

Engaging Community Members

Mary Kate Allee, MPH



Before



Make it

Fun

After



Objectives

- To discuss assumptions that may inhibit working with community members and the benefits of overcoming these assumptions
- To differentiate between different levels of community engagement



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Health is...



...a dynamic state of complete **physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being** and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (WHO 1998) *and...*



Public health is “what we as a society do **collectively** to **assure the conditions** in which people can be healthy.” (IOM 1988)



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Developing a healthy community...



...should be

- a long-term endeavour,
- well planned,
- inclusive and equitable,
- holistic and integrated into the bigger picture,
- initiated and supported by community members,
- of benefit to the community, and
- grounded in experience that leads to best practice.



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Developing a healthy community...



...requires and helps build community capacity

- to address issues
- to take advantage of opportunities
- to find common ground, and
- to balance competing interests.

It does not just happen—it requires both a conscious and a conscientious effort to do something (or many things) to improve the community.



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What Does a Community-Driven Process Look Like?



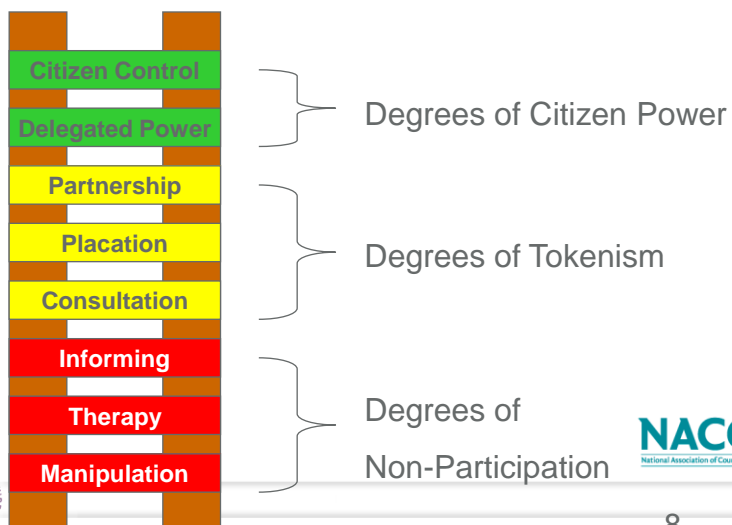
“There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process.”

(Sherry Arnstein, 1969: “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” pg. 1)

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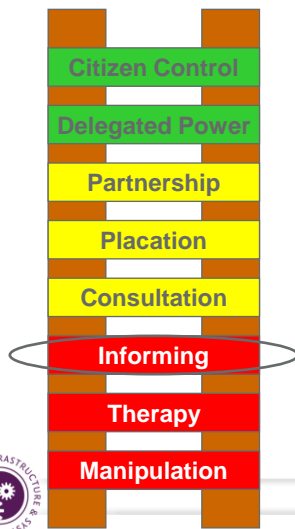
A Ladder of Citizen Participation



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A Ladder of Citizen Participation



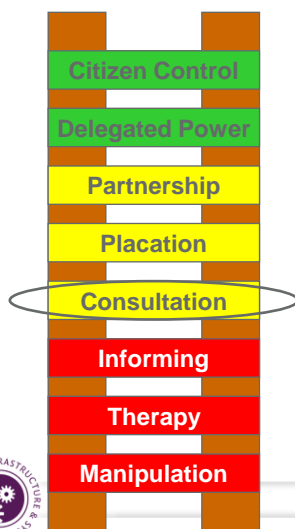
Informing:

Information flow is one-way (from officials to citizens) with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation.

Information is shared at a late stage, or after a decision or process has already been completed; the community has little opportunity to influence the process that is being undertaken “for their benefit.”

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A Ladder of Citizen Participation



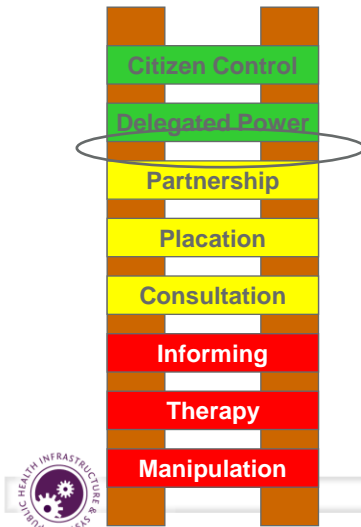
Consultation:

Participation is measured by how many people come to meetings, take brochures home, or answer questionnaires.

