

# Community Readiness for Community Change

TRI-ETHNIC CENTER  
FOR PREVENTION RESEARCH



Colorado  
State  
University



“Once upon a time, there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man, and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects, and throwing them into the ocean.

He came closer still and called out "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young man paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said,  
"It made a difference for that one."

— Loren Eiseley

American anthropologist, educator, philosopher, and natural science writer



# Community Readiness for Community Change

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Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research  
Sage Hall, Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1879  
(970) 491-7902/Fax (970) 491-0527  
[www.TriEthnicCenter.ColoState.edu](http://www.TriEthnicCenter.ColoState.edu)

Model Originally Developed by: E. R. Oetting, B. A. Plested, R. W. Edwards, P. J. Thurman, K. J. Kelly, and F. Beauvais

Modified and expanded by: Linda R. Stanley



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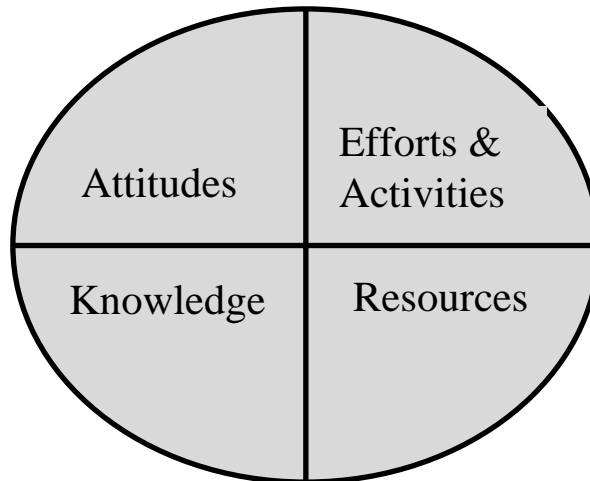
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# The Community Readiness Model (CRM)

## Measures



of

Community  
Members

+

Leadership

in order to assess

A community's readiness to address  
an issue on 5 key dimensions:

- Community Knowledge of the Issue
- Community Knowledge of Efforts
- Community Climate
- Leadership
- Resources

## **The model's key components include:**

- A set of *survey questions* consisting of open-ended questions about the community's attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, etc. about an issue (e.g. substance use, HIV/AIDS).
- A small number of *interviews* of *key respondents* using this survey.
- *Scoring* of the completed interviews using scales provided for each dimension of community readiness.
- Calculation of *readiness scores on 5 dimensions* using the interview scores.
- Use of these final readiness scores to develop a *plan for action*.

In the following pages, we will cover each step of completing a community readiness assessment. We begin by examining the readiness of an individual to change their behavior.

## When are we ready to change OUR behavior?

The **Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change** (Prochaska and DiClemente, 1992), also called the Stages of Change Model, assesses an individual's readiness to act on a new (typically healthier) behavior, and it provides appropriate strategies, or processes of change to guide the individual through the stages of change to action and maintenance.

<b>Personal Readiness for Change: Stages of Change Model</b>	
<i>Stage</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<b>1. Pre-contemplation</b>	Not yet acknowledging that there is a problem behavior that needs to be changed
<b>2. Contemplation</b>	Acknowledging that there is a problem but not yet ready or sure of wanting to make a change
<b>3. Preparation</b>	Getting ready to change. "I've got to do something about this. What can I do?"
<b>4. Action</b>	Actively involved in taking steps to change the behavior by using a variety of different techniques
<b>5. Maintenance</b>	Maintaining the behavior change and continued commitment to sustaining new behavior
<b>Relapse</b>	Returning to older behaviors and abandoning the new changes

In order to help an individual move from one stage to the next, different techniques are used by counselors and others trying to facilitate the behavior change. For example, for an individual in the pre-contemplation stage of behavior change, the facilitator might:

- Validate lack of readiness
- Clarify that the decision is theirs to make
- Encourage re-evaluation of current behavior

On the other hand, for an individual in the preparation stage, that same facilitator might:

- Identify and assist in problem solving regarding obstacles
- Help the individual identify social support
- Encourage small initial steps

Communities are a lot like individuals in the sense that they move through stages before they are ready to implement programs, develop and deliver interventions, and take other actions to address an issue in the community.

## **When is our community ready to change?**

Like individual behavior, communities are at different levels of readiness to address issues in their communities. Often community efforts to implement programs and activities to change behaviors in a community meet with:

- Little enthusiasm in the community to provide resources or cooperate in implementation efforts
- Resistance by community members and/or leadership who then erect obstacles.
- Lack of action by the community and/or by leaders to help move efforts forward
- Failure! Resources run out, volunteers burn out, the new program is ineffective

**One reason for this frustration and failure may be a lack of readiness to address the issue by community members and leadership.**

Just like with individual change, we must use appropriate actions and techniques to move our communities forward in addressing an issue. Matching a community intervention to the community's level of readiness is key to achieving success. If your community is not ready for your efforts, failure is much more likely. For example, the community may deny there is a problem, and thus your efforts will meet with resistance or even hostility. The community may not understand the issue, leading your efforts to meet with indifference or little attention paid to them. Your community leaders may not be willing to provide the resources needed to effectively implement new programs or activities.

No matter the reason for this lack of readiness, your efforts will have gone for naught.

## **What is community readiness?**

Community readiness is the degree to which a community is willing and prepared to take action on an issue.

The Community Readiness Model was developed by researchers at the Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research (Oetting, Donnermeyer, Plested, Edwards, Kelly, and Beauvais, 1995) to help communities be more successful in their efforts to address a variety of issues, such as drug and alcohol use and HIV/AIDS prevention. In part, it is based upon the principles of the Personal Readiness for Change. Later, you will see some of the same stages of community readiness that you see in the Personal Stages of Change model above.

In addition, because communities are more complicated in their processes of change than individuals are, these researchers also built the Community Readiness Model on social action work done in the field of community development (Warren, 1978). The social action process identifies stages on the community level that lay the groundwork for collective action. These

stages include Stimulation of Interest, which is the recognition of need; Initiation which involves development of the problem definition and possible solutions via programs proposed by community members; Legitimization, which is when there is acceptance of local leaders of the need for action; Decision to Act, which is the development of specific plans involving members from the wider community; and Action, which is implementation.

Later, you will see parts of each of these models incorporated into the Community Readiness Model's Stages of Community Change. The researchers then took their model out into the field to test it in communities. These communities varied widely in ethnicity, level of rurality, region of the U.S., and more recently, country. The model has now been extensively used, and based upon the many communities' experiences with the Model, it has been updated and made better over time.

Some of the issues addressed with the model have included:

Drug and Alcohol Use	Transportation
HIV/AIDs	Intimate Partner Violence
Child Abuse	Hepatitis C
Environmental Trauma	Animal Control
Heart Health	Obesity/Nutrition
Head Injury	Taxation (e.g. tobacco taxes)

## **Benefits of Using the Community Readiness Model**

The Community Readiness Model (CRM) can help a community move forward and be more successful in its efforts to change in a variety of ways. Some of these include:

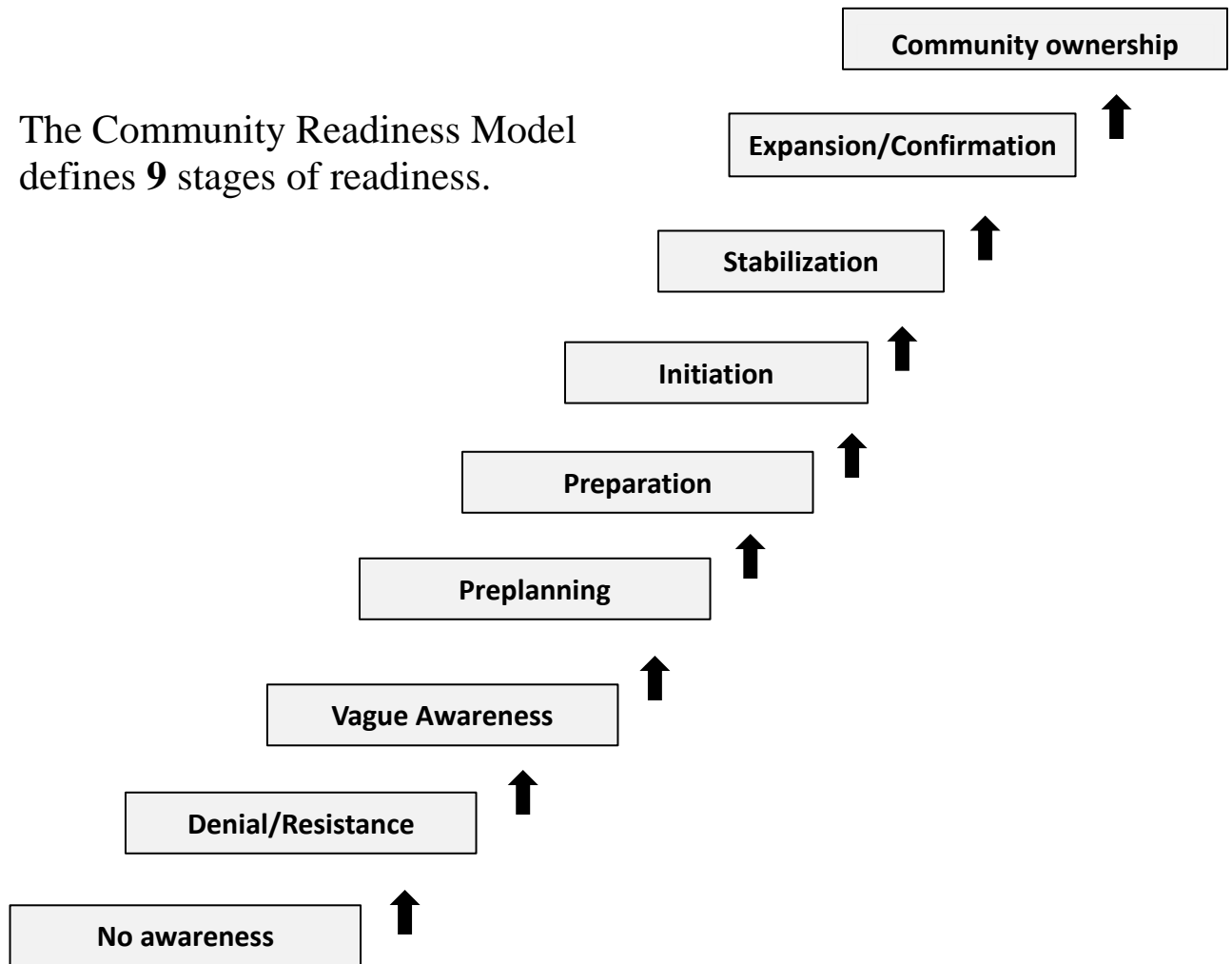
- **measuring** a community's readiness levels on several dimensions that will help diagnose where we need to put our initial efforts.
- helping to identify our community's **weaknesses** and **strengths**, and the **obstacles** we are likely to meet as we move forward.
- pointing to **appropriate actions** that match our community's readiness levels.
- working within our **community's culture** to come up with actions that are right for our community.
- aiding in **securing funding, cooperating with other organizations, working with leadership**, and more.

