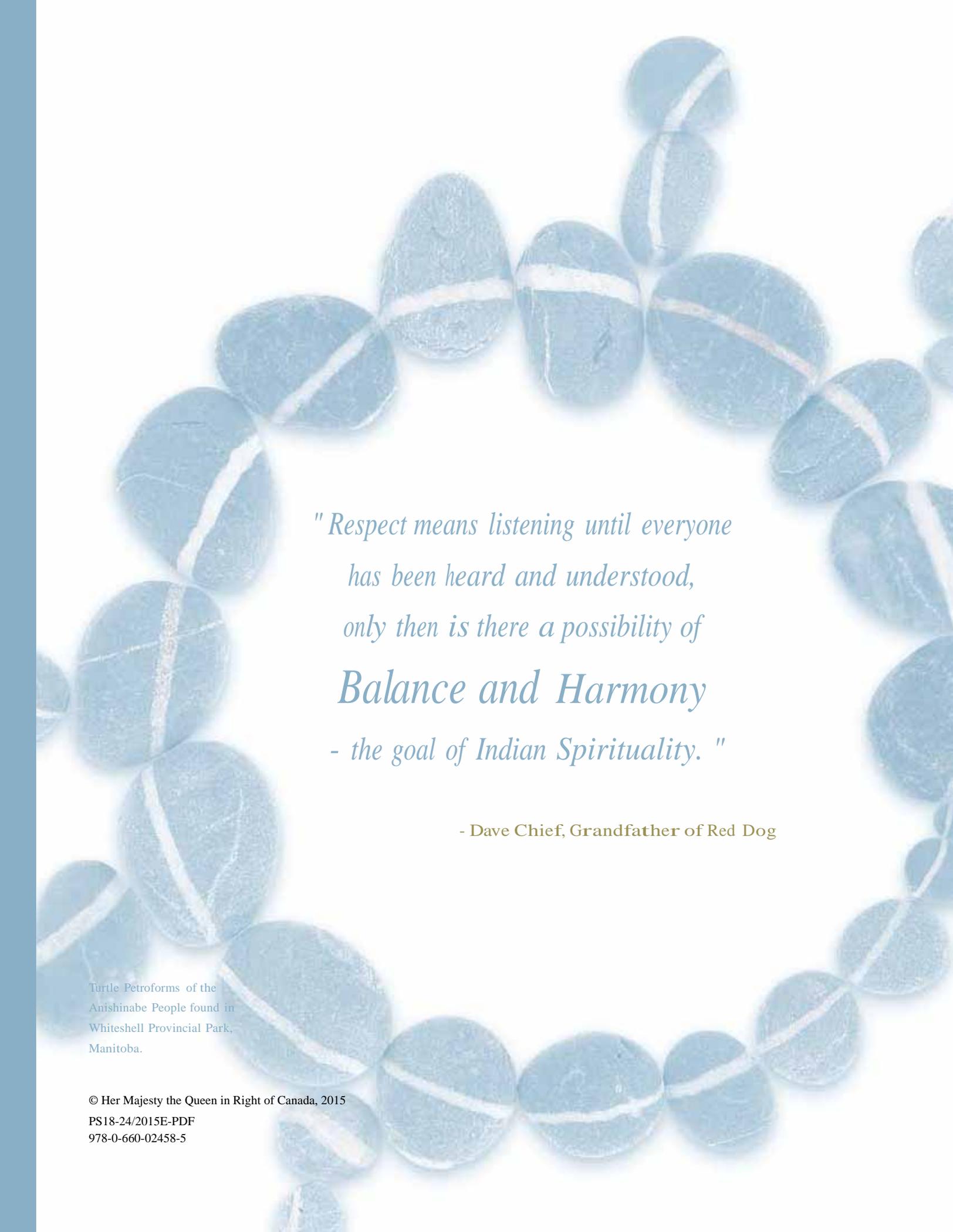


Moving Toward a Stronger Future:

**An Aboriginal Resource Guide
for Community Development**

www.aboriginalchange.com



*" Respect means listening until everyone
has been heard and understood,
only then is there a possibility of
Balance and Harmony
- the goal of Indian Spirituality. "*

- Dave Chief, Grandfather of Red Dog

Turtle Petroforms of the
Anishinabe People found in
Whiteshell Provincial Park,
Manitoba.

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Moving Toward a Stronger Future...

“There are many different interpretations, but from our perspective the turtle is a significant and powerful symbol that we honour in our ceremonies. The turtle is central to the creation story when the land was built upon the back of the turtle; and this is why we call Mother Earth by her name: Turtle Island. It means our people were built upon a strong foundation; and so the strength of our people is signified by the turtle because of our close connection to the land...”

**- Elder Charles Scribe
(Cree/Lakota)**

Churchill, Manitoba

Introduction

Aboriginal communities are going through accelerated change across Canada. Each community is at a different stage in their development. When we take a step back into history we can see how as independent Nations we were quite inter-dependent with creation and dependent on one another for survival. This whole interaction was disrupted with the onset of a whole range of impacts from contact with European explorers, settlers, missionaries from diseases of every kind to Residential schools...and the list goes on. The disruption was so damaging that every Aboriginal community in Canada has wounds of one kind or another that they are still dealing with today. But, the healing journey is moving along at different rates for each community and we are reclaiming our rightful place in the country and committing to positive change. We are taking greater strides in leadership, re-organization, and getting back to the principles and values that helped us thrive over many thousands of years.

This resource tool has been created with all of this in mind.

We, a small group of First Nation and Métis citizens came together to create this guide to help each community on their journey to a stronger tomorrow. Whether you are just beginning in your development, or well on your way, we have pulled together tools for change that can assist you and your community to build even greater momentum.

In our discussions with our fellow First Nation and Métis community members, we were told very clearly that whatever we developed had to have the following *Guiding Principles* if this resource tool was to be effective. It needed to:

- Be Holistic
- Be Culturally Relevant
- Encourage Community Involvement
- Recognize the Gifts and Strengths of Individuals and Communities
- Be Respectful of each Community's current state of Development
- Be developed *by* and *for* Aboriginal people

Throughout this guide, we have tried very hard to respect and be consistent with these Guiding Principles.

We invite you now to browse through our menu to view what we have created and gathered and to begin using these tools for your community's benefit.

Thank You!

a) Background Information:

In the summer of 2010, Public Safety Canada - Ottawa, provided funding to the Cree Nation Tribal Health Centre to develop a strategic tool to assess Aboriginal Communities and their readiness for change and to begin or continue the process of mobilizing and developing their communities. The Cree Nation Tribal Health Centre, in turn, contracted Little Black & Associates to conduct two initial focus group workshops and held several interviews with First Nations and Métis representatives from British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and the Atlantic Region, with the goal of capturing their knowledge and expertise. Several common themes emerged, and among them was a clear direction that whatever was created had to

be easy to use, have several entry points (where to begin) and be flexible enough so that communities could benefit from these resource tools in their own process of change.

A number of common threads emerged in the process that suggested *An Aboriginal Community Development Approach* that incorporated the following key elements:

- Start with raising awareness in the community
- Obtain buy-in from the community and its leadership
- Help to build trust
- Use clear communication methods within the community and extending outwards (beyond the community)
- Promote early, active involvement of community members - especially the youth
- Provide a focused vision, goals & objectives
- Lead by a core group of committed community members

This guide, therefore, follows the very simple, valuable advice provided by the participants of this project. Every effort was made to honour their knowledge and experience.

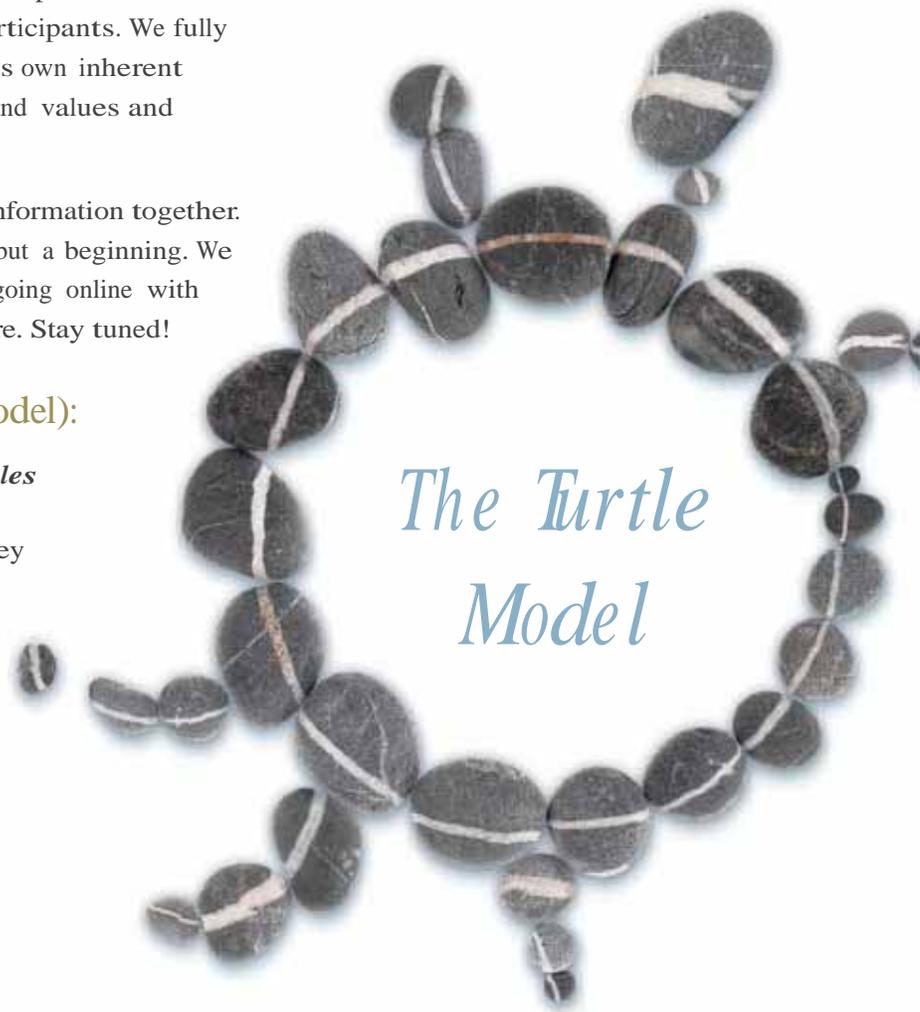
We, at Little Black Bear and Associates, took a good look at what was currently available in communities - along with a few good resources that had been previously developed such as the CARING Kit developed by the First Nations & Inuit Health Branch. We combined this with our experience and knowledge in facilitating and mobilizing organizations and communities and have developed this resource guide for Aboriginal communities to use. Hopefully we have included all of those important elements suggested by our core group of community participants. We fully respect that every community is unique, has its own inherent strengths, possesses the capacity to change, and values and desires a better future for their children.

This is our first attempt at pulling this kind of information together. It is not a comprehensive study by any stretch but a beginning. We shall be building on this process and hopefully going online with the same content on a website in the near future. Stay tuned!

b) Description of the Framework (Model):

The framework is built on the *Guiding Principles* mentioned above. The model we have used is simple. It takes the form of a turtle with six key entry points: the head, the tail, and the four limbs. The over-arching shell also contains broader themes that are basically common concepts that affect every stage of the development process. Think of them as belonging to the big picture or the “grand scheme of things”.

Each component of the Framework (model) is explained below:



The Turtle – 7 Components for Change



The Turtle's Shell: (The Community & Big Picture) – The protective shell of the turtle represents the community; and a healthy community is the protector of its own people. The shell also points to the big picture or the broad scope of matters in the community. Our participants identified a number of key aspects of a community that can be summed up in the following statement:

“A strong, healthy and vibrant community has sound leadership, essential facilitation skills, is well organized, and ready to move forward guided by core values.” Each of these main components is outlined in the shell section.



Upper Right Limb: (Taking a Look – Determining Where the Community is at) –

The upper right limb of the turtle represents tools of assessment or taking stock of where your community is currently situated in its development. These tools are about exploring your community's history, mapping out the assets, strengths, gifts, and opportunities in the community, discovering how community systems work, and creating an inventory of resources.



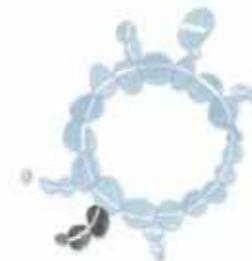
The Lower Right Limb: (Creating the Environment for Change) – The lower right limb of the turtle represents creating the right environment for change. In order for the community to embark on a journey of development, the timing and conditions must be right for change to take place. Much like tilling the ground to prepare it for planting, the community must take steps to prepare for moving forward together. This involves building trust, positive relationships, partnerships, teamwork or working collaboratively together, listening to the voice of the people in the community, creating a core group of committed individuals, planning the first meeting, incorporating strong communication strategies, and making presentations and public speaking skills.



The Upper Left Limb: (Mobilizing the Community) – After the right conditions for change exist in the community, the next step is to mobilize all the available resources (financial, human, physical, etc.). The upper left limb of the turtle represents this component. To begin, we have outlined how to get started, find the community champion(s) or key people to make things happen and obtaining their buy-in to the development process and finally, engaging the community in committing to mobilizing its resources.



The Lower Left Limb (Planning for Change): The lower left limb signifies concrete planning for change. These are specific processes that begin to bring the plans of the community into focus. To do this, we explain how to develop a focus question for any session; how to create the vision and statement of purpose (sometimes called the “mission statement”); how to set goals and objectives; and finally, ending with some concrete advice on how to create a plan of action to move the community forward.



The Tail: (Overcoming Pitfalls)- The tail of the turtle signifies the challenges and obstacles that may need to be overcome. These are called pitfalls. We provide some ideas to help your community think about personal and community healing; conflict resolution; dealing with divisions, resistance to change; and criticism within the community; dealing with staff turnover and overcoming fears. Some of these pitfalls are going to take generations to deal with but the key point is to carry on with developing your community in spite of these obstacles. The Elders told us we should not wait for everyone to heal before you begin. They are right, the more you keep working at developing your community and yourself as an individual, despite these obstacles, the better it will be for your community's future.

The Head of the Turtle: (Leadership & Taking Action) – Finally, the head of the turtle is about leadership and taking action – the head greatly influences and oversees the process of development. This means the community is ready to move forward by taking action, evaluating its progress, celebrating successes, obtaining leadership support, making presentations and public speaking, and writing a funding proposal.



The tools we have included at each of these entry points of the turtle – including the broader concepts – will hopefully assist your community in the process of working toward bettering your community. This model does not suggest that beginning at any one point means that any individual community is better than another, but simply that they are beginning at different stages and working toward one key, significant goal: “creating a better future for our children” (*Elder participant*).

c) How to Use this Resource Guide

Each module is divided into two components: “*The Story*” and “*Tools & Tracks*”. The *story* provides background information and “food for thought” on the subject. The tools and tracks section consists of practical steps and processes to assist you in focusing on a particular topic. This may include focus questions that may get you thinking and moving in a certain direction. We called it *tracks* because, if you implement these ideas, it begins to take you down a path... and when you travel a path you most always leave tracks or signs behind that some activity was undertaken or something was accomplished. These tracks are indicators of progress.

Finally, we have included quotes that offer kernels of wisdom and experiences. These came from our participants and others that have shared their wisdom on a particular topic.

d) A Comment about Community Development:

This resource manual has been written to appeal to individuals. After all, individuals read things – people don’t usually read something like this document as a group. Therefore, we encourage you as an individual in your community, or as a person interested in assisting others in their development, to ensure that when you start on a process of development that you have the right people involved. Certainly, smaller teams within your community can utilize these tools in their particular settings. For example, if you are the Coordinator of a Program, you can take these tools and put them to good use with your team or with a group that you work with such as an established Committee. Without a doubt, there are many ways this resource tool can be utilized and you are free to try any approach that you think will work in your community. We do encourage you, however, to gather support to begin any community-wide initiative. This may mean seeking the Chief & Council’s or the Community Council’s support through a resolution. Or simply creating a briefing note requesting support. Or it may mean forming the Core Group that we speak of in Section 4. *d) Creating a Core Group of Committed Individuals*. To ensure your community has a good start (or continuation), pull together the right people and obtain support from the right leaders to maximize your community’s development process and a greater chance of achieving success.

As a community member, you are in the best position to determine what the best course of action will be to obtain buy-in and support for a community development initiative. We strongly urge you to pursue the avenues that will garner the greatest support from within your community. Clear communication is the key to any successful endeavour in any community.

Throughout the resource manual, we have indicated where some sessions may or may not require a facilitator. While other sections do not indicate whether a facilitator or some other

resources are needed. We leave it to you and your community to decide on the best way to deliver any section of this manual. You may refer to the Lead Facilitator in Section 12 (About & Contact Us), a Regional Facilitator that has worked with your community, or a key individual in your community that knows the proper protocols (steps to respect and follow) to begin any development work on behalf of the community.

To get any community development initiative or project moving in your community, we recommend that the focus be on first determining what is needed or desired and whom it is that can lead or support the developmental work. Let this be your starting point. Get that Core Group of Committed Individuals together, get your vision in focus, and start building there onwards as a community.

2. The Turtle's Shell: The Community & Big Picture

"Big thinkers always know where they're going, even if they don't know exactly how they're going to get there. They know that you cannot achieve what you cannot define, and they go out of their way to define exactly what success means to them..."

- John Assaraf & Murray Smith

All Aboriginal communities are in various stages of development. Some have created methods of their own to help their community grow; many more have forged relationships with outside agencies, government departments, and organizations to build up their community such as housing, roads, office buildings, administration, etc. Effective community leaders draw on their experiences and utilize their community's strengths to build and enhance their community. No matter where they are in the process of development, these visionary leaders always have the big picture in mind and make decisions by always consulting their people - especially their Elders. But, they also have the pulse of the youth and understand how integral they are to the future of the community. This has been going on for generations. Yet, there are some communities still struggling to begin and wondering where to start. This resource guide was created to help your community begin, or to continue on from where you are situated now in the development process.

The "big picture" is about recognizing that each community is unique and at a different stage in its growth. Each community can therefore take the next step forward to become

stronger. In the “grand scheme of things”, many communities know that they want to continue growing and developing because there is always room for improvement. Our Elders teach us to “keep going” and “never give up” and they encourage new growth.

The participants involved in giving us direction in creating this guide identified a number of key characteristics of a community that is on a path of positive development. These characteristics form the “big picture” of our Aboriginal community development model. They are as follows:

- a) Strong, Healthy, & Vibrant
- b) Sound Leadership
- c) Essential Facilitation Skills
- d) Well-Organized
- e) Ready to Move Forward
- f) Guided by Core Values

Each one of these characteristics has importance for every community that desires to improve upon its current situation. There is definitely more than only these characteristics that could be included here, however, we have highlighted the main ones as follows:

a) Strong, Healthy, & Vibrant Communities



Wisdom:

"We cannot imagine that any community can become stronger when the inherent gifts within that community are not allowed to be given..."

- John McKnight

The Story

Communities that are truly working well together utilize the strengths of the people. They are concerned very deeply with being healthy, and they are very much alive and vibrant in their pursuit of wellness.

Studies that explored the question of why some communities are alive and vibrant while others are “dying or in a state of paralysis” found that communities alive and vibrant allow the individual gifts of the people in their community to be given to each other and to be utilized. They understand that when a person is gifted with certain abilities, then those abilities can be put to good use in the community. On the other hand, those communities that rely on “outside” resources and people, are weaker, and often unable to move forward in positive directions. Gift-giving is lost in these communities and as they look to “professionals” and others from outside their community to provide services or to fix their problems while the gifts of the people are ignored or undervalued.

What is the bottom line? Whenever the talents, gifts, and abilities of community members are recognized, honoured, and put to good use, communities will be alive and vibrant. One can feel the energy of the people and see the light in their eyes in these communities. But when the gifts of the people are not valued or used, communities will struggle and growth will be limited or not happen at all.

The topic of how communities develop has been the life long work of people like John Kretzmann and John McKnight who wrote the book, “*Building Communities from the Inside Out*”. Please see the following link for an overview on this topic:

<http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/introd-building.html>

Tools & Tracks:

How to Identify Gifts

Here are some ideas of how you can help to identify gifts, talents, or abilities in your community:

1. During a community gathering or at a meeting of a smaller group, place the names of each participant on a blank sheet of paper. Over the course of the session, allow time for each person to write on everyone else’s sheet to identify each other’s gifts/talents/abilities. At the end of the session, hand out each sheet to the person it belongs to. You’ll be amazed at what other people see within you. Keep a record of what was identified for each person.
2. Make a list of the main leaders that are recognized and respected in your community and write their names on a single sheet of 11” x 17” paper. Place them on the wall. Have everyone participate in identifying and writing down all the positive qualities that they see in each of the leaders. Put their picture on the sheet and post these at a local place where many people gather. Get creative by adding their picture and framing or laminating them so they last longer.
3. Hold a Sharing Circle with a stone or some other object significant to your community to be passed around the circle from person to person. The one holding the stone is to sit quietly while everyone else in the circle identifies and states at least one positive gift or ability that they see in the person holding the stone. Have someone record what is being said about each person in the circle. At the end of the exercise, you will have identified the gifts and abilities of everyone in the group.





b) Sound Leadership

Wisdom:

"True leaders lead by example..."

- Phillips

"... leadership is defined by results not attributes."

- Drucker

"The time of the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves! Banish the word "struggle" from your attitude and your vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration..."

- Hopi Elders

The Story

Communities that truly work well have leaders that are strong. What does that mean? It is not that the leaders are perfect, but they do know something about how to lead. Strong leaders know whom they serve – their people. Their prime concern is for the well being and the growth of the community towards good and positive directions. Strong leaders possess many abilities that are put to use for the benefit of the community. They are visionary and are able to see a future that others may not be able to see. They trust in the abilities of their community members and always uplift their fellow community members. They never crush or put down anyone; they only lift up those around them. Like the goose in flight, their wings give lift to those behind them or beside them.

Strong leaders hear the voice of the people. They pull together the thoughts of community members to arrive at solutions that will work. They support committees and programs and anything that will bring positive results to the community. Their hearts are *for* the people and *with* the people. They are not only Chief & Council or the Community Council; they are the grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, youth, and regular members of the community. Where you see a positive role model, you also see a leader.

Tools & Tracks:

1. *Who are the leaders in your community?*

2. *What leadership skills do you possess?*

3. *What can be done to help promote leadership development in your community?*

c) Essential Facilitation Skills

Wisdom:

"One of the greatest skills that we need to develop in our Aboriginal communities is the ability to effectively make change happen. That requires being able to understand development processes and knowing how to facilitate them."

