Positive Culture Framework
Stakeholder Identification and Participation

Written by Arlene Andrews, Ph.D., March 2012
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STAKEHOLDER
IDENTIFICATION AND PARTICIPATION

Introduction

Your group aims to grow the positive norms of an important health and safety issue in your community. To support these efforts, you will need to identify WHO CARES and who you believe *should* care.

Of course, the "WHO" is EVERYONE. All people in your community should care about health and safety – and particularly traffic safety.

But you must start somewhere, given that communities are complicated systems. Typically, we start change by involving key **stakeholders**.

Involving key stakeholders is a critical component of Step 1: Planning and Environmental Advocacy in the Positive Culture Framework (PCF). The purpose of this workbook is to enable you to identify and engage the people who are most likely to influence the change and transformation you seek.

What is a stakeholder?

A stakeholder in your effort is someone who *has a stake* in the process. What does this mean?

John Bryson, a scholar who has written extensively about planning processes, offers this definition of stakeholder (your planning group would be "the organization"): *Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on the organization's attention, resources, or output, or is affected by that output. (1995, p.27)*

The World Food Program is more succinct: *An individual or group who has something to gain or lose by the proposed action. (WFP 2001, p. 3)*

In other words, if you are trying improve a particular health or safety issue in a community, **your stakeholders are the people who are affected by that health or safety issue or by any action your group might take**.

Stakeholders are the agents of change and transformation. You cannot transform them. The success of your effort depends on their active, voluntary involvement – they will transform themselves and each other because they tend to be networked. Stakeholder participation can make or break the success of a transformation. Involve stakeholders as early as possible and engage them in diverse and meaningful ways throughout the effort.

Stakeholders include **individuals and groups** (also known as interest groups). Groups may include formal groups, such as organizations, or informal groups, such as ball team fans. In a process to plan community change, individuals must be identified who can represent themselves as individuals or groups with which they are affiliated.

To reach an entire community, your stakeholders should represent or be **inclusive** of all parts of the community. Principles of democracy support stakeholder involvement – if something affects them, they have a right to participate. Bryson (2004, p. 23) observed, "Stakeholder analyses are now arguably more important than ever because of the increasing interconnected nature of the world … many individuals, groups, and organizations are involved or affected or have some partial responsibility to act …" with regard to change efforts.

The inclusion process starts with a clear description of the community that will be the focus of your efforts: Is it bound by geography, population characteristics, organizational affiliation, or other factors?

The stakeholders should include people who can promote transformation at the individual, family, neighborhood, community, and policy levels. They should reflect the character of the community in terms of race/ethnicity, age, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, faith, and national origin. Special care should be taken to include groups that have been excluded or underserved in the past or who experience disparate outcomes (e.g., more traffic-related fatalities or serious injuries).

Stakeholders include people who have **interest** in your actions; that is, they may be helped or harmed by what you do. Those who will gain the most from your actions should be most actively involved, so that whatever is done will be relevant and their basic right to self-determination is protected. As we have learned from social movements, there should be "nothing about us without us." Also, some people may be interested because they will lose something as a result of your work, as when cigarette companies lose income from loss of sales to minors. Such stakeholders need to be identified and special efforts made to address how the effort will relate to them to understand costs and benefits and minimize resistance.

Stakeholders will also have various degrees of **influence** and power over your actions or the success of your endeavor. A clear understanding of who can influence whom – and vice versa – is critical to the work of improving health and safety.

Finally, stakeholders may contribute **assets** (resources) to your effort. The process will simply be better – more creative, more relevant, more effective – if it is grounded in the perspectives of those to whom it matters most.

What Stakeholders Bring to Your Health and Safety Efforts	
Factor	**Definition**
Inclusion	Fair, democratic representation of all sectors of the community
Interest	Identification of benefit or cost that will happen as a result of the transformation
Influence	Ability and power to help or hinder the effort
Assets	Gifts and resources that will enhance the spirit and capacity of the effort

Stakeholder involvement – overview

The process of stakeholder involvement involves three major stages: background work, stakeholder identification, and stakeholder participation. This workbook guides you through these steps:

I. Background work
    A. Form planning group
    B. Set boundaries
        1) Vision
        2) Focus community
        3) Purpose of stakeholder involvement

II. Stakeholder identification
    A. Decide inclusion criteria
        1) Sectors
        2) Demographic groups
        3) Levels of the ecology
    B. Identify stakeholders by names
    C. Understand each stakeholder
        1) Interests
        2) Influence
        3) Assets
    D. Prioritize stakeholder outreach

III. Stakeholder participation
    A. Identify stakeholder networks
    B. Recruit stakeholders
    C. Engage stakeholders
    D. Sustain stakeholder participation

IV. Evaluation of stakeholder participation

Background Work

Planning group: Who will identify the stakeholders?

First, who are *you*? And who made you the boss of this effort?

Research about effective community change reveals that one factor contributing to success is that potential participants in the change see the organizing group as legitimate, reliable, and competent in relation to the goals and activities it intends to accomplish (Mattessich et al., 2001). You are a "planning group" that has embraced a critical issue on behalf of your community. Your compassion and commitment give legitimacy to the cause (Kaye & Wolff, 1995).

You need to conduct a careful check before starting the process of stakeholder identification and engagement. The stakeholder list will only be inclusive if your planning group has a good understanding of the community and is committed to promoting stakeholder involvement (Daley & Margilia, 2000). The planning group that facilitates the process needs to engage in continual self-reflection to assure solid grounding in the community.