While the CRM is a well-researched and highly valued approach to initiate community change, it is not:

- a method for determining whether an issue is **actually occurring** in the community.
- a tool that tells **exactly what to do to increase** our readiness levels.
- **a prevention program**, per se.

## Stages of Community Readiness

The Community Readiness Model defines **9** stages of readiness.



Readiness levels for an issue can increase **and** decrease.

The amount of time to move to a higher readiness level can vary by the issue, by the intensity and appropriateness of community efforts, and by external events (such as an incident which creates focus on the issue).

Here is a brief explanation of each stage:

### Stage 1: No Awareness

- Community has **no knowledge** about local efforts addressing the issue.
- Leadership believes that the issue **is not really much of** a concern.
- The community believes that the **issue is not a concern**.
- Community members have **no knowledge** about the issue.
- There are **no resources** available for dealing with the issue.

**“Kids drink and get drunk.”**

### Stage 2: Denial/Resistance

- Leadership and community members believe that this issue **is not** a concern in their community or they think it **can’t or shouldn’t be addressed**.
- Community members have misconceptions or **incorrect knowledge** about current efforts.
- **Only a few** community members have **knowledge** about the issue, and there may be many misconceptions among community members about the issue.
- Community members and/or leaders **do not support using available resources** to address this issue.

**“We can’t (or shouldn’t) do anything about it!”**

### Stage 3: Vague Awareness

- **A few** community members have at least heard about local efforts, but **know little about them**.
- Leadership and community members **believe that this issue may be a concern in the community**. They show no immediate motivation to act.
- Community members have only **vague knowledge** about the issue (e.g. they have some awareness that the issue can be problem and why it may occur).
- There are **limited resources** (such as a community room) identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue.

**“Something should probably be done, but what? Maybe someone else will work on this.”**

### Stage 4: Preplanning

- **Some** community members have at least heard about local efforts, but **know little about them**.
- Leadership and community members **acknowledge that this issue is a concern** in the community and that something has to be done to address it.
- Community members have **limited knowledge** about the issue.
- There are **limited resources** that could be used for further efforts to address the issue.

**“This is important. What can we do?”**

### Stage 5: Preparation

- **Most** community members have at least heard about local efforts.
- Leadership is **actively supportive of continuing or improving current efforts** or in developing new efforts
- The attitude in the community is “**We are concerned** about this and **we want to do** something about it”.
- Community members have **basic knowledge** about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms.
- There are **some resources** identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue; community members or leaders are actively working to secure these resources.

**“I will meet with our funder tomorrow.”**

### Stage 6: Initiation

- **Most** community members have at least **basic** knowledge of local efforts.
- Leadership **plays a key role** in planning, developing and/or implementing new, modified, or increased efforts.
- The attitude in the community is “**This is our responsibility**”, and some community members are involved in addressing the issue.
- Community members have **basic knowledge** about the issue and are **aware that the issue occurs locally**.
- **Resources have been obtained** and/or allocated to support further efforts to address this issue.

**“This is our responsibility; we are now beginning to do something to address this issue.”**

### Stage 7: Stabilization

- **Most** community members have **more than basic knowledge** of local efforts, including names and purposes of specific efforts, target audiences, and other specific information.
- Leadership is **actively involved in ensuring or improving the long-term viability** of the efforts to address this issue.
- The attitude in the community is “**We have taken** responsibility”. There is **ongoing** community involvement in addressing the issue.
- Community members have **more than basic knowledge** about the issue.
- A considerable part of allocated resources for efforts are from sources that are expected to provide **continuous support**.

**“We have taken responsibility”**



### **Stage 8: Confirmation/Expansion**

- **Most** community members have **considerable** knowledge of local efforts, including the level of program effectiveness.
- Leadership **plays a key role in expanding and improving efforts**.
- The majority of the community **strongly** supports efforts or the need for efforts. Participation level is high.
- Community members have **more than basic** knowledge about the issue and have **significant** knowledge about **local prevalence** and local consequences.
- A considerable part of allocated resources are expected to provide **continuous** support. Community members are looking into **additional** support to implement new efforts.

**“How well are our current programs working and how can we make them better?”**

### **Stage 9: High Level of Community Ownership**

- **Most** community members have **considerable and detailed** knowledge of local efforts,
- Leadership is **continually reviewing evaluation** results of the efforts and is modifying financial support accordingly.
- **Most** major segments of the community are highly supportive and actively involved.
- Community members have **detailed** knowledge about the issue and have **significant** knowledge about **local prevalence** and local consequences.
- Diversified resources and funds are secured, and efforts are expected to be ongoing.

**“These efforts are an important part of the fabric of our community.”**

## Dimensions of Community Readiness

Note in the statements describing the stages above that there are several important dimensions of community readiness addressed, e.g. leadership and attitude in the community. **Community readiness is composed of five dimensions** or aspects that can help guide the community in moving their readiness levels forward. These dimensions are

### **Community Knowledge of Efforts**

How much does the community know about the current programs and activities?

### **Leadership**

What is leadership's attitude toward addressing the issue?

### **Community Climate**

What is the community's attitude toward addressing the issue?

### **Community Knowledge of the Issue**

How much does the community know about the issue?

### **Resources**

What are the resources that are being used or could be used to address the issue?

**Each dimension will receive a community readiness score.** Thus, each dimension can be at a different readiness level. For example, the scores for a community might look like:

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Readiness Level</u>	<u>Readiness Stage</u>
Knowledge of Efforts	3	Vague Awareness
Leadership	2	Denial/Resistance
Community Climate	2	Denial/Resistance
Knowledge of the Issue	3	Vague Awareness
Resources	4	Preplanning

### **What do these scores mean?**

In the assessment section, we will introduce scales that we use to measure each dimension's readiness level. The statements shown below come directly from these scales.

**Community Knowledge of Efforts      3      Vague Awareness**

A **few** community members have heard about local efforts, but **know little about them**.

**Leadership      2      Denial/Resistance**

Leadership believes that this issue **is** a concern, in general, but believes that it **is not** a concern in this community or that it can't or shouldn't be addressed.

**Community Climate      2      Denial/Resistance**

Community believes that this issue **is** a concern, in general, but believes that it **is not** a concern in this community or that it can't or shouldn't be addressed.

**Community Knowledge of Issue      3      Vague Awareness**

Community members have only **vague knowledge** about the issue (e.g. they have some awareness that the issue can be problem and why it may occur).

**Resources      4      Preplanning**

Current efforts may be funded, but the funding may not be stable or continuing. There are **limited** resources identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue.

# **How To Conduct A Community Readiness Assessment**

Using the steps outlined below, we can measure a community's readiness to address a particular issue. A readiness stage is calculated for each of the 5 dimensions. If you have questions about a step, please see the Frequently Asked Questions in Appendix D.

The steps taken to assess community readiness are:

1. Identify and clearly define your **issue**.
2. Identify and clearly define and delineate your **community**.
3. Prepare your **interview questions**.
4. Choose your **key respondents**.
5. **Conduct** and **transcribe** your interviews.
6. **Score** the interviews.
7. Calculate your **average dimension scores**.

## **Step 1: Identify and clearly define your issue.**

### **Readiness is issue specific.**

Therefore, it is important to clearly define your issue prior to conducting interviews. Consider the following issues that all concern alcohol use:

- Underage drinking
- Underage drinking (ages 12-17)
- Underage drinking (ages 18-20)
- Binge drinking by youth under age 21
- Binge drinking by adults age 21 and older

The readiness to address each of these issues is likely to vary significantly. For example, a community may be ready to address underage alcohol use. On the other hand, the community may not be ready to address binge drinking by adults due to community norms.

In addition to specifying your issue in a succinct phrase, it is also important to provide your respondents with a clear definition of your issue. For example, a county in the Western United States was assessing the readiness of their community to address underage alcohol use. At the beginning of the interview, they told each interviewee: *“Just to be clear, when I refer to underage alcohol use, I mean the use of alcohol by youth under 21 years old.”* Another community had identified their issue as excessive student drinking by the community's university students. At the beginning of each interview, interviewees were told that excessive student drinking was defined as *“drinking by university students that results in harm such as injury, fights, academic problems, or social conflicts”*.

## **Step 2: Identify and clearly define and delineate your community.**

### **Readiness is community specific.**

A community can be defined in a number of ways. The most common is a geographic area, such as a town, a neighborhood, or a school district. But a community might also be an organization. For example, we might be interested in measuring the readiness level of a state's Department of Public Health to begin working on increasing the physical activity of that state's senior population. In this case, the community is the Department of Public Health while the issue is increasing the physical activity of the state's senior population.

Thus, examples of communities include:

- geographical areas.
- a subgroup of a geographical area (ethnicity, age, etc.).
- an occupation group such as law enforcement, medical community, environmentalists.
- a system such as mental health.
- an organization or a department of an organization.

## Activity

### **Step 1: Identifying the issue.**

Identify the issue that your group will be assessing for readiness, remembering to be specific. Here are examples of issues:

- Underage drinking for youth ages 12-17
- Binge drinking by youth under age 21
- HIV/AIDS
- Sexual violence in the LGBTQ+ community
- Non-medical use of prescription drugs

#### **a. Proposed Issue:**

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Next, do you need to define terms within the issue to ensure that all respondents are “on the same page”? For the examples, above, this may mean defining what binge drinking is (e.g., 5 drinks in a 2 hour period), what is considered “sexual violence”, what drugs are included in “prescription drugs” and what “non-medical use” means.

#### **b. Definition of your issue (if needed):**

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### **Step 2: Identify and clearly define and delineate your community.**

Identify the community whose readiness you are assessing. As noted above, examples of communities include:

- Geographic community – a city, a county, an area enclosed by certain boundaries, etc.
- Subgroup of a geographical community defined by ethnicity, age, etc.
- Occupation group such as law enforcement, medical community, environmentalists.
- Systems such as mental health or children’s development.
- Organizations or departments of organizations (e.g. , a university, a school district).

#### **Proposed Community:**

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**You can try your issue and community in the following sentence:**

Using a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is (the issue) to (the community) with 1 being “not a concern at all” and 10 being “a very great concern”?

For example:

Using a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is underage drinking by youth ages 12-15 to residents of Anywhere County, with 1 being “not a concern at all” and 10 being “a very great concern”?

### **Step 3: Prepare your interview questions.**

The community readiness interview can be found in Appendix A . Please note that you will insert your issue and your community in the appropriate places as noted. Several important things to note:

- The **questions in bold** are mandatory for scoring. Do not omit these.
- The questions are organized by dimension. One exception is that question #1 pertains mainly to Community Climate. However, keep in mind that you may find valuable information about any dimension throughout the interview.
- Use two people to adapt the questions for your issue and community, and pilot test your questions prior to your first interview.
- If there is other information that you are interested in gathering, add additional questions at the end.
- Prepare an introductory script to ensure that your interviewees understand the issue and community. See an example below.
- If translating into another language, translate and back-translate (translate from the new language into English) to insure content accuracy.

The following is an example introduction script where the interviewee has already agreed to be interviewed at a scheduled date and time:

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ from (your organization or affiliation).

Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed for this project. We are contacting key people to ask about (issue) as it occurs in (community). The entire process, including individual names, will be kept confidential. Just to be clear, when I refer to (issue), I specifically mean:

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In addition, I would like you to answer specifically about the community of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Give more details as you think necessary.)

I would like to record our interview, so that we can get an accurate representation of what you've said. The recording will be erased once we transcribe it. Would that be okay with you?



## Activity

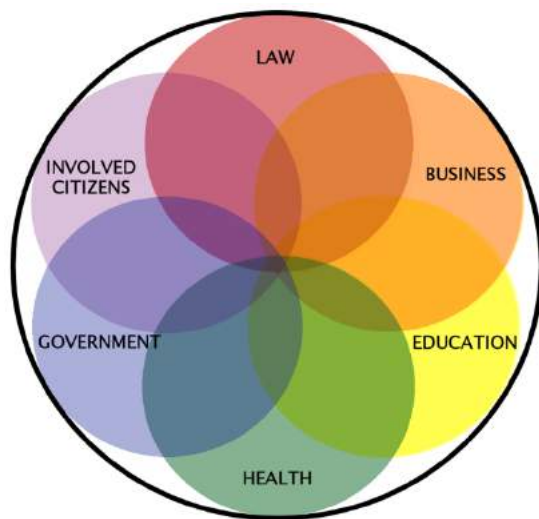
### **Step 3: Prepare your interview questions.**

- Substitute your identified issue and community in the noted places in the interview questions.
- Read through the optional (non-bolded) questions and decide which questions to use.  
We recommend not asking all of the community readiness questions, as the interviews may be so long that some interviewees stop before completing the interview.
- Add any questions of your own to the end of the interview.
- Prepare your introduction script.
- Pilot test the interview with at least one other person.
- Make any modifications needed to finalize the interview.

#### **Step 4: Choose your key respondents.**

Some community surveys rely on a random sample of the community's population, and they ask each individual about their personal attitudes toward the issue. The Community Readiness Model, instead, uses **key respondents** to answer the interview questions and provide information about how the community views the issue.

Key respondent interviews are qualitative interviews with people who know what is going on in the community. The purpose of using key respondents is to collect information from a wide range of people—including community leaders, professionals, or residents—who have firsthand knowledge about the community. These individuals, with their particular knowledge and understanding, can provide insight on the nature of the issue.



Think of the large bold circle to the left as your community. It is made up of a number of different sectors. Here we show six different sectors – law, business, education, government, health, and other involved citizens. If we interview a key respondent from each sector that can answer for at least that sector, we should obtain a relatively accurate picture of our community's attitudes and knowledge, without having to survey a large number of citizens.

#### **Who should be chosen as a key respondent?**

As noted above, key respondents should be involved in the community and know what is going on. They are likely to also have information about the issue. Thus, the choice of key respondents will depend on the identified issue and community.

Examples of key respondents include:

- School personnel
- Law enforcement
- Court system workers
- City/county/tribal government employees and leaders
- Health/medical professionals
- Community members at large
- Social services providers

- Spiritual/religious leaders
- Mental health and treatment service providers

**How many interviews should be done?**

Conduct at least 6 key respondent interviews in your community. Some communities may require more interviews in order to get a more complete picture of the community. However, in our experience, 6 – 12 interviews are often sufficient. When the community is very small or very homogenous, even 4 interviews may be sufficient.

When doing follow-up or post-test readiness assessments, use the same key respondents, if possible.

## Activity

### Step 3: Choose Your Key Respondents

1. What **sectors of the community** should be represented given the issue, ensuring that all sectors combined give a comprehensive representation of the community? Examples include school, health, law enforcement, business, involved citizenry. Think of at least 6 sectors from which you will choose key respondents.

Sector 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Sector 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Sector 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Sector 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Sector 5: \_\_\_\_\_ Sector 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Sector 7: \_\_\_\_\_ Sector 8: \_\_\_\_\_

Sector 9: \_\_\_\_\_ Sector 10: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Within each sector, what type of respondent can speak to the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge of at least this sector? (e.g., school principal, community health representative, director of housing) List other sectors each type of respondent may be able to give information about.

Sector 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sector 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sector 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sector 4: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sector 5: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sector 6: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Sector 7: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Sector 8: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sector 9: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sector 10: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. **Who** would best serve as key respondents and why?

Key Respondent 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Key Respondent 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Key Respondent 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Key Respondent 4: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Key Respondent 5: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Key Respondent 6: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Key Respondent 7: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Key Respondent 8: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Key Respondent 9: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Key Respondent 10: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Fill in the following table with your key respondent names, affiliation/title, and contact information. Contact each of your key respondents for permission to interview them. **Do not send them the interview questions.**

Please fill out the following table with potential key respondents. The Yes/No column tells whether the potential respondent has agreed to be interviewed.

Table -- Potential Key Respondents					
Name	Affiliation/Title	Primary Phone #	Secondary Phone #	e-mail address	Yes/No*

## **Step 5: Conduct and transcribe the interviews.**

When conducting the community readiness interviews, please keep in mind the following:

- It is often best to do these by telephone, when feasible.

When interviews are done in person, there can be a greater tendency of respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favorably by the interviewer. In addition, when interviews are done in person, there may be a greater likelihood for the interviewer to react verbally or with body language. On the other hand, interviewees may provide less information when on the telephone than when in person; therefore, it is incumbent on the interviewer to probe (using the suggestions in the interview guide) if answers are not informative.

However, keep in mind that in some populations, face-to-face interviews may be the only or the best option. If that is the case, it is important that the interviewer remain objective and unbiased during the interview.

- In order to get an accurate representation of what the interviewee said, **ask the respondent for permission to record the interview**. Make sure you have your recording equipment working and ready to go.
- Each interview takes 20 - 60 minutes.
- Set up an appointment beforehand, giving the respondent some information about the project.
- Do not send the community readiness questions to the interviewee, as they may then do research and prepare their answers.
- Interviewers should be familiar with the rating scales and understand the scoring process. This will help the interviewer know when to re-phrase questions or ask for more information.

During the interview:

- The interviewer should prompt for more detail but should **never** give their opinion. Examples of prompts include:
  - *“Could you please give me an example?”*
  - *“Could you tell me more about what you just said?”*
  - *“Could you please tell me what ABC means?”*
- The interviewer should keep the respondent on track, and ensure that the respondent actually answers the question.
- Do not rephrase the interviewee’s answer to validate your understanding of what was said. For example, do **not** say something like: *Are you saying that the community doesn’t really believe that this is an issue and therefore they are not acting to stop it?*
- Practice with another person prior to your first interview.



## **Transcribing the interviews**

Once an interview is conducted, it should be transcribed. Give each transcriber a copy of the interview questions to make their job easier. The transcriber should transcribe the interviewee's responses word for word, including such things as laughter. Voice recognition software does not typically work well for these interviews.

A free transcription software package can be found at: <http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/index.html>. This software allows the transcriber to slow the recording down so it is easier to hear and to keep pace with, besides making it easier to rewind, fast forward, and do other common transcribing tasks. Transcribers often find that a foot pedal (e.g., Infinity USB Digital Foot Control) can make transcribing easier.

## **Step 6: Score the interviews**

Each interview is scored to provide a readiness level for each dimension. **Two** individuals score each interview independently. Interviews should be labeled #1, #2, etc. so that scorers always refer to the same interview. Make sure to remove all interviewee identifiers before scoring to avoid potential bias that may come from the interviewer knowing the key respondent or knowing information about them, such as their age or their employment.

### **Process for scoring:**

- Have 5 different colors of highlighters. Designate one color for each dimension so, for example, Community Knowledge of Efforts (CKE) might be assigned the yellow highlighter, Leadership might be assigned pink, and so on. Have the other scorer use the same color scheme, as it will make the joint scoring process easier.
- There are five rating scales that you will use to score, one for each dimension. These can be found in **Appendix B**.
- Have a blank scoring sheet available to keep track of your scores and the final consensus scores. See Appendix C for a blank scoring sheet.
- Read through an interview in its entirety before scoring any of the dimensions. This will give you a general familiarity with the interview.
- Starting with Community Knowledge of Efforts (CKE), read the CKE rating scale to familiarize yourself with key concepts pertaining to this dimension.
- Then read through the entire interview and, using your highlighter for this dimension, highlight statements that refer to aspects of this dimension.
- Next, using the highlighted statements, start with the first statement on the anchored rating scale and ask yourself if the community exceeds that statement. If they do, proceed to the next statement and ask whether they exceed that statement.
- Continue this until you cannot move on to the next statement in the rating scale, that is, the community has not reached that stage yet. The readiness level for CKE is then at the prior stage. **In order to receive a score at a certain stage, the entire statement must be true.**
- In the “Community Readiness Scoring Sheet”, fill in your score for the Interview #1-Community Knowledge of Efforts in the table titled “Individual Scores”.
- You do not have to use whole numbers. If you think that a community has exceeded one statement but the next statement is not wholly true, then you can give a score in between the two levels.
- Move to Leadership. Skim the Leadership Rating Scale to identify key concepts that pertain to this dimension.
- Read through the entire interview, highlighting all the statements (with the highlighter assigned to Leadership) that refer to concepts in Leadership.
- Using the rating scale for Leadership and the highlighted statements, score the dimension, and write that score into the appropriate cell in the Individual Scores table on the Scoring Sheet.
- Continue to the next dimension until all dimensions are scored for that interview.

- Score the rest of the interviews in the same fashion and fill out the “Individual Scores” table as you go.
- If there are more interviews than room in the table, simply add columns to this form.
- As you become more experienced at scoring, you will be able to read through an interview once and highlight statements pertaining to each of the different dimensions, using the 5 highlighters as designated.
- Once you have completed scoring all the interviews for a community, you will meet with the other scorer to discuss your scores. Where your scores differ, you each need to discuss and explain how you arrived at your decision until you reach a consensus on what the score should be. **It is important that there be consensus on the scores by both scorers**, not an average.
- Enter your agreed upon scores for each dimension for all the interviews in the “Consensus Scores” table.

Here is an example of how the Individual Scores table might look once you have completed your individual scoring for 6 interviews:

	Interview Number					
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Knowledge of Efforts	4	4.25	2	3.5	3	3.5
Leadership	3.5	3.5	2	3	2.5	4
Community Climate	3.5	2.5	1.5	3.25	4	3
Knowledge of Issue	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	3	3.5
Resources	2	3.5	2.5	3	4	3.5

So for example, for interview #3, you gave Leadership, a score of 2.0.

**Step 7: Calculate your average dimension scores and an overall average score.**

Once you meet with the other scorer to arrive at consensus scores, the Consensus Scores table might look like:

	Interview Number						Average
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	
Knowledge of Efforts	3	4.25	2	2.5	3	3.5	
Leadership	3.5	3.5	4	3	2.5	4	
Community Climate	3.5	2.5	1.5	3.25	2	3	
Knowledge of Issue	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	3	2.25	
Resources	4	3.5	2.5	3	4	3.5	
<b>Overall Community Readiness Score</b>							

Calculate the average of the “Consensus Scores” for each dimension across all the interviews.

For example, for Knowledge of Efforts, add the scores **across** for all the interviews and divide by the number of interviews  $((3.0+4.25+2.0+3.5+3.0+3.5) / 6)$  to get the average - in this case, **3.04**. Enter the average in the last column marked “Average” in the “Consensus Scores” chart.

	Interview Number						Average
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	
Knowledge of Efforts	3.0	4.25	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	<b>3.04</b>

To calculate the “Overall Community Readiness Score”, find the average of the 5 final dimension scores. (Add the 5 dimension scores and divide by 5). Enter that score next to “Overall Community Readiness Score”.

Thus, the final community readiness scores for this assessment are:

	Interview Number						Average
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	
Knowledge of Efforts	3	4.25	2	2.5	3	3.5	<b>3.04</b>
Leadership	3.5	3.5	4	3	2.5	4	<b>3.42</b>
Community Climate	3.5	2.5	1.5	3.25	2	3	<b>2.63</b>
Knowledge of Issue	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	3	2.25	<b>2.63</b>
Resources	4	3.5	2.5	3	4	3.5	<b>3.42</b>
<b>Overall Community Readiness Score</b>							<b>3.03</b>

<b><u>Dimension</u></b>	<b><u>Readiness Level</u></b>	<b><u>Readiness Stage</u></b>
Knowledge of Efforts	3.04	Vague Awareness
Leadership	3.42	Vague Awareness
Community Climate	2.63	Denial/Resistance
Knowledge of the Issue	2.63	Denial/Resistance
Resources	3.42	Vague Awareness
Overall Score	3.03	Vague Awareness

For this assessment, the scores are quite similar across dimensions, indicating a relatively low level of readiness for all dimensions.

### **Final Step**

We suggest that when you complete your scoring of all interviews, you write a brief report that includes the dimension scores, their meanings (from the rating scales), and the major themes. To do this, read all of the interviews to identify:

- Major themes for each dimension.
- Strengths, weaknesses, and obstacles to action
- Leaders and other community members that you can enlist

## **Conducting a Brief Assessment**

If your community is not able to conduct an assessment, you can estimate your community readiness levels by conducting a brief assessment using the following procedure. You may choose to do this in a variety of settings – as an online survey, face-to-face in a group setting, or through email. The procedures may be somewhat different depending on the method of delivery.

1. Choose at least 10 key respondents from your community using the process outlined in this manual.
2. Clearly define your issue and community to the respondents. Provide them with a form or a box in which they can record their scores for each dimension.
3. Tell them that you would like them to rate the identified community as related to the issue on a series of dimensions. Emphasize that it is very important that they rate the actual state of the community not what they would like to see. There are no “good” or “bad” scores.
4. Present each respondent (by email, online, or in person) with the rating scale for Community Knowledge of Efforts, including a brief description of the dimension above the rating scale. You may need to remind them again what the issue and community are. Or you can substitute the issue and community into the appropriate places in the anchored rating scales.
5. Guide them through the scoring process, giving them the following directions:
  - Start with the first anchored rating statement. If the community exceeds the first statement, proceed to the next statement.
  - Continue until you cannot move on to the next statement in the rating scale.
  - In order to receive a score at a certain stage, the entire statement must be true. You do not have to use whole numbers in choosing a score.
  - Record your score in the appropriate place.
  - Respondents should score individually, without discussion.
6. Present each respondent with the rating scale for Leadership, and once again, guide them through the scoring process using the directions in #5 above. (Provide the definition of Leadership found in the interview template.) Proceed to the other dimensions.
7. You may ask respondents to give a written explanation of their score. Use probing questions from the interview template or simply ask why they chose that score.

If respondents are completing this in a group setting, you can work toward consensus scores for each dimension:

- Ask each individual to write their score for Community Knowledge of Efforts on a flipchart or board, without discussion.
- After all scores are revealed, have each individual explain their score.
- Hold a group discussion about the scores for 15 minutes or until a consensus score is reached, encouraging all individuals to speak. Take notes on the discussion.
- Follow the same procedure for each dimension.

If respondents are completing this in a non-group setting, average the scores for each dimension across all respondents and summarize the respondent comments. These are your final community readiness scores.

## **Where do you go from here? Developing An Action Plan**

It's now time to develop an action plan that will help move your community forward. This may be best done in a small group or community workshop format.

### **Setting goals**

The first thing to do is look at the distribution of the scores across the dimensions. Are they all about the same? Are some lower than others? It is important to increase the community readiness levels of the dimensions that have the lowest scores.

Suppose your community readiness scores look like the following:

Knowledge of Efforts:	2
Leadership:	2
Community Climate:	2
Knowledge of the Issue:	4
Resources:	3

Knowledge of Efforts, Leadership, and Community Climate have the lowest scores – all of them received a score of 2. Thus, your community should work first to raise the levels of these dimensions.

Once you have carefully analyzed your community readiness findings, you can formulate goals. A goal is a statement of general purpose and direction - what you wish to accomplish.

For the community scores above, one goal might be: To increase leadership's awareness of the issue in the community.

On the next page you will find a worksheet where you can write down the goals that your group develops. Below we will give more detail about setting objectives to help you achieve your goals.

## Activity: Goal Development

Develop 2-3 goals that you wish to accomplish in the next 3-5 years. Remember: A goal is a statement of general purpose and direction—it is the ultimate end result.

### Goal #1

Dimension(s) being addressed: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Goal #2

Dimension(s) being addressed: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Goal #3

Dimension(s) being addressed: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis**

As part of your community assessment, it is always helpful to conduct an environmental scan so that everyone is working from the same information and perceptions and so that you have helpful information at hand as you move forward with an action plan. One tool that is used in environmental scanning is SWOT analysis where:

- S = Strengths within your organization or community
- W = Weaknesses within your organization or community
- O = Opportunities external to your organization or community
- T = Threats external to your organization or community.

SWOT analysis was developed to help businesses strategically plan. However, it has since been used in many other situations, including for nonprofit and other public health applications.

A SWOT analysis guides you in identifying the positives and negatives inside your community (S-W) and outside of it, in the external environment (O-T). It can help develop a common perception among your coalition, organization, or community members. Your community readiness interviews will provide much information to do a SWOT analysis. In addition, staff/community member knowledge, past surveys, evaluations, and the like can also be very important in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Here is an example of each component of the SWOT where the issue was underage drinking of college students and the community was the university:

Strength: We are offering a variety of evidence based programs.

Weakness: Our efforts are not widely known across campus.

Threat: The downtown bars have happy hours between 11 p.m. - 2 a.m.

Opportunity: There is a community coalition who is working on the same issues as we are.

### **A SWOT Activity**

Here is one way to conduct a SWOT analysis. You can find other ways to structure this exercise online.

**Materials needed:** 4 different colors of sticky notes (approximately 100 of each color), flip chart pens, a flip chart, copies of the worksheet below.

- Gather board and coalition members, staff, and other interested citizens together. A group of 8-10 people is recommended. If there are more individuals, you can divide the larger group into smaller groups.
- Designate one color of sticky notes for strengths, another color for weaknesses, a third color for opportunities, and the fourth color for threats.
- Give approximately 15 sticky notes of each color to each group member. Also, give them each a copy of the worksheet.

- Remind them to be realistic and truthful in their work.

**With the group working on their own,** have them do the following:

1. Ask them to think about the strengths and weaknesses internal to your community. Remind them to use the community readiness results besides other information.
2. Then ask them to write down the strengths of your community on the sticky notes designated for strengths. Tell them to use the categories on the left side of the first row of the worksheet to stimulate their thinking.
3. Then on the sticky notes designated for weaknesses, ask them to write down the weaknesses of community (again, using the categories on the left side of the worksheet to stimulate thinking).
4. Now ask them to think about the opportunities and threats external to your community. Remind them again to use the community readiness results and any other information available to them. They can also use the categories on the left of the SWOT worksheet to stimulate their thinking.
5. On the color of sticky notes designated for opportunities, have them write down opportunities.
6. On the color of sticky notes designated for threats, have them write down the threats external to your program and efforts.

**Next, have the group work together to come up with a final categorization of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.**

Designate a piece of flip chart paper for strengths, one piece for weakness, one piece for opportunities, and one piece for threats. These can be hung on a wall.

Ask each person to put their sticky notes on the appropriate paper.

- Starting with strengths, have the group put similar items together.
- Now begin working on each unique item designated as a strength, asking the group whether it is, indeed, a strength or something else.
- Where the group agrees on a strength, write that strength on the paper.
- Where the group does not agree on a strength, discuss it until the group reaches a consensus. Either remove that strength, edit it, or put it into another category.
- Follow the same procedure with weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- Once you have a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, prioritize them from most important to least important. Weed out any that are not seen as important.
- Write or type your final results into a blank worksheet and distribute these to group members.

## Activity: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis

### Part I

- Using your community readiness results and any other information available to you, think about the strengths and weaknesses of your community.
- On the sticky notes designated for strengths, write down the strengths of your community. Use the categories at the left to stimulate your thinking. You can also write the strengths in the table below.
- On the sticky notes designated for weaknesses, write down the weaknesses of your community. Again, use the categories at the left to stimulate your thinking. Then continue with threats and opportunities.
- Be realistic; be truthful.

Categories	Strengths/Assets within your community	Weaknesses within your community
Programs and activities Awareness of programs and activities Knowledge of Issue/problem People within your program Experience Organizations Networks Norms/Values/Attitudes within your community Willingness to change Processes/Systems Communications Data Marketing – reach, messages, awareness Economics/Business		

Categories	Opportunities outside of your community	Threats outside of your community
Local and state policies and programs Values, norms, knowledge, programs, attitudes of greater community (e.g. state) Future trends Demographics People/organizations outside of your community Economics/Business Location/geographics Funding sources		

**Part II: Work with your group members.**

- Have each person put their sticky notes on the flip chart paper in the appropriate category.
- Organize each category by grouping similar items together.
- Now begin with strengths and work on these one by one, asking the group whether it is, indeed, a strength or something else.
- Where the group agrees on a strength, write that strength on the paper.
- Where the group does not agree on a strength, discuss it until the group reaches a consensus. Either remove that strength, edit it, or put it into another category.
- Be creative and collaborative.
- Prioritize your strengths and pick your top 10. Do the same for weaknesses.
- Prioritize the opportunities and threats, picking the top 3-5 for each.
- Based on this analysis, refine your goals developed earlier. In addition, keep this information handy for all group members.

## **Formulating objectives and actions**

With the information gathered, you are now ready to write specific objectives for your goals. An objective is a clear statement of the specific activities required to achieve a goal. It is narrower than a goal; it is tangible, concrete, and measurable.

An example of an objective might be: By June 30, 2012, our group will have met with each city council member and the mayor to discuss our issue.

When formulating objectives, it is important to understand your readiness levels for each dimension and the appropriate types of actions for those readiness levels. In working to raise readiness levels, you will likely be working to change awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and norms. In doing this, you will need to pay special attention to the following:

- targeting the right audience
- the type of message
- connections and relationships
- communicating the message

Below we will speak to each of these and where appropriate, we will include how these are influenced by readiness levels.

## **Targeting the Audience**

Think about the audience you are trying to influence. Is it elected officials? Is it the broader community? Is it a specific age group in the community? Who you are trying to influence will be very important in your message formulation and how you reach them. Remember: This is not necessarily the audience that you have targeted for a behavior change, e.g. underage youth, but rather the audience whose readiness levels you are trying to raise.

Think carefully about what motivates your audience and its beliefs and attitudes. If you don't know, find out.

## **Your message:**

Your message is the point you are trying to get across. It is likely to be very similar to the goals you have set. The key is how you package the message to make an impression and influence your audience.

A key point is that information does not necessarily change norms, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Emotion precedes our conscious feelings and works in tandem with rational thinking to help us make better decisions. In addition, people are overwhelmed with information these days. Think about the number of books being published each year or the number of items in an average supermarket. When we are inundated with information, the mind tends to accept only what matches prior knowledge or experience, and it is nearly impossible to change a mind once it is made up.

This will be especially true when our audience is at low levels of readiness. For lower levels of readiness:

- Little effort is given by your intended audience to noticing and processing information about the issue. We don't see what we're not interested in.
- Your audience is not likely to expend much time or resources focusing on this issue.
- You cannot require much of your audience. For example, any events must be fun and easy or have some other purpose

In other words, you will need to find creative ways to package your message. **Emotional or moral appeals** are likely to be much more effective in gaining the attention of your audience instead of rational appeals. Numbers and dry facts will not sway your audience. Go for their heart, not their head. **Personal stories** from affected individuals can be very powerful. You can still supplement these with facts and figures.

### **The communicator - who is carrying the message**

Research in marketing and in political science has found that who delivers a message is extremely important to whether the message is paid attention to and believed. Therefore, you will want to consider:

- Who influences the audience?
- Who does the audience trust?
- Who are important role models?

For one-on-one meetings, make sure you choose the right person, in terms of trust, respect, and influence. When presenting to a group, think about who the group respects and trusts. You are not necessarily looking for the most knowledgeable, but rather the most believable, the most heartfelt, and the most trustworthy to the audience you are seeking to influence.

Think about social networks. Mapping them out or writing them down can be very helpful in identifying the best individuals for communicating your message.

### **The method of communication**

There are a variety of methods of communication, including

- One-on-one meetings
- Small groups
- Large group presentations
- Events
- Traditional media, such as posters, billboards, TV and radio
- Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter

When readiness levels are low, your audience is not likely to expend much energy toward your issue. Thus, large group presentations are not likely to be effective, and traditional media may not be noticed by your audience, unless it has an especially compelling message. Many organizations

like to hold community events. When readiness levels are low, these events should be fun or should provide your audience with benefits unrelated to your issue.

For low level of readiness (1-3), the following are more likely to be effective:

- One-on-one meetings
- Small groups, especially unrelated, casual groups (e.g. knitting circles, book clubs)
- Having outside individuals' post your information to their social media, such as their own Facebook page and Twitter account. Though your organization may have its own Facebook page and website, the most effective way to reach people is through others' sites and posts.

One-on-one meetings work well when readiness levels are low, as long as you have paid attention to your message, the audience, and the communicator. Likewise, attending small unrelated group meetings can be a way to start raising awareness of your issue. One organization had individuals start attending unrelated small get-togethers. These individuals presented information about their issue in a non-threatening atmosphere; they used stories about people that the group members knew (with permission from the affected individuals). This allowed the information to flow throughout the informal social networks of the community, and ultimately changed the community attitudes toward the issue.

At higher levels of readiness (4+), the following can be effective means of presenting your message to a target audience:

- One-on-one meetings
- Small groups
- Large group presentations
- Events
- Traditional media, such as posters, billboards, TV and radio
- Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter
- Website

### **Connections and Relationships**

Communities are built on connections; having better connections will provide better opportunities for changing norms, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. It pays to actively manage your connections to the strategic networks in your community. The advice often given is: Know the network! Knit the network!

For each goal that you develop, identify social networks that will be involved or will be key in helping you to achieve the goal, such as sectors (Health, education, Council), interests (hobby groups), age networks (elders, youth, parents), or ethnicity networks. Then actively build relationships to those networks. Otherwise, your connections will evolve slowly. Work to build relationships, not just network.

Finally, seek out opinion leaders. These individuals have more influence on people's opinions, actions, and behaviors than the media. They do not have to be an executive or in a high position, but rather seen as trustworthy and non-purposive.

## **Example Actions for Raising Community Readiness Levels**

Here are example actions for each stage of readiness.

### **Stage 1: No Awareness**

- One-on-one visits with community leaders and members. Pay particular attention to the details of these visits (message, communicator, etc.)
- Visit existing and established unrelated small groups to inform them of the issue.
- Get individuals in your social network excited and solicit their support – be creative! Give them ideas and information that they can post on their Facebook page or other outlets.
- Collect stories of local people who have been affected by this issue in this community and find creative ways to disseminate these.
- Conduct an environmental scan to identify the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

### **Stage 2: Denial/Resistance**

- Continue actions from previous stage.
- Put information in church bulletins, club newsletters, respected publications, Facebook, etc.
- Distribute media articles that highlight issue in the community.
- Communicate strategically with influencers and opinion leaders.

### **Stage 3: Vague Awareness**

- Continue actions from previous stages.
- Present information at local community events and unrelated community groups. Don't rely on just facts. Use visuals and stories. Make your message "sticky".
- Post flyers, posters, and billboards.
- Begin to initiate your own events (e.g., potlucks) to present information on this issue. But they must be fun or have other benefits to potential attendees.
- Publish editorials and articles in newspapers and on other media with general information but always relate the information to the local situation.

### **Stage 4: Preplanning**

- Continue actions from previous stages.
- Introduce information about issue through presentations/media.
- Review the existing efforts in community (e.g., curriculum, programs, activities) to determine who benefits and the degree of success.
- Conduct local focus groups to discuss issues and develop strategies.
- Increase media exposure through radio and TV public service announcements and other forms of social media.



### **Stage 5: Preparation**

- Continue actions from previous stages.
- Conduct public forums to develop strategies.
- Get key leaders to speak out.
- Sponsor a community picnic or event to kick off new efforts or revitalize existing efforts.

### **Stage 6: Initiation**

- Continue actions from previous stages.
- Conduct in-service training on Community Readiness for professionals and paraprofessionals.
- Plan publicity efforts associated with start-up of activity or efforts.
- Attend meetings to provide updates on progress of the effort.
- Conduct consumer interviews to identify service gaps, improve existing services and identify key places to post information.
- Begin library or Internet search for additional resources and potential funding.
- Begin some basic evaluation efforts.

### **Stage 7: Stabilization**

- Continue actions from previous stages.
- Plan community events to maintain support for the issue.
- Conduct training for community professionals and community members.
- Introduce your program evaluation through training and newspaper articles.
- Conduct quarterly meetings to review progress, modify strategies.
- Hold recognition events for local supporters or volunteers.
- Prepare and submit newspaper articles detailing progress and future plans.
- Begin networking among service providers and community systems.

### **Stage 8: Confirmation/Expansion**

- Continue actions from previous stages.
- Formalize the networking with qualified service agreements.
- Prepare a community risk assessment profile.
- Publish a localized program services directory.
- Maintain a comprehensive database available to the public.
- Develop a local speaker's bureau.

- Initiate policy change through support of local city officials.
- Conduct media outreach on specific data trends related to the issue.
- Utilize evaluation data to modify efforts.

### **Stage 9: High Level of Community Ownership**

- Continue actions from previous stages.
- Maintain local business community support and solicit financial support from them.
- Diversify funding resources.
- Continue more advanced training of professionals and paraprofessionals.
- Continue re-assessment of issue and progress made.
- Utilize external evaluation and use feedback for program modification.
- Track outcome data for use with future grant requests.
- Continue progress reports for benefit of community leaders and local sponsorship. At this level the community has ownership of the efforts and will invest themselves in maintaining the efforts.

## Appendix A

### Community Readiness Interview Questions

1. **On a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is *(issue)* to members of *(community)*, with 1 being “not a concern at all” and 10 being “a very great concern”?** (*Scorer note: Community Climate question*)

**Can you tell me why you think it’s at that level?**

*Interviewer: Please ensure that the respondent answers this question in regards to **community members** not in regards to themselves or what they think it should be.*

### **COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE OF EFFORTS**

I’m going to ask you about current community efforts to address *(issue)*. By efforts, I mean any programs, activities, or services in your community that address *(issue)*.

2. **Are there efforts in *(community)* that address *(issue)*?**

*If Yes, continue to question 3; if No, skip to question 16.*

3. **Can you briefly describe each of these?**

*Interviewer: Write down names of efforts so that you can refer to them in #4-7 below.*

4. How long have each of these efforts been going on? *Probe for each program/activity named.*
5. Who do each of these efforts serve (e.g., a certain age group, ethnicity, etc.)?
6. **About how many community members are aware of these efforts? Would you say none, a few, some, or most? Why do you say it’s \_\_\_\_\_? (fill in blank with their answer)**
7. **Of those who are aware of the efforts, what do they know about them?**

*Probes:* Can they name the efforts?  
Do they know the purpose of the efforts?  
Do they know who efforts are targeted to?  
Do they know what they do?  
Do they know the effectiveness of the efforts?

8. **Are there misconceptions or incorrect information among community members about the current efforts? If yes: What are these?**

9. How do community members learn about the current efforts?

10. Do community members view current efforts as successful?

*Probe: What do community members like about these programs?  
What don’t they like?*

11. What are the obstacles to individuals participating in these efforts?
12. What are the strengths of these efforts?
13. What are the weaknesses of these efforts?
14. Are the evaluation results being used to make changes in efforts or to start new ones?
15. Is there any planning for additional efforts to address *(issue)* going on in *(community)*? Please explain.

*Only ask #16 if the respondent answered “No” to #2 or was unsure.*

16. **Is anyone in *(community)* trying to get something started to address *(issue)*? Can you tell me about that?**

### **LEADERSHIP**

I’m going to ask you how the leadership in *(community)* perceives *(issue)*. By leadership, we are referring to those who could affect the outcome of this issue and those who have influence in the community and/or who lead the community in helping it achieve its goals.

17. **Using a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is *(issue)* to the leadership of *(community)*, with 1 being “not a concern at all” and 10 being “a very great concern”?**

**Can you tell me why you say it’s a \_\_\_\_?**

18. **How much of a priority is addressing this *(issue)* to leadership?**

*Probe:* **Can you explain why you say this?**

19. **Does leadership support current efforts to address *(issue)*?**

*If yes:* **How do they show support? For example, is it passive support or are they actively involved in such things as planning or participating in the current efforts?**

*If they are actively involved:* **How are they actively involved?**

*Probes:* Are they involved in a committee?  
Do they speak out publicly?  
Have they allocated resources to address the issue?

20. **Would the leadership support additional efforts in the community to address *(issue)*?**

*If yes:* **How might they show this support? For example, by passively supporting or by being more actively involved in planning or participating in the efforts?**

*Probes:* Would they speak out publicly in favor of new efforts?  
Would they directly participate in planning or implementing new efforts?  
Would they allocate resources to new efforts?

21. Who are leaders that are supportive of addressing this issue in your community?

22. Are there leaders who might oppose addressing *(issue)*? Who are these?

### **COMMUNITY CLIMATE**

23. Using a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is *(issue)* to community members, with 1 being “not a concern at all” and 10 being “a very great concern”?

24. How much of a priority is addressing this issue to community members?

*Probe:* Can you explain your answer?

25. Are community members supportive of current efforts to address *(issue)*?

*If yes:* How do they show support? For example, is it more passive support or are they actively involved in planning or participating in the efforts?

26. Do community members believe that additional community efforts are needed?

*If yes:* Under what circumstances would they support additional efforts?

**How might they show their support for more efforts? (For example, would they get involved in planning or participating in the efforts or would their support be more passive?)**

27. What are the primary obstacles to addressing *(issue)* in the community?

28. Are there ever any circumstances in which members of *(community)* might think that this issue should be tolerated? Please explain.

29. Describe *(community)*.

### **KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ISSUE**

30. On a scale of 1 to 10 where a 1 is no knowledge and a 10 is detailed knowledge, how much do community members know about *(issue)*?

Why do you say it's a \_\_\_\_?

31. Would you say that community members know a lot, some, a little, or nothing about each of the following as they pertain to *(issue)*? (After each item, have them answer.)

- the causes (Prompt as needed with “a lot, some, a little, or nothing”.)
- the consequences

- the signs and symptoms
- how much (*issue*) occurs locally
- what can be done to prevent or treat (*issue*)
- the effects on family and friends?

**32. Are there misconceptions among community members about (*issue*), e.g., why it occurs or what the consequences are? If yes: What are these misconceptions?**

33. What type of information is available in (*community*) about (*issue*) (e.g. newspaper articles, brochures, posters)?

*If they list information, ask:* Do community members access and/or use this information?

**RESOURCES FOR EFFORTS (time, money, people, space, etc.)**

*If there are efforts to address the issue locally, begin with question 34. If there are no efforts, go to question 35.*

**34. How are current efforts funded? Is this funding likely to continue into the future?**

**35. What resources are available to address (*issue*) in (*community*)?**

- Probe:* Volunteers?  
 Financial donations from organizations?  
 Grant funding?  
 Experts?  
 Space?

**Would community members and leadership support using these resources to address (*issue*)? Please explain.**

**Is anyone in the community looking into using these resources to address this issue?**

36. Do efforts that address (*issue*) have a broad base of volunteers? Please explain.

37. On a scale from 1 to 10, what is the level of expertise and training among those working on (*issue*) (with 1 being “very low” and 10 being “very high”)?

Why do you say it’s a \_\_\_\_\_?

**38. Are you aware of any proposals or action plans that have been submitted for funding to address (*issue*) in (*community*)?**

***If Yes:* Please explain.**

**Additional policy-related questions:**

39. What formal or informal policies, practices and laws related to this issue are in place in your community? (*Prompt: An example of “formal” would be established policies of schools, police, or courts. An example of “informal” would be similar to the police not responding to calls from a particular part of town.*)
40. Are there segments of the community for which these policies, practices and laws may not apply, for example, due to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age?
41. Is there a need to expand these policies, practices and laws? If so, are there plans to expand them? Please explain.
42. How does the community view these policies, practices and laws?

**Demographics of respondent (optional)**

1. Gender:
2. What is your work title? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your race or ethnicity?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Anglo	<input type="checkbox"/> African American
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino/Chicano	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
4. What is your age range?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 19-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-34
<input type="checkbox"/> 35-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-54
<input type="checkbox"/> 55-64	<input type="checkbox"/> 65 and above
5. Do you live in (community)? YES NO If no: What community? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long have you lived in your community? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you work in (community)? YES NO If no: What community? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you live in (community)? YES NO If no: What community? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Anchored Rating Scales For Scoring Each Dimension

### Community Knowledge of Current Efforts

Note: If there are no efforts, this dimension receives a N/A (not applicable).

*(Those directly involved in local efforts are not included in the definition of “community members”.)*

- 1 Community has no knowledge about local efforts addressing the issue.  
-  
-
- 2 Community members have misconceptions or incorrect knowledge about current efforts.  
-  
-
- 3 **A few** community members have at least heard about local efforts, but **know little about them**. For example, they know local efforts exist and may recognize their names, but they have little other knowledge.  
-  
-
- 4 **Some** community members have at least heard about local efforts, but **know little about them**. For example, they know local efforts exist and may recognize their names, but they have little other knowledge.  
-  
-
- 5 **Most** community members have at least heard about local efforts. For example, they know local efforts exist and may recognize their names, but they have little other knowledge.  
-  
-
- 6 **Most** community members have at least **basic** knowledge of local efforts. For example, they can identify specific efforts and their basic purposes.  
-  
-
- 7 **Most** community members have **more than basic** knowledge of local efforts, including names of specific efforts, basic purposes, target audiences, and other specific information about the efforts.  
-  
-
- 8 **Most** community members have **considerable** knowledge of local efforts, including the level of program effectiveness.  
-  
-
- 9 **Most** community members have **considerable and detailed** knowledge of local efforts, including the level of program effectiveness and evaluation data on how well the different local efforts are working and their benefits and limitations.



## **Leadership (includes elected and appointed leaders & influential community members)**

1 Leadership believes that the issue **is not** a concern.

-  
-  
-

2 Leadership believes that this issue **is** a concern, in general, but believes that it **is not** a concern in this community.

**OR**

Leadership believes that this issue is a concern in this community, but **doesn't think it can or should be addressed**.

-  
-  
-

3 Leadership **believes that this issue may be a concern in the community**. They show no immediate motivation to act. It may not be seen as a priority.

-  
-  
-

4 Leadership **acknowledges that this issue is a concern in the community** and that some type of effort is needed to address it. They may be supportive of current efforts. They are not involved in work to develop, evaluate, or improve efforts.

-  
-  
-

5 Leadership is **actively supportive of continuing or improving current efforts** or in developing new efforts (possibly attending committee or group meetings that are working toward these efforts). They are not key players or driving forces in these activities.

-  
-  
-

6 Leadership **plays a key role in planning, developing and/or implementing new, modified, or increased efforts**, possibly as key players in groups or committees, as public proponents, and/or as driving forces behind these activities.

-  
-  
-

7 Leadership is **actively involved** in ensuring or improving the **long-term viability** of the efforts to address this issue.

-  
-  
-

8 Leadership **plays a key role in expanding and improving efforts**, through evaluating and modifying efforts, seeking new resources, and/or helping develop and implement new efforts.

-  
-  
-

9 Leadership is continually reviewing evaluation results of the efforts and is modifying financial support accordingly.

## Community Climate

*(Those directly involved in local efforts are not included in the definition of “community members”.)*

1 The community believes that the issue is not a concern.

-  
-  
-

2 The community believes that this issue **is** a concern, in general, but believes that it **is not** a concern in this community.

**OR**

Community believes that this issue is a concern in this community, but doesn't think it can or should be addressed.

-  
-  
-

3 The community **believes that this issue may be a concern in the community**. They show no immediate motivation to act. It may not be seen as a priority.

-  
-  
-

4 The community **acknowledges that this issue is a concern in the community** and that some type of effort is needed to address it. They may be passively supportive of current efforts. They may feel as if current efforts are sufficient to address the issue.

-  
-  
-

5 The attitude in the community is “**We are concerned** about this and **we want to do** something about it”. They may believe that current efforts are not sufficient to address the issue or that current efforts should be improved.

-  
-  
-

6 The attitude in the community is “**This is our responsibility**”, and some community members are **involved** in addressing the issue through planning, developing and/or implementing new, modified, or increased efforts.

-  
-  
-

7 The attitude in the community is “We **have taken** responsibility”. There is **ongoing** community involvement in addressing the issue.

-  
-  
-

8 The majority of the community **strongly** supports efforts or the need for efforts. Participation level is high. “We need to continue our efforts and make sure what we are doing is effective.”

-  
-  
-

9 **Most** major segments of the community are highly supportive. Community members are actively involved in evaluating and improving efforts and they demand accountability.

## Community Knowledge about the Issue

*(Those directly involved in local efforts are not included in the definition of “community members”.)*

- 1 Community members have **no** knowledge about the issue.  
-  
-
- 2 **Only a few** community members have **knowledge** about the issue. There may be many misconceptions among community members about the issue, how and where it occurs, and why it needs addressing. There may be little knowledge among community members about its occurrence locally or why it may be a problem locally.  
-  
-
- 3 Community members have only **vague knowledge** about the issue (e.g. they have some awareness that the issue can be problem and why it may occur). Among some community members, there may be misconceptions about the issue, how and where it occurs, and why it needs addressing.  
-  
-
- 4 Community members have **limited knowledge** about the issue. For example, they are aware that the issue can be problem and they know some limited information about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. They may know that the issue occurs locally, but they have little knowledge about how much it occurs locally and/or its causes and consequences.  
-  
-
- 5 Community members have **basic knowledge** about the issue. For example, they are aware of why the issue is a problem, and they have some basic knowledge about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. They are aware that the issue occurs locally, but they may **have little knowledge about how much it occurs locally** and/or what can be done to address it.  
-  
-
- 6 Community members have **basic knowledge** about the issue. For example, they are aware of why the issue is a problem, and they have some basic knowledge about causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. They are **aware that the issue occurs locally**, and they have some knowledge about how much it occurs locally, its effect on the community, and/or what can be done to address it.  
-  
-
- 7 Community members have **more than basic** knowledge about the issue. For example, they understand the causes, consequences, signs and symptoms. They are **aware that the issue occurs locally**, and they have some knowledge about how much it occurs locally, its effect on the community, and/or what can be done to address it.  
-  
-
- 8 Community members have **more than basic** knowledge about the issue (e.g., they understand the causes, consequences, signs and symptoms). They also have **significant** knowledge about **local prevalence**, its effect on the community, and what can be done to address it.  
-  
-
- 9 Community members have **detailed** knowledge about the issue, are **aware** of its effect on the community, and have **significant** knowledge about **local prevalence**.

## Resources Related to the Issue (people, money, time, space, etc.)

- 1 There are **no** resources available for dealing with the issue.  
-  
-
- 2 Community members and/or leaders do not support using available resources to address this issue.  
-  
-
- 3 Current efforts may be funded, but the funding is not necessarily stable or continuing. There are **limited** resources (such as a community room) identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue. There is little motivation to allocate these resources to this issue.  
-  
-
- 4 Current efforts may be funded, but the funding may not be stable or continuing. There are **limited** resources identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue. Some community members or leaders are looking into using these resources to address the issue.  
-  
-
- 5 There are **some** resources identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue. Some community members or leaders are actively working to secure these resources; for example, they may be soliciting donations, writing grant proposals, and seeking volunteers. Current efforts may be funded, but the funding may not be stable or continuing.  
-  
-
- 6 Resources have been obtained and/or allocated to support further efforts to address this issue.  
-  
-
- 7 A considerable part of allocated resources for efforts are from sources that are expected to provide **continuous** support.  
-  
-
- 8 A considerable part of allocated resources are from sources that are expected to provide **continuous** support. Community members are looking into **additional** support to implement **new** efforts.  
-  
-
- 9 Diversified resources and funds are secured, and efforts are expected to be ongoing. There is **additional** support for **new** efforts.

## Appendix C: Community Readiness Scoring Sheet

Community: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Scorer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Individual Scores

Interviews

<u>Dimensions</u>	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Knowledge of Efforts						
Leadership						
Community Climate						
Knowledge of Issue						
Resources						

### Consensus Scores

Interviews

<u>Dimensions</u>	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	Average
Knowledge of Efforts							
Leadership							
Community Climate							
Knowledge of Issue							
Resources							
<b>Average CR Score</b>							

## **Appendix D: Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Assessment**

### **Identifying the Issue**

#### **What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a very broad issue versus a more narrowly defined one?**

Using a broadly defined issue usually results in less useful information for strategy and action plan development as well as inconclusive information for scoring the readiness level. When broadly defined, there may be wide variation in how respondents are interpreting the issue and there may be different levels of readiness to address sub-categories of the broad issue. For example, an issue defined as “alcohol abuse” versus “underage drinking on the university campus” will likely result in different levels of readiness and therefore strategies for action planning. Likewise, the information obtained when asking about barriers and resources may be specific to the sub-category a respondent is thinking about and thus, not reflect other elements that are part of the broader issue. The narrower the issue is defined, the more likely respondents will be providing information about the same thing and be addressing what you intended. That said, it is possible to define an issue too narrowly and miss important contextual information.

When you pilot your questions, if your respondents are asking “Do you mean this or this?” you have probably defined your issue too broadly. Another helpful exercise is to ask several people who are similar to those you will be interviewing, “what do you think of when I say the term “(fill in your issue here)?” If all the respondents define it as you intend it to be interpreted, you likely have done a good job with your issue definition.

### **Defining the Community**

#### **Can we combine geographic communities that are close by and use the same readiness surveys and results?**

It depends. The important issue is that when you define “community”, it is a relatively homogeneous unit. If the two communities are similar, then there probably will be no problem in combining them. If, however, there are differences, such as one community is more rural than the other, has a different ethnic composition, has a different socioeconomic level, etc., it is generally best to assess each community separately. This will allow you to identify similarities and differences in readiness levels. This can be very useful information for developing effective strategies. If both communities are at similar levels of readiness for all dimensions, and there are no significant differences in their resources and perceived barriers to addressing the issue, then it is acceptable to combine them in developing and implementing strategies.

### **Adapting Questions**

#### **Can we include more than one issue in our questionnaire?**

This should be avoided because it makes the interview complex and confusing for the respondent, and it is virtually impossible to score. For each issue, you should conduct separate assessments. Although it could make for a very long interview, it would be possible to address one issue with the complete set of questions and then follow that with questions addressing a second issue with the same respondent.

### **Can the questions be changed?**

Questions can be modified to read sensibly for your own issue and community. In addition, you may need to modify the questions to be more consistent with the community's vernacular. Beyond those, it is not advisable to change the questions because the questions lead directly to the information that will make it possible for you to score the interviews using the rating scales. The questions have been developed over time to give good measurements of readiness for each dimension.

### **We are interested in other information besides just community readiness. How can we gather this information at the same time?**

You can add questions at the end of the interview to gather other information important to your project. However, take care that the interview does not become too long and strenuous for your respondents.

### **We want to focus only on this issue for a particular group (e.g. females in high school or sexual assault against Hispanic women). How do we make sure that our interviewees know that is our focus?**

First, make sure in your introduction to the questionnaire that you define the issue clearly for your respondent (e.g. tobacco use by youth, sexual assault against women). Second, when you're asking the interview questions, instead of saying "this issue", refer to your issue again (e.g., "How does the community support the efforts to address sexual assault against women?").

### **Choosing Key Respondents**

#### **How do we identify the best respondents?**

Use your own experience and the knowledge and experience of those around you to brainstorm for good respondents. In addition, the "snowball" method can be used. This involves interviewing key respondents who then introduce the researcher to others in the community who are knowledgeable and willing to be interviewed. Respondents should be individuals who are knowledgeable about the community, not necessarily those who are knowledgeable about the issue.

#### **Can I just interview members of our coalition?**

Just as you will be careful not to just "preach to the choir" when you are implementing prevention efforts, it is important to not just "listen to the choir" when you are assessing community readiness. Choose key respondents who are in a position to know the community and are in a position that would likely have some experience and/or knowledge about the issue as it exists in the community, not just those who are already on board addressing the issue.

#### **Is it okay to do more than 6 interviews?**

Yes. For example, you may need to interview more individuals if there are those in the community who might feel slighted or who might sabotage your findings if they are not interviewed. However, most of the information obtained will not be new after you've interviewed 6-10 key respondents.

#### **How should we choose a community member at large?**

This person should be someone who is knowledgeable about the community but who doesn't necessarily hold a formal position that might be involved in addressing the issue. Often a community member at large can be identified by asking the other key respondents, "Who would be a knowledgeable lay person in the community that I might contact to interview?"

**What if there isn't a person who represents a particular area in my community?**

Simply substitute another area. For example, if there are no medical facilities in your community, you might be able to substitute a person in the clergy. What you are looking for is a good cross section of knowledgeable individuals in your community to help you paint a picture of your community's readiness level for a particular issue.

**We are conducting several rounds of interviews to gauge our progress and evaluate our efforts. Must we interview the same people in subsequent rounds of interviewing?**

It's best if you can interview the same individuals, especially if 6 months to a year have passed. If the same person is no longer in the position, interview the person who is now in that position if the person has been in it long enough to have sufficient familiarity with the community. If not, choose someone from a related area.

**Interviewing**

**A respondent is giving very short answers with little detail. How can I get them to give me more information?**

Short answers are not necessarily bad answers. The respondent may not be able to give you more detail if they have limited information about the issue. This is good information for you because it is telling you something very important about community readiness in this subset of the community. If you feel that they have more information but they are in a hurry or reticent to share it, try prompting them (using the suggestions in the questionnaire) or asking them if they can explain in more detail. In extreme cases, if it is clear the person just wants to get off the phone, ask if there would be a more convenient time to finish up the interview in the near future and call back.

**How much prompting is appropriate?**

As noted above, brief prompts letting the person know you would like more information are appropriate, but it is important not to prompt to the point of badgering the respondent. There are example prompts embedded in the interview questions. Please refrain from "leading" the interviewee when you trying to get more information from them.

**How do I politely cut off someone who is digressing from the topic and seems to want to chat?**

Simply say something polite like "I really appreciate your willingness to be so forthcoming, but I mustn't impose on your time any more than necessary and I still have a number of questions I really want to ask you."

**The person I just interviewed was very short on time and stopped the interview in the middle. What should I do?**

Ask this person if there is a time they can be called back to complete the interview. If there is not, it is probably best to replace this interview with another one from someone in the same area (e.g. medical, law enforcement).



### **Can people be given the questions ahead of time?**

No. You don't want the respondents to research these questions. What they tell you without the opportunity to do background research is the true measure of the community's readiness.

### **What about when a person answers "I don't know" to most of the questions?**

An "I don't know" answer may simply reflect lack of knowledge about the issue which suggests a low level of community readiness. This is important information. However, if the respondent does not live or work in the community, or has only lived in the community a brief period of time, their "I don't know" may reflect their lack of knowledge of the community, in which case you will need to replace the interview with someone who has more knowledge of the community.

### **Can we record the interviews?**

Yes, if you get permission from the respondent. In fact, unless the interviewer is a very fast transcriptionist, recording the interview and then transcribing it is best since this will allow you to capture the full text of the interview.

### **Can we do these in person?**

In general, people feel freer to share more information and be more forthcoming when the interview is done over the telephone as opposed to in person. It is important to keep the relationship between interviewer and interviewee as objective as possible to not influence the responses. In some cases especially those related to culture, it may be necessary to do the interviews in person if for some reason it is not possible to conduct it over the phone. In that case, they should be done by someone who is not directly associated with the issue in the community to avoid the natural tendency to give responses consistent with that they believe the interviewer is expecting or would like to hear.

### **Can I ask the questions in a group and have people discuss the answers?**

This is not recommended for the initial assessment. In a group setting, there will be some individuals who are more comfortable speaking up than others and their responses may dominate the discussion. Particularly at lower levels of readiness, it is important to get objective opinions from different areas in the community. Assessment is not the time for in-depth discussion, for arguing points, or for discussion of territoriality. This type of interaction will more appropriately occur when scores are used for strategy development. The reason for conducting multiple interviews is to get the individual opinions/observations about the community of key individuals and then consider them all together. The different points of view are very important to assess overall community readiness.

## **Scoring**

### **When we scored the interviews, we had one interview that was very different from the others. Should we throw it out?**

Often there is a good reason behind one interview differing from the others. For example, the individual may have only lived in the community for a short period of time and not be knowledgeable of the community or, at the other extreme, they may be an activist with respect to the issue and have more pronounced views not generally shared by others. The first step is to try to understand the reason for the difference. If there is a reason why this individual may not be a good representative of the particular area they were chosen to represent, replace that interview with

another interview from someone in that same area who has lived in the community longer or one who is more generally representative.

However, be very careful about replacing an interview. It may be that respondents in that area/sector (e.g. law enforcement) have a very different view of the issue or have different information available to them. This is valuable to learn and will be very important to you in strategy development. In this case, you do not need to complete another interview. Use this interview to calculate averages for each dimension and for overall community readiness. Also, make sure to report, this difference in interviews.

### **How do I use the numbers on a scale of 1 to 10 that the respondents are asked to give?**

These figures are NOT figured into your scoring of the dimensions in any way. Choosing a number gives a reference point (a little, a lot, etc.) to respondents and generally makes it easier for them to expand with more detail when answering the question.

### **When scoring, the two scorers could not come to agreement on a single score. What should we do?**

It is best if the two scorers can agree on a compromise score. For example, if one says “I believe the score for this dimension based on this interview is 6.5.” and the other scorer says “I believe it is a 7,” they may agree to split the difference and agree on a score of 6.75.

### **Should we use decimal points in scoring?**

Using points between the whole number scores to accurately reflect the respondent’s views is not only allowed, but leads to greater accuracy in arriving at the composite scores at the end of the scoring process. We recommend using .25, .50 and .75 to accurately reflect responses between stages. After the two scorers have agreed on a score for each dimension, the dimension scores (including decimal points) should be added together and then averaged. It is only at this point that rounding can be done – and rounding is always DOWN – to achieve the overall readiness score for the community. Rounding down can be done so that efforts that a community undertakes are not beyond what a community might be ready for. It is better that efforts reinforce and move the community forward from where they are than attempt to do too much.

### **Who should do the scoring?**

Use individuals who have been trained in scoring. Scoring should only take into account the actual responses recorded in the written transcript. All interviewee identifiers should be removed so that there is no tendency to read something into the answers. Scoring must be an objective exercise based only on what the respondent actually said.

### **Can scores be made available to interested community members and other members of the public?**

This can be highly desirable if the scores are made available with sufficient information about the Community Readiness Model so that what the scores mean is understood. Often this is done in a public meeting and the scores are used to help direct discussion of appropriate strategies for efforts. It is not, however, usually productive to compare communities in a public setting or a newspaper article. There are no “bad” scores – the scores reflect where a community is and are not a judgment, but rather a gauge as to what types of efforts are needed to address an issue.

## **Community Readiness Publications and References**

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## **About the Author**

### **Linda Stanley, Ph.D.**

Linda brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in a variety of fields related to addressing social and environmental issues. She has been a leader in successful issue and candidate campaigns, where she developed and implemented messaging and marketing strategy, communications plans, and other key components of these campaigns. Complementing her experience in these areas, Dr. Stanley is well-trained and experienced in research methods and statistical analysis. She uses these tools to provide a strong basis for designing effective campaign strategies. In addition, Dr. Stanley has conducted community readiness trainings across the country and internationally and has provided extensive technical assistance to groups conducting their own assessments.

She holds a Ph.D. in economics and was a professor in economics and marketing for many years. For the past 13 years, she has been a research scientist at the Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research at Colorado State University. She has published in the fields of psychology, substance abuse prevention, marketing, economics, public policy, social work, nutrition, and communication.