- Phillips

The Story:

Throughout our history we always were able to make things happen. Our very survival depended upon it. Whether it was on the hunt or harvesting our crops it always involved the ability to facilitate change. We lived it. Breathed it. It was part of every fabric that made up the community. From leaders on down to the helpers to grandmothers to the providers, everyone had a role to help facilitate change and to prepare for the future. All of those skills are still with us today. In some communities they are actively utilized as clearly seen by Aboriginal communities that are developing their local resources and building up their infrastructure. Other communities may just be starting to use these skills again. Whatever the case, let us remind you of some of the essential skills that facilitators of change possess:

- **Clearly understanding the role as a facilitator** and knowing that you are not the person who makes the decision. One knows whether a particular session was facilitated well when the people feel their work and thoughts are what ended up on the wall or on the flipchart, not the facilitator's. Your role as a facilitator is to get the people's thoughts, ideas, proposals, and input out "on the table" so everyone can see it and have a dialogue about it to arrive at solutions, directions, or strategies. You are responsible for ensuring that information is recorded in one form or another: on a flipchart, screen projector via computer, on 5" x 7" cards posted on the wall, or recording minutes of a meeting.
- **Good communication skills** are the foundation of good facilitation. Unclear messages or questions by the facilitator will lead the group down undesirable paths. Communication involves (what you say and write down) but also the tone of your voice (is it reassuring or quivering?) and your body language (are you confident or unsure of yourself?). Make it your business to ensure you communicate clearly with verbal and body language that is easily understood by all in your group.

- **Understanding processes** (steps to make things happen) is the framework the facilitator uses to lead a group through a discussion. The Sharing Circle is an effective and simple tool that is often used to guide a session on any topic of interest. Everyone gets a chance to speak and the speaker is free to speak his or her mind while everyone else listens. This is a process. There are many other types of processes one can use to lead a group; examples of problem-solving or planning tools include the Solution Circle or the PATH planning process (Planning Alternative Tomorrow's with Hope). These are detailed further in the Lower Left Limb (Planning for Change) section.
- **Presentation skills** is part of communication but is more related to our physical appearance. Research has been done that demonstrated if one is dressed well there is a significant effect on people's perception of an individual and whether they carry credibility. Dressing professionally and looking your best goes a long way to assuring your audience they can accept you and listen carefully to what you are communicating. Be a confident and clear voice in the room. Your tone of voice also conveys that you are open, listening and encouraging discussion, and guiding the flow of the meeting or workshop.
- **A keen listener** (yes, you have two ears to listen twice as much as you talk). This is very true about one who has the keen ability to not only listen to what is being said but to listen and feel the dynamics or the energy in the room. Is it positive? Negatively charged? Confused? Or completely silent? A facilitator must listen to all of the cues people are sending because they will always let you know what it is. If they are silent, there is a reason for it. Find out what people are thinking by listening to what they are saying and honoring it by repeating what they say. Above all, listen to their hearts and let those hearts express themselves.
- **A total lack of ego** goes a long way to getting a group to warm up to you. When you "strut your stuff" and try to show everyone how smart you really are you are setting yourself up for failure. Your ego needs to be left at the door. Ego is always concerned with *self* and you need to be concerned with the group and where it wants to go. Humility in the face of adversity or negativity will always disarm the most difficult individual(s). What does this mean? Well, when you feel attacked or challenged by individuals in a group, it will do you no good to respond to them in a negative way. Your approach needs to be calm and confident not defensive in the face of negativity.
- **A desire to include everyone** in the discussion: "All means all and not just some" of the people. From the youngest in the crowd to the oldest Elder – everyone must feel they can speak their mind. Inclusion is not just an idea; it's a way of life. To make others feel part of the process and the solution is a gift. Making judgement calls in your mind about what a person is saying (whether it's in your own mind or said out loud) will shut others down and they will close their minds and hearts to you. Be open and inclusive, always. If you must disagree with someone it should only be on the process and never their ideas or thoughts.
- **Ability to stay neutral** and to never "take sides" is another feature of a strong facilitator. This means you are objective and do not let your emotions get involved. As a facilitator, your feelings about the issue is totally irrelevant. Frankly, if you want to lead a group, your opinion should not matter and you need to set it aside. If you are facilitating a meeting and feel that as a community member you have something to say about any particular issue, then raise it later. Bring it to the attention of the leaders or organizers and make your concerns known after the discussion is over.

- **Knowing how to ask the right questions** is the key to effective facilitation. Imagine back in historic times, a discussion around the Council fire. Good leaders asked the right questions and “facilitated” the discussion on what to do next. If they were not good facilitators of discussion and asked all the wrong questions which may have been for personal gain, people may not have followed them. Good leaders, however, always asked the right questions. Usually those questions centred on what is best for the community in the long run and for everyone’s good and well being (see How to Create a Focus Question in the Lower Left Limb – Planning for Change).
- **Seeking to Understand** whatever is being shared is the mark of a good facilitator. The insightful facilitator is constantly in the mode of seeking to truly understand the ideas and thoughts *for the benefit* of the *group* and not their own. The facilitator may understand what a person is really trying to say, however, others in the group may look confused or perplexed. The facilitator asks people to “say a bit more about that” or “could you explain what you meant by the words...” This doesn’t have to be an exhaustive process that badgers an individual by asking them “what do you mean” after their every sentence. You are simply on the lookout for ensuring the conversation is being understood by the participants of a session.
- **The ability to pull it all together** or to summarize information is a special skill of a facilitator. This also involves helping a group to organize information or data. When participants of a group have provided a number of ideas it is the role of the facilitator to help organize that information into themes or streams of thought. This is a skill that is not usually learned over night. A group facilitation course is the best option to learn or acquire this skill. However, if you are naturally able to organize information – by all means, give it a whirl.

These are only some of the essential skills of a facilitator. There is much more. But this should give you a sense of what it takes to lead groups through discussions. One of the key thoughts to bear in mind as you facilitate workshops, planning processes, decision-making or problem-solving exercises is that you are not *teaching*. Teaching involves speaking *at* someone whereas facilitation is a two-way street of communication between yourself and the group.

Remember that you are leading a discussion to arrive at possible solutions that are based on the thoughts and consensus of a group whether it involves a program, a committee, team, Chief and Council, or the Community Council. Get people talking and truly communicating. That is your job as a facilitator.

Tools & Tracks:

1. List some facilitation skills that you possess:

2. How could you improve upon your facilitation skills?

Examples: Take a Course in Public Speaking or Personal Development.

Others:

d) Well-Organized Communities

Wisdom:

"Being organized as a community speaks to the spirit of a community. If you are well organized you will conduct business in the same way - with a strong sense of responsibility for the well-being of your community."

The Story:

In the days of old it was crucial for our community's survival to be organized for our next course of direction. Whether it was moving our camp from summer to wintering grounds, going on the hunt, building a longhouse, or arranging community structures, there was a strong concern by community leaders (men and women) to be organized. Today we hear of the term "Indian time" and you still hear snickers around the room about it. "We must be on Indian time" you'll hear. But in speaking to the Elders, there is no such thing as "Indian time". REAL Indian time meant respecting other people's time. That's why in many communities – when an event is being held – you'll see the Elders there first... waiting for the meeting to begin. That's because their concept of time involved having real respect for others and concern that a meeting was called and there is business to be conducted that pertains to developing or helping the community. In some communities, it is now becoming completely unacceptable for people to come late to scheduled meetings. This has nothing to do with the "White" man's ways. It has everything to do with being properly organized as a community... and everything to do with how business and operations are conducted in your community.

Progressive communities are well organized. Period. They make no excuses or blame others for their communal systems not working. Everything within their control is handled with the utmost care and concern for the community's well being.

"Who can make a better hamburger than McDonald's?" asked the facilitator to the group. Everyone in the room put up their hands. "Who can build a better system than McDonald's?" challenged the facilitator again. This time nobody put up his or her hands. Why is that? It is because McDonald's has developed a system that is known the world over. Well, maybe Tim Horton's is giving them a run for their money now, but, the point is: we need good systems in place for our community to run smooth. Everything from governance to finances to programs to waste water treatment systems – we need to be set up well. Whether there is 50 people in your community or 5,000, there must be solid systems established to run your community. That's what it takes to be known as "organized".

Tools & Tracks:

1. *What systems are running very well in your community?*

2. *What systems should be run differently?*

3. *What could be done better to improve how your community operates?*

e) A Community Ready to Move Forward

Wisdom:

"Talking about goals is good. But taking action on them and doing what you said you would do is even better!"

"Look for the leader in your community... yes, look especially within yourself."

The Story:

Strong communities are positioned in a state of readiness to move forward on their goals. They are proactive and not reactive. What does that mean? Well, reactive is when we wait for the crisis to happen before we spring into action. Proactive is when we take steps to prevent the crisis from happening in the first place. It does not mean that crises won't happen to proactive communities. But a proactive community will be ready to meet the crisis head on and begin addressing whatever the issue may be... (another word for ready is *prepared*).



Tools & Tracks:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how prepared would you say your community is to move ahead in positive directions (with 1 = **not** ready and 10 being **very** ready)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(Find out what the average score is in your group by adding up everyone's score and dividing by the number of participants in the group. For example: 10 people voted and their scores were: 4, 7, 8, 5, 6, 7, 7, 3, 8, 9. Add these numbers up and you get a total of 64. Divide by 10 people = 6.4 – this is the average score).

2. What are some of the reasons why your community is in a good position to move forward?

3. What are some reasons why your community may be stuck and unable to move forward?

f) A Community Guided by Core Values



Wisdom:

"In the old days, everyone helped one another... we supported each other and lifted one another up; never the opposite of this..."

- Elder

The Story:

Thriving communities are guided by core principles and values that build upon the strengths of the community. They recognize that diversity

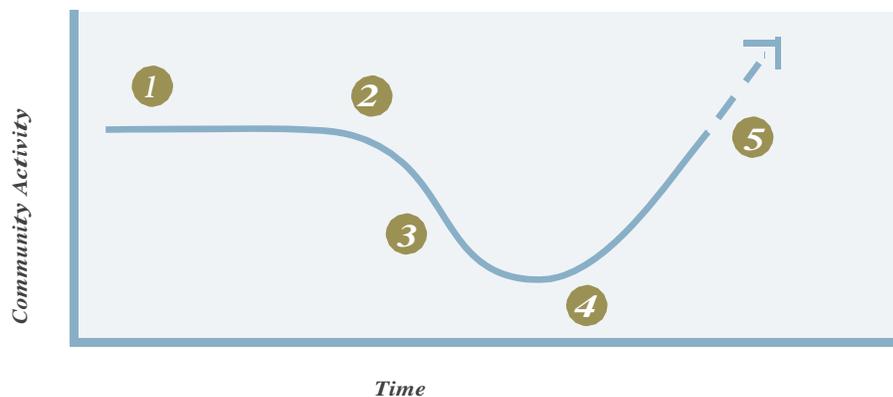
is a good thing. Differences in opinions and a wide variety of ideas are encouraged to inspire the creative spirit within their community.

Here are some additional examples of values and ways of life that guide strong communities:

- Leaders aspire to serve the community before their own interests
- There is honour and respect for local culture and traditional values, teachings, and wisdom
- Great respect for spirituality and differing ways of life i.e., various religions
- There is open and inclusive communication

- Transparency and accountability for all actions is strictly enforced
- Encouragement for sharing of individual gifts and abilities
- High levels of trust is at the root of positive relationships
- Fair policies and administrative practices are consistently utilized
- The dignity of each person is upheld and honoured

Solid principles and values have always been at the heart of Aboriginal communities. Why then are there so many social problems that plague us across the country? These patterns are similar throughout the country as documented by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and countless other studies that have chronicled the stories of our people. Of course, we don't need studies to tell us this is true – we know this from our own experiences. But when we go back into the history of every Aboriginal community in this country and in Indigenous communities in other countries and continents, we see the same pattern. Our communities were once thriving and prosperous and there was a great balance that existed across the land. After contact with Europeans and over time the situation began to reverse - Europeans began to outnumber Aboriginal people and the tides turned. A series of losses began: loss of land, culture, language, self-esteem, purpose, spirituality, and so on. This process took several hundred years from the time of contact to the early 1950's. We have been in various stages of recovery since then. The following graph illustrates a general picture of what took place with dates varying for each community across the country:



Graph of Community Historical Events (General)

The following graph depicts in very broad terms a main trend that has occurred in most Aboriginal communities throughout their history. It is meant as an illustration of the process that communities experienced – each in their own time frames. The essence is the flow of a once healthy and stable community into a period of loss and then we see a rise to greater strength:

1. **Healthy, Strong, and Vibrant** – prior to any significant interaction or involvement with outsiders, each Aboriginal community lived a traditional lifestyle or way of life. Traditional medicines, interaction with nature, trapping, hunting, fishing, harvesting crops or wild game, etc., these were the types of activities. Aboriginal society thrived in balance and harmony.
2. **Contact** – each Aboriginal community gradually encountered outside forces (European settlers, explorers, missionaries, traders, etc.) and there was an interaction and/or exchange of cultures (European / Aboriginal). There was mutual respect and generally good relations developed initially. Eventually, the negative effects followed.
3. **Decline & Loss** – this period involved a gradual and sometimes swift decline in how the community was impacted. Diseases, loss of culture, language, land, spirituality, family structures, and the entire way of life of the community disintegrated over 50 – 100 years

and in some communities over several hundred years. This may have continued on until they hit a definitive low point in the community's journey or "rock bottom".

4. Rock Bottom – some communities reached a point called "rock bottom" – where they had enough destruction and negativity. Not that decimation and destruction stopped completely, but there was a concerted decision or effort on the part of leaders in the community to make change for the better. This is where we begin to see development happen. A path out of the forest of darkness was being forged.

5. Momentum & Return to Strength – as communities realize the healing process is vitally important for their survival, individuals slowly began to return to the principles and values of their ancestors. The community develops its infrastructure (housing, roads, offices, schools, recreation centres, etc.) and embarks on a path to a better future. This is occurring at different rates for each community across the country. Strength may grow in spite of the many difficulties and challenges that persist. Hope may be growing. Faith may be returning. Love may be given once again. And old habits may be diminishing and fading away.

The truly positive and hopeful trend now seen in all Aboriginal communities is a movement back to a state of balance. Each community is experiencing this at a different rate of development: some are moving faster and others slower but all are moving in positive directions. We, of course, will never go back to everything that was once part of our history because we have moved on and have been adopting many new and useful ways of living such as new technologies, tools, education, housing, etc. But there is also a return to the principles and values that once guided our every move. That is what is meant by going back. Not regressing into deterioration and decay but back to the proud state of independence and inter-dependence we used to have with other communities and organizations. And that is what the Elders mean when they say, "we need to go back!"

Tools & Tracks:

1. *What are some of the main values that guide your community?*

2. *What positive things is your community well known for, e.g., hospitality, strong leadership, artists, recreation programs, festivals, business development, etc.?*

3. *If there were one thing you could change in your community, what would it be?*

3. Upper Right Limb:

Taking a Look & Determining Where the Community is At

a) Community History:

Wisdom:

"It is important to have knowledge of our community history, acknowledge the effects of colonization and residential schools, but be ready to move forward - otherwise these things become road blocks..."

"When we begin to understand our history, that is when I see change happening..."

- Elder

The Story:

The quotes above are very significant for two reasons. Firstly, it is important to know our community history, and once we acknowledge this past we may be in a better position to see where we need to go in the future. Secondly, it is very important that we do not get stuck on the negative experiences, as we may start to spin our wheels in the blaming game.

Remembering those very positive parts of our history can help us to move in a positive direction. It is also important to learn from our mistakes; so that they will not be repeated. Some communities have collected old photographs that tell stories of their history and had them blown up and made into posters. Others have translated and written these into short stories, books or videos. How your community celebrates your history is up to you, and it can also be an opportunity to begin the path to creating a vision of the future.

Here are some examples of activities that can help you capture the past.



Tools and Tracks:

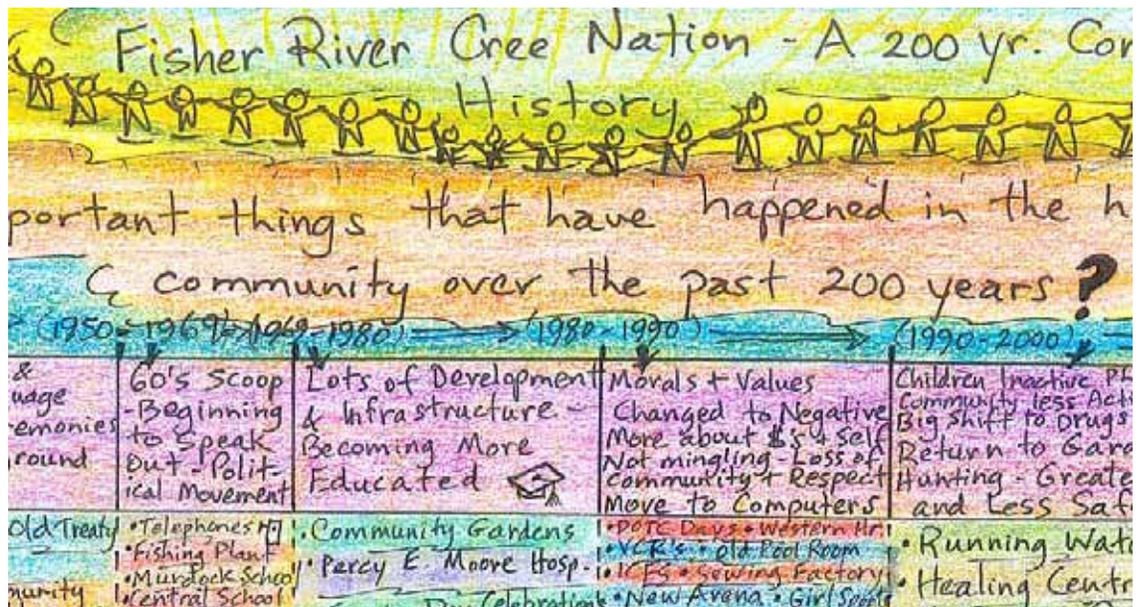
Creating a Picture History

1. **For a Picture History**, you may want to begin by starting with your own family photographs and searching for those that tell a story. Create a collage of these family photos on a large poster or flip chart paper, with short captions that tell the story in the photo. For example, you may find a photograph with a child bundled in a traditional way – your caption may read:
“My cousin Rachel in a handmade moss bag”
2. **Organize a Contest** at the school and challenge the children to create a family history by using old family photographs. Compile all of these into a community photographic poster history and display in a community gathering place.
3. **Draw your history**. You may want to find someone who is good at drawing or a local artist to assist with this activity. The important thing to remember about this activity is that you are not looking for long stories, but “snapshots” of the past. Let your group know that you would like them to describe images from the past in one or two words. One example can be: “we lived in the longhouse”. The artist can then draw the longhouse and move on to the next idea. Make it fun. The following will help you to prepare for this activity:
 - Find space – whether it’s at the community or band hall, school or health centre or other community centre.
 - Ask your co-workers, friends, or family to help identify some key individuals who may have knowledge of your community’s past.
 - Gather the following supplies: markers, flip chart paper and perhaps a digital camera to photograph drawings.
 - Set a date, and invite the individuals you had identified. Food is always a good incentive.
 - Paste a few blank flip chart sheets on the wall to begin.
 - Explain the purpose of the exercise (see above).
 - Start with some basic questions, and use your imagination to draw an image of all of these ideas on to the poster paper. String together as much paper as you need.
 - Start with some basic questions you may want to explore:
 - What was the most important feature of our community? For example, the family, the tipi, the hunt, etc.
 - Were we a matriarchal (families attached to the mothers side) or patriarchal (father’s side) society?
 - How did we decide who became our leaders? (Inherited or elected?)
 - How was your community organized (clans, kinships, tribes)?
 - What stories have been told about creation, our dwellings, transportation, hunting, the way we cared for our babies, and our children?
 - You may think about some of your own questions to generate ideas.
 - Present and display the poster proudly in a public place. You may want to laminate the picture or take a photograph of it as part of your journey.
4. As a separate activity, use **this Focus Question to run a Historical Scan workshop**:
“What are all the important moments, memories, and events that have shaped our community over the last 200 years?”

Or you can change this question to look at a shorter period of time – 50 years, 100 years, etc. This is a very powerful exercise because once the people see their history you can take the next step by asking, “where were the major shifts of change that happened in our history?” Mark these points down. The period of time between each of these points can be given a title to hold it – much like a chapter of a book. To see the trends over time that occurred in your community’s history can be a real eye-opener to understanding why your community is where it is today. A graphic representation of this community history can be redrawn in a placemat sized document in full color by one of your local artists and displayed or handed out to community members.

5. **Develop a blueprint for recovering from the past in order to embrace the future. Answer this focus question with your group:**

What are all the actions we can take in our community to support the healing process?



The illustration above shows how one community had their history captured in a graphic image. Local artists in your community may be able to do something similar. (Courtesy of the Fisher River Cree Nation Education Authority - © 2009) View full image at: <http://www.littleblackbear.ca/dl/fisherrivercreenation.jpg>

b) Finding our Gifts, Strengths & Opportunities:

Wisdom:

"Communities can begin by working toward change...and by taking a resource development approach and building on the resources in the community."

- Participant

The Story:

Well, how do we find these gifts, strengths & opportunities? You may have heard other terms such as “Community Needs Assessment” or “Community Collaborative Assessment”. Some of these assessment projects can be quite lengthy, costly and take some time to do. Often, these assessment processes are looking for the “gaps” or looking for what is missing or deficient in your community. More often than not, the community already knows what they need and have been talking about it for some time.

We have heard our community members speak in our homes, community meetings and gatherings. We have heard people in the community say, “if only we had this or that” or “we really need this or that”...that kind of discussion. Your community may have already undertaken a formal needs assessment or they may have decided that they do not want to start from a list of community deficits. The tools highlighted in this section take on a different approach and encourage you to find the gifts, strengths and opportunities for growth from a more positive perspective. Sometimes finding these strengths is exactly what you need to launch you on your way toward building a stronger future for your community!

There is not one definition for what is considered a gift or strength. They are what your community defines them as. A gift may simply be that you have someone in your community with the ability to speak publicly, or the ability to write proposals, or it could be a resource such as an early childhood development program. Organizing one of the activities below may assist you in defining and identifying what and where they are. The opportunities can be limitless, but it also has to be realistic.

If your community should decide that they would like a more in-depth needs assessment, you may want to look to the end of this guide to find some links to some really good information on Community Assessments. Taking the time to put your “ear to the ground” and to listen to the community voice is really a good place to start, but there are also tools that may help you do a more formal assessment. If you really want to begin with a strength-based approach, then choose an activity from Tools and Tracks.