As a planning group, ask yourself these questions:
- What are the characteristics of our planning group and who do we represent?
- Do we have legitimacy in the eyes of our community?
- How well do we represent our community with regard to growing cultural norms about traffic safety?
- How well does our planning group know this community?
- Are any critical perspectives missing from our planning group?
- Are we willing and able to invest our time, energy, and resources into stakeholder engagement?

You may need to make some adjustments to your planning group before proceeding with stakeholder identification. Be prepared to make changes as stakeholders become engaged – many will be fruitful additions to the planning group.

Set the boundaries

Before you identify stakeholders, affirm your purpose, goal(s) and focus audience(s), and the role of stakeholder involvement in your transformation effort.

> **Establish the preliminary purpose** – what is your group aiming to accomplish? This can be refined as stakeholders become engaged in the process. To begin, your planning group needs a general statement about the purpose of your effort.
>
> *Post your preliminary common purpose* on poster-size paper so it is visible as your group works on stakeholder identification.

> **State the general boundaries of the community you aim to serve**. Your group wants to improve health and safety. In what community? Of course, the answer is ALL communities, everywhere. Realistically, though, you must start somewhere, and you need to articulate just where and with whom that is.

Does your community consist of:

- A geographic area?
- A network of people who have a common interest, such as all people who ride motorcycles?
- People who have a common condition or identity, such as people who are not U.S. citizens? Or those directly affected by HIV-AIDS?
- People affiliated with a particular institution, such as a school system or faith community (e.g. church, synagogue, mosque, temple)?
- People in certain age groups?

You may need to do some research to gather information about your focus community or obtain a map.

> On poster-size paper, write the name of the focus community you aim to reach with your efforts. Keep this posted as your planning group works.

Clarify the purpose of stakeholder involvement.
Just what do you want stakeholders to *do*?

- Change their own attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors?
- Influence others to do the same?
- Help provide access to your audiences?
- Contribute special knowledge, skills, or expertise that can enhance your work?
- Help legitimize and add credibility to your efforts?
- Provide additional resources or in-kind (non-monetary) support?
- Support your work as a community cooperative?
- Own and sustain this effort after your planning group gets it started?

You will be identifying stakeholders for a particular purpose with regard to your effort. Spend some time talking about why stakeholders are important for your group. As Bryson (2004) points out, the purpose of stakeholder involvement may change over time, and there may be different reasons for different stakeholder groups.

The International Association for Public Participation developed a *Spectrum of Public Participation* that frames the way people may be involved in an effort, shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Spectrum of Participation	
The stakeholder needs to be…	**Examples of how to do this…**
Informed	Fact sheets, websites, open houses
Consulted	Public comment, focus groups, surveys, meetings
Involved	Workshops, polling
Collaborative	Task forces, consensus-building, participation in decision-making
Empowered	Voting, authority for decisions

Source: http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/spectrum.pdf

On poster-size paper, write the main reasons for stakeholder involvement in your efforts. Keep this posted as your planning group works. You will re-visit this list as you talk about engaging each stakeholder group.

Summary

After you have a sense of why and what you want to accomplish by engaging stakeholders (the preliminary purpose, boundaries, and levels for stakeholder involvement), then you can begin to talk about who to engage. This process is dynamic. As stakeholders become engaged, the purpose, boundaries, and levels of engagement may change.

The first stage is "Stakeholder Identification," which involves describing who the stakeholders are, what specific interests they have in the effort, what influence they have, how they are connected to one another, and what assets they can bring to the effort. The second is "Stakeholder Participation," which includes recruiting, involving, and sustaining stakeholders.

Stakeholder Identification Process

Inclusion criteria

Research about community collaborations consistently finds that success and sustainability are related to appropriate representation from all segments of the community that will be affected by the work (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001; Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001). An inclusive community initiative will involve people who represent all relevant **sectors** and diverse **demographic groups** in the community and can exert influence at **multiple levels of the social ecology** – individual, family/peers, organizations (like schools and workplaces), community, and/or society.

Before listing stakeholders by name, your planning group should develop a list of the sectors and groups that are essential for the success of your initiative.

> **Sectors**. Communities are vibrant social systems that tend to be organized by functional sectors, though all sectors are interdependent. Many groups comprise the elements of a community. Your planning group needs to identify which sectors are most relevant to your project.

Table 1 on Worksheet 1, "Inclusive Communities: Sectors" gives examples of sectors (e.g., education, justice, health and human services, business, basic needs care, media, transportation, physical planning and care, etc.). Using this list as a starting point, add other sectors, and then make a specific list of the priority sectors that are essential. In the next step you will begin to identify the stakeholder groups and individuals by name.

> **Demographic groups**. Every community has unique demographic characteristics. The people who make communities vary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, ability, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, geographic area, national origin, and other important characteristics (see also Community Catalyst, 2003). Some groups have historically been excluded and care must be taken to assure their inclusion. You may need to have statistical information at hand that describes the community's demography.

Level of the social ecology. As you consider particular stakeholders, keep in mind the degree of influence each stakeholder may have with regard to the social ecology. For example, some stakeholders may have particular influence with regard to public policy. Others may have authority or influence with regard to particular organizations or whole neighborhoods.

