

Workshop Eight

COMMUNITY MAPPING

Objectives

- To understand how to assess and map one's community along a variety of parameters, including social and institutional structures.
- To understand how to identify and assess a neighborhood's environmental risk factors.

Outcomes

- Participants will be able to analyze and create community maps of the social boundaries of their communities.
- Participants will be able to assess and map community institutions and agencies in order to analyze community resources.
- Participants will be able to assess and map community "hot spots" and begin to define neighborhood environmental risk factors.

Before You Begin

This workshop continues to make the transition from the individual perspective to the perspective of the community, and the formal and informal organizations and network of assets which can be part of the solution to community issues. Point out this transition to the group as you begin, reinforcing the group's efforts to take a systems approach to community issues rather than solely an individual one.

I. Welcome and Review of Workshop Seven Homework

(30 minutes)

Welcome everyone to the session, check in and see how everyone is doing. Spend some time talking about people's reactions to filling out the community stakeholder list. Review the lists and see which stakeholders within their neighborhoods are the best known. Find out in what context individuals have heard of or had contact with the individuals and organizations within their community. Note that as we begin to move into the final sessions of this portion of the leadership training, we will be focusing on more specific analysis of the neighborhoods in which our groups will be working. The home-

work exercise provides basic information about the "people resources/networks" in our community. Building relationships with many of these people or organizations will be important as we begin to define issues to address within the neighborhood.

POINTER – When reviewing the homework, it is important to point out that it is rare for any one individual or group to know all the stakeholders in the neighborhood. A community's ability to access appropriate resources to address issues is dramatically increased as people come together as a group whose "pool" of contacts is much greater.



II. Agenda Review

(10 Minutes)

Note that during this session, the group will do extensive mapping of the neighborhoods in which they live. These exercises will take place in steps, so that by the end of the workshop, the maps will be multidimensional and will help us to better visualize the complexity of our communities.

III. Understanding the Communities in Which We Live

(45 Minutes)

Ask the group to break into small groups according to the neighborhoods or counties in which they live. (If everyone is from the same neighborhood, have them break into small groups of five or six people.) After people are in small groups, use the following mini-lecture to introduce the session's work:

To work effectively in communities, we need to have a good sense of what that community is like. We often talk about community assessment. These words are often used to talk about analyzing the resources and needs within a particular community.

But there is a critical step that needs to happen before we begin to do a community assessment. We need to raise our own awareness about the unspoken rules a community may have and its community norms or values; we need to understand how the people who live within a community interpret and understand that community.

Some of the issues that we have been discussing speak to the "lived" boundaries of our communities—those boundaries that are spoken and unspoken.

In this next activity, we will look at the communities where we live and begin to draw maps of these communities.

As a group, I'd like you to begin to draw a picture of the community in which you live. Use the chart paper on each of your tables to draw this map. Draw the map big enough that you will have room to break out some of the internal boundaries of the community.

- *First, what is the community or neighborhood?*
- *Do the real boundaries of the community follow county or formal neighborhood lines?*
- *Are there other boundaries that are more important in terms of the ways in which people live in the community?*
- *Are there sub-communities/neighborhoods within the larger community that should be noted?*
- *Do you all agree on the boundaries? Would they be different for different members of the community?*

POINTER – Write the instructions to guide the mapping activities on separate pieces of flip chart paper and post them where participants can see them as they draw. You may also use Handouts #1 and #2 to give each group written instructions to guide their activity.



After you draw your map, use a separate piece of chart paper or the worksheets provided to do the following:

- *Make a list of the people/groups that live within your community.*
- *Where do they live?*
- *Describe the relationships among the groups that live in the community to the degree that you are aware of them.*

Residents typically experience the same community or neighborhood in very different ways. When talking with residents from the same block, for example, it is common to have different impressions from neighbors about where the trouble spots are and who is responsible. So much of our judgement about a geographical area is predicated on unspoken assumptions and beliefs about who lives there, who "owns" the neighborhood and what norms exist for the residents. This exercise begins to identify how people think about their community. It provides participants with the opportunity to begin to voice their thoughts about the neighborhood and allows people to see how different residents from the same area see things in very different ways.