Participants “participate in participation” and leaders acquire evidence that they’ve gone through the required motions of “involving people.”

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A Ladder of Citizen Participation



Partnership/Delegated Power:

Power is redistributed among citizens and power holders and decisions are made in partnership. Citizens can achieve dominant decision making authority over a particular plan or program.

The Obvious Risk:

- We will work just as hard as we always do, and because we fail to do things differently, we will get results that are ultimately the same as those we are getting now.
- BUT, we will have involved numerous others in the process, and as a result, we may have done damage in the community.
- As we engage community members, we must be asking ourselves, “In my organization, what thinking needs to change?”

Questions to Ask Ourselves:

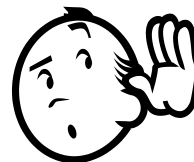
- What assumptions does the lead organization (my colleagues) hold about who our partners should or should not be?
- What assumptions do I/we make about involving the private sector, hospitals, city government, the mayor's office, universities, tribal communities, law enforcement?
- What assumptions does the lead organization hold about the community, and visa versa? About community driven process? About working together?
- What do we think about "Increasing the visibility of Public Health"?



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Listening: An Essential Skill

- Engaged Listening is hard work
- Listening to self, and to others
- Acceptance of what is said
- Pay special attention to surprise, differences, disagreement
- The goal of OUR listening is better understanding
- Reflective Listening, The Power of Validation



Willingness to Collaborate:

- **It is a commitment, to be a collaborator within the community.**
- **Need to acknowledge History, Turf, Existing Relationships**
 1. Assurances to Existing Partners
 2. Clarity with New Partners around Goals, Process, and Leadership
 3. Acknowledge and be Eager to Integrate Previous Planning and Assessment Efforts
 4. Go slow now, to go faster later



Reflective Listening Exercise

- What assumptions does the lead organization (my colleagues) hold about who our partners should or should not be?
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Reflection Community Engagement Work

- ⊙ What community engagement work have you done?
- ⊙ What was the strategy?
- ⊙ How did you feel at the end of the community engaged intervention?
- ⊙ What was challenging about community engagement work?
- ⊙ What would get you to the next level of engagement?
- ⊙ What does it take to maintain a community-driven strategy?
- ⊙ What will change in your work to increase community engagement?



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Contact

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Community Health Assessments (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) for Accreditation Preparation

Engaging Community Members in
Community Health Improvement
Processes

Allen Lomax
July 19, 2011



Community Members to Engage in the Community Health Improvement Process

List of Possible Community Members to Involve:

- PTA Members
- Consumers of Non-profit Organizations' Services
- Neighborhood Community Groups
- Members of Policy Advisory Committees and Commissions
- Business Owners
- Members of Civic Associations
- Informally Recognized Community Leaders
- Media
- Marketing People
- Youth



Benefits of Engaging Community Members

- They have knowledge about the community--needs, concerns, and issues
- Creates advocates for the community health improvement process
- Expands awareness about the community health improvement process
- Adds credibility to the community health improvement process
- Expands the base for doing work during the process
- Identifies potential obstacles to implementing the results of the process



Challenges to Engaging Community Members

- Citizens don't have time
- Citizens promote their own agenda
- Citizens don't trust government
- Inadequate government-citizen communication
- Participation objectives poorly defined
- Citizens don't have expertise
- Agencies don't have enough financial resources
- Department heads want to control agenda
- Elected officials want to control agenda
- Administrators don't have time
- Elected officials don't trust agencies

Source: Results of a 2004 survey of city/county managers, county administrators and elected officials; Cited in Citizen Involvement Efforts and Bureaucratic Responsiveness: Participatory Values, Stakeholder Pressures, and Administrative Practicality by Kaifeng Young and Kathe Callahan, Public Administration Review, March/April 2007, Vol. 67, Num. 2, Pgs. 249-264



