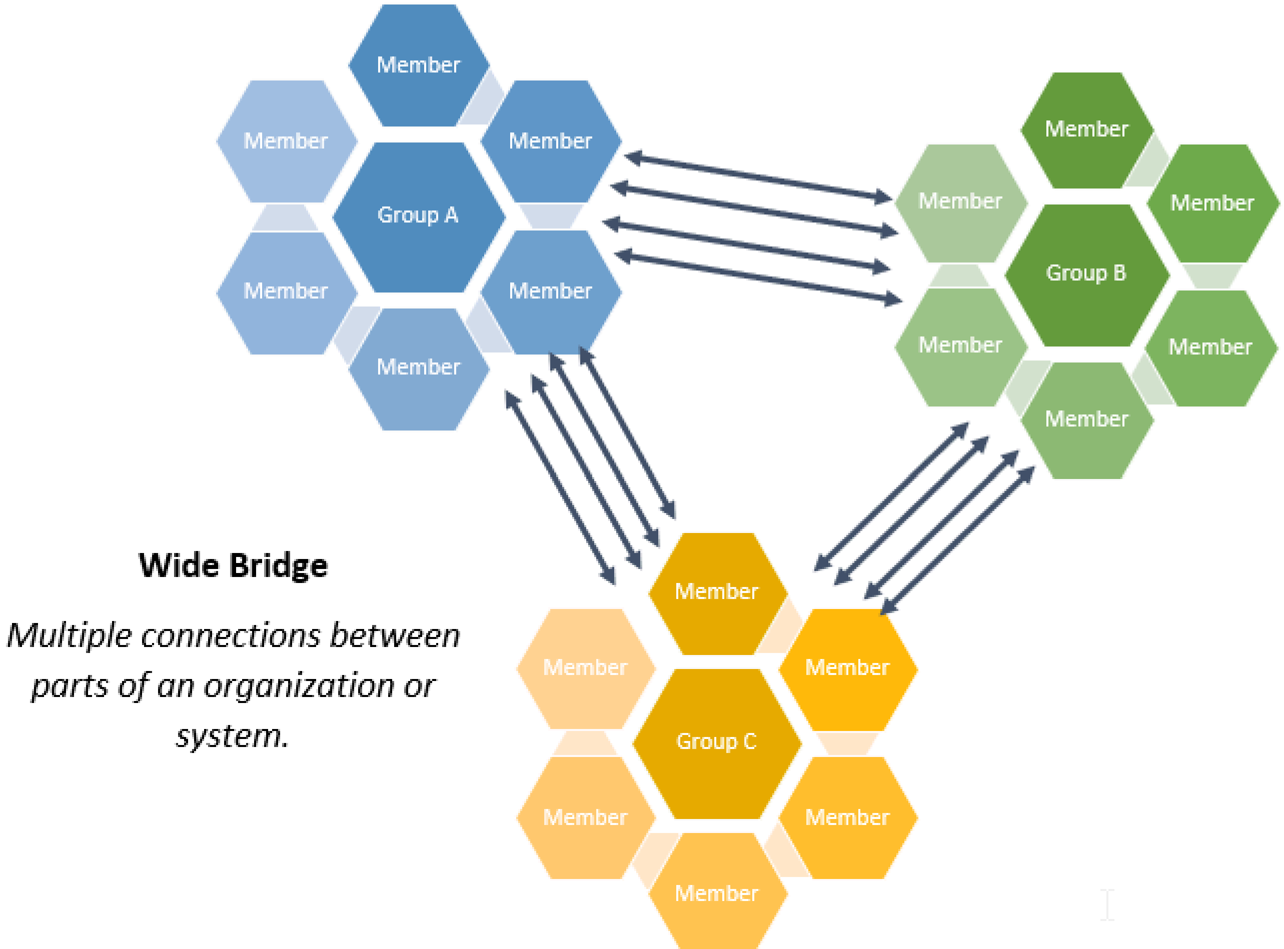

Figure 40.2 "Wide Communication Bridge"

Social System and Social Identity Theories Impacting Change

There are three additional social system or social identity theories that influence the extent to which we are likely to engage in behaviors that facilitate or hinder change: **Path of Least Resistance, Power of Bystanders**, and **Implicit Bias**. These help explain the implications of resistance and the likelihood of facilitating the change that needs to take place.