After all groups have completed this activity, ask them to discuss their impressions. If all members of the group are from the same community, this discussion can be an open discussion within the large group. Use the following questions to guide the discussions:

How would you describe the overall climate and feeling within the community/neighborhood? Is it positive? Negative? Positive for some members of the community while negative for others?

What kinds of issues define the community norms? What are the unspoken rules that people in this community live by?

If participants met in small groups, bring everyone together and have a summary discussion before moving on.



IV. Mapping Community Institutions and Resources

(30 Minutes)

Point out that the social maps that the small groups just drew are only one way to map our communities. Now have the groups return to their maps (or draw new maps if they prefer) and begin to add the community institutions, agencies and resources that exist in their communities. Churches, schools, governmental buildings, social service agencies, and after-school, child care and preschool programs should all be marked on the maps. Major employers or spots of significance or interest should also be added.

Note that understanding both the social context of communities, as well as their institutional structures will be critical in creating strategies around particular issues chosen by your community groups.

Including resources and institutions on the maps adds an important dimension to the picture of what constitutes the neighborhood. After this level of information is added, participants will be better equipped to assess their knowledge of resources within the neighborhood. In addition, they will begin to identify key organizations and institutions that could potentially be assets in their work.

As this exercise progresses, it is important for the facilitator to provide context for the activities. Participants need to be able to articulate why it is important to understand the value of looking at the boundaries, norms, institutions and resources in a neighborhood. To help this process along, ask participants, "In what ways can this mapping help you understand your neighborhood?" or "How can this mapping information be useful in addressing problems or issues in the neighborhood? Take time to explore how well participants are understanding these context issues.

V. Mapping Community “Hot Spots”

(15 minutes)

Finally, have group members map what we sometimes call neighborhood “hot spots.” These are the areas where most of the high-risk activities or behaviors take place—the most crime, the greatest levels of deterioration, the place where trouble is most likely to start. Ask group members to consider which blocks, corners, etc. in their neighborhoods would be considered “hot spots,” and then note them symbolically on their maps.

The mapping process is the first step toward thinking “environmentally.” The environment encompasses the political, social and economic factors that contribute to the structure of a community. The mapping of boundaries provides a political and social context for a particular neighborhood issue. For example, the issue of home owners versus renters is often a “hot” issue in many neighborhoods, and people often draw lines that exclude rentals from the boundaries of a neighborhood or place all of the “hot spots” in a community on the blocks where renters live. Understanding the social and economic status, the ethnic and cultural makeup, and the spoken and unspoken prejudices in a community can better help you to understand how some sections of a community become identified as “hot spots” while other problem areas go relatively unnoticed. Hot spots don’t just happen; there is always an environmental context that helps to explain the problems occurring. Mapping hot spots can allow participants to begin to understand this environmental context and analyze the range of factors that contribute to creating a hot spot within a community.

VI. Sharing Community Maps

(40 minutes)

Ask each group to choose a representative to share their community maps with the larger group. If the groups have done maps of the same community or neighborhood, consider leading a discussion of the similarities and differences between the maps that were drawn. On what issues did the groups map the community similarly? On what issues were there differences? What do these differences tell us about the community assessment process?

Suggest that the groups save their maps for future reference when they begin to choose issues and design research and action strategies.

POINTER – Sharing community maps provides a key opportunity for the facilitator to probe participants’ understanding of the lessons that can be learned from the mapping process. Ask participants, “What are the maps really saying?” “What are some of the assumptions inherent in the drawing?” What did participants discover in the mapping process? Do participants see their neighborhoods differently since completing the exercise? Be sure to direct questions to both the presenters and members of the groups. Ask probing questions. Even if people don’t have all the answers, it is important to broaden the participants’ thinking about how the maps not only define the neighborhood, but also the people who engaged in the mapping. The maps tell as much about the mappers as the area mapped! Make sure that group members understand why.



VI. Closing Activity: Learning Telegrams

(10 Minutes)

Have each person compose a telegram of 25 words or less describing the most important thing they learned during this session. Ask a few people to volunteer to share their telegrams with the group. Use this opportunity to gently encourage some people who may not have spoken during the workshop to share their thoughts.

