

### 1. Community Involvement

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### Ten Steps to Effective Community Involvement

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

We all agree that community is at the center of everything we do. It is why we do what we do and we hope that community members will get involved. The following are the basic steps to encourage community involvement – they are also the foundation for community engagement and development.

In order to get people involved we need to:

1. Create awareness and interest (tell them what's happening and why they should care – promotion)
2. Set goals or priorities (what is going to happen first and when will it be happening)
3. Establish principles and values (how we will behave – treat each other and how we will do what we do)
4. Work together (determine who else needs to be involved and find ways to collaborate)
5. Build capacity (increase skills, leadership, infrastructure, and resources)
6. Develop northern tools and processes (create tools and processes that work in the north)
7. Take action (just do it – get going and build on momentum)
8. Communicate (get the word out – tell success stories – keep everyone informed)
9. Evaluate (measure and assess progress and results)
10. Celebrate (recognize what has been done and those who have contributed)

# Toolbox - 1. Community Involvement

## Skills Checklist

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

SKILL AREA	DESCRIPTION	Yes - No
Technical Knowledge of Community Development	basic knowledge required to work effectively in community – theory – practice – tools and techniques for community capacity building.	
Intuitive or Traditional Knowledge and Experience	the unwritten ways and traditional approaches (protocols and cultural relevancy) – the practical application of community development – contextual techniques for listening and being culturally appropriate.	
Understanding How Communities Work	governance and management structures, roles, relationships, culture, language, history, social and economic priorities, environmental realities and key opportunities/issues	
Fostering Teamwork and Empowerment	the ability and desire to work cooperatively with others on a team; as a team leader, or the ability to demonstrate interest, skill, and success in getting groups to learn to work together.	
Managing Change	to identify and manage changes needed to improve effectiveness; initiating, sponsoring, and implementing transition; helping others to successfully manage change and transition	
Developing Others	delegation of responsibility and to work with others and coach them to develop their capabilities	
Communication	ensuring that information is passed on (both written and verbally) to others in a timely and effective manner	
Building Collaborative Relationships	the ability to develop, maintain, and strengthen partnerships with others inside or outside the organization	
Community Values Orientation	demonstrating understanding of values and beliefs that are culturally relevant to a particular community or group and to support activities that enhance growth	
Information Gathering	the ability to clarify the need for information, seek it from appropriate sources in an appropriate way and use skilful questioning to draw out the information and the use of that information and data	
Planning and Forward Thinking	the use of a logical, systematic, sequential approach to planning, situational analysis and to take appropriate action to be prepared	
Fostering Innovation	the ability to develop, sponsor, or support new ideas and improved methods, products, procedures, or technologies	
Advocacy	the whole spectrum of advocacy from social messaging (to change behaviors) to lobbying and standing up for a cause, individual or change	
Evaluation	the ability to lead or conduct an assessment or evaluate progress as well as results or outcomes and the skills required to use the evaluation data in an effective manner	

### Factors to Consider – Community Involvement

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

The following factors will determine how much community involvement there might be for any project, program or event that you are planning. Keep these things in mind and build on the things that help and reduce those that are causing limitations or barriers to community involvement:

- Crisis/Opportunity/Catalyst – it is easier to get things going when there is one of these factors in place.
- Politics – on all levels (big and small P) play a significant role in whether or not things will be supported.
- Capacity – the number of people with ability to do things can make or break the project or program
- Apathy/Lack of Interest – this is one of the main reasons why people don't get involved
- NIMBY (not in my back yard) – some ideas are good but people don't want it to conflict with their lives.
- Sense of Belonging – the more this is in place the better.
- Time and Ownership – when people feel ownership about a program they will make time for it.
- Health – it requires a certain level of health (wellness) in order for people to get involved in anything.
- Trust and Legitimacy – if the program is trusted and “fits” well in the community, people will get involved

### Tips for Working In and With Your Community

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

- Developing and maintaining relationships is important.
- Having fun as well as getting the work done builds relationships and motivates community members to participate. Food and refreshment is important it brings people to the meeting.
- Be open to all possibilities. Have a clear sense of purpose and benefit but let ideas and actions be driven by the community.
- Good communication is key. This includes:
  - Listening
  - Honesty
  - Making community members aware of community events and opportunities
  - Openness – working together to decide what to do not pushing your own idea
- Working together. Ensure everyone has a voice There are many ways to work together:
  - Elders and youth
  - Community as a whole
  - Regional focus
  - Agencies/services working together
- Talk to other communities to see what works
- Need more than one person to own and care about the action – the more that are involved the better. Do not want the action to fail if one key person leaves the community. This has happened too many times
- Clearly identified leader(s) and respect for leadership. There is lots of work to do. We cannot all be leaders. Someone must be recognized as a leader.
- Think about the time of day that is best for your event. Make sure transportation is not a barrier to participation.
- Need to share information to all – all the time
- Follow your own heart and intuition – no rule book
- If at first you don't succeed, do not be discouraged – try again. If it is important enough, people will take interest and get involved.

## Community Readiness Checklist

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

Before initiating a community development process, it is best to determine if the community is ready, willing and able to get involved. Gather information and answer yes or no to the following questions. The answers will help to determine community readiness and next steps.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER	YES	NO
1. Is there a common issue, opportunity or challenge facing the community?		
2. Are community members aware of their power to act together to address the issue, challenge or opportunity?		
3. Are there examples of when the community has worked together successfully to achieve a common purpose?		
4. Is their potential for an inclusive community development process?		
5. Is there willingness to identify common ground rather than focus on differences?		
6. Is community development understood as a process that will bring about change?		
7. Are there people ready to accept a leadership role to get things going?		

## Getting the Community Involved

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

For community leaders it is important to:

- Know the purpose or goal of community involvement
- Know the benefit to community members
- Set a good example
- Facilitate or encourage community input and participation

**Community members will only participate if the intent, process and outcome have meaning.**

Where to start:

- Know the limitations and capacity of both leaders and the community
- Set goals that are possible to reach quickly to build confidence
- Start with the positive – focus on the assets of the community
- Establish good relationships and connections – work together
- Always look at the community as a whole
- Work with existing community-based programs and services

**Capacity is the knowledge, skills, attitudes and resources needed to get things done.**

Essentials for community involvement:

- Clear understanding of the community
- Establish relationships and trust (or willingness to try)
- Accept the community's right to determine focus and priorities
- Respect diversity – all aspects of the community
- Mobilize and build on the strengths and capacity in the community
- Be flexible
- Long-term commitment

Motivation for community involvement:

- When community members have participated in the decision to undertake the project/activity
- When the rewards/encouragement exceed the barriers or cost involved
- When community members see others getting involved, particularly when respected community members support it.
- When community members are in an environment free from judgment and when they are supported for their involvement.
- When the community trusts the motives of those taking the lead.
- When the community sees the project as being successful.

## How to Solve Problems

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

Find the root cause of a problem by describing the problem and asking why it has occurred. Once that has been determined, ask why again – why did that happen? Ask why again for each answer until you have exhausted all the background or until you have the root or the cause of the problem – and from there the “how” can more easily be determined.

There are five specific steps to problem solving:

### 1. Define the problem

It is important to make sure that the problem is defined not the symptoms – once it has been defined it is much easier to work out how to solve it.

### 2. Outline possible solutions (what is desired and what is not)

When seeking solutions describe what you would like to see happen to solve the problem – and also outline what is not acceptable.

### 3. Rank the solutions

Determine which solution has the highest interest from with those that have been rated in order of preference.

### 4. Create an Action Plan

Once you have a solution, determine the steps needed to implement it.

### 5. Evaluate and adjust if required

After a reasonable length of time (according to the group) – evaluate progress and make changes.

## Qualities of a Good Mediator or Problem Solver:

- Good listening skills, able to read body language and being aware of emotional issues that are not always mentioned.
- Ability to ask clarifying questions in a not threatening way.
- Ability to break disputes into manageable chunks and resolving each chunk separately.
- Getting the things that people agree about out first – then the difficult stuff later.
- Creating a safe and trusting environment.
- Being fair and impartial: making sure everyone has a chance to express his or her views.
- Keeping the discussion focused on the issues.
- Restating points in appropriate language to help everyone understand in a neutral way.
- Restating the points that are agreed upon (writing them down) to build on the progress.
- Using humor to bring people together and defuse tense situations.

## Conflict Resolution Techniques

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

### KEEP IN MIND

#### Personality Styles

People come in all different flavors. All kinds of personality profile studies are available that can illuminate these differences, but for our purposes, suffice it to keep in mind that no two people ever share exactly the same perspective of an issue.

#### Principles vs. Issues

Principles are people's non-quantifiable, fundamental values. They run deep and have duration. For example, maintaining good nutrition.

Issues are measurable and specific to a given situation. They are more negotiable (hopefully). For example, wanting to create a 400 square foot vegetable garden.

### ENVIRONMENT FOR RESOLUTION

#### A Safe Place

Find a neutral place that feels safe and comfortable to both of you – free of stress, anxiety, interruptions, or distractions.

#### The Right Time and Enough Time

Set up a time for conflict resolution that allows you both time to cool down and prepare (see Personal Preparation below). Also, set aside plenty of time for the resolution session. Don't rush the process.

#### Someone You Both Can Trust

If you both choose mediation, mutually agree upon a mediator you trust to be qualified and impartial.

### MEDIATOR PREPARATION

As a mediator, you must:

- Care about the people involved rather than the issues, yet remain completely impartial.
- Be aware of your personal biases and projections.
- Be willing to let the parties experience their own strength rather than feel like they are being "rescued". But, not be so neutral that you erase yourself.
- Facilitate, support, and defend the resolution process.
- Be willing to share personal experiences and vulnerability when appropriate.
- Trust your own intuitive knowing.

## BASIC STEPS TO RESOLUTION

These steps are followed during the course of one or more meetings when you are working out the conflict on your own or when a mediator is involved.

### 1. Personal Preparation

- Review our Interpersonal Agreements.
- Look inside yourself to become aware of your feelings and energy in regard to conflict in general and this conflict in particular and try to determine why.
- Realize that you are both seeking healing. Imagine creating an outcome that achieves satisfaction for each of you – one that enhances community for all involved.

### 2. Obtain Agreements

- Agree on the process for conflict resolution.
- Agree to stay in the relationship and make it better by resolving this conflict.
- Agree to treat each other with respect.
- No blaming or name-calling.
- Openness to learn from other points of view.
- Active listening and no interruptions.

### 3. State Your Initial Positions (Issues)

- If a mediator is being used, you may find it helpful to address the mediator rather than each other.
- Take turns, a few minutes each, to state the way you experience the conflict.
- Focus on specific incidents and don't drag up old unresolved issues.
- No personal opinions from people not in the room ("Ann thinks so too. . .").
- Describe behavior and your feelings ("When you did X, I felt Y.").
- Don't interpret other's behavior. Simply report what happened.
- Some helpful questions:
  - Who has the conflict? (Who doesn't?)
  - Where is the conflict located? (Where does it not exist?)
  - How long has the conflict been brewing?
  - What was the first sign of the conflict?
  - What are the key events that got the conflict to where it's at now?
  - How does the conflict currently show up?

### 4. Restate Each Other's Initial Positions

- Take turns, a few minutes each, to restate what the other said, highlighting the main points.
- Concur that the restatements were complete and accurate. Make corrections if necessary.
- Pause and silently reflect on how you now feel. Have you both been heard?

### 5. Continue Bringing Up Issues and Feelings and Begin Working on Solutions

- Keep an open heart. Silently affirm the inherent goodness of the other.
- Identify the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and information sources.
- Identify underlying principles (vs. issues).
- Identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- Each of you defines your success criteria:
  - “I will know this conflict is resolved to my satisfaction when. . . ”
  - Strive for concrete, measurable criteria.
  - Brainstorm as many ways as possible to meet shared principles.
  - Mediator may help with this with the consent of both parties.

### 6. Summarize Points of Agreement and Produce a Solution

- Create a solution that meets your success criteria and is as specific as possible, and therefore, less subject to varying interpretations.
- If appropriate, write it down and sign it.
- Mediator reviews solution to ensure that it is doable.
- Agree to maintain confidentiality of resolution or communicate it only via explicitly agreed upon means.
- Agree to follow up with each other at specific times.

### 7. Follow Up

- Check on whether the solution is being followed.
- Revise it if necessary.
- Discuss what is the most important thing that you learned from the conflict and what you might do differently in the future.
- Celebrate!

### Facilitation Tips

(Source: Flo Frank's Toolbox)

Facilitation is the process of working with a group of people to help them set goals, reach a decision, create a plan or to come to agreement about something. The facilitator's role is to keep things moving along encouraging participation and keeping track of common ideas, issues or obstacles. Normally the facilitator does not take part in the discussions unless they are a content expert or have some special information. The following are some basic tips for facilitation:

1. Ensure that the goal or desired outcome of the process is clear (what do we want to achieve?).
2. Make people comfortable, have refreshments, directions to washrooms and a clear timeline.
3. Ensure that everyone knows why they are there and what is expected from them.
4. Open with a prayer (if that is the practice) and a formal welcome and introductions.
5. State the goal of the session and get agreement on what is to be accomplished.
6. If necessary, set out some ground rules (e.g. cell phones off, take turns, listen carefully, no blaming, etc.).
7. Develop a process for everyone to participate but to get done in a reasonable amount of time.
8. Ensure that everyone agrees to the process being used.
9. Explain the role of the facilitator and why you are there.
10. Determine if a note taker is required and let everyone know who it is and the distribution process.
11. Do not take photographs or record sessions without the group's permission (ask in advance).
12. Repeat key points as they are made or have them jotted down on flip chart paper.
13. Ensure that progress is being made and that people feel that their contribution is useful.
14. Address, acknowledge or resolve any conflict or disagreements or they will fester.
15. Allow time for everyone to speak and ask for additional input from those not as vocal.
16. Wrap up with key points, areas of agreement, things to be resolved later and next steps.
17. Remember to thank everyone and encourage their continued interest and involvement.