Butterfoss (2007, p. 51) proposed that Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) links successful community change with change at social ecological levels as follows:

> Intrapersonal level: Individual's knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, behavior, self-concept, and self-esteem;
> Interpersonal level: Individual's social networks, social supports, families, work groups, peers, and neighbors;
> Organizational level: Norms, incentives, organizational culture, management style, organizational structure, and communication networks;
> Community level: Community resources, neighborhood organizations, social and health services, organizational relationships, folk practices, governmental structures, and informal and formal leadership practices; and
> Public policy level: Legislation, policies, taxes, and regulations.

An inclusive health and safety effort will have stakeholders who can influence change at all ecological levels. Change at one level does not automatically cause change at another level – the relationships between/among levels are complex.

When the stakeholder is an organization, representation from multiple levels (i.e., administration, middle management, direct operations) can enhance attainment of your goals (Mattessich et al., 2001). For example, having a school board member, principal, and classroom teacher will help assure their school's commitment while also tapping diverse interests, influence, and assets associated with each level.

With organizations, just because one person is engaged (e.g., the leader), does not mean everyone is engaged. Organizational engagement in a collaborative effort and requires effective communication within the organization (among workers, managers, leaders) as well as across organizations (Austin, 2000).

Planning your project should include promoting communication between people **across levels** – such as when high school students talk with bank presidents and elected officials – as well as **within levels** – as when students, teachers, and cafeteria workers talk about operational level issues. Having a sense of each stakeholder's span of influence will be helpful at a later step, when your planning group identifies stakeholder networks.

Summary: inclusion criteria

Your planning group may have other inclusion criteria – every project is unique. After you have finished your background work and identified your inclusion criteria, you are ready to identify your stakeholders.

Identify stakeholders by name

Keeping in mind that you cannot reach everyone at once, your objective at this point is to create a list of priority stakeholders who will be engaged in the work. Before you can prioritize, you must identify the potential key stakeholders by name.

A basic brainstorming session will produce a list of names. Simply write the names of all individuals and groups who have an interest in the work or can influence its success. Identify who the stakeholder represents using your inclusion criteria (sectors, diverse groups, levels of the social ecology).

To identify your key stakeholders, ask yourself these questions:

- Who has a vested interest in your efforts?
- Who are the people/groups that could support (or thwart) your efforts?
- Which people/agencies are important for communicating on the issue?
- Who could be secondary reinforcers of your efforts?
- Who is sending out competing or conflicting messages?

Brainstorming Stakeholders by Name

First, each planning group participant individually writes names in column A of Worksheet 3. Using the inclusion criteria (posted on three pages of poster paper), the participant makes notes in Column B about who is represented by this stakeholder.

Then the facilitator points to each participant in the group; one at a time, the participants add one name to the group's Stakeholder List, taking turns as many times as necessary until the group agrees all names are recorded. As the names are offered, the facilitator puts the names on poster paper so that everyone can see the list. Of course, more names can be added later. At this point, limit discussion to names and factors that link the name to the focus community (sectors, demographic groups, levels of the social ecology). The Planning Group should be sure to put themselves on the list!

The group looks over the list and clusters or combines any names that belong together. As the facilitator writes on poster paper, a recorder at a computer types the names onto column A and focus information onto Column B of Worksheet 4. Use as many copies of Worksheet 4 as is necessary to complete the list. When this is done, the group has its Stakeholder List.

While the group takes a short break, copies of the Stakeholder List with the stakeholder names and focus areas (Worksheet 4, Columns A and B filled in) are made so that each person has a list.

Understand your stakeholders (interest, influence, assets)

Each stakeholder is unique and brings particular interests, influence, and assets to your effort. Bryson (2004, p.36) observes that a key task is to understand "how *specific stakeholders* – either separately, in coalitions, or in co-aligned groups – might be inspired and mobilized to act in such a way that the common good is advanced." Before they can be engaged in a common mission, your planning group needs to understand each stakeholder.

Your planning group will rely on multiple sources of information to gain an understanding of the stakeholders. The planning group may have information through experience, personal and professional networks, websites, news media, or written reports. They may need to proactively collect information about certain stakeholders or groups by conducting interviews or surveys.

The understanding of stakeholders will be grounded in the answers to these questions:

- What stake (**interest**) does this stakeholder have in the initiative?

- What **influence** (power) does this stakeholder contribute to the change process?

- What **assets** can this stakeholder share with the initiative? What assets can your initiative share with the stakeholders?

Later the planning group will also consider:

- How do the stakeholders relate to one another? What **networks** exist?

Using Worksheet 4 begin to discuss the characteristics of the stakeholders with particular attention to each factor: interest, influence, and assets. On the Worksheet, make a brief note about each factor.

Interest: Why does this stakeholder care about your initiative? Is the interest positive (i.e., they want you to succeed) or negative (i.e., they would be OK if you fail)? In what way will the stakeholder benefit or be harmed by your success? What do they want from you?

How would you rate this stakeholder's level of interest in your project – high, medium, or low? If your project is brand new, you may need to speculate about what level of interest the stakeholder will have when they hear about your project.

Influence: Each stakeholder has a base of power and capacity to influence others. This power or influence can take many forms such as control over funds, creation of trust, mediation of lines of communication, or other forms of influence.

Examples of individuals:
- Tonio may have influence because he is admired and certain people want to follow him as a model (we might call him a gatekeeper, someone who can open access to others);
- Sarah may be the mayor with control of funds that could support your efforts;
- Jiang may have authority over what ads get placed on city buses.