VII. Workshop Eight Homework

Explain that during the next week, participants will walk their communities in an effort to learn how to assess the overall environment in terms of substance abuse risk and protective factors. Before the session ends, break people into small groups that will survey together. Arrange times to accompany each group. Have group members use the Community Tour questionnaire during their walks. These walks will help to form the basis for defining key issues for action within the community.

What Happens Next

If your program is conducting its first round of leadership development training, the next step is to conduct a broad-based community assessment designed to clarify key issues among local residents. After group members have completed their community tours, bring them together to talk about what they saw and begin to extract some of the key issues that are indicated by their observations. Follow the guidelines outlined in the Free to Grow implementation manuals for conducting an action-focused community assessment. Through this process, your group should continue to reach out to a broader circle of residents, as well as community stakeholders, to build their support for the action agenda that will emerge out of the assessment work.

With the assessment complete, the critical step of choosing an issue for action must take place. The case study provided with Workshops Nine and Ten should help you to understand how to assist a group in this process. Once an issue has been chosen, use Workshops Nine and Ten to help workshop members clarify a strategic plan to move that issue to action.

If Your Community Action Group Is Already Up and Running

Training group members from communities where a community action group is already up and running may already be participating in the community action group, and may have seen the assessment and action planning process take place within the group. While it is unlikely that your group will conduct a broad-based community assessment each year, there are many ways to create opportunities for those who have not participated in a broad-based community assessment to carry out some community assessment activities. If your community action group is working on a particular issue, a brief survey can be crafted as part of the research process to get resident input into the community action process. These “mini-surveys” can provide new group members with experience in drafting and analyzing an assessment.

Don't Forget to Celebrate!

There are a number of points in the training process that provide good opportunities to celebrate the group's work together. Don't forget to acknowledge them. You might consider having a celebration here after Workshop Eight, when group members have completed the foundation of the training and are about to embark on their community assessment. The completion of the neighborhood assessment project also provides a special opportunity for group members to celebrate with other community members in recognition of the work that they have done together. The completion of Workshop Ten also provides another transition time suitable for closure, acknowledgement and celebration.

WORKSHOP EIGHT

Handouts

Workshop Eight – Handout #1

Community Mapping Activity: Step-by-Step Instructions

STEP ONE:

- Decide on the community or neighborhood that you are mapping.
- What are the boundaries of the community? Do the “real” boundaries follow formal neighborhood lines?
- Are there sub-communities or neighborhoods within the larger community that should be noted?
- Do all group members agree on the boundaries? Would they be different for different members of the community?
- Note any specific ethnic, cultural or class “enclaves” within the neighborhood’s boundaries, and note where they live on the map.

STEP TWO:

- Add key community institutions, agencies and resources that exist within the community. Try to include institutions such as churches, schools, government buildings, social services agencies, child care and after-school programs, etc.
- Add any major employers in the community.
- Add major commercial districts (if any) within the community.

STEP THREE:

- Note the neighborhood’s environmental “hot spots” on the map.
- If these “hot spots” are linked to businesses, parks, vacant lots, note this information as well.

Workshop Eight – Handout #2

Community Analysis

Describe the groups that live in the community.

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How would you describe the relationships between the groups that live in the community?

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How do different groups live in the space within the neighborhood? Are there social/unspoken boundaries?

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Workshop Eight – Homework Assignment

Taking a Community Tour

The purpose of this assignment is to familiarize yourself with the environment of the community in which you will be working. It is also a way to see the issues and problems in the community through the eyes of the residents with whom you are working.

Ideally, you should form small groups with some of the other individuals in the training to take the community tour. The value of this approach is that you will be able to discuss what you see with other class members.

Your focus is the target area in which you are working. A community tour involves looking for and at areas that pose risks to the safety and welfare of the residents with whom you are working. You are looking for businesses, apartments, single family homes, parks, motels, deteriorated areas that are real or potential problems. You want to, within reason, get close to these places and try to see how they affect the neighborhood.

The area may be a residential neighborhood or a retail area. It is important that the entire environment be toured. Neighborhoods coexist with retail areas and what happens in one impacts what happens in the other. For example, a high concentration of liquor outlets will affect the surrounding neighborhood—often in negative ways. Taking this scenario further, if your target area has many liquor stores or bars, it will be important for you to go into these establishments to see how their operation may negatively influence the neighborhood. Or, if your target area has numerous cheap motels in the area—it is important to determine if their presence in some way contributes to drug dealing or prostitution.

Your tour should be long enough to get a good feel for the area in which you are working. You may want to drive in some areas and walk in others. How you structure the tour is up to you and your small group. However, the goal is to get physically close to the environment to see, touch and taste it.

As you tour the area please answer the following questions:

Alcohol Outlets

- 1) Does the area have a high number of liquor outlets? Yes No
- 2) Are they concentrated in specific areas/blocks? Yes No
- 3) Do they appear to be problem outlets (i.e. loitering, drug dealing or other offenses) nearby? Yes No
- 4) Do the outlets sell high-risk beverages (i.e. 40 oz. malt liquor, fortified wines, pint bottles of distilled spirits)? Yes No
- 5) Do the outlets have obvious problems around the premises? Yes No

- 6) Are the windows of the outlets filled with ads for cheap alcohol? Yes No

What is your general feeling about alcohol outlets in your target area?

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Other Retail/Commercial Property

- 1) Are there motels in the area that appear to be causing problems such as drug dealing or prostitution? Yes No
- 2) Are there other businesses that may be fronts for illegal activity? Yes No
- 3) Are there many vacant retail locations? Yes No
- 4) Does the retail area appear to be vital and alive? Yes No

What other observations do you have regarding the retail/commercial area?

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Describe other retail services that exist in the target area. Pay special attention to whether the area has: banks, supermarkets, shoe repair, dry cleaning, produce markets, hardware stores, etc.

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Residential Property

- 1) Does the target area have multi-unit apartment complexes? Yes No
- 2) Do these units have observable problems occurring on or in the general vicinity of the complexes? Yes No
- 3) Are there obvious signs of physical deterioration of all or some of the apartment complexes? Yes No
- 4) Does the area also have single family detached units? Yes No
- 5) Are there many examples of physical deterioration of the units? Yes No

What is your general sense of the state of housing in the target area?

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Streets and Alleys

- 1) Do some or many of the streets have potholes? Yes No
- 2) Is illegal parking a problem? Yes No
- 3) Do abandoned cars appear to be a problem? Yes No
- 4) Do street auto repairs appear to be occurring? Yes No
- 5) Are the streets and alleys clean? Yes No

What is the general condition of the streets and alleys in the target area?

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Are there areas that people hang out in or avoid in the area? Describe the nature of these areas and where they are.

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Parks and Playgrounds

- 1) Are there parks and/or playgrounds in the area? Yes No
- 2) Are they clean? Yes No
- 3) Are they well landscaped? Yes No
- 4) Do you see empty beer cans/bottles or drug paraphernalia ? Yes No
- 5) Do children use the playground? Yes No

What is the general state of the parks and playgrounds in the target area?

Are there other observations you have about the target area?

What are the three biggest problems you observed?

Are there areas in the community that are considered “hot spots?” If yes, describe where they are and what makes them a hot spot.

What are the three biggest assets that you observed?

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Are there indications that some form of neighborhood organizations exist in the target area (Block Watch Signs posted, store front community action groups)? If yes, where are they and are they active in the community?

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Building Leadership for Community Development— Training Evaluation

We're interested in hearing from you regarding your training experience. Please use the following scale to reflect upon your experiences during the Building Leadership training series:

- 1 Poor
- 2 Fair
- 3 Good
- 4 Very Good
- 5 Excellent

- The sessions were informative.
- The facilitator/s were skilled and engaging.
- The sessions provided an opportunity for me to learn new skills.
- The sessions provided an opportunity for me to build relationships with other participants.
- The sessions provided time for me share my feelings and experiences.
- The workshop materials and handouts were helpful.
- The training location was pleasant.

Which sessions of the training did you enjoy the most? Why?

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