An Introduction to Community Development:
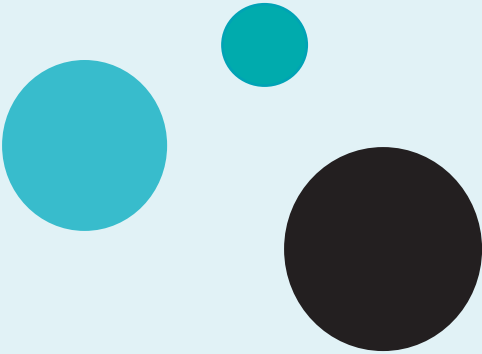
Activation to Evaluation
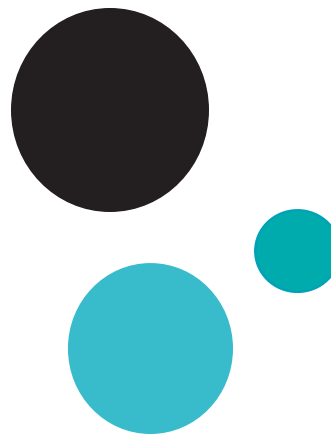
By Lydia Guy
Prevention Services Director

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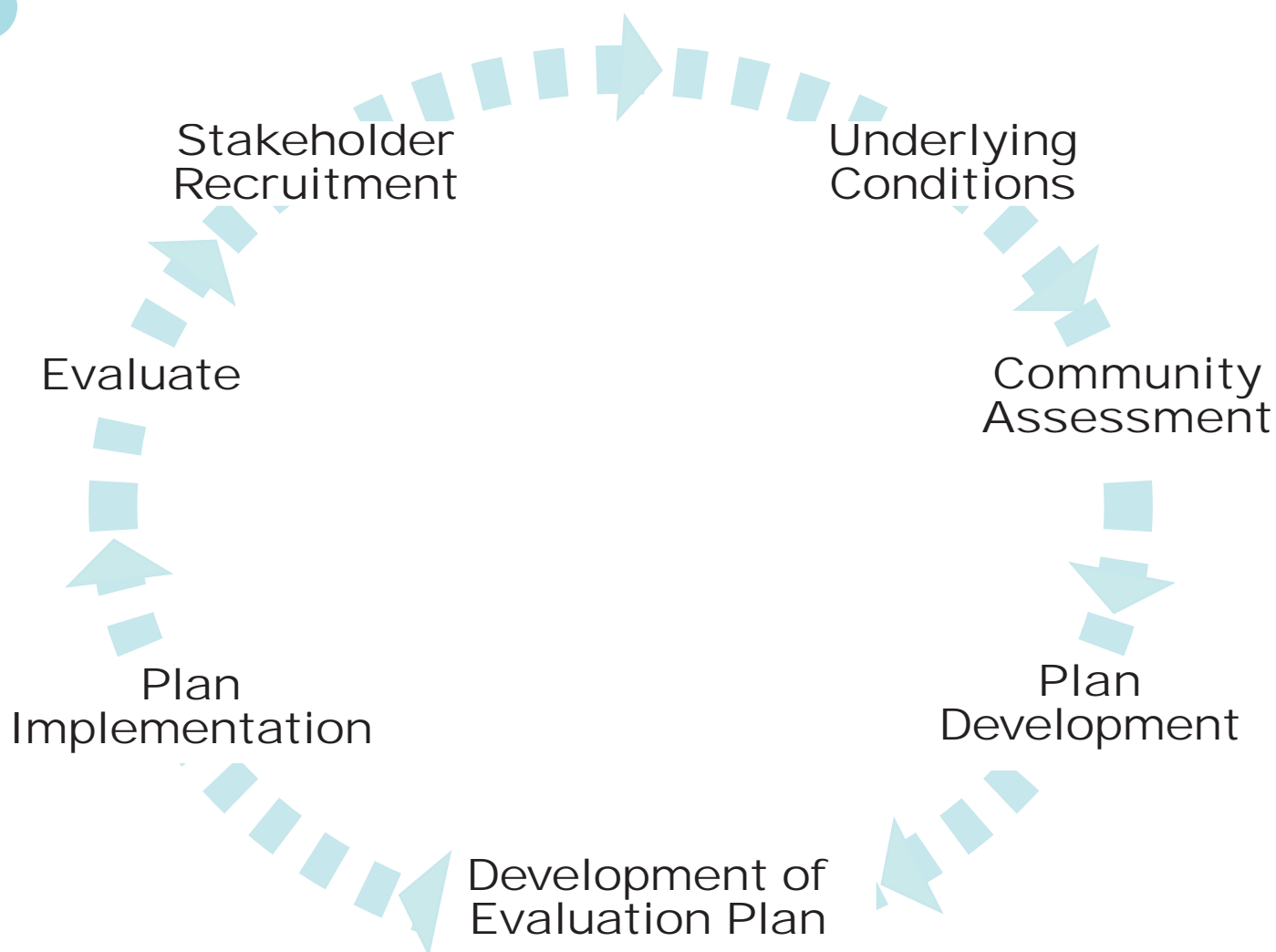# OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

AND YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT, HONEY
YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT
YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT
BUT IF YOU TRY SOMETIMES, YEAH
YOU JUST MIGHT FIND YOU GET WHAT YOU NEED

THE ROLLING STONES

The work of the anti-rape movement during the 1970's can be viewed as community development. It was comprised of communities, primarily women, looking at the issue of sexual violence, defining it in terms consistent with their life experiences, determining the underlying societal causes and developing strategies. The strategies developed were both community specific and wide-ranging: from speak-outs to crisis lines. Over the last thirty years, certain services became defined as best practice; eventually these practices were standardized and the current sexual assault service delivery system was developed. Many of the initial leaders of the anti-rape women were young, formally educated, heterosexual, white women and as such many of the services which became standardized were most effective within these demographics. An unintentional outcome of the standardization was under-representation of many historically marginalized communities.