Examples of organizations:

- The Boys and Girls Clubs have access to 200 youth each day;
- The community college has several on-line information sites for its students;
- The local policy chief can address the problem of poor enforcement of relevant laws.

An individual stakeholder may have multiple forms of influence or power. Discuss how each stakeholder's unique forms of influence may affect your efforts. Then rate the stakeholder's level of influence – is it high, medium, or low?

Assets: Now is a good time to inventory what assets or resources the stakeholder might bring to your project. Is it good will, knowledge, skill, access to an audience, funding, space, media? Is the stakeholder linked to a particularly important network? The possibilities are endless.

The Drucker Foundation (2002) suggests the following might be assets. As you consider each stakeholder, consider this asset list and how important (high, medium, low) this asset is with regard to your mission.

Knowledge	Revenue
Volunteers	Facilities
Material goods	Information distribution
Visibility for your image	Expert relationships
Linkages to key people or resources	Other (specify)

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute produces tools to assist with making inventories of individual, organizational, and community institutional capacities that can contribute to community change (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; Kretzmann et al, 2005).

Consider the sharing of assets as a mutual, two-way process. You will ask stakeholders to bring assets to the initiative, but the coalition will offer assets to them, too. Go over the assets list and consider what your effort might offer to stakeholders.
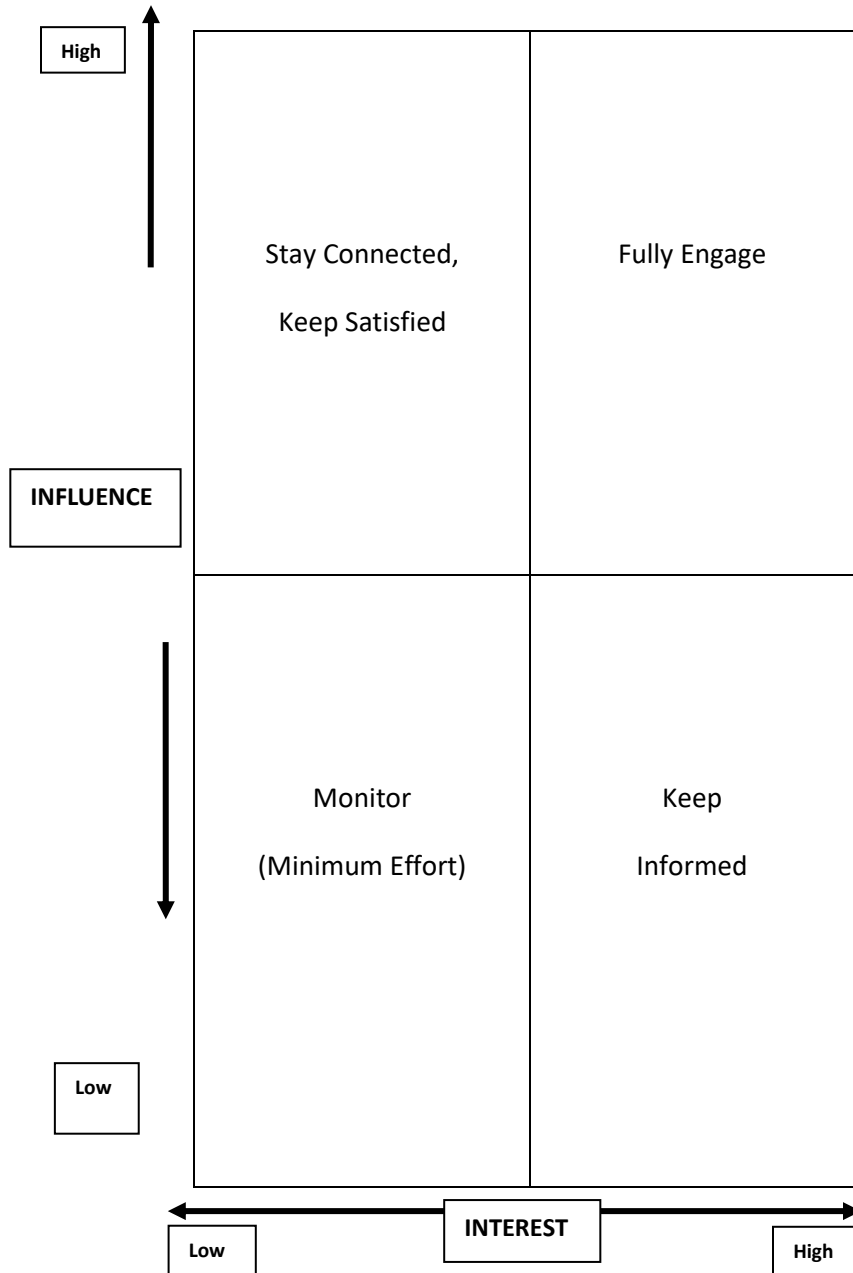

Identify priority stakeholders

So many stakeholders, so little time! This exercise is designed to help your planning group prioritize outreach to stakeholders.

Your discussion about understanding stakeholders included rating them with regard to level of interest and level of influence. Using these ratings, assign each stakeholder a place on the Stakeholder Interest/Influence Grid.