Strategies for Engaging Community Members

- Hold meetings, forums, etc. in community facilities (e.g., libraries, recreation centers, museums, schools)
- Advertise meetings, forums, etc well in advance
- Hold events at different times
- State the purpose of the event
- Start and end on time
- Ask for real input and feedback
- Use techniques to actively engage participants (e.g., multi-voting)



Strategies for Engaging Community Members

- Create small work groups and then reporting out to larger group
- Share the results of the events with participants after the event
- Use on-line techniques for involvement (create an issues forum, blog, listserv)
- Create a web site that contains information about the process and progress being made (create short video—no more than 5 minutes—about the process)
- Provide child care



Strategies for Sustaining Community Members' Involvement

- Report efforts successes community-wide (newsletter, newspaper)
- Celebrate successes
- Recognize the achievements of members
- Make community members feel valued as real partners
- Constantly communicate with community members
- Listen to and address major concerns by community members
- Incorporate networking time at events



Resources

BEYOND CIVILITY: From Public Engagement To Problem Solving, An Action Guide For City Leaders, National League of Cities, Center for Research and Innovation, January 2011
<http://nlc.org/find-city-solutions/research-innovation/governance-civic-engagement>

Capacity Primer: Building Membership, Structure, Leadership and Cultural Competence, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute, www.cada.org



Community Health Assessments (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) for Accreditation Preparation

July 19, 2011

Engaging Community Members

Paul Campbell Erwin



Objectives

At the completion of this session, you will be able to

1. Explain strategies for involving community members in the various steps of the CHA/CHIP process
2. Revise community member engagement strategies throughout the process.



Strategies for involving community members

- Examples from the Knox County (TN) Together! Healthy Knox Community Health Improvement Process (handout)



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Strategies for involving community members: Dialogue and MAPP

...if strategies have failed in the past, consider it may have nothing to do with the strategy

Dialogue is...intentional, skillful interaction for creative outcomes, shared understanding, and the development of shared meaning (Cross River Connections)

Dialogue is...learning to listen in a way that the community will speak, instead of speaking in a way that the community will listen



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Strategies for involving community members: Dialogue and MAPP

An exercise:

1. Get into pairs
2. Grip each other to prepare for thumb wrestling
3. Get as many “pins” as possible in one minute



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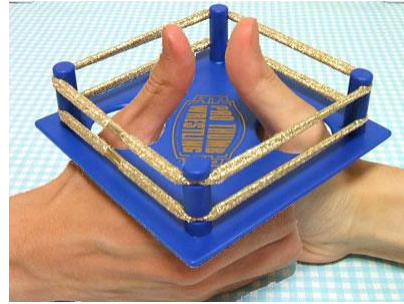


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Strategies for involving community members: Dialogue and MAPP

An exercise:

- For the group that got the fewest pins, what did you do and why?
- For the group that got the most pins, what did you do and why?
- If you changed your strategy midstream, what happened? What impact did it have on your results?
- What are some unintended consequences of straight competition?



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Strategies for involving community members: Dialogue and MAPP

Dialogue enables collaboration and partnerships by:

- Developing skills: listening, inquiry, advocacy and building together
- Fostering attitudes: openness, empathy, and equality
- Reflecting intentions: to interact creatively

Dialogue creates trust by:

- Building mutual understanding that...
- Enables shared understanding that is the foundation of...
- Shared agreements and commitment



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Dialogue in Practice

- Physical set up
- Meetings – agenda and skills
 - Clear desired outcomes
 - “Check in” and connect
 - Good question(s)
 - Small group breakouts
 - Reflective listening
 - Next steps
 - Respectful closure



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Lessons Learned from Dialogue

- Transition from public health directing the process to community directing the process: challenging and uncomfortable
- Creating a space for trust and safety can be controversial
- Skills are a piece of Dialogue...Intention is just as important for achieving MAPP desired outcomes
- It takes time, but it's worth it!



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Dialogue Benefits

- Move from “I” to “We”
 - A team connected by values, stories, experience
 - Shared vision
- Commitment to process
- Clarification and shared understanding of roles (public health, community organizations, etc.)
- Increased awareness and emphasis placed on community engagement and local ownership
- Meetings are enjoyable!



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2. Revise community member engagement strategies throughout the process.

And for more on Dialogue: Leonadi Ward leonadi@pacbell.net