Tools and Tracks:

Simple Community Strengths and Opportunities Exercise

There are several techniques you can use to gather information on your community's strengths, gifts and opportunities; these are only a few examples.

Goals:

- To get to know the strengths, assets and opportunities for growth within your community
- To share an appreciation for the value of these strengths, when you know what you have
- To appreciate what you may need to help you reach your community goals.

Facilitator recommended: Yes

Time Required: Approximately 1-2 hours

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: 20

Essential tools: felt markers, pieces of paper or index cards, flip chart, poster paper or white board.

Here's How:

1. Organize a gathering of community members who have knowledge of community resources, or simply those members you want to engage in the change process – youth, young families, Elders, health centre workers, band staff etc. You may want to coordinate this activity with another event occurring in the community.

2. Begin by explaining the purpose of the activity – “*Finding our Community Strengths*” and refer to “The Story” section of this module. Explain as well how this activity can fit into the overall objective of strengthening your community and getting the community ready for positive change – and to expect that this is just one activity in a series of exercises moving in a positive direction.
3. Take five minutes and ask each participant to create a list of the top ten most important ***strengths*** of your community from their own perspective. Ask them to write one idea per slip of paper or index card (5” x 7” in size). For those who do not read or write English, pair them up with someone who can (or simply ask them to shout them out at the end of the five minutes when you regroup). Emphasize that these strengths can be specific individuals that they may know, or they may be a program or resource in the community. Examples may be “our language” or “our culture”. Encourage participation, especially from the shy ones afraid to tell you about their own strengths! That’s why the cards are so effective; because if someone does not want to talk out loud about their strengths, they can always put it down anonymously on a card and hand it to the facilitator.
4. Then, call the group back together (re-group) and ask each person to list their top ten strengths or resources. As they read them, you or the facilitator records them on the white board or flip chart where everyone can see them. Don’t write down duplicates but put a check mark beside the idea if it is an exact duplicate. If it is closely related but worded different, keep the card and avoid throwing someone’s idea out.
5. When all the strengths have been listed, and duplicates identified, repeat the round again – or simply have the larger group shout out their ideas until all the ideas have been exhausted. You may be pleasantly surprised how much strengths are right in your community.
6. Repeat this exercise for ***Opportunities***. Have the group list the 10 answers for the following question: “Where do we have the most opportunity to change our community for the better?” or “Where are our opportunities for growth?” Explain that an opportunity is all of those areas that are within your community’s power to change, and those that you may need help with. Remind the group that to use only a few words to describe their ideas such as we have an opportunity to “teach our language to our young”, “improve school attendance”, “clean our community garbage dump” “clean our yards”, or “create more employment”, etc.
7. Compile a list, or have the facilitator draw a simple graphic image of those representing the top ten, using color coded markers, but list all ideas! Celebrate by creating two posters of this group, one for “Strengths” and one for “Opportunities” date it and display in a visible location. Create a smaller version for your own files, or translate into a word document.
8. Repeat this exercise with as many different groups and participants as possible – remember the goal is to engage as many community members as possible.

c) Discovering How Community Systems Work



Wisdom:

"In order for communities to move forward, we have to understand how things work, understand how the government works.

If we have a better understanding of how things work, and how the government works, then we can use this information to our advantage."

"We have to go through a change, for example the band council process. Once they get into office, its been known for some of them to act like dictators. It should be the other way around. We should be the ones to tell them what to do. If ever we are to move toward self government - this system has to change."

- Elder

The Story:

Just as important as knowing what your own community strengths, resources, assets and opportunities are, is knowing how things presently work, operate and relate to each other both at the local level and beyond. This is not about the relationships at this point, but more about furthering your understanding of the community and those "processes" that affect your community and looking for those opportunities for improvement. This may involve a period of educating yourself first, discovering how funding rolls out, understanding how programs develop and operate or just how governments presently work. (Note: Government officials in Ottawa can take a course titled, "How Ottawa Works". Seek out this program and see if it can be adapted for Aboriginal communities). Or you may decide that you may undertake the learning experience along with the members of your community. There are a few ways that you can do this. Arranging presentations, facilitating discussions or workshops that utilize the collective knowledge of key individuals in your community are some examples. Inviting key agencies, organizations or government to come to an information sharing workshop are other examples. Whatever you decide ,the following are some simple tips.

One very good piece of information to know is how a Contribution Agreement works, from the community level, to the regional level and all the way to the national level. If you are arranging a programs and services workshop, this may be something you want to consider, especially if your audience are individuals who work within programs and services within your community.

Tools and Tracks:

Community Awareness Workshop

Goals:

- Get to know the programs and processes within your community
- Get to know how programs and services are funded and interact
- Gain and appreciate where there may be opportunities to link, make process improvements or create opportunities to help you get to your goals

Here's How:

Facilitator Required: Yes

Time Required: 1-2 Hours

1. Arrange for a community gathering and invite community workers and/or in conjunction with government representatives to present on their programs or services. Suggested topics include: a) description of program/services, b) goals and objectives of programs/services, c) major activities, d) source of funding, and; e) common linkages internal and external to the community.
2. Include a question and answer period after the presentations.
3. Have presenters provide you with their presentation materials beforehand, so that you could create a small fun questionnaire for participants to complete at the end of the presentations.
4. Have participant's complete a questionnaire on information they may have heard during the presentation and have a draw for a door prize at the end!
5. If you do not have the resources to organize this event, link with another gathering that may already be taking place in your community.
6. Be sure to invite a government official, or community member who has knowledge of how programs and services are funded and organized at the regional level. There is also information that you can find on the Internet on how a Contribution Agreement works. See <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/finance/agree-accord/index-eng.php> and http://hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/_contribution/agreement_accord/index-eng.php
7. This is a tool often used in business to figure out how something works, but it can also be useful in figuring out how other processes work. It involves mapping those activities that define exactly what an organization or entity does, who is responsible, to what standard a process should be completed and how the success of a service can be improved. This activity often involves the use of an experienced facilitator, but may also be simplified to a few steps outlined below.

Process Mapping Exercise

Facilitator Required: Yes

Goals: As above in Community Awareness Workshop

Time Required: 1-2 hours; Essential tools: felt markers, pieces of paper or index cards, flip chart, poster paper or white board.

Here's How:

Step 1: Organize a gathering of community members who have knowledge of community process.

Step 2: Determine the beginning and the end of the program, work process or funding agreement

- Where does the work/process begin?
- Where does the work/process end? (usually at the point of service)

Step 3: List the Steps or tasks involved

- Use an action word to describe all the tasks involved in carrying out the work.
- Include those tasks that only are currently done.
- Write each of these tasks on a square or rectangle index card or post-it note.

Step 4: Order the Steps

- Order the post-it notes or index cards from top to bottom in order from beginning to end.
- Do not draw arrows until later.

Step 5: Draw Appropriate Symbols for each task, decision point or process.

- Start with the basic symbols and write all tasks, decisions point or process on the appropriate symbol:
- Ovals show where things start (input) or the output at the end of the process.
- Boxes or rectangles show tasks or activity performed in the process.
- Arrows show which direction the work flows.
- Diamonds show points in the process where yes/no questions are asked or a decision is needed. (For example, client eligible for services – yes or no?)
- A slanted rectangle shows process not specifically tied to a task (e.g., Client on wait list)
- Usually there is only one arrow out of an activity box, but sometimes you may need an arrow that decision diamond that shows flow in three other directions.

Step 6: Complete the Model

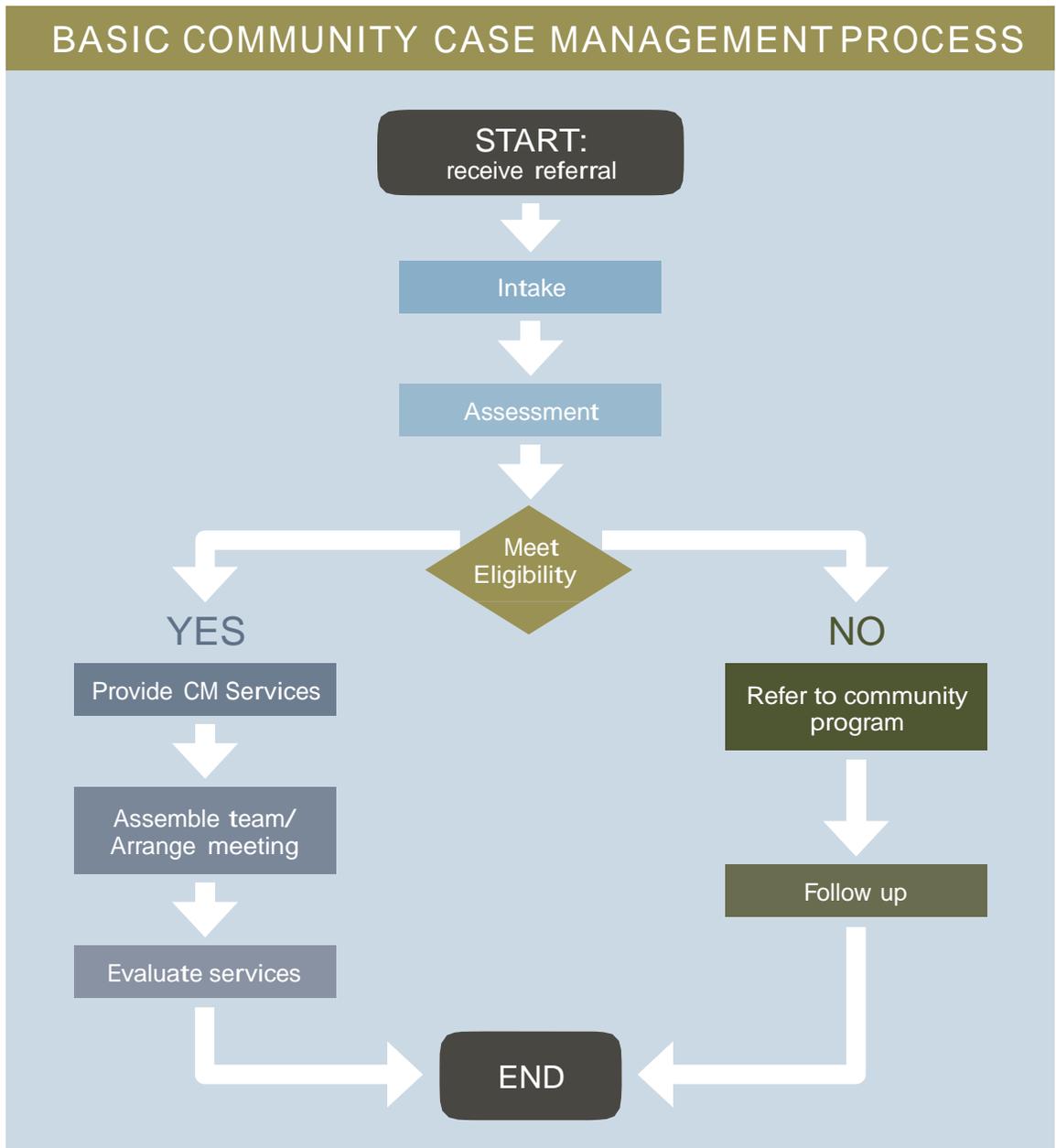
- Assemble all the symbols with the labels written on them in order of how the work flows.
- Order from top to bottom
- Place arrows in between tasks, decisions and process to show the direction of the flow of the work.
- Check for completeness and validate with the group that this is the way it is done. (Include any important information that will describe who is responsible, by title or where the task is performed)

Step 7: Review the Map

- Have the group look at the flowchart.
- Ask if this is the way that work is occurring, or is it the way it should be?
- If it is the way it should be, where has it drifted, and have a discussion on how to get back?

- If it is the way it is now, can the group find where tasks are overlapping and where we can make some improvements?
- Compile a list of recommendations to make system improvements, and who would potentially be responsible.

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: 20



d) Creating an Inventory of Resources

Wisdom:

"There is a process of mapping the resources in the community, we begin by looking at the wealth of resources in our community. This exercise is visual. But when you see it graphed out, it is a very valuable tool."

The Story:

This section involves a very simple task of taking the visual drawing, maps or charts that were from the Community Strengths and asks you to take it one step further and creates an inventory of resources, gifts and strengths that considers the potential benefit for each of these. You may have initially completed the section on finding our gifts and strengths, and created a visual of this that is now on display. It is not enough to know what they are, but is it also important that these individuals, resources or programs feel they are acknowledged and will be included in the journey to a better future. It is important that this exercise is one that defines all the possibilities for the resources, but there are other activities in the other legs of the turtle to help you get there. This exercise simply asks you to outline all the potential roles that you can reference further into the process. You may choose to jump right into this exercise as soon as you have completed the Finding our Gifts, Strengths and Opportunities exercise.

Tools and Tracks:

Working Group to Create the Gifts and Strengths Inventory

Goals:

- Get to know how the gifts, strengths and resources may be helpful later in the journey
- Get to know who the key individuals are that are attached to these resources

Facilitator recommended: No

Time required: 2-3 hours

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools: Space for meeting, recorder and transcribe information electronically.

Arrange for a meeting and invite community helpers to review the maps, charts or diagrams that had been developed and or on display.

Compile a list of the top ten strengths, gifts or resources that were listed, or drawn.

Compile a comprehensive list for all the other gifts.

Create a chart from the list with the following columns

- Strengths/Gifts/Resources
- Key individual/organization or job title
- Potential role in change process – e.g., Speaking, writing, advocating, money, space, organizing.
- Create a file for future reference.

4. The Lower Right Limb: Creating the Environment for Change

a) Building Trust, Positive Relationships & Partnerships

Wisdom:

"We need to start by building trust..."

"We don't have control over the money from Ottawa. But here in our region, we may have control of where the money goes, and to whom. We have learned how to influence and make change within government departments starting with our own staff of which 85% are Aboriginal. We have to have Aboriginal champions within government too..."

"If you want good business, then you need good relationships. Bad relationships = bad business..."

The Story:

In historic times, our communities were healthy, strong, and teeming with life. We knew how to relate to one another and how to deal with conflict. We had incredible trust in one another. Our very lives and survival depended upon it. The thought of speaking falsely (lying) was simply unthinkable. Over thousands of years, we had cultivated ways of relating to one another, between families, and between communities that fostered positive relations. Even in times of war or conflict between tribes or nations, we had a way of dealing with one another in "a good way" in order to settle the crisis.

With the disruption of our way of life and after generations of loss, we lost our way and forgot how to relate to each other (generally speaking). Anger, bitterness, resentments, frustrations, and a whole array of negative ways of living crept into the core of our communal lives. Add alcohol, drugs, gangs, and corruption to the mix and you've got a recipe for disaster. No wonder our youth have been numbed to the point of suicide and self-destruction. But now is not the time for pointing any fingers at anyone to continue the "blame game". Now is the time to rise up and to take back control of our communities.

It all starts with one person at a time taking responsibility for their own lives, getting on a path of healing, or leading if you've done some healing. We are in the situation where the more healed need to help the less healed. It's a big risk to deal with one's pains and hurts, but it's one we need to take. It takes vision to see the day when your community lifts out of all the negativity and moves into the positive. It takes courage to begin that journey. It takes struggle to become healthy again in mind, body, and spirit. Yet, this is precisely what needs to happen for us to develop positive and healthy relationships. Many Aboriginal communities have done exactly this and they are well on their way to becoming stable and able to thrive once again. In spite of setbacks that do occur from time to time, for instance, suicide, Aboriginal communities are picking up after the crisis and moving on. In fact, we are a very resilient people in this country. In spite of the hardships, difficulties, injustices, and challenges of every kind that we have experienced on our homeland, we continue as survivors and victors. We have an indomitable spirit (strong and determined).

The Elders speak of returning to our "old ways". Many recognize the wisdom in this saying. We realize that it is not that we have to go back to living in tipis or little shelters. No, the return to the old ways has to do with a change of heart and mind. It means a change back to the principles and teachings of caring, sharing, honesty, and kindness and so on. This is what the Elders mean when they talk about getting back to the old ways. When we can begin to live in this way again, we can be sure that positive relationships will be the result. Then will there be trust in one another...and forgiveness when we fail one another.

When we have good relationships amongst ourselves we are able to also extend this to our non-Aboriginal brothers and sisters from other nations and communities. In today's diverse world, it is essential that we build partnerships with people that reside outside our communities. It is a difficult path, but many Aboriginal communities are taking it and becoming successful in acquiring the resources they need through partnerships with governments, agencies, businesses, and a whole range of organizations. Sometimes we see how difficult it is to forge trustful relationships with others because of all the terrible things that have happened in the past. It's hard to put that aside and work for unity or a working relationship. But for the most part, if we want to develop businesses and working relationships to increase our own capacities and wealth, then it is imperative to commit to establishing positive relationships both within and outside our communities.

To begin creating better relationships in our communities, it's important for us to *Create Safety* in the community so that ideas are accepted and respected. We must abandon any belittling of one another or intimidation. Change has to be promoted and development encouraged every single day. For the moment you let up on the "throttle", you begin to go in the opposite direction. Swimming against the current isn't easy, but it's something we need to do to effect any significant change.

A return to the natural laws that governed our Aboriginal people is a shift in the right direction. Our grandmothers and grandfathers remember well how their parents lived. Sure there were hardships in their time but today's youth are experiencing even more complex problems and difficulties that many of our Elders never dreamed could happen.

Communities need to commit to building and fostering positive relationships both inside and outside their community. It may be a daunting task, but it can and is being done every day throughout the country. It all starts with a bit of awareness and a willingness to understand. To seek to understand before being understood. The art of communication is based on this premise. Again, it also starts with a decision to trust and to venture onto the path of discovery as we relate to others. One community that we are aware of had the great difficulty of getting

past generations of mistrust and family feuds that spanned a hundred years. People in their community even forgot why they feuded with other families. In a community gathering where there was great struggle over creating any kind of unity one person fell to their knees and cried out, “Creator, forgive me and I forgive them!” Instantly, every one in the community recognized that this was their own heart’s cry and each person began to cry out the same prayer. Within seconds, like a domino effect, people were embracing and crying as they felt a great peace and a freedom of heart that they had longed desired for generations. There was a flood of forgiveness and unity sprang from this well where grief and disharmony once reigned.

So, it is possible for things to change in the blink of an eye. But it requires taking that leap of faith into the unknown. But you can do it! And we know that many of you have already been doing it! “Keep going,” says our Elders. “Don’t ever, never, ever give up!”

Tools & Tracks

Here are some key thoughts to keep in mind as you work to build healthier relationships in your family, your community, and in your work environment within the community

1. ***Listen & Learn:*** You were given two ears to hear and one mouth to speak with...our Elders suggest we listen twice as much as we speak. We know in our communities that anyone who speaks of themselves (bragging) is frowned upon. When you listen and express genuine interest in hearing what others are saying, you are appreciated. Leave your ego at the door or give it the old boot altogether. Time to listen carefully to what others are saying. Be aware of how much you say “I” whenever you talk. Try using “we” more often...“Silence is wisdom” and sometimes the wise path is the silent one. If you listen, you will learn.
2. ***Promote Harmony and Peace:*** There is nothing that disrupts harmony and peace more than to insist you are right and others got it all wrong. We have learned to become addicted to being right. Here’s a question to think about: what is more important: being right or maintaining harmony in your community? Many of our problems in relationships happen because we hold on to our pride and want to be proven right. We need to get the last word in on the conversation or the argument. Healthy relationships always consider others before ourselves and don’t usually care about winning the argument. Remember whoever does the most talking is usually wrong.
3. ***Avoid Gossip:*** Try to avoid gossip like it was the most dreaded disease on earth. It is in many communities where back-biting, criticism, negativity, and bad relationships are commonplace. Be a real leader and absolutely make it your one goal to completely eliminate and refuse to participate in gossip. The old saying holds true, “if you don’t have anything good to say, then don’t say anything at all...”. Think about it: we don’t trust anyone that gossips...and that includes ourselves.
4. ***Forgive others:*** It’s true that if you want a healthy relationship, then at some point in time you will need to forgive others for their faults. You will also need your own faults to be forgiven. That’s enough to remember to keep from holding back your forgiveness. Forgive and you’ll be forgiven. Yes, forgive much and forgive often.
5. ***The Right Heart:*** People know when you are sincere or when you are not. So be sincere in all that you do. Keep the “right heart” about you. Do things for others because you wish to do them and not because you are hoping to get something in return. Instead of thinking : “I wonder what I can get out of this?” Try, “I wonder what I can give in this situation?” Your kindness and concern for the well-being of your community and its members will not go unnoticed if your heart is in the right place.

6. **Unity:** When you feel part of a community and there is a coming together, there is a spirit of unity. Everyone feels good about that unity. Think of a community gathering where everyone was smiling (pow-wow, wedding, round dance, etc.), the sense of unity was powerful. To promote that unity and oneness requires guarding your mouth and words you speak. A gentle word brings peace while sharp or cutting words repel. A good relationship - where unity lives - drives away all negativity such as jealousy, envy, bitterness, and insecurities of every kind.
7. **Laugh a lot:** This is not so difficult in many of our communities. It's amazing that we, as Aboriginal people, have had extremely hard times and yet we can laugh so heartily. This is particularly true when we speak our own language. It's good medicine to laugh and smile a lot. It's contagious. It doesn't mean we have to wear a fake smile around either. If you want to be serious, then be serious about laughing and smiling – it's the antidote to stress.
8. **Commit to relationship building:** Be truly committed to always building healthy relationships. That doesn't mean there will be no conflict just because you want good relationships. But we need to keep it all in perspective. Analyzing this and over analyzing that is not necessary most times. It's the little things we do that add up. Mother Teresa once said, "I'd rather do little things with much love than grand things without love..." We are all human – and we all make mistakes. Make it a silent conspiracy in your community to overlook the mistakes of others. Build and lift others up – never put down or crush. After all, we are all relatives and part of the human family.

b) Team Building/Working Collaboratively



Wisdom

"The way government funding works: it separates us. We have to get many people involved, and we all have to work together - justice, health and so on."

"When we built a house, everyone came together and shared. Everyone had something to do... my grandmother's house was built in two days. We included

everyone. When we played baseball, the old ones were on the same team as the young. We are starting to do this again in our own community."

- Participant

The Story:

Team building is often a term that is used to describe an activity or series of activities that aims to help a group of people work more effectively together. Team building exercises can be applied in any setting whether you are a small program with few employees or large organization with several programs and hundreds of staff members. Team building activities have been practiced by team sport organizations for many years. There are countless

number of books written on the subject, facilitators that specialize in team building and thousands of exercises out there that can be accomplished in 30 minutes and all way up to 3-4 days in team building retreats!