Figure 1. Stakeholder Influence/Interest Grid

High

Stay Connected, Keep Satisfied	Fully Engage
Monitor (Minimum Effort)	Keep Informed

INFLUENCE

Low

INTEREST

Low   High

Adapted from Bryson, 2004

Stakeholder Participation

Now that you have identified your stakeholders and decided where to begin, spend some time talking about how you will reach out to the stakeholder group and gain their commitment to your cause. Typically, this involves multiple processes: **recruitment** (making contact and encouraging their connection to you), **engagement** (involving them in various ways), and **sustenance** (promoting sustainability of their engagement over time).

As members of a vibrant common community, your stakeholders are interdependent. Start first by discussing how your planning group is currently connected to various stakeholders – what are the networks?

Identify stakeholder networks

Stakeholders have relationships with one another and with the planning group. Before you begin to engage stakeholders, it helps to discuss how they currently relate to your planning group and to each other.

Identifying Networks

1. Mark the planning group with a square and lay it at the center of a table, on a large sheet of poster paper.
2. Now lay the circle/triangle for each stakeholder on the table at a distance that indicates how connected the stakeholder is to the planning group.
3. Cluster stakeholders who are close to one another.

Discuss:

- Why are some stakeholders further away from the planning group?
- How can stakeholders be involved if they are interested and influential, but far away?
- Are any of the stakeholders likely to be problematic? What kinds of problems might arise?

Foster-Fishman et al. (2009, pp. 565-566) observe that community relationships matter:

> When residents feel connected to their neighbors and believe that by working together change is feasible, they are more likely to be active, engaged citizens. If residents are expected to be involved, they are more likely to be involved. Building strong connections among neighbors fosters norms for activism.

Stakeholder recruitment

Your priority stakeholder list will include people you know well and people who are strangers to you. Either way, connecting your stakeholders to your effort will require a **personal touch**.

In the prior section, we addressed the importance of your planning group developing an understanding of your stakeholders. Given that the relationship is mutual, as you recruit stakeholders for participation in your initiative, you should also consider how the stakeholders see you – that is, how they understand your planning group (deBakker & den Hond, 2006). Have information prepared about your initiative that is relevant to the stakeholders you seek to recruit.

The spirit of your initiative is grounded in **trust**. Trust is the foundation of effective, cohesive collective action. Effective communication and interaction are the pathways to trust. Building trust takes time.

Based on a review of research literature about effective community collaborations, Mattessich et al. (2001) recommended that before the work of a collaborative begins, collaborating partners should take time to get to know one another. Specifically, they should discuss how they operate, their cultural norms and values, their limitations, and their expectations. This process will promote mutual understanding, respect, and trust.

Your work on rating the influence, interests, and assets of potential stakeholders and prioritizing stakeholders lays a foundation for your decisions about how to recruit them. As you recruit stakeholder participation, build on trusting relationships that members of your planning group already have with various stakeholders. Your network analysis will give you a general picture of how to start.

The stakeholders who need to be closely engaged in your efforts – as empowered decision makers, collaborators or involved participants (See Table 1 on page 8) – should be approached with face-to-face personal contact. Meet potential stakeholders on their "turf," in places where they feel comfortable (Piasecka et al., 2010). Individual or small group meetings are a good way to start – perhaps over coffee or a light meal. A phone call might work for those busy stakeholders who are close to your planning group. Larger gatherings such as workshops, conferences, town meetings, or rallies may be ways to stimulate participation for these high-focus stakeholders.

Those stakeholders who need to be informed or consulted might be reached by surveys, focus groups or more indirect methods. The relationship needs to be two-way. You may request information or resources from them, but you also should provide them with something: information or material goods. Websites and social media are excellent ways to create communication.

As you recruit stakeholders, be clear about what you are asking of and/or offering to each stakeholder. Tell them about your group's purpose and ask them about their interests and needs.

Be sure your planning group keeps a **record** of which stakeholders were contacted, when, and how. Make a note of how the stakeholder responded to your outreach (See Worksheet 7).

Stakeholder engagement

Recruitment taps potential stakeholders who may participate in your efforts. **Engaged** stakeholders are those who support and actively participate in the effort. To accomplish community transformation, stakeholders must engage dynamically and stay engaged over time.

Stakeholders will participate in the transformation effort to varying degrees: Some will participate actively over time, others occasionally, and yet others in supporting roles. Stakeholders will also participate in different ways: some will advise or lead planning, others will participate in transformative education, and some will broker relationships with focus populations. Participation is dynamic and will change over time.

Many lessons learned about effective community coalitions and collaborations have relevance to stakeholder participation in community change. In *The Collaboration Challenge*, James Austin (2000) emphasizes the need for participants to feel personally and emotionally **connected to the purpose** of the community initiative **and to the people** involved in the effort.

Participants tend to stay engaged if they have a **sense of belonging** with the effort and a belief that their contribution is **meaningful** (Piasecka et al., 2010). Informal social networks that enable friendship, nurture mutual support and material support contribute to feelings of cohesion when communities coalesce for change (Hardina, 2006).

People engage other people. It's not just what you do, it's how you do it, and who does it, that leads to strong relationships among people in your community.

Stakeholders can and should be involved at every step. Adapted from a training program by Phil Bartle of the Community Empowerment Collective, we use their term "mobilizer" to refer to people who promote engagement. Initially, members of your planning group will be the mobilizers.

The mobilizer who reaches out to a particular individual or group must have **credibility and legitimacy**. For example:

> … If a mobilizer is going to reach out to youth of minor age, parental awareness and, in some cases, parental permission is needed;
> … If a mobilizer is reaching out to an unfamiliar group, the mobilizer might start by contacting one person who is familiar with the group. The mobilizer builds that relationship, then together they approach the group. Examples are when the mobilizer works to engage people from an ethnic group or sexual orientation different than his/her own or when a mobilizer who can hear reaches out to people of Deaf Culture.
> … In some cases the mobilizer needs official legitimacy, as when school authorities approve engagement of students or teachers.

Stakeholders may need **training in how to participate** – not just about the community norms you seek to transform. Everyone has assets (e.g., creativity, social connections, willingness to serve, funds, materials, and more) that might be tapped for the mission. The planning group needs to help people know what is needed and expected from them as stakeholders. Stakeholders who can identify their assets and connect their potential to the group's work will feel engaged.

Numerous on-line resources can support basic training in democratic, inclusive participation. People who have historically been excluded from community processes (people with low income, criminal histories, intellectual disability, or certain mental health concerns, for examples) may need extra assistance to support their inclusion and empowerment.

Mobilizers may need **training in how to manage** stakeholders to promote their sustained engagement. Managing stakeholders requires relational skills, such as communicating, encouraging, inspiring, affirming and negotiating. As the work of the community evolves and strategies get underway, attention to stakeholder relationships is a parallel process. As the initiative grows, the pool of stakeholders will

grow, too. Mobilizers must be diligent to "make new friends but keep the old" while still attending to the needs of diverse stakeholder groups.

Transformation occurs in a **cycle**: stakeholders are identified, recruited, and engaged, a community plan is developed and enacted, change is monitored and reported, progress is celebrated and recommendations for adjustments made. As your group works to improve health and safety, stakeholders will be engaged in various ways all along the way.

Tips for Effective Multicultural Participation

- Embrace pluralistic, shared vision and values.
- Adopt ground rules for a safe, nurturing atmosphere.
- Establish structure and procedures that reinforce equity and eliminate discrimination.
- Encourage and support diversity and how it can be incorporated into existing programs.
- Value diverse points of view.
- Practice inclusive communication.
- Create leadership opportunities for everybody.
- Engage in activities that celebrate differences.

Every community is different and has diverse groups – that's what makes life interesting. It also makes stakeholder recruitment and engagement challenging. No single approach works for every community or every group. The work of the effort becomes particularly interesting, though potentially challenging, as representatives of diverse groups begin to work together. Use a checklist of multicultural processes (see "Tips" box above) to assess how your group is doing.

As you work on stakeholder engagement, be aware that people from some groups may require special effort to engage. For example, more often than not, the planning group is comprised of people who have resources (e.g., jobs that allow them to spend time on the effort, familiarity and trust in the group's relationships). Planning group members who are not low income – including those whose careers or activities place them with people of low income – cannot speak for those people who do cope with low income. Special efforts may be needed to involve them and other groups who are marginalized.

Ravensbergen & VanderPlaat (2009) demonstrated that learning circles effectively engage people with low income in community development work. You will need a good group facilitator with strong cultural competence. You will need to arrange a safe place, transportation, care for dependent family members, and food to support circle meetings. People living with low income and other marginalized groups are likely to be sensitive to power dynamics. In learning circles, they, not your planning group, set the agenda and drive the discussion, promoting a sense of empowerment about the topic.

Learning Circles

1. Convene a group of people with a common interest in the mission of your initiative.
2. At the first meeting (after introductions and a warm-up exercise), have the group identify what issues it would like to understand better (the facilitator will remind the group of its purpose).
3. Have the group select a co-facilitator from among the learning circle members.
4. The group sets a schedule for a series of 6-10 meetings, with specific goals set by the group.
5. The co-facilitators encourage the circle members to engage in open, transparent exchange of ideas.
6. The facilitator makes a record of the group's themes, recommendations, or decisions.

Adapted from Askim, 2005

Certain stakeholders may need particular methods of engagement. The planning group will need to attend to ways to involve stakeholders with atypical communication (e.g., deafness, speech challenges, language differences). Stakeholders who live in remote areas may need to be engaged through technology. Youthful stakeholders may respond to social media or active modalities of communication such as music or drama while elders may prefer stories and small groups.

A variety of training resources exist for helping train stakeholders to participate in community change efforts. For example, Jallow & Malik (2005) compiled a comprehensive set of tools for use in promoting engaged participation among refugees in developing countries. They include:

- Training through workshops (to teach planning skills, cultural awareness, team building);
- Community appraisal of needs and capacities;
- Stakeholder consultation methods (such as learning circles, focus groups, surveys);
- Analysis of social processes (e.g., developing stories about how various social groups within the community relate to one another).

Reid (2000) and Gaventa & Barrett (2010) offer a series of community case studies to illustrate lessons learned about effective engagement of stakeholders.

Sustaining stakeholder participation

Community change and transformation is a slow, dynamic process. As the goals of your effort begin to be achieved, the community will want to sustain the change and the positive trend. This will require sustained engagement by diverse stakeholders.

Effective community change is grounded in **healthy relationships** among participants in the change process <u>and</u> the **knowledge and skills** they acquire in the effort (Javdani & Allen, 2011). Mattessich et al. (2001) identified a number of factors that contribute to the success of collaborations. Several of the factors are likely to be particularly relevant to sustaining stakeholder involvement:

- Assure that stakeholders clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in the initiative; their activities should be **meaningful** to them;

- Engage in open, frequent, and interactive communication; listening is important; stakeholders should feel as if they **belong** with the initiative;

- Support **flexibility** in structure and adaptability as conditions change.

Heath (2007) would add that genuine dialogue leads to more engaging, creative, democratic, and reciprocal relationships among diverse stakeholders. When each stakeholder, speaking in a unique voice that is culturally and personally grounded, feels heard and valued based on the quality of the interactive expression and listening with other stakeholders, strong, sustainable relationships emerge (Barge, 2002).

As the transformation proceeds, people will change, and stakeholders will come and go. As stakeholders change, their concerns are likely to change, and the core issues of the overall effort will evolve. A strong effort will adapt to such changes.

Cyclically, as the planning group monitors the process and results of the initiative, stakeholder participation should be assessed (See Figure 2, page 19). This will lead to an updated review of stakeholder interests, influence, and assets. While stakeholder recruitment and support is a perpetual process, fresh recruitment efforts may be needed. Over time, some stakeholders' engagement will wane while new stakeholders will become active.

By all means, **celebrate** the success of your initiative AND the building of strong community relationships through your stakeholder participation!

Evaluating stakeholder participation

You may wonder along the way: Does stakeholder participation make a difference to efforts in your community? You will not know unless you evaluate stakeholder participation (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). You can build this in as you design and conduct the overall evaluation of your strategies.

Every effort is unique. The evaluation of participation in the effort must be specific to the context, so no single approach to evaluation can be designed. Also, participation by stakeholders in the design and conduct of the evaluation of their own participation will produce more meaningful and practical information. Your planning group might consider two key questions: (1) What is the focus of our evaluation? and (2) What evaluation method can give us the most useful information about this focus?

Focus. Karl (2000) suggests that three general topics be considered:
- The extent and quality of participation;
- Costs and benefits of participation to various stakeholders; and
- Impact of stakeholders on initiative, results, and sustainability.

Choose your own questions.

SAMPLE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Who is participating?
Number of stakeholders
Amount of time per stakeholder
Characteristics of the stakeholders (demographics)
Characteristics of those who drop out
Interests, influence, and assets of the participating stakeholders

How do characteristics of the participating stakeholders compare with the characteristics of the focus population? Are they representative?

In terms of the spectrum of participation, in what ways are stakeholders engaged (e.g., informed, consulted, involved, collaborating, empowered)?

Is the stakeholder mobilization process effective?

Do stakeholders report they are meaningfully engaged?

Are communication processes managed well, including conflict management?

How does stakeholder participation affect the results of the effort?

Is the stakeholder participation process efficient?

Does the cost of mobilizing and engaging stakeholders justify the results in terms of meaningful stakeholder participation?

Do stakeholders begin to mobilize their own resources and show initiative regarding participation?

Are engagement methods culturally competent?

Is power balanced (e.g., by gender, ethnicity, social class, age, other key characteristics)?

Are stakeholders trusting and mutually respectful of one another?

What is the impact of stakeholder participation?

Did the stakeholder participation lead to a better effort?

Is the stakeholder participation sustainable over time?

Methods. With regard to methods, Karl (2000) observed that because stakeholder participation is a process, information that is qualitative (descriptive and interpretive) is likely to be more valuable than quantifiable measurements. As a process, participation is dynamic, changing over time as the community transformation emerges. Thus, inductive approaches that seek to understand the participation as it occurs, rather than pre-determining anticipated outcomes, are likely to inform the effective practice of participation.

Stakeholder involvement requires outreach to encourage their participation, so communication avenues are likely to be in place to facilitate collection of information for purposes of evaluation. Techniques such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, and community forums (in person, by phone, and by web) are useful to the overall effort – evaluation can be integrated into these efforts.

Interpreting and sharing evaluative information. As your group monitors the stakeholder participation process, decisions must be made about how well the process is working and what effects are occurring. Take time to regularly reflect upon lessons learned about stakeholder participation: What worked well? What can be improved? A "Lessons Learned" learning circle is a good arena for reflection.

Share the story of your stakeholders' engagement in the effort to improve health and safety. Developing a common community narrative is important for building community and sustaining positive change.

Conclusion

As you work to improve a particular health or safety issue in your community, your stakeholders are the people who are most affected by that issue or by any action your group might take. Stakeholders can make or break an effort. Your planning group is wise to seek inclusive participation from all sectors of the community, carefully identifying the interests, influence, and assets of particular stakeholders. After careful study and reflection, you will have a sense of why and what you want to accomplish by engaging stakeholders (the preliminary purpose, boundaries, and levels of stakeholder involvement). Then you can begin to talk about whom to engage and start the careful work of recruitment and participation.

Transformation takes time; the process is dynamic. As stakeholders become engaged, the purposes, boundaries, and levels of engagement may change. The cycle of stakeholder engagement illustrates how stakeholders can be involved every step of the way – in a continuous, sustainable process. While growing positive norms is the priority focus, concurrent attention to stakeholder participation will assure meaningful, effective, sustainable, positive change.

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Worksheet 1: Inclusive Communities – Community Sectors

Communities involve vibrant interactions among groups that tend to be organized by sectors such as those in the list below. Any individual in the community is likely to be involved with multiple sectors, though intensively involved with particular sectors. Before listing stakeholders by name, your planning group will need to develop a list of the sectors and groups that are essential for the success of your initiative.

Using the sector list (Table 1), put a checkmark by each group that is **critical** to the attainment of the vision for your project. **Critical** groups are those groups you simply cannot leave out.

Blank lines are provided so that you can add groups that are important in your community.

Do not list names yet.

Each person should take a few minutes to think about the sectors that are critical to your project.

As a group, discuss your individual ideas. Agree to a master list, to be documented by the recorder.

Table 1. Community Sectors

Check if essential	SECTOR
	BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY
	Commercial enterprises
	Major companies
	Small businesses
	Chamber of Commerce
	Worker groups and unions
	ECONOMIC AND BASIC NEEDS CARE
	Employment assistance
	Housing programs
	Food programs
	Emergency material assistance
	Shelter
	Disaster and crisis services
	Tenant / consumer groups
	EDUCATION
	Early developmental programs & child care (ages 0-6)
	Primary schools (K-6 gr)
	Secondary schools (7-12 gr)

Check if essential	SECTOR
	Higher (colleges, universities)
	Education-related professional associations (specify):
	Educators
	Parents' organizations
	GOVERNMENT
	Elected local officials (town, city, county)
	Elected state officials
	Elected federal officials
	Regional planning councils
	Tribes
	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
	Health care systems (hospitals)
	Primary care providers
	Hospice and chronic care
	First responder and emergency care
	Patient/ Consumer organizations
	Health & mental health research and development foundations
	Health care professionals
	Mental health services

Check if essential	SECTOR
	Alcohol and drug services
	Public health services
	Services for people with disabilities
	Child welfare services
	Family support services
	Elder care services
	Professional providers
	Professional associations (e.g., medical, social work)
	FAITH COMMUNITIES
	Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples
	Interfaith groups
	INFORMATION AND MEDIA
	News media
	Social media
	Libraries
	JUSTICE AND SAFETY
	Law enforcement
	Fire fighters
	Judiciary
	Attorneys

	Corrections
	Victim services
	Justice-related professional associations (e.g. bar, police)
	Civil and human rights groups
PHILANTHROPY AND CIVIL SOCIETY	
	United Way
	Foundations
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	Environmental protection and conservation services
	Realtors And developers
	Waste management
	Zoning and physical planning
RECREATION, LEISURE, CREATIVE CULTURE	
	Parks
	Sports clubs
	Youth development associations (e.g. scouts, boys & girls clubs)
	Artists and arts councils
	Musicians
	Actors and theaters

	Crafters
	Exercise facilities
TRANSPORTATION	
	Public transportation system
	Highway Patrol
	Traffic managers
	DOT Regional Staff
	MPOs / RTPO
	County Public Works
VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS	
	Neighborhood associations and block clubs
	Ethno-cultural groups
	Interest groups (e.g. AARP, veteran's groups, Elks)
	Advocacy groups
OTHER	
	Safe Kids Coalitions
	Community Prevention & Wellness Initiative (CPWI) Coalitions
	Drug Free Communities (DFC) Coalitions

Worksheet 2: Inclusive Communities – Diversity

An inclusive community initiative will involve people who represent diverse **demographic groups** in the community. Any one individual will have multiple demographic group affiliations. As you identify stakeholders, keep in mind in what ways the stakeholder represents the focus demographic groups for your project.

Each person should take a few minutes to think about the groups that should be the focus of your project. As a group, discuss your individual ideas. Agree to a master list, to be documented by the recorder.

Groups by….	Identify parts of these groups that are your FOCUS	What special consideration should be given to involving this focus group?
Age		
Gender		
Race / ethnic identity		
National origin		
Religion		
Sexual orientation		

Socio-economic condition		

Worksheet 3: Stakeholder Start List (for Individual Planning Group Member)

Participation in: _____

A: Name of individual, group, or organization who is the stakeholder	B: Focus – Who is represented by this stakeholder (sectors, diverse groups, ecological level)?

Worksheet 4: Stakeholder Participation List (for Planning Group)

Participation in: _____

A: Name of individual, group, or organization who is the stakeholder	B: Focus – Who is represented by this stakeholder (sectors, diverse groups, ecological level)?	C: Interests – What interest does this stakeholder have? Hi-Med-Lo?	D: Influence/power – Who or what does this stakeholder influence? Hi-Med-Lo?	E: Assets – What can this stakeholder contribute to the effort?

Worksheet 5: Asset Development[1]

Stakeholders may bring many assets to your effort. On this worksheet, identify assets various stakeholders may have. How will you connect these assets to your effort?

Name of Stakeholder: _____

Identify the stakeholder's assets	How will the assets be connected to the effort?
Knowledge	
Financial Resources	
Access to volunteers	
Social networks and connections	
Facilities	
Materials and equipment	

Know-how	
Information distribution	
Visibility for your image	
Other:	

1. Adapted from Kretzmann, J. P., McKnight, J. L., Dobrowolski, D., & Puttenney, D. (2005). Discovering community power: A guide to mobilizing local assets and your community's capacity. Evanston, IL: Asset-Based Community Development Institute.

Worksheet 6: Templates for Prioritizing

YELLOW

RED

BLUE

BLUE

RED

YELLOW

Worksheet 7: Stakeholder Contact List

Participation in: _____

Name of individual, group or organization who is the stakeholder	**Contact Information** (address, phone, email)	**Date of Contact**	**Method of Contact** (phone, email, in-person, etc.)	**Contact by whom**	**Response note**