In Washington State there was an acknowledgment of the importance of community specificity and inclusion of community development, even within the context of standardization. The Sexual Assault Prevention Plan for Washington State included the following goal: ***To impact the underlying causes of sexual violence through the shifting of ownership of solution from social services to the community using a community development approach.***[1] Based on this commitment to community ownership, resources were allocated within the state to specifically focus on sexual violence prevention utilizing a community development approach. The WCSAP Prevention Resource Center, a technical assistance resources center, was established in 1997. The center's focus is to increase the state's overall capacity in prevention. In 1999 sexual assault prevention was established as a core service for accredited community sexual assault programs (CSAPs).

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1 *Sexual Assault Prevention Plan for Washington State, Office of Crime victims Advocacy Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and Washington Sate Department of Health* by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. The Evergreen State College, August 1997.

Stakeholder Recruitment

Underlying Conditions

Evaluate

Community Assessment

Plan Implementation

Plan Development

Development of Evaluation Plan

Community development as a sexual violence prevention strategy is an interesting paradigm. Based on our own individual skill set and life experiences we usually enter into the process with an expectation of what the outcome might be. In partnership with others, we enter into a collaborative process to understand the dynamics of sexual violence in our communities and reduce the negative impact. Through dialogue and discourse we reach a shared understanding. The resulting strategies derived from the collective mind are generally not what any individual stakeholder envisioned but are quite often exactly what the community needs.

STAKEHOLDER RECRUITMENT

The inherent assumption in the community development process is that a community of committed people, familiar with their community and willing to enter into a process to seek a solution to a given social problem, will create the optimum intervention. Community development, although based on theoretical principals, prioritizes the expertise of the community over that of the academic. Professionals are encouraged to share their unique expertise as participants within the community process itself. Ultimately a group of committed stakeholders will have a vested interest in the success of the intervention, knowledge of societal dynamics, as well as a long-term connection to the community.

The stakeholder recruitment process is the first step in encouraging this process. As a community development facilitator your role is to identify individuals who are pivotal in the life of the community. Stakeholders may possess individual and/or institutional power, each is of equal importance. Their strength lies in their sense of community ownership and personal conviction. These individuals should not be chosen based on their ability to conform to a specific analysis of the issue, but rather their ability to enter into a thoughtful and respectful dialogue. It is important to include stakeholders who represent the true diversity (whatever that may be) of the community.

The recruitment process can be as formal as sending invitations to attend a community meetings or as informal as meeting for coffee. However, the ultimate success of the process will depend on your ability to personally engage potential stakeholders. During the recruitment process it is very common to receive recommendations of individuals for whom it will be crucial for you to connect; these individuals may have been previously unidentified. All communities will include individuals who can help or hinder any attempts to change the dynamics within that community. The stakeholder recruitment process is the mechanism in which these individuals are identified and encouraged to participate in the process. If they are unwilling or unable to participate in the process it will be of utmost importance to encourage them to be an ally or at the very least a benign presence.

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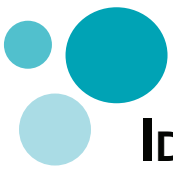
IDENTIFICATION OF UNDERLYING CONDITIONS

Interventions are often focused on fixing the "problem." As social services providers, clinicians and rape crisis advocates we have developed an impressive array of problem solving techniques. Our interventions are often focused on solving problems on a micro (individual), mezzo (community) and macro (societal) levels. The focus of a community development process is to emphasize the underlying conditions, as determined by the community stakeholders, contributing to the problem as opposed to the problem (observable symptom). Directing the intervention toward the underlying conditions will create greater change than addressing the reoccurring symptoms. Much like the old adage: Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day... Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.

The first step in determining the underlying conditions is to facilitate a process which creates a list of the observable symptoms. A group brainstorm is often the most effective tool. The theme of the question most often used to generate the brainstorm in relation to sexual violence is, "How is sexual violence currently manifested in our community?" The answers are the symptoms or the current community (sometimes referred to as condition "A"). The theme of the follow up question used to generate the underlying conditions is, "What causes each of these symptoms?" The resulting conversation should generate a complex analysis of the underlying conditions contributing to sexual violence. As a community development facilitator it is extremely important to encourage an open and honest discourse. If individuals are unable to share their perceptions of the causal conditions of sexual violence, by definition the interventions created will be flawed. The final step is for the group to prioritize the conditions based upon their perceptions of importance and the opportunity to influence change.

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COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Community development is not fundamentally about what went wrong but rather what we can make right. The first two steps in the process were about reaching consensus regarding the scope, prevalence and nature of the current situation. The needs assessment step compels us toward a paradigm shift. How would we like our community to look, feel and behave if the given societal problem did not exist? This requires a leap of faith and a fundamental belief that all communities posses strengths and protective factors which will enable them to enact societal controls which transform our communities into happy, healthful, nurturing entities.