Path of Least Resistance

Johnson (2006)[5] explains that the path of least resistance is the natural state of a social system. Since each system has its own set of norms and expectations, the easiest and most comfortable thing to do when entering a social system is to adopt the rules, expectations, and norms that exist—whether explicit or not. This is the **'path of least resistance.'** Violating cultural norms and not following this path can be very consequential, leading to mild disapproval, punishment, or humiliation.

Johnson illuminates the **path of least resistance** through a story of an elevator, reminding us of the unwritten or spoken rules of elevator social norms. Within moments of entering an elevator, he conducted an experiment with the rules by choosing to stand and face the back wall instead of the established norm of facing the front. The tension and discomfort were palatable. He wasn't saying anything or behaving in any way other than violating the norm of facing the front, but it caused discomfort for others and himself because he chose to engage in a path of greater rather than least resistance.

The risks of adopting harmful cultural norms, however, are also very consequential. Those who adopt harmful norms become a part of an organization or a system that perpetuates conditions such as oppression, inequity, harm, and mediocrity.

Power of Bystanders

Staub contributes another relevant theory for understanding organizational change and social change: the '**bystander effect**,' which describes an individual's likeliness to intervene in times of tragedy or change. This was famously described in 1970 by Litane and Darley in their research on the unresponsive bystander.[6] Staub explains that witnesses of violence or injustice have the opportunity to intervene, but they rarely do. Let that sink in for a moment. Why is this the case?

He states that the reasons are rooted in three primary things: **background of the social conditions**, **past group relations,** and **devaluation of the victim's group**. The bystander is not responsible for the initial injustice or the violence, but due to lack of action, they have a responsibility for the continuation of the violence or injustice.

Bystander passivity not only communicates support to the perpetrators of the violence or injustice through inaction, but also influences other bystanders. By protecting themselves from other people's suffering, the

5. Johnson, A. G. (2006). Privilege, power, and difference. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw Hill.

6. Latane, B., & Darley, J. (1970). The unresponsive bystander: Why doesn't he help? New York, NY: Appleton-Crofts.

passive bystander reduces empathy and caring, making future action less likely. Passivity by bystanders suggests to other bystanders that inaction is acceptable, even appropriate.[7]

It is important to remember the **bystander effect** when looking at organizational change. Remember, Centola explained that a well-connected and influential person within an organization or a social system can be a roadblock for change; if that person is a passive bystander they are going to influence the likelihood that other people will fall into the pattern of standing by.[8]

Implicit Bias

Implicit bias refers to our "attitudes towards people or associating stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge."[9] This phenomenon is not unique to race, gender, country of origin, etc.

Implicit bias is critical for an organization to understand some of the internal forces driving ineffective outcomes and the need for change because it influences how we assess and respond to others. It also influences how we relate to individual and group strengths, needs, and challenges, therefore impacting our decision-making and directly influencing the assessment and intervention stages of our work. Cetola explains how implicit bias "permeates the professional norms and networks that reinforce them" (2021, pg. 281). [10] The implications of unchecked implicit bias cannot be understated; it leads to substandard care, inadequate treatment, perceptions of threat, and many other harmful impacts. It is no surprise that the outcomes of this disparate treatment are higher incarceration rates, health acuity, higher mortality, etc.

7. Staub, E. (2019). Witnesses/Bystanders: The tragic fruits of passivity, the power of bystanders, and promoting active bystandership in children, adults, and groups. Journal of Social Issues, 75(4), 1262–1293. https://doi-org.link.uwsuper.edu:9433/10.1111/josi.12351
8. Centola, D. (2021). Change: How to make big things happen. New York: Little, Brown Spark.
9. Perception Institute. Implicit Bias. Para 1. https://perception.org/research/implicit-bias/
10. Centola, D. (2021). Change: How to make big things happen. New York: Little, Brown Spark, pg. 281.

41.

ENGAGING, ASSESSING, AND IDENTIFYING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE INTERVENTIONS

Similar to community change work, the strategies for organizational change follow the steps of engagement, assessment, and intervention. Therefore, this chapter will follow these same steps in a more condensed form and highlight assessments used by organizations depending on the type of external or internal factors and forces that are driving the change. The recommendations provided in this chapter are based on current and recent trends that have been observed as primary drivers of organizational change.

Engagement Methods

The engagement phase of organizational change work will differ significantly depending on whether you are already a part of the organization or not. Similar to engagement with a community, engaging at the organizational level includes getting to know the organization and establishing trust.