There are many reasons to talk about team building. Human beings seem to be the ones that need to think and work at it. We can learn a lot about working as a team by observing a colony of bees or ants. In a beehive, we have the queen bee, worker bee, and bees that do other tasks. Bees live in hives with clear organization and roles. The queen is responsible for laying eggs, the male drones fertilize the eggs, and the workers gather food to take care of the hive. The tasks and roles of the bees do not always stay the same; the workers change their duties as they get older. They begin their journey by feeding the larvae; later on they keep the hive cool by fanning it with their wings; they later on become the cleaners of the hive and when they mature, they leave on food-collecting expeditions. One bee on its own does nothing spectacular, but the whole colony working together produces wonderful sweet honey. They are also doing their part by beautifying nature as they pollinate plants and flowers and keeping the cycle of life going. Each has their own particular role, and when all work together they accomplish great things!

The value of building stronger teams in our communities can never be underscored. Just as a colony of bees work collaboratively for the good of the hive, working effectively as a team can help your community work toward realizing your common vision and goals for a better future. There are many workshops that most often involve the use of a skilled facilitator, but there are also a few short exercises that simply demonstrate the benefits of working as a team. Your community members are the best ones to decide what is needed.

Goals:

Some of the benefits of team building are:

- Break down silos
- Create a collaborative team
- Use clan system
- Get rid of egos and power struggles
- Create a level playing field – stop challenging one another negatively
- Make a conscious effort not to keep tabs or score of who does what – focus on the goal instead
- Everyone needs to see their place in the process and feel included
- We need diversity of opinions and ideas not just a one-track process

Tools and Tracks:

Let's Build Something New

The following exercise demonstrates the benefits the benefits of working more effectively as a team.

- Apply learning into real work or community environment
- Foster cooperation and inclusiveness among team members
- Sort out and clearly define roles & responsibilities
- Demonstrate the importance of being more effective working together as a team.

Facilitator recommended: no

Time required: 1-2 Hours

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: 20

Essential tools: Paper, scissors, masking tape, cardboard paper, glue, old magazines with pictures of nature (National Geographic is a good one to use)

Here's How:

1. Plan a gathering of community members or those whom you have identified as a possible member of the core group.
2. Place scissors, colour paper, cardboard and masking tape and magazines at each table.
3. Divide each group up into smaller groups of four.
4. Next, have the group choose what they will invent and build together. Encourage them to be as adventurous as possible.
5. Instructions for group: have a discussion at the table and assign a role for each person; choose a role from the following list.
 - The engineer/planner
 - The builder
 - The painter/designer
 - The salesman
6. Now, instruct each member of the group to choose their role and their tools on the table. Take 15 -20 minutes for them to build the most beautiful and creative item they can think of.
7. Bring the group back together and have the salesman name and present the item to the rest of the groups. Have each group explain the importance of their creations and why they are so marvellous.

c) Listening to the Voice of the Community

Wisdom:

"Start small and actively involve people in the process - they have to be part of it, have a voice in it, and believe in it..."

– Participant

"Share information, not just with a few people, but with everyone. Hear the peoples' voice, including the youth..."

– Participant



The Story:

This topic fits well in the Lower Right Limb (Chapter 4) in assessing where your community is at; but it is just as equally important at this point to listen to what your community wants for its future. There is not one activity that we can suggest that captures the “essence” of listening, but putting your ear to the ground, paying close attention and listening to the community is a practice that must be filtered throughout all phases and stages of community development. This can result in building stronger relationships, or even begin to heal relationships and hurts of the past. When we truly listen to people (no matter how different their opinions are from ours), we build rapport, increase mutual understanding and even motivate individuals and groups to take positive action on issues that are important or even difficult for our community.

Listening to the voice of the community can take place in a number of ways. It can be done by one on one interviews with community members or it can take place in a group setting. One on one interviews are very useful when you want to reach those individuals that may not come out to organized groups. One on one interviews are great also because they send a message that all ideas are valued. However 1:1 interviews take more time. Groups are more effective for gathering a lot of information in a shorter period of time.

There are terms that describe good listening skills such as “active” listening; or facilitation tools that you can use that will increase the likelihood that a group of people will listen to one another in a way that fosters understanding and empathy. These “facilitation tools” have been long practiced by indigenous cultures: we have used sharing circles, sharing lodges, and many other forms of listening in the past. Modern facilitators often refer to what we already knew and had been practicing for centuries as “facilitated discussion” or “facilitated dialogue”, techniques they have learned bring out deep levels of reflection and sharing.

It is important that if you are going to conduct one on one interviews, sharing circles, “facilitated discussion” or “facilitated dialogue” that there are some basic skills that you can learn. It is also important that there are some ground rules in place, so that participants feel safe to share their ideas without fear of being judged or criticized. When they feel comfortable in this way many different ideas, beliefs and solutions can arise. There are basic rules in a group setting that specify: a) respect for everyone’s opinion b) length of time to speak, c) confidentiality or you can create your own rules, based on your own community’s culture. Laying down some ground rules will create an environment where participants feel safe and their opinions are valued as well. Conducting groups will be covered in another section; here we will cover the basics of conducting interviews as a means of listening.

Tools and Tracks:

Conducting 1:1 Interviews

Goals:

- To gather ideas from those individuals who generally do not participate in group meetings or gatherings
- To increase our level of understanding of a broader range of community members, rather than those who are more outspoken
- To send a message to community members that their opinions are valued, thus building trust and credibility for your cause

Facilitator recommended: No

Time required: 1-2 hours per interview

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools: Note paper, pen or tape recorder device, if acceptable by community.

Here's How:

1. **Create the introductory story.** Interviewers should thoroughly explain why it is that the interview is being done. The purpose of the interviews must be made very clear, and the participant must be assured that their opinion is of value and their confidentiality will be respected. So the first step is coming up with an introductory message. Most often this can be done in a few sentences. *For example: Hi, my name is _____ and I am hoping to speak to you about something that is very important for our community (name what it is and be specific, for example "Building a better future for our community"). It is important that we hear from you, because we value every member of our community and we are looking for everyone's ideas. Everything that you say to me will be kept confidential, only your ideas will be put together in a summary form. Nobody will be identified by name.* If you will be taking notes, or tape recording, include a sentence on this once they have agreed to do the interview. For example, you can say *I will be taking notes, or tape recording our talk, is that OK?* You can explain that the tape recorder is useful, because you can make the notes later from the recording and you can listen better if you are not taking notes. If they do not want to be recorded, then explain that it is OK also and you will take notes instead.
2. **Design questions.** You can come up with these on your own, or you can enlist the help of a few coworkers. There is usually one main question that you want to ask and other subsets that will help you get the information that you need. Ask open ended questions such as: What are some of our community's strengths? What are your ideas about what needs to happen in our community to be healthy again? Imagine a better future for our community, what does that look like to you? What kind of community do you want for your children/grandchildren? Prepare a list of about 10 -12 questions.
3. **Test questions.** Select one or two individuals who you can test the questions out on. Practice reading the introduction. Once they have agreed to do the interview; you should also ask if they agree to how you will record the interview. Ask questions slowly, read clearly and allow the participant time to think about answers. Do not interrupt their answers. Nod your head to show you understand the answer even if you do not agree. Avoid giving your own opinion. Ask questions one at a time. You will know if the question is not clear if you have to ask it again and explain better.
4. **Clarify introduction and questions.** You should have a pretty good idea after the test interview if these are clear. Reword or tweak the introduction or questions if need be.
5. **Go forward and interview.** Keep a record of your interviews, in some systematic way. Create files on paper or computer. Ensure that this information is protected in a locked drawer, cabinet or by password on your computer and no one else has access to it.
6. **Summarize.** When you have completed the interviews take time to read your notes or listen to the interviews. Often if you are the one interviewing the themes sort of jump forward even before you reach this stage. Themes are often those ideas that

keep coming up. If you are reading your notes, use a highlighter to outline these. If you are listening to the interview, stop the recorder and take notes. Sometimes ideas are unique also, and those are important as well. Create a table of these themes. Create a section for those ideas that are unique also. Compile a short report of these themes that you can share with the community.

7. **Share and validate results.** This is an important step. Share these ideas with your leaders in a newsletter or in some public way so that the community feels that their information is valued and will be of use.

d) Creating a Core Group of Committed Individuals

Wisdom

"It is a lot like building a house. Everyone came together. Everyone had something to do, the women did the cooking; men did the building, the children played. Everyone came together and contributed..."

- Elder

The Story:

Creating a core group of community champions is an important step in mobilizing the community and it becomes even more important to keep the momentum going once things begin to move. This core group can have many roles, but most commonly they provide leadership, advocate for policy change; seek out resources or make decisions on what activities to undertake. They may take an active role in recruiting others to get involved. This core group can often share their ideas and experiences and offer their own gifts to the benefit of the group. One person can try to do it all themselves or you can pool everyone's strengths to form a strong group of committed individuals. If you have a strong group working together, you are less likely to experience burn out. If one should drop out, it is less likely to affect the functioning of the entire group. Think of it as a hockey team; you have goalies who mind the net, forwards who try to score on the other team, defensemen who help keep the puck out of their own end; coaches who provide the skill development and strategize for the game; team captains to help provide leadership and encouragement to the team; all of which are needed for the sake of the team. However, if one individual is ill, the game does not come to a standstill. It goes on!

This is not about the technique, but more about how we can get all the people together whom you believe may be able to help your community begin the journey toward positive change and how you might convince them to be part of the core group. Some community members may not need any convincing, or this core group may arise spontaneously. If this is the case, you are well on your way to forming your core group. If you need some help to get this going, then Tools and Tracks can provide you with some helpful hints.



Tools and Tracks:

Snowballing – Finding members for Core Team of Committed Individuals.

Goals:

- Find and build a strong core group by pooling skills, experiences and strengths of the community.
- Provide leadership in the journey on to community change, growth and development.
- Maximize use of human resources in community; reduce burden on individual effort

Facilitator recommended: No

Time required: N/A

Here's How:

- Revisit the list you created in the “Finding your Community Strengths”, as a place to start. If there were individual names on the list – add to your list of potential members for the core group.
- Consult co-workers to help you list all other potential members that come to mind, ask colleagues to name those who would benefit the group. Name the strengths of these individuals as well.
- Don't limit yourself, gather as many names as you can.
- Approach each individual that was named, explain the purpose and potential role of the Core Group of Committed Individuals and ask if they would be interested in attending an information session. Ask them also to name another individual or two who they might think of.
- Once you have a list of potential members, you are well on your way to organizing your first meeting.

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools: Pen, paper or computer, your brain power.

e) Planning the First Meeting (Of Potential members for the Team of Committed Individuals)

Wisdom:

"We need community champions, I agree, but we need to bring together more people. The more the better; and we need to give them incentives - some food, offer a meal and then get them talking..."

- Participant

The Story:

This section is a pivotal point – getting everyone together for the first time, selecting core members, and forming your Core Group. Other sections will talk about different roles and responsibilities such as setting priorities, assigning tasks and managing meetings,

so please consult these sections if need be. This story here is primarily about making an impression, being clear about why it is that you are meeting and yes...about hooks and incentives to get people out. The wisdom shared above is not just about eating for the sake of eating or nourishing our bodies; it is really about the “sharing” part of a meal. Sharing a meal together is how business was conducted in the past, how we gave thanks for what we had; it was about celebrating the hunt, harvest or other significant events. Preparing the feast and sharing food is about building community as well. This is a very good way to approach this initial meeting – as a celebration toward a better future.

Many people do not respond to invitations to attend a meeting, but they certainly respond differently to a celebration or a feast. People will often get excited about an event that is taking place if there is a lot of build up to the event or if it is presented in a positive way and if there are incentives for being part of it. Promote it as a gathering of brilliant minds, a celebration of a new future. Have a huge potluck, or find a local business to sponsor a low-cost nutritious meal.

Tools and Tracks:

Planning your first meeting for potential members for a Core Team of Committed Individuals”

Goals:

- Create a positive environment for your initial meeting
- Create excitement about mobilizing the community to build a stronger future
- Increase likelihood that you will get the numbers you hoped for your core group

Facilitator recommended: No

Time required: 3-4 hours to plan

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Here’s How:

1. Find a community sponsor(s) for the feast. A local business may be willing to donate food, or staff to do the cooking. A community program may find that they have the budget and fits well within their mandate (e.g., Brighter Futures, CFS). Approach many and pool all the resources. Explain your purpose – they would be hard pressed to refuse a good cause. Ask for donations for a door prize!
2. Plan for a community feast! Choose a date, find a location and send attractive invitations to all those that appeared on your list. Invite them to come out to the celebration, instead of calling it a meeting. Be careful not to be deceptive on the invitations however. Simply state that they are invited to a feast where you will be discussing a very important topic – being part of a group that will be creating a new future for their children/grandchildren. Don’t be afraid to appeal to their caring human side.
3. Clarify first what it is that you will be asking potential members to be involved in. Here is a sample of your opening statement. *“The purpose of this gathering was to ask each and every one of you to become part of a Core Group of Community Champions. The purpose of this session is to:_____ (you can add your own thoughts here such as to provide leadership, direction, advocate, organize and mobilize the community). We need each and every one of you because each of you have gifts to offer, as someone in your community had named you*

personally. We want to be able to draw on these gifts to help us build a stronger future for our children/grandchildren. We can't do it alone; we need to rely on each other and the strengths of each other. There is no plan at this point, but this is where we all can help each other".

4. Write down and practice what you will say, and how you will present it to the group. If your strength is not speaking publicly, then find someone who can speak on your behalf. Maybe you are in a position of leadership already in your community, then use your influence to get people there.
5. From this initial gathering, start a circle discussion going before the meal. Open with the following statement: *"Imagine a better future for our children, what do you see? Allow the group to have an open discussion for 20-30 minutes. Have someone take notes. This information you can use later in the planning phases. At the conclusion of the discussion, ask those individuals to step forward if they are willing and committed to making these dreams a reality in your community."*
6. Share the meal. Work the room to recruit those individuals who you think may be a good member for the core group. Your meeting will be a success if you have a good sized list of members to get things going. Set a date for the next gathering that will work for the majority of the group.

f) Incorporating Strong Communication Skills



Wisdom:

"Who do we listen to? We listen to the people that speak the most, sometimes the loudest and make a very strong argument for this and that. What if we listened to the people who had the knowledge? We have to keep knowledge flowing in a circle..."

- Elder

The Story:

What exactly are strong communication skills? When we talk a lot or speak loudly, isn't that communicating? When we post an information bulletin on the wall about a meeting, is that communicating information? As humans we communicate most often by speaking, yes, and unfortunately those that speak the loudest are often the ones being heard, but as the Elder suggested above – are they the ones who have the knowledge? Strong communication is also about the accuracy of the information. If you have someone in your community like the one described above, get them on your team! We can provide them with the information that is clear, accurate and help them develop into a well rounded communicator. You can also develop these skills.

So, when we talk about strong communication skills we are really talking about **effective** communication skills. Effectiveness can be measured by asking the following questions:

- Was the information understood?

- Was the message clear and accurate?
- Did I understand what was said?
- Are people nodding when you ask if the information was understood?
- There is the telltale sign: were there any crinkled eyebrows staring at you?

As human beings we also communicate with our bodies – sometimes called non-verbal communication. We also communicate by being silent and by listening. It is just as important to hear information, as it is to give. This is called two-way communication. As the wise person suggested above, keep it *flowing in a circle*. Therefore, it is important that we are aware of our non-verbal communication skills, our listening skills, and our speaking skills. These skills can all become part of our tools in being an effective communicator.

This section is not about developing a communication strategy; the story here is about using our skills as a communicator to receive and send information.

Tools and Tracks:

Simple Communication Skills

Goals:

- Develop skills as an effective communicator
- Create an environment of open two-way communication and mutual understanding
- Be clear, develop skills in relaying information in short messages
- Recognize nonverbal signals you are giving and how to read others

Facilitator recommended: N/A

Time Required: ongoing

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: 10 - 20

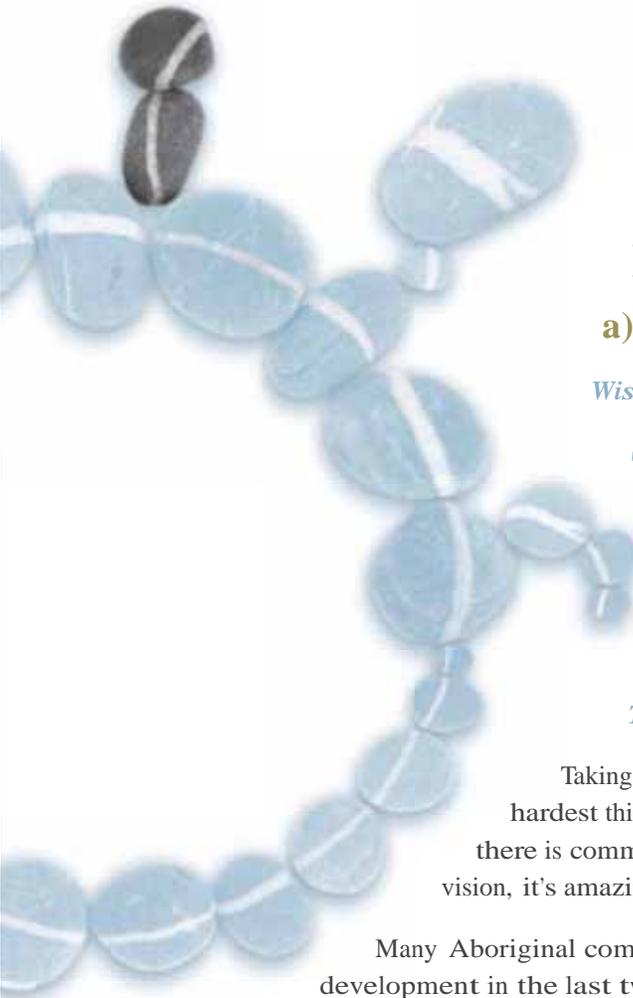
Essential tools: Laptop or flip chart, markers – ability to record information

Here's How:

1. ***Make direct eye contact.*** You have probably heard in the past that some cultures do not make direct eye contact and that this may be disrespectful. This is probably true for some communities, but most often it is true if you are the listener – and are receiving the information. You have to pay attention to these norms in your community, of course, but making direct eye contact when you are the one who is doing the talking or delivering the speech helps you to convey the message that you are interested and are encouraging the other person or audience to show interest in your conversation. If you are in front of a group of people speaking, looking into the eyes of people around you can make them feel like you are interested in them personally, and they are more likely to take interest and hear you as well.
2. ***Check in with your body language.*** Body language sometimes is louder than speech. Sometimes you say something with your mouth, but you say something else with your body language. So, balancing what you say and what your body says is an important skill to learn. Check in and be aware of what your body is saying periodically. Are my arms crossed (angry – sometimes it can just mean that is a comfortable way to sit, so check expression), am I wringing fingers (worry),

nodding (understanding / hearing), crinkling brow (confused) crinkling my nose (what? or disagreeing?) Looking at the door/wrist? Yawning? Be aware of what expression you are wearing and what others are wearing on their faces as well.

3. **Speak clearly and loudly, but not too loud!** Sometimes when you speak loudly, it sends out a message that you are confident and that you mean what you say. Remember the wise words quoted above. Use an appropriate volume and tone. Showing confidence ensures listeners hear exactly what you are saying.
4. **Listen.** When others are speaking, really listen. If you ask a question, wait for an answer. Practice nodding to convey that you understand the message.
5. **Prepare.** Do the research. Be knowledgeable and ensure that the information is accurate. Prepare notes or questions prior to the meeting or gathering. Carry all relevant information with you; no one can expect you to memorize everything.
6. **Practice.** It may feel odd at first, but try standing in front of a mirror and practice. If you are going to be doing a presentation-video tape the practice and review. Just as it is with any skill, practice makes perfect.



5. The Upper Left Limb:

Mobilizing the Community

a) Getting Started

Wisdom:

"If you continue to think the way you've always thought, you'll continue to get what you've always got..."

- Unknown

The Story:

Taking the first step of any journey can be one of the hardest things to do. However, once that decision is made and there is commitment to continue following through towards your vision, it's amazing what results can be achieved.

Many Aboriginal communities have been taking great strides in their development in the last two generations. Our youth are becoming more educated and returning home to help their community in many different leadership capacities. But if your community is just beginning to commit to change and to plan for your future, there are a number of initial steps to consider.

First, the old story holds true that "one branch can be strong...but many branches put together is strongest..." Therefore, strength in numbers is a key consideration. In other

words, if only one person is trying to get the community moving down a path of healing, the chances are that not much is going to happen. There has to be a small group of committed individuals ready to begin working towards the change you want to see happen in your community. Someone once said that it only takes 3% of any given population to start a revolution. Figure out how many people that would be for the population of your community and you have an idea of how many people it would take to get things really moving! Just make sure the revolution is a positive one. Taking that first step requires courage – you have it within you. And so does your community.

Second, consider taking “baby steps” in the initial stages. Better to take small steps in the right direction than to wait around for huge steps that only happen once in a while. This takes patience. But there is also patience in you and your community as well.

Third, don't be discouraged if nothing really happens right away. Continue to work for the betterment of your family and it will spill out into the community. Remember that a plane must fly into the wind when it takes off. That wind resistance is necessary for liftoff. Any resistance that emerges in the community is to be expected when there's a committed group of people seeking change. Keep going and never, ever, consider giving up. So staying positive and shunning discouragement is a mindset that is essential. The more people that believe positive change is not only possible but also bound to happen the better.

Change is not easy at the best of times. People need time to adjust to new ideas or to even hear about positive planning for a better future. Joe was a member of the community that had spent many years working hard. One day, Joe decided he wanted to take a trip to Europe. Nobody in his family let alone his community had ever made such a trip before. People started “talking” when they heard that Joe was planning to go “overseas”. Why was he going? What's he trying to prove? “Is he trying to be better than us?” These were the things that were flying around the community. Meanwhile, Joe was simply following a childhood dream that he had since he was a boy. He wanted to see Paris, Rome, London and other famous cities that he'd studied in elementary school. He wanted to understand more about his family history as his grandfather was English and his great-grandmother was of Scottish descent. They came to settle near his home community and married into the Cree and Ojibway nations.

