

Community Development in Northern Canada: A Competency Approach for Strong Communities



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- Background, development and pilot of the learning module
- Introduction to module content
- The module: sample of activities

Outline

- Health and social service providers who are skilled and confident in using community-based and participatory approaches can work with northern communities to build capacity and address community health and wellness needs
- 2009: Northern workforce reported they had little education in community development (CD)
- PHAC funding for three territory project
- Professional workforce as target audience



The Initiative

Objectives of project:

1. Foster collaboration
2. Assess CD competency levels
3. Identify learning gaps and interests
4. Develop an educational module
5. Test module & revise
6. Make module accessible and sustainable

In this initiative, health and social service professionals are able to acquire competencies to act as a catalyst of change;
the community itself creates and holds the voice and vision

Learning needs assessment survey was based on the 13 CD Competencies for the North*

Wants

CD Concepts

Diversity & Culture

Communication

Working Relationships;
Coaching, Facilitation

Needs

Advocacy, Community
Engagement

PAR, Asset mapping,
Community mobilization

Problem-solving, conflict
resolution

Foster Sustainability;
Proposal Writing

Based on analysis, five competency areas were selected for chapters
Topics blend building on strengths/interests (wants) with addressing gaps (needs)

* adapted from:

Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHAC, 2008) – community capacity building competencies, and
Common Ground Consulting (2009) – proposed community development competencies for the North

- Able to engage communities to advocate for services and policies that influence the health and wellbeing of many people at the same time
- Able to help communities work through issues using problem-solving and conflict resolution skills
- Able to understand and apply at least one of the following to gather information: participatory action research, community asset mapping, participatory evaluation
- Able to advise on and influence opportunities to help communities keep their efforts going
- Able to develop two or more of the following: strategic plans, grant proposals, project proposals, briefs, options papers, requests for proposals

Five Focus Competencies

* adapted from:

Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHAC, 2008) – community capacity building competencies, and
Common Ground Consulting (2009) – proposed community development competencies for the North

- Members of the tri-territorial team initially worked face to face, developing indicators and exploring resources; each college team took away a chapter to fully develop
- The tool as a whole was then piloted with H&SS staff (RNs, SWs, MDs) in NT and YT (NU prevented by capacity issues)
- Participants generally quite positive about the tool and the content

Development

Pilot Findings

Relevancy

"It was nice to have certain content delivered from a completely northern perspective...generally a really big gap."

"A lot of people are doing CD work or related work- they are applying a lot of the knowledge but don't know the formal language or where to find resources to be able to hone the skills they naturally have. This module could really help them to have resources, to finesse those skills, to build on their assets."

Effectiveness

"This knowledge supports developing a critical competency for anyone who works with a community focus as part of their work."

"...the 'big impact' that working through this course had on me was self-reflection. As I read each chapter, I found myself constantly reflecting on situations in my practice and how through what I've learned through my work, in addition to taking this course, I can be more culturally aware, and foster cultural safety in my daily practice."

Public Health Advocacy and Community Engagement

Explored through the lens of a youth film on food security in Old Crow, YT

- Framing the issue and the debate
- Exploring root causes
- Developing advocacy plan and goals
- Determining optimal level of public engagement
- Recognizing and reconciling conflicting expectations

Chapter 1

Problem Solving, Conflict Resolution, and Cultural Competence

- Mindtools www.mindtools.com activities on communication and conflict resolution
- Community scenario applications
- Exploring my position on the cultural competence continuum (Saskatchewan Public Schools)
- Examining power and privilege

Chapter 2

Participatory Action Research, Community Asset Mapping, and Participatory Evaluation

- Introduction to PAR, CAM, and PE with a focus on partnering with communities to identify/celebrate strengths, describe community concerns, act to solve problems, and evaluate the results
- Explores needs-based versus assets-based approach to community development
- Inventory own community's assets
- Application of principles of PAR, CAM, and PE to a community-based case study

Chapter 3

Sustaining & Influencing Community Efforts

- Ways to sustain and influence the strength-based action that you and community have taken
- Use the Nunavut tool-kit adaptation of Carleton University's Values, Structures, Processes (VSP) tool for sustainable community action in response to a community-based case study
- Strategies for financial sustainability of a community project
- Activities to sustain momentum in a community group

Chapter 4

Writing Strategic Plans, Proposals & Decision-Making Documents

Knowledge and skills for front-line workers to help communities prepare effective proposal and decision-making documents (strategic plans, grant/project proposals, briefs, options papers, RFPs)

Examples provided:

- Proposal Writing Guide/Project Planning Guide - NWT/NT Literacy Council
- Strategic Action Plan for suicide prevention – NT
- Project Proposal: HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C – Health Canada
- Brief on Canada's environmental agenda and implications for Aboriginal peoples – National Aboriginal Health Association

Chapter 5

Learning Activity: Photovoice

A participatory action research method in which individuals identify, represent, and enhance their community through photography. Photovoice enables people to record and reflect on their community's strengths and concerns and promotes discussion about community issues.

- Learn about implementing photovoice in your own community
<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/photovoice/main>

Chapter 3: Participatory Action Research, Community Asset Mapping & Participatory Evaluation



Learning Activity: VSP Sustainability Tool Kit

Review the VSP approach to sustainability (values dialogue, structures and processes) from Carleton University, and the Nunavut adaptation of the tool

Move through the VSP stages identifying strategies and how they might be effective at every stage in relationship to your own community

Stage 1: Identify concerns and decide to act

Stage 2: Develop your plan

Stage 3: Implement your plan

Stage 4: Evaluate, adjust and re-visit core values

Use the VSP model to work through a community-based case study

Chapter 4: Sustaining & Influencing Community Efforts



Learning Activity: Writing a Proposal

NWT and Nunavut Literacy Councils.(2008). *Proposal writing guide*. Retrieved from http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/resources/comdev/proposal_writing/proposal_writing_guide.pdf

Using the template provided, develop a proposal for a community-based case study.

- Project title
- Contact person
- Proposal: intent, planned activities, expected outcomes
- Schedule and timelines
- Additional information
- Projected budget

Chapter 5: Writing Strategic Plans, Proposals & Decision-Making Documents



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Project Team