Engaging as an Existing Member of an Organization

If you are an existing member of an organization you will want to engage your coworkers, team, or supervisors by bringing attention to the external or internal factors or forces for change. These were covered in the previous chapter and include:

- **External**
  - Demands by the community, often in response to tragedy
  - Mandated change driven by policy
  - Trends or shifts in context or funding that require a shift in strategy
- **Internal**
  - Evaluation results that demonstrate outcomes not being achieved
  - Evaluation results that demonstrate the organization is consistently not culturally relevant to the population being served

- Evaluation results are inconsistent between staff and services
- Difficulty with recruitment and retention of staff and/or board members
- People being served are disproportionate to the population

You may start your engagement with speculation about the above factors but should have some form of evidence or observations to share when engaging others. Given the importance of establishing wide versus narrow bridges of communication, it is important to engage with more than one person so that you are not reliant on them to validate or give credibility to your observations.

Engaging as a New Member of an Organization

If you are new to an organization you have an important opportunity with engagement because you will be asking questions and making observations as a part of the introductory or orientation period. And, you haven't been absorbed into the culture or organizational norms yet, so you bring a fresh perspective and sense of naivety. You also haven't had the opportunity to establish trust or mistrust, so you may have more leeway for the types of questions you ask or observations you share that other members of the organization don't have.

Similar to engaging with a community, it is best to begin by asking questions and listening to the response before forming any judgments. The questions can be related to observations but they will be heard and responded to differently if they are delivered in a question. For example:

- I am curious, does the organization use a trauma-informed approach?
- Out of curiosity, why does the assessment form only include male and female as gender categories?

The goal of your questions should be to encourage your coworkers to pause and consider what you are asking about and the observations you are making. Do they have an answer to your question that explains the observation? If so, you likely learned some critical information about the organization. If not, are they willing to explore the idea or question a little further by engaging in a type of assessment?

Assessment Stage

The next phase of organizational change is assessment where the observations, factors, and forces are explored more intentionally and more in-depth. This information is needed to make the case for change; you are learning about the need for change and gathering evidence to justify any recommendations.

Here are a few commonly used assessment tools:

Assessment Tools

- **Anti-racist organizational assessments:** The past decade has seen a rise in expectations for racial justice work at the organizational level, primarily driven by external forces and demands for change. As noted by Winters (2020) an organization that has integrated diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of their work can maintain a more thriving environment for their staff and their work[1]. Therefore, it is critical to begin with an assessment and then identify specific gaps, needs, and strategies for moving forward. Here are two of the many resources for assessments:
    - Resource Guide for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Organizational Assessment Tools. (2021) Prepared by Trinidad Tellez, MD, Principal, [Health] Equity Strategies, LLC in partnership with the Institute for Economic and Racial Equity, Brandeis University.
    - Organizational Change Tools supports work that goes beyond the DEI approach to focus more on bringing anti-racist strategies into the organization.
- **LGBTQ+ organizational assessments and strategy work:** The past decade has also witnessed a rise in expectations for inclusion work for lesbian, gay, transgender, queer, asexual, intersex, and two-spirit folx in our organizations, in our work, and in our community, while also responding to social and legislative erosions of rights in many parts of the U.S. The Biden administration signed an executive order expanding workplace nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ individuals [2] and there are organizations leading the way for assessing and transforming organizations to be more inclusive. Here are two related resources:
    - Beyond Visibility: Assessing your Transgender and Nonbinary workplace (2022). Prepared by Out and Equal. The assessment tools shared on their website provide a global perspective on LGBTQ+ workplace equity.
- **Disability Inclusion:** It has been over 30 years since the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a civil rights law that expressly prohibits discrimination based on disability. Since this federal law guides organizational and workplace expectations regarding access, it is critical that people understand the expectations of the law, but should view this as a baseline for their disability inclusion work.
    - ASAN (Autistic Self Advocacy Network). This organization, run by and for people with autism, is working to create a world more inclusive for autistic people. They have publicly available resources, training, and assessments to support people with autism across their lifespans and help them reach their potential.

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1. Winters, M.-F. (2020). Equity and Inclusion: The Roots of Organizational Well-Being. Stanford Social Innovation Review. https://doi.org/10.48558/SD1P-J693
2. Yurcaba, J. (Jan 21, 2021). Biden issues executive order expanding LGBTQ nondiscrimination protections. NBC News. https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/biden-issues-executive-order-expanding-lgbtq-nondiscrimination-protections-n1255165

- **Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment:** The practice of trauma-informed work recognizes that people and families are impacted by a variety of traumas that influence the extent to which help can be provided and accepted.
  - Trauma Stress Institute's Trauma Informed Organizational Assessment. A toolbox for assessing a variety of organizations for the extent they are engaged in trauma-informed practice or care.