Fourthly, bear in mind that chaos is part of the process. Conflict is part of the process. Stress is part of it as well. So is a whole array of other forces that do not want your community to ever focus on positive change. A few examples:

1. **Media** – pick up any paper and all you read about is people wanting to kill another, conflicts, fighting, wars, rumours and talk about of everything negative under the sun. Yes, that's all the bad news that leaves you with a feeling that nothing good ever comes out of people and tearing apart is more common than building.
2. **Funding agencies** – unless you can demonstrate that you are hopelessly full of misery and that social problems are rampant, you will not get a “sniff” of consideration from many funding bodies. As John McKnight, a leading author on Community Development, reminds us, “unless you show these organizations your scars, your weaknesses, and deficiencies, they will not fund you.” While many organizations and foundations are starting to change their way of thinking, there still remains a great deal of difficulty in acquiring funds for community development.
3. **Community divisions** – age old feuds and disagreements between families and factions is perhaps one of the biggest obstacles to overcome within our Aboriginal communities. Until community members heal from their wounds from historical

wrongs whether from outside or within the community, this will continue to be a challenge. It is not cause for us to maintain or continue on with the status quo (keeping things the way it's always been). In fact, it is cause for us to rise up and make the necessary changes within our communities. Our children deserve it.

So, when it comes to getting started, there are certainly very strong forces opposed to your community's efforts to make a decision for the better. But great leaders have always been like arrows that pierce the air straight (resistance) to their target (vision). They are unwavering in their commitment to see their people return once again to the autonomy and freedom of self-government that we once knew in abundance. Hearts and minds are changing and movement is happening at the community level in spite of all the opposing forces that exist. We remind you of a quote from the highly respected anthropologist, Margaret Mead, who once said, "never underestimate the power of a small group of people to change the world. Indeed, it's the only way it ever has..."

So go ahead. Make the decision as a community to *Get Started* now.

b) Finding the Community Champion(s)

Wisdom:

"Change requires a lot of courage to work against all those forces that counter everything we want to change..."

– Participant

The Story:

The "champions" in your community are the leaders that are committed to taking action for the betterment of everyone. We are used to identifying these people by the jobs they hold, for instance Chief, Councilor, Executive Director, and so on. But the champions are not necessarily the paid leaders. They are the grandmothers, mothers, aunts and uncles, and the youth in your community. They take risks to try their best to make change possible. They work to establish programs and initiatives in spite of limited resources. They take risks by taking action even when criticism and gossip is flying around after them. They have great courage and strength of character. They follow through and keep their word. They may even be the "silent ones" that get overlooked but you know you can count on them to "get the job done". But of course, they may not want to be called a champion and they may even shy away from being called a leader; but the champion is a person you know you can trust to take action and make your community's plans a reality. This may be all summed up in one characteristic: courage. Take a good look around your community and ask yourselves who fits into this role. Maybe it's you! If you don't feel that this is your skill set, asking a few simple questions may help you find this individual. Sometimes it may be obvious, and the next step is to convince them to be part of your team. If this is the case, we offer some suggestions.

Tools & Tracks:

Questionnaire – Who can be our community champion?

Goals:

- Help you identify those individual strengths that could lead to finding a community champion.
- Assist you in seeing and identifying your own strengths.

Facilitator recommended: No

Time Required: N/A

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools: Your own mind power

Here's how:

Consider the following questions to assist you in identifying a community champion, from your community's perspective:

1. Can we name someone in our core group or in our community who has been outspoken on issues in the past?
2. Can we name someone in our core group or community who has shown a great deal of confidence when they are voicing their opinion? (Note: remember, confidence commands attention).
3. Is there someone now residing in our community who is/has held positions of authority, and had the respect of the community? (Note: this could be an Elder, former leader, teacher, principle or police officer, nurse, doctor, minister, etc.).
4. Is there someone at the moment that we can identify that has a good handle on issues and is not afraid of speaking up?
5. Is there someone in our community who is generally outgoing whose energy we may be able to harness to work toward our goals?
6. Can we think also of any individuals who have gone through some personal growth and had some trying experiences and turned their lives around? (Note: remember the best anti-gang advocates are those resilient individuals who have lived the gang lifestyle and have found the strength to overcome many obstacles to begin living a more balanced life).
7. Is there a young member of our community who is showing some leadership qualities, and with support could become a good champion for our youth?

If you have answered “yes” to any one of the above questions, then answering the next of questions may be useful:

- Would any of the individuals we have identified also be willing to learn and grow with your group?
- Would they be willing to learn new approaches and ways of doing things or to face criticism? Answer questions on behalf of the group? Approach leaders, organizations and naysayers and deal with them diplomatically and with respect?

If any of your current community leaders come to mind in answering any of these questions, then your community is already richer and probably well on your path to a brighter future.

The following are some suggestions on how to entice this individual to become your community champion and voice for change.

- Create a list of all the strengths you had identified in this individual that could benefit the group.
- Invite the individual to coffee or lunch and have an informal information sharing session on your dreams for your community. Share this resource with him/her.
- Ask the individual what their dreams are for their children and grandchildren as well. Listen.
- Share the list of strengths with this individual. Let him/her know that they had been identified as a potential champion for change for their community.
- Ask them to attend one of your meetings or workshops you have planned to get more information, and meet your team if there is one already formed or forming. If there is no group at this point, then explain that this may be part of his/her role to assist in getting this going.
- Create a welcoming atmosphere. If this individual is attending a meeting for the first time, ask each team member to personally greet him / her in your community's traditional way or shake hands with the individual when they arrive.
- Offer an incentive – personalize the incentive. A good one is if they are to take up this challenge they could take pride in the fact that they would be very important part in creating a better future for their children/grandchildren and community.

c) Effective Meetings

Wisdom:

"Begin with the end in mind..."

- Stephen Covey

The Story:

The best way to determine whether you had a good meeting is to look at the outcome of the meeting. Did you accomplish what you set out to do? Did you reach the goal or address the purpose of the meeting? Today, getting down to business is different for each community, for sure. But there are many similarities as well. For instance, most Aboriginal communities have adopted ways of conducting meetings that are structured along the lines of a Euro-centric approach, either French or English. This is usually an adaptation of Robert's Rules of Order that includes making motions and voting on them to decide by a simple majority (50% plus 1) and so on. Or, we have conducted meetings in a more traditional fashion where everyone has a say about a topic and the leader of the meeting (chair, chief, manager, etc.) announces the consensus of the group after much open discussion. These are very different approaches. But in either case, there is a topic up for discussion and an agenda that is created to guide the meeting. We are used to this.

But the main question you need to ask yourselves is this: are you having meetings that are effective? In other words, do you make decisions in good time with a process that meets your needs? There's nothing more frustrating than talking about an issue for hours and never arriving at a clear direction or decision. Or worse, everyone leaves the meeting mad feeling it was a waste of time.

Some Aboriginal communities have adopted very strict methods and processes for decision-making while others remain more traditional in approach – allowing for consensus and all participants to speak their mind. With today’s ever-increasing pace of doing business, Aboriginal communities are also shifting along with the times and finding methods that work best for them. There is obviously no right or wrong way of holding a meeting; however, in the Tools & Tracks, we have suggestions that may help to ensure your next meeting flows along smoothly and creatively.

Tools & Tracks:

1. There are many different types of meetings; some are private (in-camera) while others are open to everyone in the community. We are concerned only with the community meeting at this point. Always clearly communicate a meeting’s purpose on the poster or announcement.
2. At the outset of the meeting, walk through the agenda with participants. It’s always a good approach to let people know what’s coming at them. Having “no surprises” is a good rule to follow as people generally resent anything suddenly sprung upon them.
3. For workshops and sessions that are dealing with a topic that is not so serious, get creative by decorating the room with color, balloons, ribbons, etc.; anything to give people a feeling that something unique is going to happen and you are ready to engage in a new and exciting process.
4. Have a person lead the meeting that is upbeat, positive, well respected, and knowledgeable about how to move the meeting forward.
5. The meeting has a beginning, middle, and end. Here is a basic format:

| Meeting Title | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>(Place of Meeting)</i> | | | <i>(Date of the Meeting)</i> | |
| <p>Opening:</p> <p>Opening Prayer</p> <p>Introductions</p> <p>Purpose of the Meeting</p> <p>Introductory Remarks</p> | <p>Movements of the Meeting</p> | | | <p>Closing:</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <p>Wrap Up</p> <p>Closing Prayer</p> |
| | <p><i>Issue 1:</i></p> <p>Introduce issue</p> <p>Decision to be made</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Call for decision</p> | <p><i>Issue 2:</i></p> <p>Introduce issue</p> <p>Decision to be made</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Call for decision</p> | <p><i>Issue 3:</i></p> <p>Introduce issue</p> <p>Decision to be made</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Call for decision</p> <p>(Etc.)</p> | |

You can cut and paste this format or modify it to suit your own purpose.

d) Engaging the Community

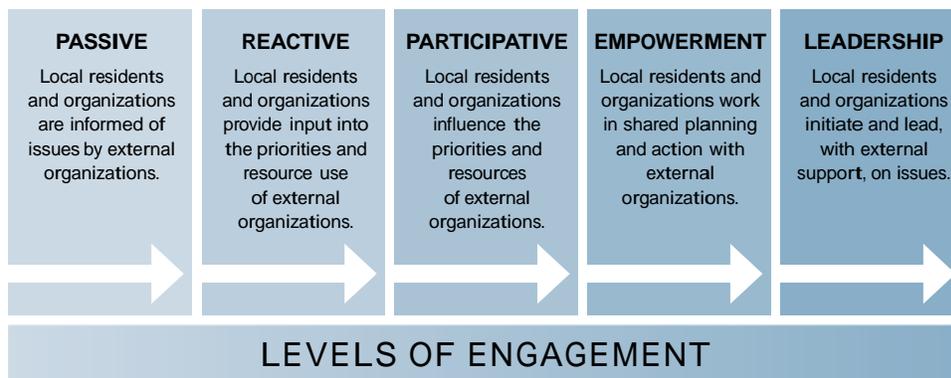
Wisdom:

"In my experience, it is not about consultation, but about engagement, really listening to what the community has to say, and responding..."

– Participant

The Story:

What is really meant when we talk about engaging the community? The Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement, an organization dedicated to the art and science of community engagement defined it as ***“people working together collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their future”***. They explained, as community engagement increases, community members move from being passive citizens to taking active leadership roles, and eventually taking on powerful roles that can influence and have an effect on the lives of their communities. This is represented in the graph below:



<http://tamarackcommunity.ca/index.php>

But what can this really mean for our communities? It is really about bringing community level people together from many different families and sections of our community, and providing them with an opportunity to influence decisions through the entire process toward building a stronger future. Not only does this help your community in the long run toward achieving their goals, but it also has a very positive side effect in that it helps increase social capital¹ within our communities as well.

There are numerous ways you can get community members engaged. You can target specific individuals or specific heads of families and ask them directly to get involved; you can hold community workshops to raise awareness, form working groups to work on specific tasks, hold public meetings or specific forums, interview key individuals, conduct community surveys, host “community conversations”, or even utilize existing social networks in the community. There

¹ What is *social capital? We have all heard of the term “capital”, which means “goods” “dollars for big projects” or just simply “money”. Think about engaging local community members as an investment in your community! You are creating “capital” in the most valuable resource that we have – the people that live within our communities. For more information on social capital see:
http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/en/downloads/MeasuringSocialCapital2003_e.pdf

are other sections in this guide that specifically ask you to engage in the planning process, and suggestions on how to involve your community. The following is just one example of how you can engage the community. Remember the more engaged the community the more likely your initiative will succeed!

Tools and Tracks:

“Community Conversation” and Creating Working Groups

Working groups can be set up in your community as a way of getting specific work done; answers for specific questions or when direction is needed for a particular project. Often a working group can begin by having a successful community conversation. Planning these conversations for the purpose of forming a working group is an effective way of engaging your community. How many times have we been in a situation where we had to justify a decision that we alone had made? One of the major benefits of having community conversations and creating working groups is that community members can take ownership over decisions that are made!

Goals:

- Create a grassroots lead movement and more meaningful solutions for a targeted project or answer for a specific question
- Allow community members to have a voice and participate and take ownership in decisions that are made on a certain topic or tasks.
- Increase community cohesion
- Build community esteem, and greater sense of responsibility

Here’s how:

Step 1: Identify the need for a working group. Key questions to ask here are:

- ***“Is the work or task too large for one individual to realistically accomplish?”***
- ***“Is the work easily divided into specific tasks or topics?”***
- ***“Could the work, task or decision potentially be a topic that I/we could need additional support to justify?”***
- For example, is it one that could potentially have some disagreement or be contentious?

Step 2: Identify purpose of the working group:

- Write a clear *Statement of Purpose* of the working group.
- Write down your ideas on:
 - a) *Frequency of meetings*
 - b) Who you anticipate would be the *membership*
 - c) What you foresee will be their *responsibilities*.

Step 3: Host a “Community Conversation”.

- Identify 5-10 (or as many that you can think of) key individuals that may be useful or have some insight on the particular topic, or question. Arrange a time and place for the meeting
- Invite these individuals to participate in the Community Conversation

- Seek input from the group. Begin dialogue by sharing your answers you came up with in Step 2. Then open dialogue by stating something like “*each of you have been seen in the community as an important person with knowledge in this area*” then lead conversation with “*I would like to hear what all of your thoughts on this are*”?
- Take notes. Wrap up conversation with “*How can each of you help?*” or “*Are you able to help your community with this important task?*”
- Ask those individuals who are interested to become part of this working group or to name others who may be potential members.
 - Appoint a *chairperson* and
 - Set *date for first meeting*
 - With the new membership, *create a name* for the working group

Step 4: Commit to the date for the first meeting. For more information from this point, see “Effective Meetings”

Utilize the Community Conversation method whenever you want to engage the community in any other step of the Community Development process whenever you feel that there is a need to get the community more involved!

For Community Engagement examples see also:

http://www.qlgc.sa.org.au/community_planning_toolkit/9_step4-6.html

6. The Lower Left Limb: Planning for Change

a) How to Create a Focus question:

Wisdom:

"A good focus question challenges us to think hard about a topic and to generate many different answers to that issue no matter how complicated it is...this helps us to build consensus about which directions we need to move toward."

– Phillips

The Story:

As previously mentioned, one of the key skills of a facilitator is the ability to ask the right question. So how does a facilitator know what question to ask? Well, let's start with two different kinds of questions:

- Closed-ended Question
- Open-ended Question

The Closed-ended questions call for an answer that is usually either “yes” or “no”. When you ask someone whether they like the taste of deer meat they will say, “yep” or “nope”. Not too much more to be said there. But when you shift that question a bit you could say, “what is it about deer meat that you don't like?” Answers are likely going to be more than just yes or no. They may talk about a bad experience tasting deer as a youngster and how that sticks with them today. You might even get a longer story about why they love deer meat and all the times granny used to make stew with bannock.

A focus question is simply that. It *focuses* a group around a single idea or concept or thought that needs to be examined. A simple rule when facilitating a group is this: try not to deal with more than one topic at a time. Deal with one and then move on to the next – never two or more at once. Remember, clarity of discussion is the desired path and not cluttering up discussions with 10 other issues unless they are directly related to the topic at hand.

An open-ended question usually starts with “how” or “what” and sometimes “where” rather than “who” or “when”.

Examples of open-ended questions:

- What do we envision our community will look like in 25 years?
- What can we do to address the issue?
- How did you feel about the meeting?
- What kind of community do we want our grandchildren to experience?
- How could we approach that issue differently?
- What else can we do about poor community participation?
- Where do you see requirements for community improvements?
- What do we want to achieve in 1 year that is positive and possible?
- Where are we going to be in 6 weeks?

Examples of closed-ended questions:

- Who was at the event?
- When did you arrive here?
- Who is responsible for taking action?
- When should we have our planning session?

Focus Questions *usually* have the following components:

(What, How, Where) + (Action) + (Issue or subject) + (by certain time frame)?

Example 1: What steps can we take to clean up our community in the next 6 months?

Example 2: What do we want our community to look like in 15 years?

(Note: The above colors in the examples correspond to the components of a focus question)

Tools & Tracks:

Write an open-ended Focus Question for a topic you would like to address in your community:

b) Creating a Community Vision

Wisdom:

"Vision is the art of seeing things invisible..."

- Jonathan Swift

*"Do not follow where the path may lead.
Go instead where there is no path and
leave a trail."*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

*"Some see things as they are and say
"Why?". I dream of things that never
were and say, "Why not?"*

- George Bernard Shaw

"Where there is no vision, the people perish..."

- Proverbs 29:18

The Story:

In planning for your community's future, the vision is where it all begins. For anything to change, there must be a vision of where your community wants to be in the future. The vision is like the north star which was used to navigate before the compass was invented – it lets you know which direction you should be going when you get stuck or “lose your way”. All successful communities have a vision or many visions for different segments of the community i.e., Education, Health, Council, etc.

A vision can be from a single person with an idea or the combined thoughts and ideas of everyone in the entire community, which is often called a *Shared Vision*. Look around your community. Is there a new Health Centre? Council office? Arena? Whatever the structure may be, someone or some group of people in your community had the vision to create it. It was once a thought and now it is a reality. All visions work in this same way. First comes the thought to create something new, then comes making it reality.

But there are important ingredients or keys to success that lie at the root of everything that has ever been created or developed in your community, somebody took action and made the dream a reality. Somebody was committed to taking action. Someone had the burning desire to make a change for the better.

A vision remains only a dream until there is desire and commitment to take action.





Tools & Tracks:

Creating a Shared Vision

Goal: To develop a community Shared Vision where all community members have an opportunity to participate.

Facilitator Recommended: Yes and No.

A vision workshop can be facilitated by an independent facilitator or by someone in the community. It simply takes making a decision to develop one. Set the date and post up the poster around the community that could read something like this:

Community Planning Workshop – Developing a Shared Vision for our Future

Utilize whatever networks you have such as local radio, local TV., newsletter, or a poster to let community members know about the session - whatever works best in your community.

And here's the secret hook: "Feast to Follow" or "Soup and Bannock will be served". These are just suggestions. But if you really want people to show up, it's always a good idea to offer some type of refreshments.

When using independent facilitators, make sure they have good experience facilitating vision workshops. But if you decide to do it as a team or a group of community members, here are some points to consider:

- **Use a focus question that is clear** (refer to section 6 (a) on how to devise a focus question). Sample Focus Question: "What do we want our community to look like in 5 years?" Sometimes, people don't feel that much is going to change in 5 years; simply try a different timeline of 10 or 20 years. Make sure everyone agrees on the time frame.
- **Keep the end in mind** – where you see your community into the future. Steven Covey tells us that one of the habits of success is keeping the End in Mind.
- **Be inclusive.** Everyone should have a say in where they see the community to be at some point in the future. One community even had all the children at their school do an exercise in their classes. The principal and teachers asked all the

students: “Let’s create a dream for the future of our community. What do you wish would happen?” All of the students came up with incredible ideas that were incorporated into the community plan!

- **Language issues.** In one community, the Elders were not able to speak English. The youth that were able to understand their language simply asked the Elders the focus question in their own words. The Elders then shared their thoughts while the youth recorded them on 5” x 7” cards.
- **Handling shy participants** – sometimes not everyone is willing to speak out publicly. They may be simply too shy. If that’s the case, use the 5” x 7” cards. Ask them to put their ideas down on the cards and then collect them and throw them up on the wall with everyone else’s ideas. This way, you ensure everyone has participated.
- **Be creative and let your imagination go.** It’s all about getting the maximum amount of participation from the community.
- **Create an atmosphere of safety.** People in the community need to feel it is safe to share their deepest thoughts in the meeting environment you have picked.
- **Get participants relaxed and in a mode of letting go.** The creation of a vision should be fun and open, without any stress or tension.
- **Address any thinking that limits, devalues, or puts obstacles in the way of creativity.** For example: someone yells out from the crowd, “why should we do this exercise, nothing ever changes around here anyway!” Being defensive won’t help. Neither will kicking such a person out of the room. Obviously, your challenge is to get participants thinking and believing that anything is possible and that it’s good to allow ourselves to dream about a better future.

Time required: 2-3 hours for the workshop. Extra time if refreshments are offered.

Assuming that money is not an issue, what do you dream about having in your community in the next 5 years?

c) Creating a Statement of Purpose (Mission Statement)

Wisdom

"Not knowing your purpose is like driving your car with the front left brake locked..."

- Phillips

The Story

Sometimes we may go through life just drifting around aimlessly. We’ve gotten used to living life from day to day and accepting that life simply happens *to us*. We may feel helpless and not sure of where we need to go as a community and what we should be doing.

It's only human to sometimes allow this. However, we were built to have purpose and meaning in our communities and the organizations that we create. Thanks to the Creator we were given the power to choose and to *make* things happen instead of having it all happen to us. And we were given another gift – the ability to create. And with this gift of creativity we can develop a statement of purpose.

The statement of purpose is simply a brief statement or even a phrase that sums up what we are all about and answers the question “why we do what we do?”. It guides us and grounds us at the same time. We say to ourselves, “ahhhh...yes, that's what we do and why we do it!”

Here are a few examples of Aboriginal communities/organizations' mission statements:

Osoyoos Indian Band (British Columbia): “*The Osoyoos Indian Band is committed to achieving economic self-sufficiency within its businesses by the year 2005. This will be achieved through the training and education of our people which ensures that Pride of Heritage will guide us in developing our resources optimally both in socio-economic terms and for the benefit of future generations.*”

Slogan: “*Working with Business to Preserve our Past by Strengthening our Future*”
<http://www.oib.ca/oldsite/oibdc.htm>

Six Nations of the Grand River: *The Six Nations of the Grand River Social Services Department is mandated to serve our Nation by providing assistance in a non-adversarial, cooperative manner, which draws upon, supports and strengthens the family-based obligations and traditions of caring, sharing, mutual respect, healing and harmony that are rooted in and inseparable from our culture.*”

<http://www.sixnations.ca/SocServDept.htm>

Louis Riel Capital Corporation (LRCC): *To assist and further the development of Manitoba Métis business enterprise through the provision of financial and related advisory services.*

Aroostook Band of Micmacs: *To unite with Tribal Members to elevate the health status of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs to the highest level possible. This will be accomplished by educating and providing services that encourage and promote responsibility for personal, family and tribal wellness.*

www.micmac-nsn.gov/index.html

Here are a few mission statements of well-known companies to give you an idea of what the corporate business world has developed for their organizations:

Mary Kay Cosmetics:

“To give unlimited opportunity to women.”

Wal-Mart:

“To give ordinary folk the chance to buy the same thing as rich people.”

Walt Disney:

“To make people happy.”

Nike's Mission Statement:

“To lead in corporate citizenship through proactive programs that reflect caring for the world family of Nike, our teammates, our consumers, and those who provide services to Nike”

Mission Statements are:

- Clear and concise
- Meaningful
- Have Values
- Reach for a grand goal well beyond reach (you're not going to achieve it in one or two years, it may take several years to reach)

For more examples of mission statements, please see:

<http://www.missionstatements.com>

Tools & Tracks:

How to Develop a Community Mission Statement

An effective mission statement will clearly outline a community's purpose in plain language that is brief and easily remembered by everyone. It is specific to your community and distinct from any other community. It serves to guide every decision made by each body within the structure of your community, for instance Chief and Council, community council, programs, initiatives, etc. It serves to guide every decision made in your community.

Basic Steps:

1. Prepare a brainstorming session with multiple groups in your community. To obtain the most input possible from everyone in the community is the best approach.
2. Ask this question: What is the purpose of our community? It may be challenging at first, but as you obtain the thoughts, ideas, and perspectives from everyone, you will begin to see the patterns emerging.
3. Consider your community's services, values, which you are targeting as an audience, your priorities and the main activities that happen in the community.
4. Take a look at current and upcoming strategies the community is planning, and how they affect or fit into the community's overall mission.
5. Ensure that the mission statement describes what the community does – it's actions and not it's smaller goals or objectives. The mission statement is sometimes referred to as the BHAG – “big hairy audacious goal”. It's beyond reach but what you'll strive after for generations to come.
6. Consider revising drafted mission statement ideas that are already in place so that they are short and concise, clear and easily understood by everyone in the community. If you can't remember it, then it's too long.
7. Create a mission statement that will remain true even if there are future technological advances that may change the community's focus or direction.

d) Setting Goals and Objectives

Wisdom:

"Success is goals..."

– Brian Tracy

The Story:

To get to where your community wants to be (vision) requires setting goals and objectives to get there.

So what's the difference between a goal and an objective? A goal is larger, bigger, and takes longer to reach. An objective is simply smaller goals. Like in ice hockey - the goal is to score a goal. You have to pass the puck around perhaps many times (objectives) to get an opportunity to score a goal (goal). Or think of paddling across the lake (the goal is to get to the other side) while every paddle stroke you take is an objective. Many objectives will get you to the goal.

One of the basic methods for setting goals is to use the SMART approach.

Tools & Tracks:

Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals & Objectives

The S.M.A.R.T. method is one way to help you remember how to walk through the process of setting your goals and objectives.

S = Specific: For goals to be effective, they should be specific. In other words, they should describe specifically the result that is desired.

M = Measurable: Goals and objectives can be even more specific when they are measurable. In order to determine if you have achieved your goal, you need to be able to measure it. Instead of “better health service for the community,” the goal could be “to improve our health transportation service by hiring 2 more drivers within 6 months.”

A = Achievable: The next important factor to setting objectives is that they be achievable. For example, an objective of “100 percent community satisfaction” isn't realistically achievable. It's not possible to expect everyone to be 100 percent satisfied with services in the community. A goal of “20 percent improvement in community satisfaction” is better—but may still not be achievable. You need to determine whether a goal or objective is possible.

R = Realistic: Realistic goals and objectives recognize factors that cannot be controlled. Realistic goals should be challenging but not so challenging that the chance of success is small. They can be accomplished with available resources and effective teamwork.

T = Time-based: The final factor for a good goal or objective is that it is time-based. Knowing when you want to accomplish a goal by a certain timeline is the key to being able to measure whether you reached it.

Setting organized goals and objectives to help your community or team members of organizations in your community can make a greater positive impact and put you on a track to greater success.

e) Creating a Plan of Action (P.A.T.H. Plan)

Wisdom:

"If you fail to plan, then you are planning to fail..."

- Unknown

The Story:

"Why should we plan for anything in the first place? What good does it do when life is going to happen to us and our plans will never work out the way we wanted anyway?!"



We've heard these kinds of questions and complaints by many in the past. But consider this scene:

The federal government introduced a new Youth program with a fairly significant budget to go along with the initiative; and some of the people in Community "X" heard about it. There was some discussion around whether the Council should get a proposal together and a few of the community members began to talk more seriously about it. After some time passed, nobody really took a lead in getting the proposal done even though there was excitement among the youth that heard about the talk that was "going around". The deadline was fast approaching and at the last minute, one of the Councillors made a call to a friend who was good at doing proposals. "Hey, Joe," he said. "Can you help us get a proposal ready to access some of those new dollars?" "Sure can," came Joe's reply. "When's the deadline?" "Ahhhhh," said the Councillor, "it's in three days". "Sorry, Councillor," said Joe. "I need at least a week to get a proposal of that size together. I'm afraid we've missed the boat on this one."

A little bit of time spent at the beginning would have avoided this community from missing out on a grand opportunity that would have helped the youth in their community. Just a little bit of planning would have had a different outcome. Sound familiar?

A Plan of Action can be in many different forms. The common components of a Plan of Action often includes the following:

1. *Name of your journey* (A title that holds or describes your Community's journey together)
2. *Shared vision* (Where we want to be in the distant future)
3. *Goals* (Where we want to be in the short, medium, and longer term)
4. *Assigning responsibilities* (Who is responsible for each goal)
5. *Current status* (Where we are right now in our journey)
6. *Strengths* (How we can be stronger together)
7. *Summary of feelings* (How everyone felt about the planning session just completed)

Tools & Tracks: Creating a Path

1. Name of Your Journey:

Whether it's at the very beginning or after you've developed your Shared Vision, your group needs to come up with a phrase that describes your community's journey together. This is a summary of what you are all about and it should be a simple, brief phrase. Here are some examples:

“Our Path to Wellness!”

“Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Elders!”

“Reclaiming our Past, Planning a Stronger Tomorrow!”

“ABC Organization: Commitment to Wellness & Strength!”

It is a brief statement that sometimes sums up your entire vision in one phrase. It says where you are heading, is positive, and outlines a clear vision very clearly. Many organizations and communities have taken this phrase and placed it at the beginning of their website and all over their promotional material. It can be the Vision or Mission Statement in a nutshell.

2. Shared Vision:

Every plan that you create should be moving towards a shared vision. The vision is where the whole community would like to end up at some point in the future. It is the longer term destination and can be 3, 5, 10, or 25 years from now. The timeframe that you want to focus on is up to the community but 3 to 5 years is a good starting point. If it's too long into the future and if people do not see much happening in terms of movement towards the vision, then the vision can drift away and be forgotten.

The vision is simply a longer-term goal. All of the shorter-term goals should point directly towards the vision. A sample focus question for the vision session could be:

“What do we want to be, do, and have in our community in 5 years?”

3. Goals:

Use the S.M.A.R.T. method to develop goals. Usually, it's a good idea to have goals that are 1 year, 3-6 months, and 40 days into future. These timeframes will allow you to know if you are on track within a short period of time i.e., 40 days. When your team or community members see that kind of movement early in the plan, then there is momentum that is created. This encourages and lifts up the group to keep on working to achieve their goals.

4. Assigning Roles & Responsibilities:

Everyone involved in the planning process needs to understand their role(s) and responsibilities; that is, how they are to be involved in helping to carry out the plan. Communities know who is in a position to carry out responsibilities associated with the plan. Once a goal is created, it can be determined who should be responsible for it, for instance Council, programs or initiatives, individuals with related jobs, etc. A community plan is for the whole community. And anyone should be able to contribute to making the plan a reality. The point is to make sure everyone knows who will be doing what to ensure the plan is executed. There's nothing worse than a plan that has created and nobody identified to carry out the plan. This is an important step because if you are not clear on roles and responsibilities, nothing gets done. But your team (community) is dynamic and creative and you will get this down easily!

Aligning Multiple Plans - If several different segments of the community each have their own plan, you will want to ensure that each of these individual plans are moving towards one vision for the community. That means you may need to align individual plans by changing or adjusting them to make sure they point to the larger, new vision or the one already established. This is simply a review of existing plans and asking the simple question: “Is our goals pointing us in the right direction to our *shared vision*?”

5. Current Status:

Identifying where we are now (today) is a key step. There are actually three important times we need to be aware of and knowledgeable about: our past (history), where we are today and where are going tomorrow (vision). But for this segment, we ask the question: “How would we describe where we are at today?” This can be modified in different ways, but essentially, you are trying to get a picture of the status or position of your community right now.

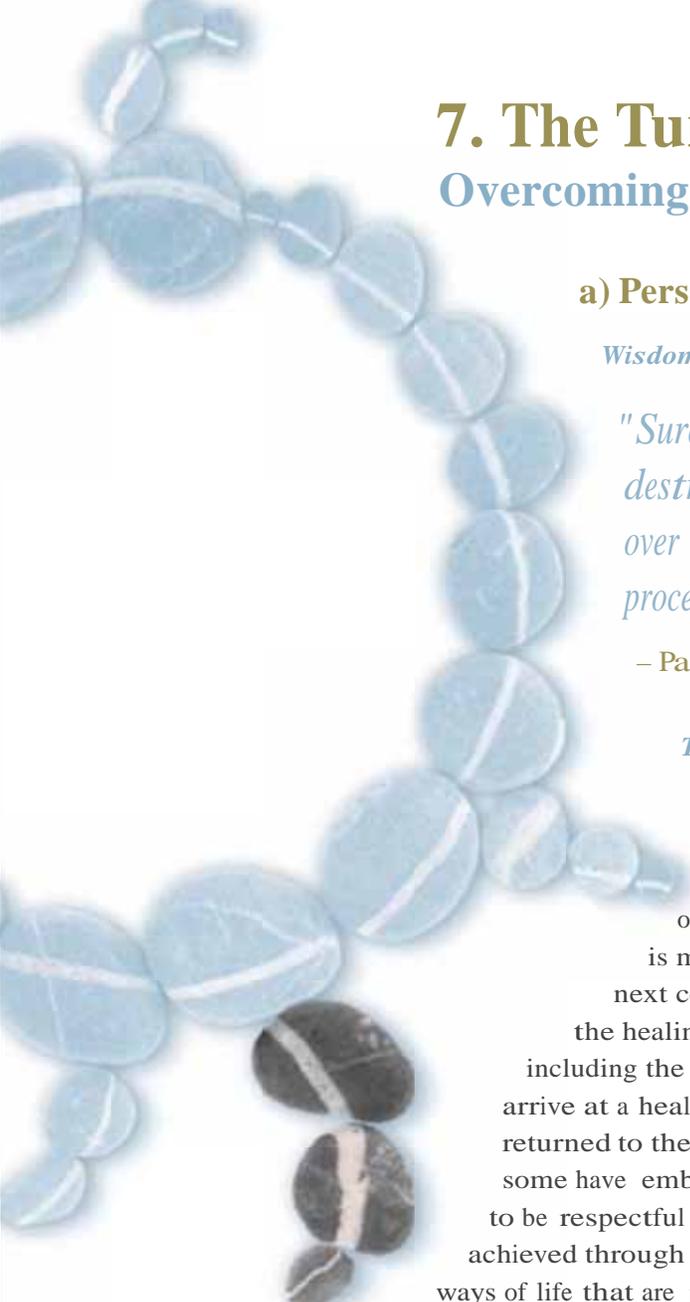
6. Strengths:

It's important in the planning process to identify the strengths of the community. Because (as we have mentioned), it is on the strengths that you will be building up the community. So, the question that can be answered is: “What are all the strengths that we possess?” And another question could also be raised, “What can we do to strengthen ourselves as a community?”

These two questions should help you identify your community's capabilities and capacities.

7. Summary of Feelings:

It's very important that at the end of a session, everyone in the group has a chance to express themselves. If there is a small group, a circle of sharing is best. It allows everyone to really share their thoughts about what they see happening with the planning work you are doing. If you don't have time and there are many in the group (15+) then you can ask each person to say how he or she felt about the session in three words or less. This is a quicker way of getting everyone's overall assessment of the planning session. Be sure to include all of their responses in your plan or report. It will remind you of how the session went as time passes and it will let others know how your group felt about the session even if they couldn't be there with you.



7. The Turtle's Tail: Overcoming Pitfalls

a) Personal & Community Healing

Wisdom:

"Sure, we have learned a lot of bad and destructive behaviours in our communities over the generations. But we are in the process of unlearning them!"

– Participant

The Story:

The thing about personal healing is: if you work on yourself, you are actually working on your community. Our communities heal one person at a time. And every community is mending itself at a different rate than the next community. We need to be respectful of the healing process within individual communities, including the ways and methods that are utilized to arrive at a healthier place. Some communities may have returned to the traditional ways of our ancestors while some have embraced Christianity. Our Elders teach us to be respectful of all ways. Unity and peace can only be achieved through respect for one another and the various ways of life that are practiced.

When positive people cooperate with positive people the result is positive interaction and the development of positive relationships. When you introduce negative people to the equation, it's not so easy. There will be conflict and a clashing of agendas. Dissensions and great difficulty in moving forward will become the key challenge. So what is to be done at this point? Our Elders give us an example to follow. One day, there was an old man that had been to war and he was displaying his war medals at a table during an Elder's conference. Meanwhile, there was an Elder's panel at the head of the room and they were answering questions from the main plenary of the room. The old war veteran was ranting and raving that *he* should be the one to be up there with the Elders on the panel and he was complaining that the conference organizers did not ask him to be up there. This went on for some time and the organizers were getting quite upset. But the Elders sitting on the panel stopped the session and invited the old veteran to come up and sit beside them. When everyone else in the room was very mad and upset at this old veteran, it did not faze the elders in the least bit. They *invited* him and *included* him to join them at the table. Of course, the old veteran continued to brag and rant about how he saved this person and shot another to help win the war. Everyone in the room was astounded to see these events unfold. But soon, it became apparent that the Elders looked even wiser in the eyes of everyone at the session, while the old veteran made himself look even more self-centred.

Nobody called the old veteran an “Elder”. Everyone knew the difference from this experience.

So, too, when you encounter people in the community severely in need of healing and they are hurting immensely. It’s easy to tell them to get out of the room or go get some healing; but harder to include them and to be compassionate and understanding that they too are our relatives and they are victims of generational and systemic abuses. It is still even harder to conduct a community planning session with people that are continually disruptive to the process you are trying to make happen. Courage is needed to approach these people one-on-one and kindly ask them to either refrain from negativity or to respect the group that is trying to make positive steps forward.



Personal healing is personal. Individuals need to come to their own realization that their lives need to change. And they are responsible for making that change – hopefully with our support.

Community healing on the other hand is much more challenging, as it involves many more individuals concerned with mending the community as a whole. Some communities have made dramatic shifts from being 90% immersed in alcohol and drugs and reversing that to 90% alcohol and drug free. It requires the community coming together and making a decision to deal head on with the problems that plague the community. It doesn’t have to be every single person that makes this decision, only 3% of your community’s population. That small group can make all the difference.

The healing process is simple, but never easy. Whether it’s an individual or a community, it starts with a decision.

Tools & Tracks:

Steps to Consider for the Healing Process

Personal Healing:

1. Make a decision as an individual in your community to change for the better.
2. Develop a personal vision and plan using the PATH process (requires a facilitator).
3. Take small baby steps in the direction of your vision.
4. Believe in yourself and that change is possible.
5. Commit to being a leader by example.
6. Don’t wait for others to start, take steps of your own.
7. Remember that healing your community is every community member’s business.

Community Healing:

1. As a group of community members (whether it's leadership or a small group), make a decision to commit to community healing.
2. Obtain support from your community's leadership for healing initiatives;
3. Consider requesting Community Council or Chief & Council to consider passing a motion that states if an individual wants to sit on the Council - or be in an elected leadership position - requires at least 2 years of sobriety (as some Communities in the country have done).
4. Coordinate resources and expertise to develop a Community Healing Plan – involving the leadership, community membership and staff from such programs as Brighter Futures, Building Healthy Communities, NNADAP, Provincial programs, etc.
5. Enlist the core group of committed individuals coordinate activities. This group is not responsible for healing the community, only coordinating resources.
6. Build trust by holding one successful community event and then another. Begin with one and make it count. Build it from there.
7. Utilize the community's strengths to mobilize the community healing process.

b) Conflict Resolution Tools (Problem solving)

Wisdom:

"Seek to understand first what another person is saying before being understood..."

- **St. Francis of Assisi** (paraphrased)

"The first step in solving any problem is knowing there's a problem in the first place..."

- **Participant**

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same way of thinking that got us there in the first place..."

- **Einstein**

The Story:

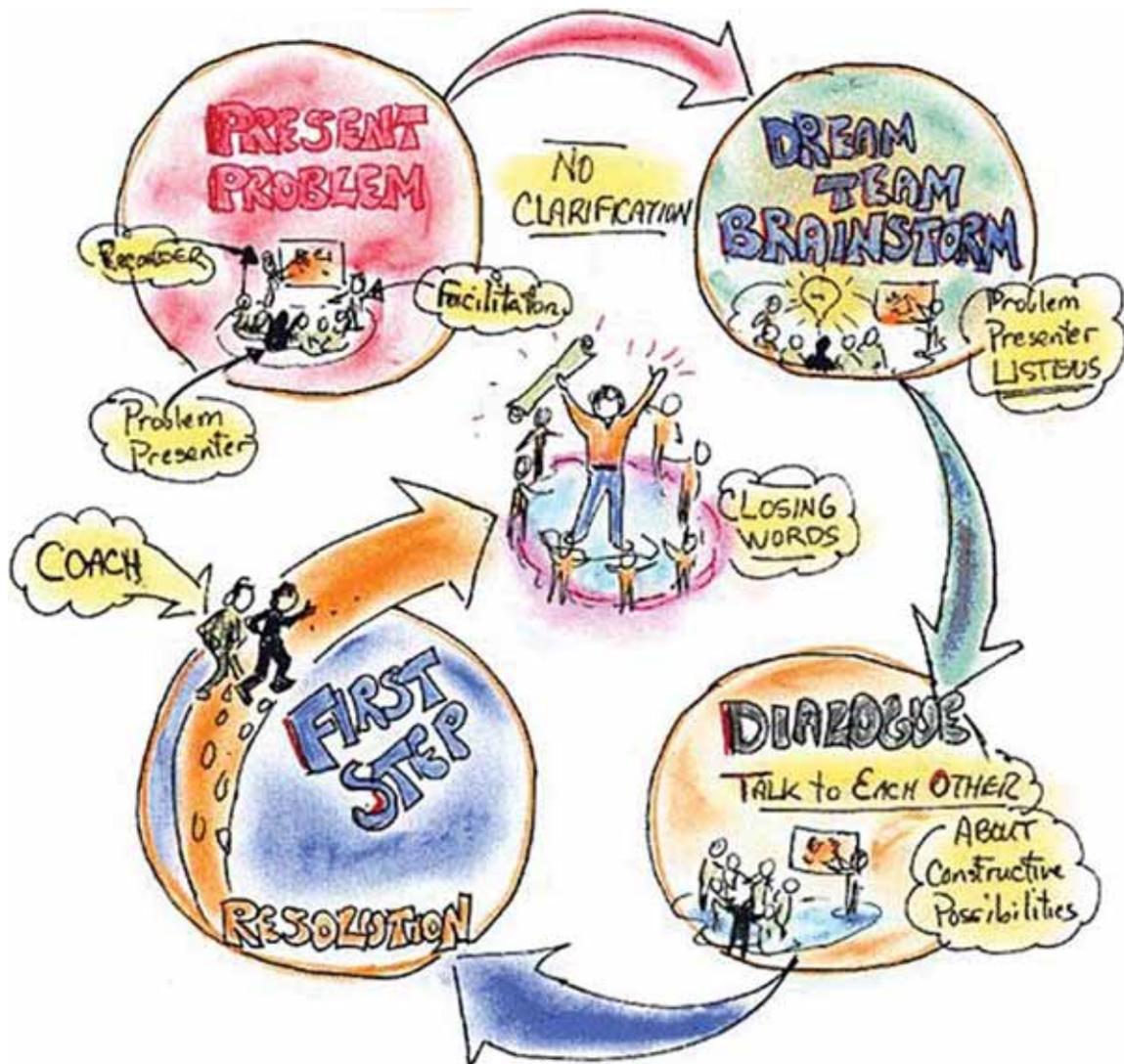
This is a short and powerful problem-solving tool that takes no more than a half hour. It is effective in getting “unstuck” from a problem in life or work. Solution Circles are tools of “community capacity”. It assumes and demonstrates that nearby people - in any community or work place have the capacity to help - if asked. It requires a person to ASK - not an easy thing in our culture of privacy and “do it alone”. This tool puts all the values we espouse into practice and demonstrates that TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER.

Time required:

No more than thirty minutes. People per Solution Circle: Best with 5-9.

SOLUTION CIRCLE

GETTING UNSTUCK



² Used by permission. Please see:
<http://www.inetusion.com>

The Solution Circle Process:

Roles to be played:

- Problem Presenter (focus person)
- Process Facilitator (team manager, time keeper)
- Note Taker or Graphic Recorder
- Amazingly creative Brainstorm Team

Explain the steps in detail:

Step 1: Present the Problem

(Six minutes) **The Problem Presenter** will have six uninterrupted minutes to **spea**k** about the problem**. The job of the process facilitator is to keep time and make sure no one interrupts. The recorder takes notes. Everyone else (the “brainstormers”) listens to the Problem Presenter. If the problem presenter stops talking before the six minutes elapse, everyone else stays silent until the six minutes pass. This is important because sometimes the silence itself can tell a story. So, the problem presenter gets six **uninterrupted** minutes.

Step 2: Brainstorm

(Six minutes) Next is a brainstorming session. Everyone thinks of creative solutions to the problem that was presented. It is not a time to clarify the problem or to ask questions. It is not a time to give speeches, lectures or advice. The process facilitator must make sure this is a brainstorm. Everyone gets a chance to give his or her brilliant ideas. No one must be allowed to dominate. The problem presenter listens - without interrupting. He/she must not talk or respond. We often give the person masking tape to facilitate their listening. It is hard to just listen!

Step 3: Discussion

(Six minutes) Now the group can have a dialogue led by the problem presenter. This is time to explore and clarify the problem. Focus on the positive points only and not what can not be done.

Step 4: Decision

(Six minutes) Lastly, the group decides on the first steps that are doable within the next three days. At least ONE step should be initiated within 24 hours. This is critical. Research shows that unless a first step is taken almost immediately, people do not get out of their ruts. A coach from the group volunteers to phone or see the person(s) designated to carry out the actions required within 3 days and check if they took the first step.

Step 5: Evaluate Experience

Finally the group just does a round of words to describe the experience and the recorder gives the record to the facilitator.

In our experiences, people love this exercise and find that it generates action. It does not guarantee a solution, but it usually gets people “unstuck” and at least points to the next logical step.

Seven Levels of Thinking for Problem Solving:

The following various levels of thinking are represented by some of the creatures we are familiar with. Use this tool to analyze any given situation or problem you are facing in your community.