This first step in determining needs is to facilitate a process to determine what types of things we would observe in our utopian environment then create a list and our description of these things. This list should be as specific and concrete as possible, and it should be framed as a positive not as the lack of a negative. For instance we would want to describe brightness as having the presence of light not the absence of darkness. From a facilitation process this can be extremely difficult. We are encouraging the stakeholders to engage in a visioning process, which can oftentimes be overwhelming. It is important to provide structure and clarity throughout the facilitation of this exercise. This state is sometimes referred to as condition "B" or more simply the vision of the community development initiative.

The next step is then to place condition "A", our current underlying conditions, on one end of a continuum and then place our condition "B", our vision, on the opposite end of the same continuum. By juxtaposing conditions A & B we ask ourselves the question, "What is it we need to accomplish to get from A to B?" This portion of the process is less about visioning and more about evaluating the underlying conditions in comparison to our stated vision; this evaluation allows us to accurately assess the community's needs. This step marks the transition from conceptualization to actualization. As community development facilitator, it is extremely important to make sure that every need which is identified directly correlates with an underlying condition as well as the defined vision.

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DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY PLAN

Oftentimes we are rewarded for our ability to react quickly and decisively in a situation. For those who have worked in fields directly related to crisis intervention it has been our ability to improvise, and our capacity for action, activity and movement that has allowed us to flourish. It is not uncommon to view planning time as a luxury. In a well balanced community development initiative the development of the plan is not a luxury but an absolute necessity and builds on our prior work. Typically when we make a plan we ask ourselves the five "W"s: Who, What, When, Why and Where. Many of these components have already been addressed:

- **Who**: The *stakeholder recruitment* process has helped us identify the active participants, as well as necessary allies. Due to the fluid nature of community process we have also most likely determined additional individuals and roles that will be necessary to enact our plan effectively.

- **What**: The *community assessment* and *underlying conditions* exercises defined what we need to accomplish in broad strokes. We won't have the specifics but we do have a starting point, an ending point and specific items we need to address to reach our vision.

- **Why**: The *underlying condition* and *community assessment* exercises have helped us create a common understanding of the scope, prevalence and underlying conditions contributing to sexual violence as well as a common vision to work toward ending it.

When and Where generate the specifics associated with creating a cohesive plan. From a facilitation stand point this activity is by far the most difficult. Up until this point many of the discussion will have been theoretical. The development of the plan requires solidification. It will be necessary for the facilitator to encourage the stakeholders to include concepts such as practicality, resource allocation and expediency in their conversations. As a facilitator it is a difficult balancing act to maintain the enthusiasm of the group while moving them toward a plan which is clear, concise and easy to follow. It is however essential. The effective implementation of the plan is dependent on the ability of every stakeholder to understand and communicate the plan in its entirety and to act upon the components for which they are directly responsible. Due to the open ended nature of community process, the exuberance of the participants combined with the scope, nature and prevalence of sexual violence, there is a tendency to create plans which are unwieldy or over intricate. In this case it will be necessary for stakeholders to embark upon an additional step of separating the plan into short, medium and long term goals.

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DEVELOPMENT OF AN EVALUATION TOOL

For many of us evaluation and evaluation tools seem punitive and a misallocation of limited resources. Evaluation in and of itself is benign. Through our avoidance of evaluation we allow others to define the parameters and type of evaluation that will take place. This disconnect has resulted in the negative experiences and feelings many of us have regarding evaluation. Evaluation done correctly can be a positive experience. Evaluation and self-reflection are integral to the community development process. It allows us to determine if we identified the correct underlying conditions, set reasonable goals and developed effective plans. When we evaluate we are able to see our progress from the existing condition "A" to our desired condition "B". We can celebrate our success as well as implement mid-course corrections if it appears we are moving in the wrong direction. As community development facilitators it is necessary for us to begin to embrace evaluation. Maya Angelou stated, "When you don't like a thing change it. If you can't change it change the way you think about it." In the sphere of public health, social services and human services, evaluation is a given… so the only opportunity for change is to change our perception of evaluation.

There are many assessment tools.   It is not necessarily important which method you choose but that the method is integrated into your initiative. Before stakeholders began the process of implementing the plan they should develop strategies and tools to evaluate the effectiveness of their plan. There are many resources focused on evaluation and more specifically outcome evaluation but one resource which links community development an outcome evaluation is *Gauging Progress: A Guidebook for Community Sexual Assault Programs and Community Development Initiatives.*

NOTES

Plan Implementation

It is almost impossible to provide direction on how to implement the plan. Each community will have different strengths, challenges, resiliencies, communication styles, interpersonal dynamics, timelines and strategies to address sexual violence within that particular community. The core belief that is necessary however is that you view your stakeholders and community members as valuable resources.

People viewed as resources

⇧

People viewed as recipients

⇧

People viewed as objects

NOTES

Evaluate

Evaluating a community development initiative is the process of applying the evaluation plan to the project plan. As the evaluation plan was developed, indicators were identified. These indicators are usually categorized as short, medium or long term goals. Evaluating progress based upon a range of indicators can provide positive reinforcement when you are heading in the right direction, as well as allow for mid-course correction if it seems we have gone off track. In evaluation, it is important to take notice of whether or not we have implemented our plan as initially designed. A successful outcome of an evaluation can determine that a particular strategy is not effective; we can use that information to inform the next application of the project plan.

A		B
The Current Reality **What's happening now** **The status quo**	**Community Development Plan** Action Steps	**The New Reality** **What we want to happen** **The vision, goal, outcome**

**Evaluation Plan**
Indicators

NOTES

...AND BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Perhaps you were able to complete all aspects of your plan as designed and all the components were as successful as you would have liked. However, it is more likely that some portions of your were successfull while other aspects of your plan were less effective than initially hoped. Either way the intervention has changed the community in some way. You now have a new "Condition A," the current reality, and it is time to determine a new goal and vision "Condition B." After you have implemented and evaluated your plan it is time to begin again.

Community development is by definition a process. Healthy communities just like healthy individuals are always in the process of learning and growing.
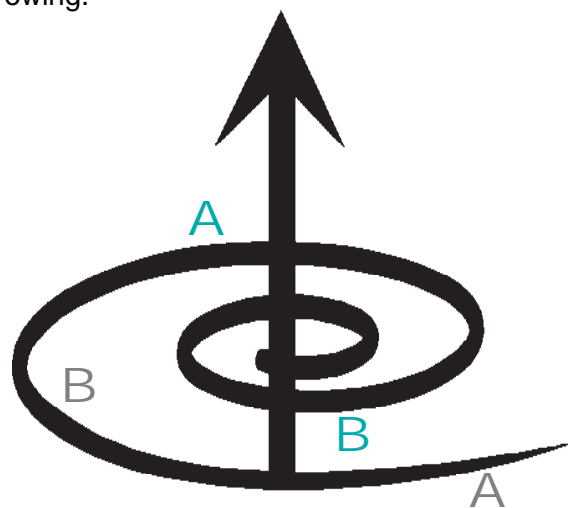
development
n 1: act of improving by expanding or enlarging or refining

NOTES

PREVENTION AS A CORE SERVICE

In March 1999 prevention became a core service as part of the State of Washington Sexual Abuse/Assault Services Standards. Although prevention was not a new service for many of us, the standardization of this service was new for *all* of us. As part of the standardization, qualifications were created for staff and volunteers involved in its provision.

> Social change efforts should be initiated and led by a Community Sexual Assault Program. All volunteer and paid staff must complete 30 hours of initial sexual abuse/assault training, and the 5-hour WCSAP prevention orientation or equivalent. Twelve hours of on-going training is required annually. All training must be approved by the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. The provider must be familiar with the dynamics of sexual abuse/assault and relevant community resources, as well as have an understanding of how medical, legal and social services respond to victims of sexual abuse/assault. Providers must have an understanding of the causes of sexual violence, prevention and social change theory, community development techniques and have demonstrated experience in educational techniques appropriate to their audience.
>
> Providers must be supervised by a paid staff person who has completed the 30 hours of initial sexual abuse/assault training and the 5-hour prevention orientation, and has two years of relevant experience. The supervisor should observe the provider's training on a periodic basis.[1]

The qualifications were created in recognition of the fact that the provision of sexual assault prevention services requires a specific skill set, as well as making sure that everyone providing these services in Washington State has a basic understanding of social change theory and the Loftquist framework adopted in 1997. Qualifications are both prevention specific and inclusive of general sexual assault service delivery theory. Core and on-going training hours are required for everyone involved in the initiation of sexual assault prevention services due to the fact that the vast majority of prevention initiatives will include survivors and significant others and the necessity that sexual assault providers posses the ability to provide appropriate crisis oriented services.

The 5-hour prevention orientation, ***Prevention Accreditation Standards Support Package*** is provided as a training video and support package and can be obtained by contacting Prevention Services Director, Lydia Guy at lydia@wcsap.org. Core and ongoing training can be obtained through various sources, including but not limited to WCSAP, Community Sexual Assault Programs, and other sexual assault specific providers. Contact Advocacy Education Director Janet Anderson at janet@wcsap.org for information regarding core and ongoing training opportunities.

1. State of Washington Sexual Abuse/Assault Service Standards

PREVENTION - ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Standard CS7:   **PREVENTION: SOCIAL CHANGE**
The agency facilitates the process of community mobilization to eliminate factors that cause or contribute to sexual violence.

Evidence of Compliance

1. Evidence of leadership by the agency in a community development planning process. Projects can target specific communities within the broader service area (i.e., schools, religious sector, summer camps).
2. Evidence of participation by **at least five** potential stakeholders, reflective of the community's diversity, with the intent to develop and implement a community development plan focused on eliminating sexual violence.
3. Evidence of appropriate training and supervision for all direct service volunteers and staff.
4. Evidence that supervisors of prevention staff have the relevant social change and community development experience.

Required Level of Compliance: A*

Standard CS8:   **PREVENTION: INFORMATION/AWARENESS**
The agency must demonstrate efforts to inform the community and increase awareness about sexual abuse/assault with the goal of increasing the community's acceptance of responsibility for prevention of sexual abuse/assault within the community defined in CS7 and in the broader service area.

Evidence of Compliance

1. Evidence that the agency is disseminating information about sexual abuse/assault, including information on underlying causes of sexual violence (i.e. brochures, speakers bureau, PSAs, press releases, media kits and community events).
2. Evidence that the agency is reaching out to diverse populations.
3. Evidence of appropriate training and supervision for all direct service volunteers and staff.
4. Evidence that supervisors of prevention staff have the relevant social change and community development experience.

Required Level of Compliance: A*

Standard CS9: **PREVENTION: BUILDING SKILLS**

The agency must provide programs and presentations focused on building skills of individuals and developing strategies to prevent sexual abuse/assault within the community defined in CS7 and the broader service area.

Evidence of Compliance

1 Evidence of programs/activities that build leadership, enhance decision-making, build relationship skills, and enhance positive self-concept (i.e. physical defense training, assertiveness training, personal-safety awareness, educational support groups, community organizing, social change theory, community development process or classroom presentations).

2. Evidence of technical assistance being provided focused on skill-building to prevent sexual abuse/assault.

3. Evidence that the agency is reaching out to diverse populations.

4. Evidence of appropriate training and supervision for all direct service volunteers and staff.

5. Evidence that supervisors of prevention staff have the relevant social change and community development experience.

Required Level of Compliance: A*

*   To achieve these standards, the agency must demonstrate compliance with each item.

Choosing the Right Prevention Strategy

Choosing the right strategy is integral to the successful implementation of any sexual violence prevention initiative. The analogy being, "It's much more effective to use a hammer to drive in a nail than to use pliers." Factors to consider when selecting a strategy includes time restrictions, resources available (including human resources), desired outcome and anticipated gains. Increasing the efficacy of our programming requires us to determine the goal of a given activity/strategy, the resources we can devote and the anticipated gains. For example, if you have a short time-line and limited resources, information and awareness activities may be more appropriate. Each strategy has associated costs and benefits when evaluating its ability to create societal change (altering behavior and norms). Information and awareness requires minimal investment and offer minimal gain. Evaluation of outcome measures have shown information and awareness activities to be highly effective in increasing knowledge but to have virtually no effect on changing behavior. Skill-building requires a moderate investment and yield moderate results. These types of activities have been shown to be most effective when skills are incorporated into the individual's and/or agencies' regular skill set, as opposed to being used sporadically. Community development is a more resource intensive strategy but provides the greatest benefit and best opportunity for social change.

Choosing a prevention strategy using these criteria may seem burdensome at first, but in the long-run will be more efficient. It allows us to do the work of ending sexual violence in a much more purposeful manner. We are more likely to reach our desired outcome, with decreased frustration levels and less unintended consequences.

Strategy	Time Frame	Resources Required	Desired Outcomes	Anticipated Gains
Information & Awareness	Short	Limited	Increase general awareness	Increased awareness over short term, will require repetition to reinforce information. Negligible behavioral change.
Skill Building	Moderate	Moderate	Build skills of individuals or organizations to address the issues	Increased pool of individuals or organizations equipped to deal with issues if skill set is reinforced consistently. Moderate behavioral change.
Community Development	Significant	Significant	Change underlying conditions contributing to the prevalence of the issue	Community ownership of issue. Substantive behavioral change.

ARENAS OF ACTION

Purpose

Development	Problem Solving

Conditions

1. Community Development

examples

Community assessment; community education related to underlying conditions; training; community organization; advocacy with systems; legislation; policy development.

Key motivation: Community members as stakeholders participate in the planning and implementation process and focus on underlying conditions

Possible Activities:
Outreach: Stakeholder recruitment, Advisory Board formation, Focus Group meetings, Community events, Public Speaking / Speaker's Bureau development, Mentorship opportunity development, Training / Technical Assistance

(Community Development)

3. Community Problem Solving

examples

Often reactive responses to a "crisis", such as: Release of sex offender, community notification; sexual assault in local school; kidnapping and sexual assault in elementary school; rape / murder of adult or teen. Also specific focus for specific outcome; training law enforcement, other professionals.

Key motivation: Awareness and access to services

Possible Activities:
Tech. Assistance to lay persons & professionals, Outreach, Community education events, Public speaking / presentations, Distribution of material, Other…

(Information & Awareness)

Individuals

2. Personal Growth & Development

examples

Classroom presentations focused on individual's safety, group prevention education, skill building curricula and programs.

Key motivation: Skill Building

Possible Activities:
Kids / Teens / Parents/ Individuals, Safety training, Classroom presentations / skill building Educational support groups, Skill Building in Professionals, Train the trainer skill building, Technical assistance to professionals, Other…

(Skill Building)

4. Personal Problem Solving

examples

Post victimization remediation, group therapy, individual, advocacy, support groups, legal and medical advocacy, therapy, remedial work in classroom setting.

Key motivation: Post-victimization remediation

Possible Activities:
Group therapy, Individual therapy, Individual advocacy, Support groups

(Therapy & Advocacy)

Focus

In program planning it is extremely beneficial to assess the total resources available and the desired outcomes before selecting a strategy. Selecting strategies based on personal preference or precedent is common but not necessarily the best use of limited resources. A well balanced community sexual assault program will include activities from all Quadrants of The Arenas of Action. The table above is a visual representation of the Arenas of Action.

- The **X-axis** is the purpose of the action. The purpose of the action can tend toward either development (creating capacity) or problem solving (remediation).

- The **Y-axis** is the focus of the action. The focus of the action is either individuals or underlying conditions.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE
VS. DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

Using community development strategies in a social service setting can be challenging. One of those challenges is the tension between prescribed structures and developmental processes. Community development is all about "development." That's why it is called community development. Sexual Assault Service Delivery Systems and agency infrastructures are the prescribed structures in which all community sexual assault programs exist; they are by definition prescribed structures. Prescribed structures are the fundamental elements on which an organization is based. They include items such as mission statements, service delivery protocols, funding mandates, contractual guidelines, laws, policies, organizational by-laws, and professional requirements. To use community development strategies effectively in this setting, it is necessary to cultivate the skill of balancing the requirements of your structure without limiting the creativity of your community.

Sometimes we tend to one extreme or the other. We may allow our definition of prescribed structure to over influence the process and create an initiative that is not truly community driven (i.e. a community process which merely validates our existing plan). Sometimes, although less common, we may allow the developmental process to over-influence the results. This may lead to an initiative that has a goal or methodology antithetical to the views of our agency or funding sources. The trick is to ascertain the boundaries of the prescribed structure and push those limits.

Quite often when we take a closer look at a structure, we find there are not as many prescribed elements as we initially believed. We may be able to change some elements of our prescribed structures. Prescribed structures that are the result of traditions and organizational culture, *("We've always done it that way.")* are within our sphere of influence. While other prescribed structures (*such as laws and contractual obligations)* may be less amenable to change. It is by continually evaluating our structures and expanding our borders that we experience the benefits of both a developmental process and a prescribed structure.

PRESCRIBED   STRUCTURE

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS
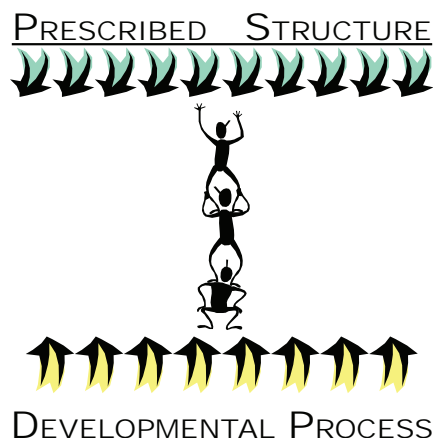
PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE   VS.   DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Driving Forces

- Funding mandates and guidelines
- National affiliations
- Laws, policies, charters, by-laws, rules
- Professional education
- Traditions
- Perpetuations of organized cultures

Driving Forces

- Concerns about a crisis
- Desire to promote change
- Desire for more local ownership
- Recognition of new realities
- Strong leadership

Benefits

- Stability
- Continuity
- Consistency
- Maintenance of Standards

Benefits

- Creativity
- Flexibility
- Adaptability
- Participative involvement of people
- A sense of ownership
- Responsiveness to changing conditions
- Increased local control

Cautionary Note

Prescribed structure is characterized by caution and certainty.

A common problem is that today's prescriptions tend to be based on yesterday's assessment of yesterday's realities.

Cautionary Note

Development process is characterized by risk and uncertainty.

A possible problem is that today's assessments may overlook yesterday's experiences and accomplishments.[1]

[1] Adapted from *The Technology of Development: A Framework for Transforming Community Cultures*. William A Lofquist Development Publications-1996

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTION PLAN

1

What is your long term goal?

3

Focus on underlying conditions in the current reality: What is happening now that creates a climate where sexual violence can happen?

5

How will you gauge your progress? What will you see, hear or read that will let you know change has happened?

2

Who are your community participants?

6

What specific activities will your group do to get from what is happening now (Box 3) to desired results (Box 4)?

4

Focus on underlying conditions in the visioned reality: What conditions need to exist to create a community free from sexual violence?

7

List all the resources needed to carry out the activities listed in Box 6.

• People (paid, volunteer, community member?)

• Physical space and materials

• Financial support

8

Build a list of the people in the following categories. *(This list will help you determine important allies in your prevention efforts.)*

• Key people you think will support and advocate for your prevention project.

• Key people you would like to involve but whose support you are not sure of.

• Key People who you know from past experience are capable of blocking the ways to your goals.

Time line: Plot your activities from first to last, giving target date and person(s)) responsible for

Start Date
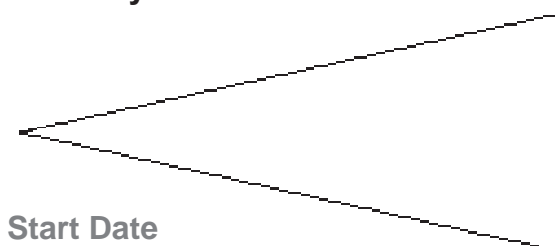
9

List all the reasons you can think of that might be raised as an objective to your plan.

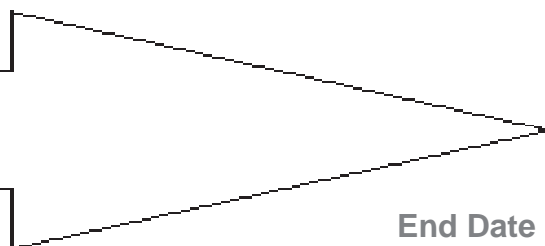*(Think of the people who would be opposed to your activities)*

10

List all the reasons you can think of that might be raised as an objective to your plan.

11

How will you help to keep the sexual assault prevention plan moving and growing>

12

completing tasks

End Date

EVALUATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE: DEFINING REALISTIC OUTCOMES

BY SARAH STACHOWIAK AND HALLIE GOERTZ

Pam spent the last year engaging a wide group of stakeholders to address underlying community issues that perpetuated sexual violence. After months of meetings and difficult discussions, the group had decided that they should work to decrease victim-blaming in their community. They had chosen several activities to increase the community's awareness of this issue and how community members could positively impact this issue.

Now that the community group was coalescing and moving forward, Pam wondered about evaluation. How could she prove that this work was going to create the social change that they were working to achieve?

The social change model adopted and supported by OCVA focuses on impacting underlying causes of sexual violence by transforming communities to address sexual assault issues. These efforts often require CSAPs to establish relationships, convene community processes, and network with stakeholders. Ultimately, successful social change work shifts the ownership of solutions from social service agencies to the community.

How does an agency evaluate work that is often amorphous, ever-changing, and ultimately owned by community members?

One of the first steps toward evaluating social change is to work with your community stakeholders to <u>define outcomes</u> that are realistic, reasonable, and that you are able to impact with your social change interventions.

What are outcomes? They are the *changes* in community conditions that stakeholders believe will occur as a result of the initiative. In social change work, it may be helpful to consider outcomes that are changes in community environments, relationships, institutions or service systems. Examples of community-level outcomes include:

√ Local media increases attention given to an issue.
√ Community members have increased awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault.
√ Community members have a shared definition of victim-blaming.
√ Community members decrease tolerance for inappropriate or violent behavior.
√ Schools increase enforcement of sexual harassment policies.
√ Stakeholder groups deepen their collaborative relationships to address sexual violence.

In the vignette above, Pam was musing about how to find out if the local process she was involved in would impact community conditions. Say, for example, that one of the activities the stakeholder group had identified was to develop a number of opinion pieces for the local media on victim-blaming. Pam might develop a "So That" chain to identify outcomes related to specific activities her group was carrying out.

Activity: Develop Op-ed pieces on victim-blaming
So that
Media coverage increases (outcome)
So that
Community members understand what "victim-blaming" is (short-term outcome)
So that
Community members recognize victim-blaming behaviors (short-term outcome)
So that
Community members decrease victim-blaming behaviors (intermediate outcome)
So that
The community decreases tolerance for victim-blaming and increases support for victims (long-term outcome)

When choosing outcomes to evaluate, stakeholders should prioritize those that realistically reflect the kinds of changes their initiative can make happen. In addition, remember that time periods for achieving outcomes can vary. It can be valuable to identify short-term, intermediate and longer term goals for this type of work.

Organizations often find it challenging to apply evaluation to prevention work. When you're preventing something from happening, you can't "prove" that a bad thing didn't happen because of an intervention. In addition, evaluation of efforts that impact the community rather than a small group of individuals can seem overwhelming. However, there are benefits to be gained from outcome-based evaluation.

Defining outcomes for social change work can help you:

1) See if you're addressing underlying conditions.
2) Continuously improve your processes or activities.
3) Support a group's sense of purpose and direction.
4) Make informed decisions about what to do next.
5) Report on progress to funders and stakeholders.

Once outcomes are defined and agreed upon by the stakeholder group, groups need to make outcomes measurable by creating indicators of change.

EVALUATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE, PART II: MAKING OUTCOMES MEASURABLE WITH INDICATORS

BY SARAH STACHOWIAK AND HALLIE GOERTZ

The last time we met Pam, she had developed a "So That" chain to identify outcomes that helped demonstrate the impact of the work the stakeholder group was doing to decrease "victim-blaming" in the community. Since then, the stakeholders prioritized the outcomes, selecting those that they thought realistically reflected the kinds of changes their initiative could make happen. Now Pam was wondering what she could do to demonstrate that these outcomes were being met? What would she measure to show progress?

How can abstract outcomes statements be measured? One of the first steps in evaluating social change is to define outcomes that are realistic and reasonable for the strategies that are part of your social change work. (Remember, outcomes are the changes in community conditions that stakeholders believe will occur as a result of the initiative.) Once outcomes are defined and agreed upon by the stakeholder group, groups need to make outcomes measurable by creating indicators of change.

What are indicators? Indicators are more <u>specific</u> statements that describe how outcomes are being accomplished — detailed examples that can be <u>observed</u> and that are <u>logically tied to an outcome</u>.

Examples of indicators related to sexual assault prevention projects, and their associated outcomes, include:

√   Outcome: Increased student comfort with issues related to sexual assault.
   • Indicator: Sexual assault is talked about more at student services meetings.

√   Outcome: Increased staff participation in sexual assault prevention efforts.
   • Indicator: Staff spend more time on sexual violence prevention projects in class.

√   Outcome: Decreased denial of sexual assault issues in the community.
   • Indicator: Organizations perceive sexual assault as a problem in the community.

Let's consider an example using one of the outcomes Pam's stakeholder group selected.

Outcome: *Community members understand "victim-blaming".*

To measure this outcome we need a specific, observable way to describe *knowledge*. One possible indicator is:

Indicator: Community members can identify three rape myths.

Let's review this indicator. First, it describes a <u>specific</u> type of victim blaming – rape myths. It is also <u>observable</u> because the participants can be directly asked to identify rape myths. Finally, it is <u>logically tied to the outcome</u>, because both the outcome and indicator are measuring *knowledge.*

What are strong indicators? There are six key criteria that can be used to check indicators and ensure that they are strong:

1. **Is the indicator a direct measure of the outcome?** The indicator should be indicative of the outcome rather than a predictor of the outcome. It should mean that the outcome has been achieved.

2. **Is there a logical link between the indicator and the outcome?** If the outcome reflects a change in behavior, the indicator should also reflect a change in behavior.

3. **Is the indicator measurable and observable?**   An indicator should point to information that is tangible in the real world. Can it be seen, heard or read?

4. **Are the indicators valid and reliable measures of the outcomes?** Validity means, "Are you measuring what you intended to measure?" You want your indicators to be the closest, most accurate proxy for the outcomes as possible. Reliability means, "Can you collect the indicator data in a consistent way?" Consider both when selecting indicators.

5. **Is it reasonable to expect the agency can collect data on the indicators?** Sometimes, the indicators you choose might require a lot of time and resources to collect, or they might be difficult to gain access to.

6. **Are the indicators useful? Will they help you understand what is going on in the program and where improvements may be needed?** Think ahead and imagine the end of the evaluation process. Will the audience care about the progress made on these indicators? Will it be meaningful, given the overall intention and context of the program or initiative?

What does a "bad" indicator look like? Consider the "victim-blaming" outcome again:

Outcome: *Community members understand "victim-blaming".*
Indicator: Community members report using rape myths in conversation less frequently.

When we look more closely at this indicator we can see that though it is specific and observable, it is **not** logically tied to the outcome, nor is it a valid measure, because the outcome refers to knowledge and the indicator refers to a behavior.

How many indicators are enough? This question is a bit like the old question: "How many pages does this term paper have to be?" Outcomes need only as many indicators as it takes to accurately describe the aspects of the outcome you wish to represent. It is generally preferable to keep the number of indicators manageable in order to reduce time and resources needed for data management. Typically one to three indicators are appropriate for each outcome that has been identified.

What's next? So, now that Pam has written and prioritized her outcomes and has begun to develop indicators, what's the next step? In the next step, we will explore how to integrate your outcomes and indicators into an evaluation design that can be used to assess your program.

EVALUATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE, PART III: CREATING AN EVALUATION PLAN

BY SARAH STACHOWIAK AND HALLIE GOERTZ

So far, Pam's involved with a local stakeholder group that is working to decrease "victim-blaming" in the community and has been thinking about ways that they can assess their work. Pam has written and prioritized outcomes to demonstrate the impact of their work and developed indicators to measure progress in achieving these outcomes.

Pam is wondering how she can use their outcomes and indicators to understand what progress the stakeholders' activities are making to decrease "victim-blaming" in the community. The next step in the process is to choose an evaluation design, develop an evaluation plan, and identify data collection tools.

Selecting a Design. Before assessing a program, an appropriate evaluation design must be selected. The design provides the master plan for conducting data collection. It is like a blueprint for architects or a strategic plan for organizations. Evaluation designs can vary from very low intensity to extremely rigorous, with a lot of room in between. Here are some examples of evaluation designs that might be considered by CSAPs doing community development work:

Type of Design	Indicators	Resource Intensity
Post-Program Measures	Tools describe outcomes (e.g., behavior, attitude, knowledge changes) *after* a program.	Low
Pre-and Post-Program Measures	Describes participants' scores on expected outcomes *prior to and following* a program	Moderate
Post-Program Measures and Benchmarks	Same as post-program, except similar scores are also collected from partner organizations or other targets for *comparisons*	High
Pre- and Post-Program Measures and Long- Term Post-Program Measures	Same and pre- and post-program measure approach with *additional scores obtained again at a later point in time*.	High

Things to consider when making decisions about an evaluation design include:

♦ When do you expect change to occur? Immediately? Gradually?
♦ Will there be milestones, or shorter-term outcomes, that will be seen along the way?
♦ What resources are available for data collection and analysis?

Community development work is often not a "program" but rather a number of coordinated activities, or strategies, to create social change. When considering an evaluation design, think about the activities that will be undertaken and when opportunities to collect data are possible and will provide useful information. For example, one community may decide that they want to see what impact can be seen after six months. Another could use needs assessment information as a baseline and then do a community survey annually to have a pre-post design. No one design is "right." A design should be chosen that will be do-able and informative.

Developing an Evaluation Plan
An evaluation plan combines all of the information about outcomes, indicators, data collection and sampling. Here is a typical evaluation plan layout with descriptions of each component.

Outcomes	Indicators	Data Collection Methods and Tools	Frequency and Schedule of Data Collection	Sampling Strategy
List each outcome identified previously.	List each outcome identified previously.	Identify how indicators will be measured (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, official statistics, etc.)	Describe when and how often data will be collected.	State who data will be collected from. If data is collected from a population of over 100, consider sampling.

Pam's stakeholder group's evaluation plan might look something like this:

Outcomes	Indicators	Data Collection Methods and Tools	Frequency and Schedule of Data Collection	Sampling Strategy
Community members understand victim-blaming	Community members can identify three rape myths.	Short survey	Annually at community summer fair	Summer fair attendees

For their community development work, Pam's group decided to use a post-program measures design over time. This will allow the group to see how community members at large are changing their opinions about victims of sexual violence.

Developing Data Collection Methods
Data collection is always a balancing act between collecting data that are comprehensive enough to serve your needs and finding process and scopes that are reasonable to

implement. As you determine the tools and data collection methods, keep in mind a few things:

- ♦ Who is in the best position to collect the data?
- ♦ What data are already being collected that could provide insight into these outcomes?
- ♦ What is the time frame for capturing this information? Is an annual survey or check-in appropriate?
- ♦ Who is the audience? The intended audience can help you determine the most appropriate method.
- ♦ Which questions, methods and outcome indicators are most culturally appropriate? Think about translation of materials, the importance of establishing trust and whether methods are culturally sensitive.

Once the evaluation plan is designed, Pam's group will want to implement the evaluation and report results. This information may help them better understand the impact they are having, find problem areas or opportunities for improvement, secure additional funding, and share their work with other stakeholders.

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*If you have questions or would like technical assistance on evaluation of prevention efforts, contact **Organizational Research Services** at **206.728.0474** and ask for Sarah Stachowiak (sarahs@organizationalresearch.com, extension 10) or Hallie Goertz (hgoertz@organizationalresearch.com, extension 24).*

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