Organizational Interventions and Strategies for Change

Communicating and Networking for Change

Centola (2021) shares insights on how systems can be more able to adapt to change when they focus on promoting new behaviors and innovations rather than just sharing information[3]. They describe this in the 7 fundamental strategies for change:

1. **Don't rely on contagiousness.** Instead of relying on the contagion spread of information, use strategies to intentionally change people's beliefs and behaviors. Maintaining too much reliance on influencers can backfire.
2. **Protect the innovators.** Support 'wide' versus 'narrow' bridges to connect innovators who can not only spread information within their network but can reinforce their ideas.
3. **Use the network periphery.** People in the periphery of a network are less connected and therefore are more insulated, which makes it the ideal part of a system for innovations to 'take hold.' Instead, the more highly connected influencers may be the largest roadblock to change since they are likely to be connected to many people who are conforming to the status quo.
4. **Establish wide bridges.** Wide bridges (versus narrow ones) have redundancy built into the design which reinforces ties between points and

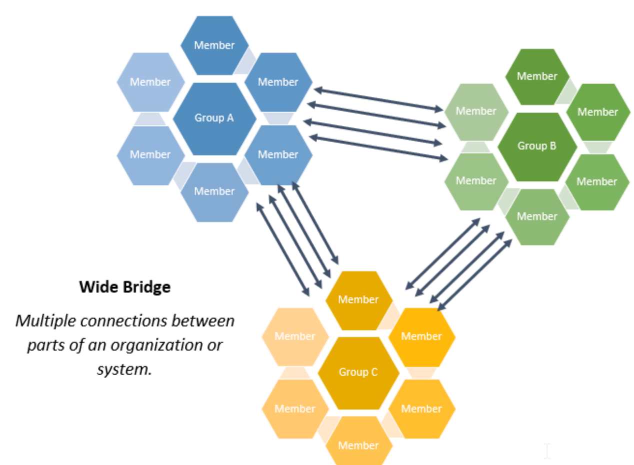

Figure 41.1 "Wide Communication Bridge"

3. Centola, D. (2021). Change: How to make big things happen. New York: Little, Brown Spark.

translates into networks that are more successful at spreading new ideas and preferable behaviors. A narrow communication channel is efficient at spreading information but not reinforcing it. A wider bridge is important for establishing trust, credibility, and legitimacy.

5. **Create relevance.** Context is important for establishing relevance and can then influence whether similarity or diversity of influences is most important. For example, if the behavior change requires belief that the behavior is widely accepted then it is important that there is diversity in the source of the influence (variety of people accepting the change). If the behavior change requires a feeling of solidarity or excitement, then it helps if the influencing sources are similar to the person or group you are focused on.
6. **Use the snowball strategy.** Focus on strategic places to spread the behavioral change rather than just strategic people. Research shows that too much exposure to people who resist adoption will backfire. Instead, focusing on particular change agents can reduce the percentage of the 'tipping point' for change, which research demonstrates as needing to be approximately 25%. So, focus on persuading a quarter of the network or team in the need for change.
7. **Design team networks to improve discovery and reduce bias.** Research conducted with a variety of networks shows that smaller teams that established connections for information sharing but met less frequently were more effective at improving discovery, fostering innovation, and reducing bias than those that were larger but communicated more frequently.

Trainings & Creative Organizational Learning for Change

A very common outcome of an organizational assessment is the need for additional and specific training. This is particularly the case with change efforts related to anti-racism, equity, and inclusion. Training can come in many forms and it may be optimal to mix up the types of trainings and learning experiences that are intended to drive and support organizational change efforts. Consider the following ideas:

- **Off-site conferences and workshops.** It is common for organizations to support staff to attend conferences and workshops on topics relevant to their mission and work. These can be important training opportunities for networking and idea generation. They also can be an incentive for employees to spend time away from their day-to-day work and engage with others in an environment that can be fun and engaging. Conferences and workshops are resource intensive, however, which can limit the number and frequency of opportunities for staff, so it is important to consider other ways of learning.
- **On-site trainings and workshops**. In addition to supporting attendance at off-site conferences and workshops, organizations can host their own trainings and workshops using internal and external expertise. One benefit of this is that the content of the training can be tailored to specific organizational needs, however, this can also be resource-intensive.
- **Learning and discussion groups.** Another valuable strategy for organizational learning is a discussion

group, which typically involves reviewing, listening, or watching similar content and then discussing it. A common structure for this is a book club that revolves around the reading and discussing of a book focused on content relevant to the organizational change goals. These groups could also consider podcasts, documentaries, videos, or even TED Talks since there are a plethora of options that are publicly available or low or no cost.