The Owl: The owl level is about sitting still, as the owl does, in one place and asking what the essential facts of the matter are all about. It is about seeking to understand what the current situation is and all the information that cannot be argued with by anyone in the group. If someone can say, “no, that is not correct”, then you are not dealing with the facts of the matter. Concrete facts simply say what happened such as “we spent \$200,500 in our budget last year”. You either did or you didn’t. Or, “we don’t have a backhoe for our operations”. You either have a backhoe or you don’t.

The Wolverine: Known as the terror of the forest in some parts of the country, the wolverine is about understanding what your dark side or the storm is in the community. What could go wrong with the situation? What are the potential areas where you could fail? Where are you weak?

The Buffalo: When the buffalo were plenty, it was always good news. The buffalo was the provider of clothes, shelter, and food for the community. So, what are all the positives about the situation you are facing? What is the sunny side of the picture and the good things happening?

The Eagle: Able to fly the highest, the eagle sees many possibilities in the grand scheme or the big picture. What are some of the over-arching issues affecting your situation or problem? When you take a step back, what do you see is part of the whole picture?

The Horse: Known for its keen senses and its responses to humans, horses react with fierce and gentle emotion. They can be bucking broncos or timid and quiet. So, what is the emotional reaction of your community to the problem or situation you are encountering? How do people feel about it?

The Wolf: No creatures in the wild are more capable at teamwork than the wolf pack. Wolves are capable of great achievements and they keep the family unit intact as they work together. So, what then are all the possible solutions or goals to your problem or situation that requires teamwork?

The Squirrel: If you need something done with detail, you need to be like the squirrel that gathers and plans for the future. All the general and detail work can be handled by those who are like the squirrel. If you want something done, give it to a squirrel. So, what are the key action steps you will take based on what you came up with for your possible solutions? What are the top priority actions and who will be responsible for ensuring they will happen?

c) Dealing with Resistance to Change, Criticism, & Family Division

Wisdom:

"Change requires a lot of courage to work against all those forces that counter everything we want to change... we need to have an understanding of the learned behavior; understanding of how things have come to be the way it is today. We need to have courage; we need to persevere and be strong..."

– Participant

The Story:

Let's not kid ourselves; implementing something new in our communities is not going to be without its challenges. You can expect that you are going to face resistance, criticism and see division occur or resurface among families, clans or other organizations. In fact, if there is anything that we can be absolutely sure of it is this: issues will arise, conflict will happen, and criticism is guaranteed. The question is how do we deal with these?

What powerful words spoken by the participant above: courage, perseverance and strength. These qualities are describing someone truly remarkable: someone who is able to stand up and defend something they believe in, get back up on their feet after being knocked down and pull entire families and communities together to agree on a common solution to a problem. Where can we find these super human beings?

Well, the good news is we don't need to have all these qualities or be a superhuman, but we do need to surround ourselves with a supportive team whose entire collection of strengths make up the strong force to combat resistance, criticism and family division. No one individual can be expected to do it all on their own. Nor is there any guide that will help you deal with Situation A, with Solution A. However, we can provide you with some very simple guidelines.

Tools & Tracks:

Some Sound advice for Community Challenges

Goals:

- To provide you with some viable options that will enable you to deal more effectively with resistance, criticism or division.
- Increase your chances of continuing the momentum in a positive direction

Facilitator recommended: Maybe

Time Required: N/A

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools: Your mind power, solid support system.

Here's How:

Consider the following tips, regardless if you are facing resistance, criticism or division, they may be useful.

Acknowledge

Acknowledging that resistance, fear, criticism and division exist is the best means of opening up communication channels. Address the concerns. Note them and validate the concerns. For example, you can say "I hear your concerns, they are valid. We can talk about them; we can give you more information and we can try to see if we can come up with some solutions"

Talking About it

Talking about the situation really involves two levels of discussions. First among your team, then among the resisters, critics and divided families/community. Be proactive, not reactive. Discuss among your team or colleagues how each situation could be best dealt with. Some cultures will be comfortable arranging a talking circle. Arrange to bring both sides together; or the family heads or spokesperson from each family to meet. Consult your community Elders or traditional means of dealing with these situations and draw on those strengths.

Involvement

Why not ask them to get involved and be part of the group, or a working group or sub-committee? Find a strength that you can tap into and have them work for you instead of against you. If you need a working group to plan or develop a new initiative, ask them to participate. If families are divided, invite one key member from each. List the pros and cons for each option and make them in an open forum if possible.

Education/Information

Often resistance arises from fear; and fear arises from the unknown. Providing the right information at the right time is essential to overcome fear. Educate yourself first with information. Sometimes you may feel that the reasons are obvious. Well sometimes they are not to other people - so write them down. Often as well, there is a clearly defined objective to any initiative. State the objective. Often agreement can be made on the objective, but not always on the means to get there. Once there is agreement on the objective, they may be persuaded to agree on the means. If there is a decision that is to be made, provide options. If agreement is not reached, consider the next step.

Negotiating/compromising

If all else fails, negotiate a mutually agreeable middle solution. This is not a new concept for Indigenous people around the world. Good leaders will often consider both sides of an issue and propose a solution that incorporates elements of both sides. Sometimes a skilled facilitator may be brought in to assist with this task.

d) Dealing with Staff and Leadership Turnover

Wisdom:

"Never, ever, ever give up..."

– Winston Churchill

"Look at how geese work together to arrive at their destination, they take turns leading the flock..."

- Phillips

The Story:

What can be more frustrating than just getting some positive momentum going and then receiving the news that you will have to deal with new leadership in the community or staff to work with? Well, it is just one of the realities that we have to deal with, but we cannot let that deter us from our path. Often a really good education campaign is all that you may need do to keep the momentum going, but sometimes you may require a little planning to help you get through the “hiccup” and back again on the positive path. You can choose to look at this as a challenge or you can choose to see it as an opportunity; an opportunity for new members and recruits for your team of committed individuals.

One of the best strategies when dealing with new staff is to have a solid orientation package. The orientation package should include an education section as well as some information that the new staff or leader (and potential recruit) can walk away with. A personal approach is always good. Who can refuse to listen to what you have to say if you make an appointment or block some time with the new person to orient them to community development taking place in your community? If you have already created a core group of committed individuals, perhaps you can approach this as a group as well.

Seldom do we ever have a turnover in leadership without adequate notice. Use the campaign period as an opportunity to ask the nominated members how they feel about building a stronger future for the community; ask them if they are aware of all the community development activity taking place; and if they are willing to keep up the effort? Again, think of this an opportunity! Set up an interview with each nominated member and provide them with the orientation to Community Development.

The transitioning of leadership in our communities may sometimes be a difficult time. New leaders are often very busy learning their new roles and responsibilities. The same can be said for new staff whether they join the administration, health or social team in our communities. All can potentially become a resource that can benefit our team, so it is important that we provide them with the education as early as possible and catch their attention while they are keen and enthusiastic.

Tools & Tracks:

Creating a Solid Orientation Package

Goals:

- Foster a proactive approach in preparing for leadership or staff turnover
- To create a pre-existing plan of action to deal with staff and leadership turnover

Facilitator recommended: No

Time Required: 6-8 hours to prepare orientation package, then ongoing

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools: Computer, presentation software, three-ring binders (suggest you prepare 20) & photocopier

Here's How:

Put together 20 orientation binders (to start) with tabs for each of the following sections. This orientation package should include these elements:

Tab 1: Explain what is meant by Community Development (Community development is more than just economic development - although economic development is included. Community development is the process or effort of building communities on a local level with emphasis on building the economy, forging and strengthening social ties, and developing the non-profit sector)

Tab 2: Background and history of Community Development in your community including:

- When and how it all began
- Vision, Goals & Objectives - overall

Tab 3: Status of overall progress, and for each individual initiative

Tab 4: Key individuals/organizations or affiliations and roles of each. Can include your Core Group of Committed Individuals here

Tab 5: Future plans

Tab 6: Presentation slides (optional)

Tab 7: Further references

Tips: Keep the information brief and to the point. No lengthy documents in Tabs 1-6, reserve any lengthy reports and papers for the last tab. Follow the outline to create a title for each section. Use bullets and point form for each subtopic. (See also Making Presentations.)

Keep one binder as your Master Orientation Binder for *Building a Stronger Future for NAME COMMUNITY*.

Sample Questions to ask potential nominees who may be new to Chief and Council:

- Can you tell us if you are aware of what is currently happening in our community in regard to Community Development and/or Building a Stronger Future?
- Can you tell us what your thoughts are on the subject or how you feel this is going?

- Can you tell us what your plans would be for Community Development, not just economically but socially as well? Do you see yourself being a big part of it?
- Make up your own questions here, to get them thinking of Community Development.
- If there is not yet anything happening in an organized way, these questions are really good to get a new leader thinking of what should be done and some concrete steps to get there.

e) Overcoming Fears



Wisdom:

"Don't be afraid..."

– (The Bible)

"It's OK to be afraid. It's not OK to stay afraid..."

– Lou Tice

"...fear is the chief reason for poverty and failure and misery that takes on a thousand different forms."

– Napoleon Hill

"Success doesn't come to you - you go to it."

- Marva Collins

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself..."

- Roosevelt

The Story:

Fear. What a loaded word. Particularly, when one considers that fear is at the root of so much inaction and paralysis in our communities right across the country. It's responsible for pain, anguish, confusion, anger, mistrust, regret, dependency, and every unfulfilled dream or goal that was ever dreamed. There's so many different scenarios or situations where fear rears its ugly head.

Top of the list, ironically, is the fear of success. Why would anyone fear success? Doesn't success bring us lots of money and doesn't everyone need money to survive and have a good life? Well, it's simply not that simple. Let's take, for example, George – an individual who dreamed of starting up his own business. After the launch of his restaurant, business was booming and things were going along very well for George. He began to say to himself, "wow! If this continues, I will have lots of money in no time!" That eerie feeling of fear began to creep up the back of his spine just thinking about it. After a few more months

things began to spiral downward. A year later, George was not only closing down his business but he was \$20,000 in debt with his creditors. What happened?

George was not used to having money to begin with. He struggled - like so many other Aboriginal people - with poverty all of his life. Sure he could see that success was just around the corner, but George was not prepared mentally or emotionally to have money in his bank account all the time. He had to get rid of it quickly when it was there. He took a trip to Arizona. He bought a new quad. He gave a lot of it to his friends and relatives. Money was like water in his hands. His fear of success sabotaged any real chance of him ever becoming wealthy.

Why is that? Although, this is changing in some Aboriginal communities that are maintaining higher levels of success in their business ventures and increased employment status, most communities are still struggling trying to stabilize their economic situation. In other words, poverty still reigns. When we come from a position of poverty, we need to break free from the mentality and the ways of thinking that kept us in poverty. Generations of being told we couldn't succeed at anything but the most menial of tasks and a range of other put-downs, we succumbed to the belief that we couldn't be successful (generally speaking, that is). To change this, we need to prepare for success. We need to get rid of our fear of succeeding - for whatever we decide to do.

A close cousin to the fear of success is the *fear of failure*. Every test you have ever taken in school has at its' root an underlying concept: don't fail. If you fail, you will have shown that you are not only inferior but mentally incapable of succeeding. The school system continuously sends out the message to children that they need to pass each and every examination in order to move on to the next grade. Nobody needs to spell this out to us, it is there whether we acknowledge it or not. Is it any wonder then that we fear taking on that new job or starting a business when we've learned all of our lives that it's unacceptable to fail? "Nothing ventured, nothing gained", goes the old saying. Well, "nothing ventured, nothing failed," seems to be our new way of thinking. We need to take the lesson from Thomas Edison, who invented the light bulb. He performed over 11,000 experiments to arrive at inventing the light bulb, which affects each and every one of us today. What if he had given up after the 10,999th experiment? T.J. Watson, the founder of IBM computers reminds us that "success is at the far end of failure! ...would you like me to give you a formula for success? It's quite simple, really. Double your rate of failure. You are thinking of failure as the enemy of success. But it isn't at all. You can be discouraged by failure or you can learn from it. So go ahead and make mistakes. Make all you can. Because remember that's where you will find success."

Fear of criticism is an especially difficult one for us. What will "people" say if I do this or that? "I can't stand it when people say I'm just trying to be better than them when I simply want to achieve my dream..." many of us have thought. We shy away from even beginning something for fear of being criticized. The old bucket of crabs story still holds true - we drag one another down instead of lifting one another up. We can learn a lot from the Jewish and the Italian people. They help a new family buy or build a new house and then help to get them established. Then they move on to another, then another. Constantly building up, never tearing down.

The person who can master his or her fears, can achieve practically anything they set their hearts and minds to achieve.

“The development of our self-confidence begins with the elimination of this demon called fear.” (Hill)

“The person who makes no mistakes is the one who never does anything. Do not be afraid of mistakes providing you do not make the same one twice...” (Roosevelt)

Tools & Tracks:

Personal Fear:

There is but one suggestion that we have to individuals in dealing with personal fears. And there is but one person that we know that can help you. Our suggestion is very clear and simple. Go, find a mirror...look yourself straight in the eye and point to yourself and say, “you are the one that can help me to deal with my fears!” Make the commitment to tackle and face them one at a time.

Q. What do you fear?

**** Make a commitment to yourself today to overcome your greatest fear!***

Community Fear:

Fears that are unspoken about directly but are often revealed in the community during gatherings come in the form of phrases that contain “can’t” or “you will never be able to...” Or, you think of a big old obstacle staring you right in the face: no funding, no programs, no staff, no leadership or vision. Remember that when you think you “can’t” then you are absolutely right. But when you think you CAN, you are also right. Only the people in your community can decide to go beyond any fears and begin taking the steps to greater development, healing, or stability - towards creating or pursuing your community’s great vision.

Q. What fears are holding your community back?

8. The Head of the Turtle: Leadership & Taking Action

a) Taking Action

Wisdom:

"People are tired of the rhetoric... it's time for us to stop the talk and just do it!"

The Story:

This is the “kick it the butt factor” that we all need to hear sometime. We have all heard the stories. We have all heard the “things must get better” and “we need to get moving” stories and yes we can continue to talk and plan, but we will never see the progress we hope for if we continue to talk a lot and take no action. Sometimes we even hope that someone else will take up the cause and get things going. We talk, talk, plan, plan, plan and these make wonderful colorful posters and the documents sometimes make wonderful kindling or even placemats. However, if you want to see your community develop and thrive as they once did, we need those posters, plans and placemats come to life! And we can't wait for someone else to get it going. How do we do this? It all starts with a decision, with the collective will of the community and support of the political leadership in your community as well.

Think about the major change that took place in our modern society in the past century. Fifteen years ago it was perfectly acceptable to smoke in your workplace. Office buildings, banks, public transportation, airplanes and, yes, even hospitals allowed smoking or had designated space for smoking. Backed by sound and solid evidence that smoking was harmful for our health, we began to see small movements taking place across the world. But it all really started in Canada with the case of Heather Crowe; the non-smoking restaurant worker who was diagnosed with lung cancer. She decided to take action and took it to the courts, and became a center of a large smoke free workplace campaign. One province at a time began implementing no smoking policies. Soon government began passing bi-laws and passing legislation. One by one our provinces passed legislation. This change has had huge impact across our country, and around the world. Similar stories have played out across the world.

Tools and Tracks:

Kicking Butt and Incentives to Get Moving

Goals:

- To inspire a group to get going on a project
- To help a team focus their energy

Facilitator recommended: Yes

Time Required: 15-20 minutes tagged on to a meeting or workshop

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: 8-10

Essential tools: Flip chart, marker, paper & pens

Here's How:

Start with a team building exercise among your group by creating a team-based challenge.

1. Introduce the reason for this activity by reading the above "Wisdom Statement" to the group. An example for the opening could be "We all have a responsibility to get working on building a better future for our children. We want to stop talking and do something about our situation (name what this is). This exercise is about how and what we can do individually, to give ourselves a "kick in the butt". It is time to stop wishing someone else will do the work, we all need to work. So we are going to create a contract with ourselves and look at it periodically to see where we are at. This is about our own individual responsibility, and not about someone else's. (See Goals)
2. Take 5 minutes and have each individual write an honest answer to the following question: In what way can I take ACTION in my community? Take 5 more minutes and have each person turn their answer into one clear goal, based on their answer on the main purpose of the group. Goals should be limited to a 6 month time frame. Examples of goals are:
 - I will recruit 1-2 new community members this month to join our team in the next 6 months.
 - I will volunteer 8 hours of my time each month to supporting our community development initiatives.
 - Or create your own goal: _____.
3. Next have the individual reflect on this goal and finish the following statement: working toward this goal is important for me and my community because:_____.
4. Have them write the answer on the back of the poster. Decorate and post where you see it each day. Celebrate when goals are reached!

b) Evaluating, Observing and Following Your Tracks

Wisdom

"We have done things this way for so long and yet we can see that things are not getting better. We don't need an expert to tell us that. If something is not working we know that. We need to learn from our mistakes, but we also need to try different things to see if they are going to work..." - Participant

The Story:

Sometimes when we are moving forward, trying new things or doing things differently, it is a good idea to take a periodic look at the path we left behind. We need to know that what we have done has made a difference or an improvement in our community. Think about a music teacher and her students. Her students seem to be progressing along rather slowly and they appear bored. The teacher goes to a workshop on new teaching methods and she decides that she wants try to get her students to have fun playing their instrument, and if they are having fun, she thinks that they will learn faster (the hypothesis/objective). She comes up with a new plan. At the end of each lesson, she allows the student to listen to their favorite music and play along for the last 5 minutes (this is the intervention/program). She then tells them, that they can practice along with their favorite music, but for each five minutes they spend on their favorite song, they have to spend the same amount of time on their mandatory music lessons. She decides that she will measure if this is working by how quickly they move along in their modules (the indicators of success). She has kept records of when they moved from lesson to lesson, and how quickly they had done so before hand (baseline data).

How do we conduct an evaluation that means something to our community? First of all, planning to evaluate a new program or initiative needs to take place at the beginning and not at the end of an intervention or program. Unfortunately, many evaluations are not planned for at the beginning and we run into problems along the way. They should be planned for at the beginning, and periodic checks take place along the way.

Evaluations and taking a look behind at our tracks does not have to be a complicated ordeal, nor do we have to hire outside “experts” to tell us we did a good job, or if what we did didn’t make a difference, although there are thousands of books written on the subject, and many who claim they are experts in doing evaluations. That may be so, but we are the real experts in our communities and we are the best people to decide if our efforts have made a difference.

There are some simple steps to consider however. We have to ask at the very beginning, what do we hope to achieve with our intervention? This answer usually becomes our goal statement. For example, we are planning to implement a curfew at 9:00 PM in our community. Family’s names are entered into a monthly draw that had a nice prize if their children were not found outdoors after 9 PM on weeknights (the intervention). The overall goal is to keep our youth out of trouble (reduce crime). We think our intervention will have other effects:

1. Children/youth are making it to school on time in the mornings (reduce lateness)
2. Children/youth attendance has improved
3. Improve parental responsibility for ensuring children are in doors at a certain time. Our indicators for success are created directly from our objectives - # times the youth/children come into contact with police/constables or # incidents reported involving them, # times school reported children/youth late for school; attendance and # of times families names were entered into the draw.

Next we decide how we are going to measure whether this has made a difference. We will keep track of number of children and youth found outside after 9 PM. We will work with the school to see if lateness has decreased and attendance improved.

We decide that for our evaluation, we will compare the numbers before and after the intervention. So, before we even implement the curfew we have a meeting with the school, police and others to decide how and who will keep track of all the numbers. We also look at the current numbers as they stand at this point in time if they are available: baseline numbers. If we don't have them, that is OK. Our initial sense of how things are is our baseline. Once we have this all sorted out, we then implement the curfew. We take a periodic look at the numbers to see how things are going along the way. All of these numbers become part of the quantitative data (quantifiable, measurable). Six months later, we decide that the numbers are only telling part of the story and it is time to ask community members if they think the curfew is working (qualitative data). Both of these types of data, (quantitative and qualitative) are equally important to tell the whole story.

This is a very basic evaluation. You will probably hear that there are many types. Some measure the effects of the program, or outcomes and others measure whether the program/services can be better delivered (process). Whatever the purpose of the evaluation, it doesn't need to be complicated. Sometimes funding agencies will tell you that you need to have an evaluation of the program/intervention or service, but don't let you know that you should really plan for it at the very beginning. Use the tools and tracks and ask these basic questions for each and every new thing that you try in your community and you will be well on your way to planning your own meaningful evaluation. This is not a comprehensive "how to", but simply gets you thinking about the impact of all activity that you may undertake by starting off on the right track and by asking the right questions at the very beginning of every activity. These questions can be useful for individual activities or for your overall plans for your community.

Tools and Tracks:

Deciding when an evaluation is necessary and, if so, can I answer these questions?

Goals:

- Enable you to determine if an activity, intervention or project requires an evaluation.
- To get you thinking about the appropriate questions to ask when looking back at your tracks.
- To get you really thinking about what the project/program/intervention is all about, including its goals, how it will meet its goals and how you will know if it has met its goals or not.

Facilitator recommended:

Time Required: N/A

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools:

Here's How:

Consider the answers to the following questions each and every time you plan a new intervention, project or new activity in your community as a result of your efforts.

1. Did this activity, program, project or intervention introduce a new way of doing things in my community as a result of our community development plans?
2. Are we going to evaluate one specific intervention, or our overall efforts?

3. Who were the target group of people – children, youth, parents or all community members?
4. If so, what was the overall goal of the activity, program, project or intervention? (write it down) For example “There will be less youth getting into trouble and staying out late at night”.
5. What were some of the other objectives? (list below –think about those things that mean something to your community, some should be specific and measurable, if possible)
 - For example, less youth coming into contact with constables (easy to measure #of incidents)
 - Community members voice they feel safer (interviews, perceptions)
 - Improved attendance at school etc.
6. How will we determine if this activity, program, project or intervention is a success? (List possible indicators of success)
7. Do these indicators have measurable numbers? If not, what other means could we use? Think about interviewing or doing surveys to see if community members have seen any positive changes.
8. What would be the purpose of the evaluation? Improve effectiveness of project (process) or change behaviours/practices (outcome).
9. Who will be responsible for evaluating our progress?

If you are able to answer each of these questions at the beginning of your activities, projects or efforts - you are well on your way to planning for your evaluation. You will be able to look back on the path you have carved, make some decisions along the way and change course if need be. Nowadays, it is all about having the “evidence” to support our decisions.

c) Celebrating Successes

Wisdom:

"You don't have to change the world in one day... take small baby steps, one step at a time and celebrate those small steps..."

– Participant

"When we celebrate what's right with the world instead of wallowing in what's wrong with it, we find the wisdom to fix what's wrong..."

– Dewitt Jones



The Story:

Sometimes when there is a huge mountain in front of you that you have to climb; it is often difficult to see the beautiful scenery all around you; the yellow and deepest purple of the flower staring from the forest floor; the scent of the evergreens after a fresh summer shower; the gentle rustle of the leaves in the wind; and the crunching of the fallen branches under your feet. All you can see is that large rocky jagged mass that looks impossible to climb. Instead of focusing on the progress you have made blazing trail through the 10 KM you have travelled, you focus in on the 100 you still have to go.

We are all guilty of it. Often what we have not yet accomplished sends a shadow over what we have done, or are getting done. It sends such a dark shadow we may not see anything at all. Somehow we have become our own greatest critic; and one critical insensitive comment from a colleague gives us further evidence that we have done nothing more than dust the small film of dirt of our desks. All those meetings, workshops; plans, and presentations - and there still is that great big mountain in our way!

Nothing could be further from the truth. Every meeting, presentation, planning session, poster or workshop that you have done has made an impact, and you must celebrate those successes! We have really gotten quite good at feeling that what we have done is not worthwhile. It is now time we change that. We have all heard that humility is a virtue; it certainly is, but when a person is a great big star, they usually have a great big ego to go along with their star status. But we are like small stars, and there is virtue in what we are trying to do. We therefore must consciously make an effort to take time to reflect on our journey and make an effort to celebrate those small victories. Somehow we have learned to batter ourselves, instead of buttering ourselves. It is time to change the way we think and focus on those small baby steps and give ourselves a pat on the back for those tiny victories.

What can be considered a victory? How about 10 or 20 people who come out to your presentation and who want to help? What about that first meeting, when there was so much energy and hope for the future? What about the youngsters who have shared with you the vision of their future, they will have that imprinted in their hearts and somehow, one day they will remember and join you on your journey in 15 years, or maybe sooner.

Here are some tools to help remind you of when to celebrate and some ideas to help you decide how. Remember -focus on the smallest of victories, because when you add up all those small baby steps you would have travelled another 100 km before you realize it. Find a reason to celebrate your small success weekly or everyday and your community will soon find yourself accomplishing more than you dreamed possible.

Tools and Tracks:

Celebrate the Small Successes

Goals: Why should we celebrate small successes?

- It provides us with some needed **Validation**: You may have heard of SMART goals: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely goals and by timely we mean establishing some clear timelines. We propose you substitute a new term for the "S" – SMALL. It begins with setting **small, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely** goals that when we achieve them it gives us much needed confirmation that we are moving in the right direction. We then have reasons to celebrate those small baby steps.

- It provides us with **Motivation to Continue**. Celebrating the small victories often provides us with the motivation to continue on to the next small goal.
- It increases our confidence to move on to bigger challenges.
- It helps us to focus on the **Visible Results**, and not all that we have yet to accomplish. It also makes us feel good

Facilitator recommended: No

Time Required: N/A

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools: Your mind power, thank and congratulations cards.

Here's How:

We are all pretty good at recognizing when we have achieved something significant in our community, such as more kids graduating from high school and going on to further their education, building a new gathering place for children or implementing a sport program to keep the youth busy. If the success is obvious, then go to step 5 for some ideas. If you need some help looking for reasons to celebrate, consider the following:

1. Separate the larger evaluation outcomes you hope to achieve by all of your efforts as the longer term goals and treat every meeting, gathering, workshop or planning session like they are goals in themselves.
2. At the beginning of each activity, workshop, gathering or community session set three SMART goals for that specific session. For example, three goals for a meeting are: 1) that 50% of invitee's will attend, 2) at the beginning of each gathering, meeting or workshop we clearly defined our goals for this specific session, and third of these could be that 3) at the end of the session we have set a date for the next meeting and have 75 % attendees committed to the next meeting. At the end of each, review the three goals. Did you achieve them? If not, don't worry, celebrate if you even had achieved one.
3. At the beginning of each week create a list of SMART goals for that week. At the end of the week review the list. Try it on a daily basis as well. Don't limit yourself, give yourself the freedom to define your own goals.
4. Celebrate these small successes! Here's some suggestions:
 - a. At the end of the meeting, or gathering, make a point of reviewing the SMART goals and celebrate with a round of applause. Congratulate yourselves.
 - b. Send out cards of thanks and appreciation outlining the small successes to your community members or participants.
 - c. Create a colourful poster outlining the accomplishment and post in a visible place in the community.
 - d. Choose someone to acknowledge and thank them for their accomplishment on a daily or weekly basis. Sometimes giving is better than receiving!
 - e. Have a meal, bake a cake or share cookies to celebrate the small victories!

- f. The possibilities are limitless. Write down some ways you can celebrate those small victories, or recognize others for theirs:

(For more information, please refer to Dewitt Jones' website found in the Links section)

d) Leadership Support



Wisdom:

"The art of leadership is saying 'no', not yes. It is very easy to say 'yes'..."

- Tony Blair

"The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers..."

- Ralph Nader

"I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people..."

- Ghandi

"Good leaders find good ideas and then get them implemented..."

- Phillips

Story:

Without the support of the leadership in your community, you may find yourself spinning your wheels farther "down the road". It's always a good idea to enlist or obtain the support of the leaders in your community and that should be a priority early in the planning process. But the process works both ways. If you are in the leadership position (on the Council), then you also need the support of the people if you want to embark on a community development process. That is a rule of thumb and not written in stone, of course.

One community put it this way: "we don't expect Chief and Council to carry out everything we have planned in the community. That would be unrealistic. But they do need to know what we are trying to accomplish and we do need their support to move forward..." (Fisher River Cree Nation).

Good communication is required to ensure you obtain the proper support from the leadership in the community. If you sit on a committee that reports to the council and you require the support from them, it's always good business to keep the council informed of the plans of your committee. If certain projects require additional resources, for instance, funding, staff, etc., and you need the support of council, then a memo or letter to council outlining the situation is pretty standard practice.

It all depends on your circumstances. If you report to council, then knowing the boundaries of your authority to make decisions is very important (mandate, terms of reference), particularly when you require approval for key decisions. However, the support we are specifically referring to here is for community development activity. Ensure your leadership is working with you, not against you, and you'll be well on your way. But what if the leadership is not in support of your planning work? Chances are, better communication is needed to get their attention. To avoid setbacks or delays in your work, do your utmost to have those in leadership hear about your cause. In most Aboriginal communities, the community members know how to get the attention of those in leadership. We are mostly related in our communities and someone knows the best route to take in obtaining leadership "buy-in". Don't give up. Keep working to ensure you have the support you need to get your team's work off the ground and moving in positive directions. When a small group of people have come together to plan for the betterment of the community, it's rare for the leadership not to be in support of this movement. The point is to get that support in official writing i.e., a letter of support from them.

Tools & Tracks:

What to Consider in Obtaining Leadership Support

1. State very clearly to the leadership what you are working on or planning to do;
2. A clear and simple approach is best; demonstrate that you are serious about what you are working towards. Showing that you are serious about your work helps to build credibility. Follow through with your plans, don't delay in beginning.
3. If required, put this in writing as a briefing note for submission to the appropriate Authority. Here's how:

Preparing a Briefing Note:

Topic or Subject Title: (Say in a brief phrase what this note is about; For example: "Youth & Safety in our Community", "Board Roles & Responsibilities", "Creation of a Core Planning Team", "Our Grade 12 School Trip to...", etc., etc.)

Attention or Submitted To: (Say to whom the Briefing Note is being addressed to i.e., Chief & Council, Mayor & Council, Board of Education, etc.)

Prepared by: (Who is sending the Briefing Note / Key players involved)

Key Issue(s): (Say what the main issues are related to the topic that is being brought forward for discussion or a decision).

Background Information: (Provide a brief history of the issue(s) and an overview of the potential outcomes related to the issues).

Options: (Say what the potential decisions could be and the benefits or pitfalls for each option).

Decision or Support Required: (Recommend which decision would be best and why including key roles that need to be fulfilled by whom).

(*Note: The above template may be modified to suit your needs.*)

e) Making Presentations & Public Speaking



Wisdom:

"There is no doubt we have to educate our people, we can do this one by one, but we can reach more people if we can stand up in front of many and speak clearly; give them information and keep them informed."

– Participant

The Story:

Public speaking and making presentations go hand in hand, and the skills required for both are very much the same. What it all really comes down to is two things: information and organization. But even if you are fully informed on the issue, and have yourself completely organized to do a presentation there is often one very huge barrier – fear. An entire section is devoted to fear alone, but this type of fear that we are talking about is very specific, it is the fear of public speaking. No doubt that if making presentations or public speaking is not one of your strengths but is one of your roles; you may have to develop a way to overcome it. So along with the usual tips about making presentations and public speaking we really need to talk about overcoming these fears and you can refer to Overcoming Fears in Chapter 7.

In terms of information, there is a need to be:

- a) informed on all aspects of the issue;
- b) anticipating questions and being prepared to answer them;
- c) knowing when to say that you don't know, but knowing where to look for the information.

In regard to organization for the presentation or speech, you need to:

- a) choose a method;
- b) prepare/plan and practice. There are many presentation computer programs that you can use, even if you are not projecting it on the wall. They are sometimes useful to keep you organized. The most common program is Microsoft's PowerPoint.

Tools & Tracks:

Tips for preparing for your presentation or speech

Goals:

- To assist you in organizing your thoughts and materials for making presentations & speeches.
- Increase your confidence in delivering presentation and speeches.

Facilitator recommended: No

Time Required: N/A

Maximum participants recommended for effective groups: N/A

Essential tools:

Here's How: Fill in the blanks where indicated and follow the general outline to ensure you have a well organized speech or presentation

Introduction

Create a brief summary of what the presentation or speech is about, by answering the following:

I am here to talk to you today about:

(summarize in 1-2 sentences).

This information is important because:

(summarize in 1-2 sentences).

Outline

Provide one slide or if you are making a speech, one paragraph at the beginning of your presentation that outlines the topics that you will cover. List them in point form. For example, *I will be covering three major areas:*

Main Point 1: _____

Main Point 2: _____

Main Point 3: _____

Detail of each main point

A) For each Main Point in the Outline Section write one or two paragraphs of detail :

>Paragraph/s for Main Point 1: _____

>Paragraph/s for Main Point 2: _____

>Paragraph/s for Main Point 3: _____

B) Once the detailed paragraphs are written, if you are making a presentation, prepare 1-2 slides for each paragraph which summarizes what you will be talking about.

Tip: Do not try to fit the entire paragraph into the slide. As a rule of thumb each slide should have a maximum of seven lines. The written paragraph(s) will become your notes that you can read as your script or help you remember what it is that you want to say. Be clear when you are moving from one main point to another. You can write the main point at the top of the slide as your title. If you are making a speech, indicate that you are moving to the main point by pausing or by using a transition statement such as: *Now, to move on to the next point of* _____

Tip: In *overcoming fears*, the following may help. 1. Know your subject. Read all materials. If you feel confident that you know your topic well, you will show confidence. 2. Practice and rehearse several times. Try practising the presentation to 1-2 friends or colleagues that you feel comfortable with. 3. Self-talk. If you feel a bit treblely beforehand, talk to yourself with your inner voice. Let yourself know that it is OK to feel a bit nervous, a bit of nervousness is healthy. Take some time to reflect a few minutes before to remember why this is important. If you are feeling shaky, then avoid coffee or any other stimulant 2-3 hours prior. Speak slowly and clearly, often the shakiness will go away.

Conclusion

In a concluding paragraph or slide, prepare a summary of your main points and restate the overall reason for the presentation. If it is a speech, ensure your audience is aware that you are closing. Whether it is an actual presentation or a speech you can begin with something like *“So today, I came here to talk to you about:*

“In summary I had provided you information on: (Summarize your main points again: Main Point 1, 2 & 3 etc.)

Question and Answer Period

- Allow 5-10 minutes at the end of the speech or presentation. Write the answers down and keep them with you during the speech or presentation.

List on paper any possible questions and answers that you anticipate may come up:

Q: _____

A: _____

Tips:

It is a good idea if you paraphrase or repeat the question to be sure that you understand what is being asked and that the audience has heard the question.

Scan the entire audience when you are answering the question. Avoid looking just at the person who asked.

Stick to the point. Answer only the question as clearly as possible and to the point.

f) The ABC's of Writing a Funding Proposal

Wisdom:

"Show me the money!"

– Jerry McGuire

The Story:

Sometimes the difference between a successful program and one that never came to be in the first place is a successful proposal. More and more Aboriginal communities are looking beyond government sources to find funding for their initiatives to foundations and a whole range of philanthropic organizations. Whether they are in Canada or located outside of the country, you need a proposal that is going to sell your idea or concept.

Writing a proposal doesn't have to be a complicated process. A simple three-step process is all you need to begin. Remember that the purpose of a funding proposal is to persuade someone to give you financial resources. If you can't convince someone, you won't get the money. That's the bottom line.

A. Preparation

Preparation is the key to a successful proposal. Without it, you are destined to fail. Here are some basic guidelines:

1. Be clear about why you need to create a funding proposal and to whom you will be sending the proposal.
2. Understand the funder for whom you are preparing the proposal. This means knowing about the program or initiative that has the resources you need, its objectives, parameters or conditions / criteria, and so on.
3. Know your community, which means being clear about your community's identity, your strengths and weaknesses e.g., do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis; and being able to present a credible track record in areas such as your community's proven financial management, project impacts (how your community will be affected positively), technical ability (experience and expertise available to your community) and your general management ability. (See below for how to do a SWOT Analysis)
4. Gather all of the related information that you will need for your proposal. For instance, quotations for supplies or materials, identification of all budget costs, etc. Back up everything. Be very credible with absolutely everything you present and serious about needing the funding.
5. Plan ahead so that your proposal is not rushed; involve your team in all aspects of the brainstorming and concept stage. Be human and forget about being academic in your approach. Let the human side come through in your tone. But don't go overboard on emotions and get too "mushy".
6. Writing tips: avoid jargon; use plain and simple language. Check for spelling errors. Write many drafts after getting feedback on each one. Use confident language and terms such as "we will" instead of "we would like to"... "we shall" instead of "we want to". Use a font that is easy to read. Don't overcrowd your sentences. Use double spaces.
7. Finally, you need to plan the project, which means understanding all of the background information, setting objectives, and designing a successful process.

| SWOT analysis: | |
|---|--|
| <p>Strengths</p> <p>What does your community do very well?</p> <p>What are all the resources available in your community?</p> <p>What do you see as your community's strengths?</p> <p>What do others see as your strengths?</p> | <p>Weaknesses</p> <p>What could be improved in your community?</p> <p>What resources do you lack? What's missing?</p> <p>What do you see as your community's weaknesses?</p> <p>What do others see as your weaknesses?</p> |
| <p>Opportunities</p> <p>What are all the available opportunities open to your community?</p> <p>What are some trends happening that your community can take advantage of?</p> <p>How can you turn your community's strengths into opportunities?</p> | <p>Threats</p> <p>What are some trends happening that could possibly harm your community?</p> <p>What are other communities / government / other organizations doing that could impact your community?</p> <p>How are your weaknesses a threat to your community?</p> |

B. Writing the Proposal

Once your group has gathered all the material that you need to write the proposal, begin writing a first draft. Designate one writer to create the first draft but make sure that everyone in your small group will have the opportunity to review the draft proposal to provide feedback and to strengthen the document. You can use the following template as a guide – or modify this one to suit your needs:

| <i>Section</i> | <i>Content</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|---|--|---|
| Cover letter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the funder for the opportunity; asks them to accept your proposal submission for the specific funding initiative; state in general what your proposal is all about and your confidence in utilizing the funding in an effective manner to benefit your community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page only • Signed by the appropriate authority (Chief, Mayor, Executive Director, etc.) • The more official the authority the better • Address this letter to a real person, not: “To Whom it May Concern” |
| 1. Title or Cover Page | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal Title / Name • Submitted To • Submitted by Date | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The title captures the main essence of the project in a brief phrase or sentence. Keep it short. |
| 2. Table of Contents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists all the main headers and the page numbers of each | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simply lists the chapters and pages to find them in the proposal document |
| 3. Project Summary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizes the proposal on 1 page. Clearly states purpose of the project, describes how much \$’s you need and how you intend to utilize that money to reach your key goals and objectives. Express your abilities and proven track record and why you will be successful. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly describe the essence of the project by describing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the current situation is that needs to be addressed • What your community feels is the best way to address your challenges or problems • Why this is the best solutions to your problems • Who will benefit from the project • What will be achieved by the project in what period of time • What everything will cost and why the money spent will be a good investment for the funder |
| 4. Body of the Proposal: | | |
| a) Background Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puts the proposal in proper context – how you arrived at the current situation and how you decided to take action to address what’s needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 – 1 page |
| b) Purpose of the Project or initiative – the issue(s) being addressed. | What you see as the main purpose for developing the project / proposal. This is your vision in summary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 page |

(continued on page 88)

(continued from page 87)

| <i>Section</i> | <i>Content</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| c) Key Goals & Objectives) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itemize the main goals and objectives that will move you toward your vision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page at the most |
| d) Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say how the funder's \$'s is going to truly address your communities challenges and fulfill your objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 page • Be confident in your statements but balance it with humility; Say what qualifies your community to receive the \$'s? |
| e) Overall process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the process (who's going to do what) and what will happen when the funding comes to an end – sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 pages • Any contingency plans • Whether you will be getting additional funds elsewhere |
| 5. Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up the funding proposal with your key goal, commitment to achieve it, and that the funder's money will be a good investment for a good risk (your community). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 page |
| 6. Budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itemized table of all costs • Breakdown and explain in detail with notes at the bottom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 page • Revenues • Expenses • Totals • Notes |
| 7. Backup documentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines, letters of support, quotations, any related support documents such as audited statements, financial plan, a Resolution from Council, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 pages • Have original copies not photocopied, if possible |

C. Follow-Up

After the proposal is submitted the work doesn't end there. You need to get in there and make good contact with the person you submitted the proposal to. In fact, by the time the proposal is submitted to that person, you should be on a first name basis with them. They should know who you are and why you are coming to them for funding. Be proactive, but do not pester the contact at the funding agency. Submit the proposal on time and find out when you can expect an answer back from them. Ask whether you can call at a later time or whether they'll be sending notice of whether you are successful by mail first.

If you get a "no" to your proposal, avoid criticizing the funding agency. Find out why your proposal didn't make it and what you can do to strengthen it in the future. Be persistent, it will pay off.

Above all, you are developing a positive relationship with a funder. If you keep this in mind at all times you will always be able to look forward to a positive working relationship with the funder in the future.

9. Closing Remarks

The thoughts and ideas outlined in this Aboriginal Resource Guide for Community Development are for the benefit of Aboriginal communities across the country. We hope to have appealed to members of the Aboriginal community to begin utilizing the process suggestions and tools for change that we have gathered and created...to begin working as a team for the good of your community. We realize these stories and tools are by no means comprehensive; there is much more that can and will need to be added to this endeavour in time, as we continue to build upon this foundation.

It is our sincere desire to inspire change and creative action in Aboriginal communities. That is our vision. It is a vision that comes from the grassroots of the Aboriginal community – from people that live daily in First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities across the land. And we believe this vision is expanding at an accelerated rate. Inevitably, like the turtle, Aboriginal communities will reach their destinations and great visions - slowly but surely. Yes, slowly but surely we are regaining the integrity, harmony, and empowerment that was ours in times past. We encourage you to carry on or to begin taking greater strides as your community moves towards...a stronger tomorrow!

Miigwech! Ekosi! Pidamayado! Muhsee Cho! Thank You!

10. Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks goes out to all of the individuals and teams that contributed to the creation of this Resource Guide. Your thoughts, quotes, inspirations, support, and knowledge has made this possible. Know that it is to be utilized for the betterment of Aboriginal communities throughout the country and perhaps in other communities throughout the world:

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The PATH & MAPS Handbook

Person-Centered Ways to Build Community

John O'Brien, Jack Pearpoint and Lynda Kahn

ISBN 978-1-895418-91-0

It's been almost 30 years since Marsha Forest and her co-activists for inclusion began to use maps to assure that excluded students were met with a welcome and a real chance to learn in schools and classrooms that were striving to be inclusive. And almost 25 years ago Marsha and Jack Pearpoint and John O'Brien designed path as a support to people who need to discover strategies that serve their vision of inclusion in school and community life.

This handbook reflects what we have learned since and John and Marsha wrote the PATH Workbook in 1995. It provides a stronger foundation for path and maps by connecting person-centered planning to the work of community building. It makes the basis for good facilitation more explicit and suggests some ways that facilitators can improve their practice. It suggests new ways to frame the questions in both PATH and MAPS. It presents a template for MAPS that we have found usually works better than the cycle of eight questions with which many people are familiar. It emphasizes creative work with imagery as integral to the process of exploring people's gifts and highest purposes.

11. Key Links:

The following links are helpful websites and resource documents that can assist you in your research for even more information related to the topics raised in this Resource Tool:

Additional Tools for Change can be found at:

- www.inclusion.com
- “Building Communities from the Inside Out” by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight
www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/introd-building.html
- “Celebrate What’s Right with the World” by Dewitt Jones
www.dewittjones.com
- “Everyone Has a Gift” - Building Communities of Capacity by John McKnight
www.inclusion.com/vdeveryonehasagift.html
- For more examples of mission statements, please see:
www.missionstatements.com

12. About & Contact Us

This Resource Guide was created by a team of Aboriginal people that were contracted by the Aboriginal Corrections Policy Unit, Public Safety Canada (Ottawa) to devise a tool that would assist Aboriginal communities in their development. There has been a great deal of discussion of these matters with other Aboriginal people from across the country through interviews and focus groups. This is an initial work that will be strengthened and increased over time.

As we created this tool, we had in mind the youth, the Elders, the women and children, and the leaders. Our main consideration is to be helpers to our own people and that is why we have tried to make this as practical as possible and written in plain language as best we know how. We would appreciate any comments and feedback and ways to help us strengthen this resource guide.

Miigwech ! Ekosi !

This Resource Guide was written by Little Black Bear & Associate's Team:

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Disclaimer:

The views, opinions, or statements contained in this document do not reflect the position of any Department within the Government of Canada or with the Cree Nation Tribal Health Centre, Inc. The information contained in this document is meant solely for the benefit of Aboriginal communities in Canada and should not be construed as an academic study or a definitive guide on the subject of Community Development within Aboriginal communities.



*"A very great vision is needed
and the man who has it must
follow it as the eagle seeks the
deepest blue of the sky... "*

- Crazy Horse

Moving Toward a Stronger Future:

An Aboriginal Resource Guide for Community Development

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