Creating or Modifying Policies for Change

Another common strategy for facilitating organizational change is to establish or update an organizational policy. This is an important way to clearly communicate decisions that have been made and guide the expectations of staff, volunteers, and a board of directors. Policies are also often used to translate federal and state policies which dictate organizational practices and expectations.

Common organizational policies cover the following areas:

- **Functions of the Board of Directors**
  - number of members
  - frequency of meetings
  - responsibilities
  - decision-making process
- **Employee behaviors**
  - social media use
  - diversity, equity, and inclusion
  - harassment
  - remote work and networking
- **Organizational functions**
  - caseloads
  - confidentiality and privacy protections
  - vehicle use
  - computer use and protections
  - financial and recordkeeping processes

A common outline for an organizational policy includes:

1. **Purpose:** A brief description of the intention of the policy.
2. **Definitions:** Specific definitions that provide clarity and a shared understanding of what the policy is addressing.
3. **Guidelines for Behavior:** Outlines or describes what is acceptable and preferred behavior as well as

what is unacceptable.

4. **Procedures:** Identifies rights, responsibilities, and steps for complaint investigation and resolution.

If the policy is likely to change a cultural norm, it is optimal to involve a team of staff to assist in the development of the policy. This would likely positively impact the awareness and compliance of the policy.

All organizational policies should be reviewed by someone who can provide legal consultation to ensure that the policy components and procedures are compliant with workplace laws and employee protections. Once approved, it is important that all people impacted by the policies be directly communicated with to ensure that the policy is understood—both the purpose and methods for compliance.

CONCLUSION

> ***"We are all going through a significant period of evolution, and it means that there's an opportunity in that, it feels burdensome right now, because so much has been taken from us. But there's such an incredible opportunity, to decide how you want to show up in the new world.***
>
> ***Because it will be a new world. And my greatest hope is that we don't reach for normal, that we reach for better."***
>
> -Michelle Norris, Michelle Obama Podcast – August 2020

YOU are needed to help us 'Reach for Better'

One of the intentions of this part of the textbook is to present opportunities for YOU to participate in and lead organizational change efforts, even as a new member of an organization. My hope is to provide inspiration and tools that are available to you immediately upon your entry into your chosen profession—whether as an intern or employee.

So, I have chosen to begin this last chapter with a return to how I began this book: a call for 'better' rather than 'normal.'

YOU are an important part of this challenge because you will enter your profession with hope, vision, innovative ideas, talents, and observations that are all needed.

Consider that you will be entering your profession likely on the periphery of an organization—on the edge or frontline versus the center of the organization. The periphery is an important place for change strategies partly because those in the periphery are likely to be less connected to influences that may counter or resist change efforts. [1]

Please consider these opportunities from the periphery:

1. Centola, D. (2021). Change: How to make big things happen. New York: Little, Brown Spark.

- **YOU have the opportunity to make fresh, meaningful observations of your new work environment.** Observe the system and attempt to characterize the organizational culture, particularly aspects that seem healthy and those that seem harmful. Observe how you enter the culture and adopt the organizational norms.
- **YOU should ask questions and listen.** Your initial judgments or observations about the organization may be spot-on and worthy of criticism and they may uncover complex reasons that require in-depth understanding.
- **YOU have the opportunity to volunteer to participate on teams or committeesrelated to projects you are intrigued with.** The team or committee should have some institutional power behind their work (budget, outcomes, etc.) so that their work isn't just to check a box but to innovate and support change.
- **YOU can find and connect with like-minded coworkers.** Use your connections to build your network of people who share your vision and ideas for change. Get to know other people. Listen to their ideas.
- **YOU can suggest tools and resources.** You likely learned about new resources and tools during your academic studies that were not part of your new coworker or supervisor's education. Suggesting these tools and resources may be a palatable way to share your knowledge in a way that is heard, less as criticism and more as sharing.
- **YOU can offer to do some of the work.** For trainings, perhaps you offer to research trainers who would be available. Perhaps you offer to look for materials for a work-sponsored discussion group and suggest a book, podcast, or TED Talk.

YOU have power and YOU have the opportunity to move our communities and organizations toward a better place. Consider this. Ponder this. Go forth.

CHANGE LOG

Date and brief explanation of content changes: