It Takes A Village:
A Toolkit for Launching your Community-led Health and Well-being Improvement Initiative

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Make an Impact on Community Health and Well-being

This toolkit is intended to provide communities, health authorities and health promoting organizations and professionals with tips, tools and standards to help you plan your own community-led health improvement initiative.

This toolkit is based on the lessons learned while implementing the Hope Health & Well-being Initiative – a project led in partnership between Fraser Health, the District of Hope and communities of the Fraser Canyon. For an extensive review of that initiative, please refer to the [Tools section](#) at the end of this document.

In this toolkit you will find:
- Considerations for a community-led health improvement initiative
- Tools and resources for launching your own community-led health improvement initiative

These sections will provide high-level advice to help you launch a similar initiative to the Hope Health and Well-being Initiative. However, since each community is unique, pick and choose the tools and recommendations in this document which you feel are relevant and applicable to your needs.

Photo credit: Sara Kozicky

There are three key stages to launching your community-led health and well-being initiative, as follows:

1 **Community Engagement and Planning**

2 **Implemention and operations**

3 **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Getting started

Community Engagement and Planning

Community engagement is essential to ensure your initiative is community-led. Here are ten questions to ask before you begin.

1

Can we make this happen?

Planning and implementing a community-based health initiative requires dedicated time and resources. Be sure your organization leadership is dedicated to the process and in support of those working on the initiative.

2

Why now?

Ensure there is a strong case for an initiative. For the Hope Health and Well-being Initiative, public health information from the local health authority and province was used to support the need for the initiative. Presenting this information to stakeholders created a sense of urgency in the community to do something about these concerns. Additionally, this helped form a mutual understanding between stakeholders of community-based priorities as opposed to individual priorities.

3

Is your community ready?

Before beginning an initiative, it is important to assess the readiness and ability of your community. Within the communities of Hope and the Fraser Canyon there were already structures and organizations in place working on improving the health of the community. They had a proven record of successful initiatives. A formal readiness assessment tool that can be used is the Handbook for Community Readiness Assessment.

4

Who's steering the ship?

Leadership, structure and coordination support is very important for a community-based initiative. A Steering Committee can be established to oversee the activities of the initiative and should be made up of a diverse group of members, including health authority staff, local physicians, government officials and First Nations leaders. If possible, include a pre-determined minimum number of residents of the community in leadership roles.

Team resourcing is essential during initial planning as it requires coordination and project management support. After the initiative has been implemented and is active, the amount of support needed does decrease. Please refer to the Tools section at the end of this document for a work plan template, a helpful tool for keeping track of activities.

"[The initiative] can't rely just on the health authority to say, you need to do this or else. It is all of us doing it together. That is very much where we talk about the community system, that we really have a part to play. It takes a village to create wellness."

- Steering Committee Member

5 What do you value?

Select guiding principles for the initiative, as they will help in planning, decision making and operations. Guiding principles are key for keeping activities close to goals set out for the initiative and values of the project. As an example, the guiding principles selected by the initiative Steering Committee included:

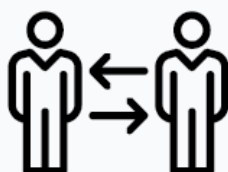Affordability

Sustainability

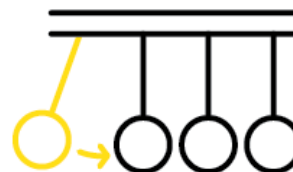Achievability

Accessibility

Measurability

Partnership

Safety

Social Change

Impact

6 Are you ready to trust the process?

As a Steering Committee, consider:
- Set common goals and be vulnerable - set aside your own agenda or priorities for the good of the community

- Do not micromanage the community or have upper level leadership micromanage the process
- Be transparent within the community
- Be authentic in your approach, including going to the community and following through with what you say you will do
- Be willing to give up some free time (especially during planning)

7 Who do you need to hear from?

Use the stakeholder analysis table (Please refer to the Tools section at the end of this document) to list stakeholders and their role within the project. Ensure the stakeholders are diverse, to represent a variety of perspectives that exist in the community. Involve and engage those that may not typically have a voice or have been neglected in the past, such as First Nations communities, lower income communities, seniors, and remote communities. Begin developing relationships with these groups early, as trust will help involvement. More information on stakeholder analysis can be found within the Community Toolbox - Identifying and Analyzing Stakeholders and Their Interests.

The approach for community engagement for the initiative was informed by the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2's). The model has five levels which include: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. For the initiative, the community collaborated with the health authority to plan strategies to promote health and well-being.
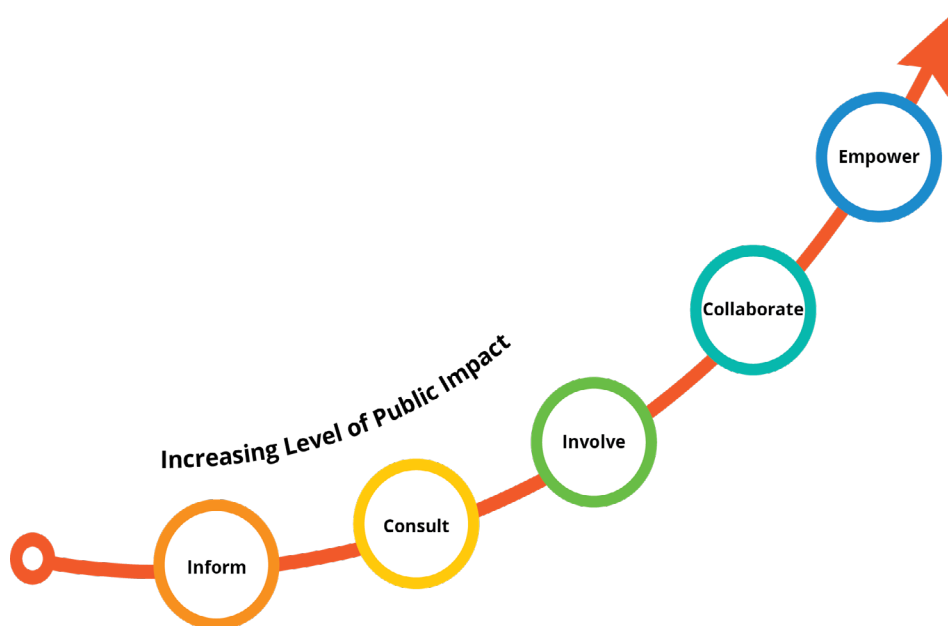
Empower

Collaborate

Involve

Consult

Increasing Level of Public Impact

Inform

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8 How do you let everyone know?

Consider the best possible forms of communication for your stakeholders and the community. Determine what method(s) of communication your community uses to receive news and updates. Write down your approach in a communications plan template. Please refer to the Tools section at the end of this document.

9 Is it by the community and for the community?

Ensure the initiative is community-led. Decisions should be made by the community and for the community. Decide the level of stakeholder engagement using the IAP2 model, keeping in mind that most community involvement exists within the "collaborate" and "empower" levels. As the project moves forward, check if the voice of the community is guiding the initiative or if it has been lost. Be open and flexible to change the process if needed.

10 What is your approach for community planning?

After you have chosen your stakeholders and level of involvement, it is time to decide how you will approach community planning. Consider some tips and tools from the initiative Steering Committee:

- Have a short time frame for engagement in planning to not lose momentum in the community
- Consider a variety of methods to engage (ex. Online survey through Facebook for youth vs in person)
- Share relevant data with the community (as part of engagement) to be all on the same page at beginning and start discussion
- Meet in the community (where the specific groups are)

Consider the following resources for your community planning:
- Public Health Ontario Planning Toolkit
- Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia

How did we do it: The planning process

The planning process and short descriptions are shown below. For more detailed descriptions of each step, see the comprehensive journey document on to Tools section.
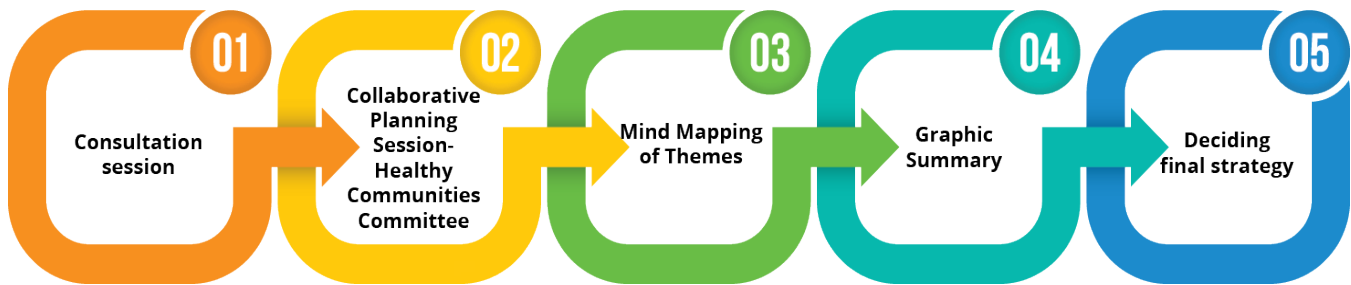
Consultation Session

The goal of a consultation session is to tell the community about an issue and discuss ways to address it. Community consultation sessions can take on many forms and can use many ways for hearing from the community, including public forums and online surveys. Selection of a plan will be dependent on your community and resources.

Collaborative Planning Session

To have more involvement of the community in planning, you can plan a collaborative session in which community ideas will be part of decision making. For the initiative, over 80 ideas from the community consultation sessions were presented to the healthy community committee. The ideas were discussed, and a list of possible strategies were made.

Mind Mapping Exercise

A mind mapping exercise is a visual activity that can be used to organize thoughts and ideas from planning sessions. Mind mapping was used to organize strategies from the healthy community committee into coordinator positions and transit initiatives.

More information on mind mapping and tools can be found at Mind Mapping 101: By hand and electronically.

Photo credit: Tristan Miller

Planning Summary Picture

It can be useful to create a summary picture of the results of community engagement and planning. This can help make a shared vision for the initiative that can be referred to often and help organize the ideas from planning.

During the engagement sessions, post it notes were used for planning. An artist (Tristan Miller) was hired to make the summary picture from the planning notes.

Deciding Final Strategy

After coming up with potential strategies for the initiative, it is important to go back to your initiative guiding principles to decide what you will do. Strategies can be looked at using an Impact Matrix Template (see Tools Section). The impact matrix helps in choosing strategies that would have the highest impact on the health of the community and the most members of it. An Impact Matrix can also be used to compare the amount of effort or resources needed for a certain level of a result. You can find more information on Impact Matrix's from Six Sigma Daily Impact Effort Matrix.

Making it happen!

Implementation and Operations

Once your community is engaged and your plan is on paper, the next step is to execute. Here are ten tips for successfully implementing your plan.

Be clear on expectations **1**

Have opportunities for health promotion that **2**
involve the whole community

Build abilities within the community, but don't **3**
forget to give support

Help create partnerships and innovation in the community **4**

Support pre-existing local organizations **5**

Be aware of the timing of requests and deadlines **6**

Use logic models for planning, operations and **7**
evaluation purposes

Be flexible and adaptable to change **8**

Keep the community engaged **9**

Re-evaluate the needs of the community **10**

How did we do it: Implementing the strategy

During the planning phase, it was identified that implementing coordinator positions, community public transit and an innovative grant program would best represent the desires of the community.

Coordinator Positions

If your community wants to implement coordinator positions, you may consider using a local community organization to manage the position(s). This supports community engagement, skill building and promotes sustainability of the initiative. Local pre-existing organizations are an excellent resource, as they already have relationships and partnerships within the community. Please refer to the Tools section at the end of this document for examples of an Expression of Interest (EOI) application for agencies to manage coordinator positions and an example contract for successful applications.

One way to help the community make partnerships and think about the community as a whole system is to host training on Collective Impact ideas during the application process.
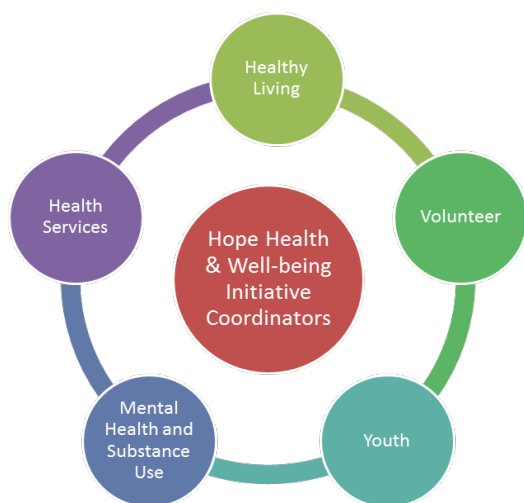
Collective Impact brings community organizations together, which improves collaboration and communication amongst the different entities.

It is important to give support and guidance to coordinators, while recognizing the experience of the local organizations. It is also important to have clear expectations for the roles, including a detailed position description and intended outcomes for the role. (Please refer to Tools section at the end of this document to access the Journey Document.

For the initiative, coordinators submit quarterly reports to the Steering Committee and meet quarterly to encourage collaboration and sharing of ideas. There is no required reporting template. Please refer to the Tools section at the end of this document for an example template from the Youth coordinator. Organizations are encouraged to review their logic models and report what is meaningful and right for their organization.

Community Transportation Program

This is an example of a community priority implemented that is not the typical type of funding from a health authority. However, it contributes to community health and well-being by reducing social isolation and increasing accessibility of health services in the region. The process for the transportation initiatives were like that of the coordinators, including an application and contract.

"When we have previous relationships, we can say we have a new program and they are on board right away. When people do not know you, you have to grow them (relationships) to develop that connection and trust for participation."

- Coordinator

The initiatives funded included:
- Community Transportation Program
- Regional Transportation Program

Like the coordinator positions, the Community Transportation Program reports quarterly to the Steering Committee. The District of Hope reports to the health authority once a year for the regional transportation program. Detailed description of the transit initiatives can be found in the Journey Document in the Tools section at the end of this document.

Photo credit: Sarah Metcalfe

Grants

Grants allow for a diversity of health promoting activities and helps to promote innovation within the community.

The grants are for two purposes: seed money for a one-time only innovative projects (micro health) or start-up funds that act as a catalyst for applications for larger grants (macro health).

It encourages smaller organizations or people who may not be able to manage the contracts to be engaged in innovative health promotion activities. Grant applications are reviewed by the healthy community committee and the Steering Committee. Please refer to the Tools section at the end of this document for micro and macro health grant application templates, as well as a template decision letter to applicants. Additionally, you can use a template for tracking applications (refer to Tools section.)

Additionally, contingency funds are available for the coordinator positions additional activities not covered by their normal budget. Please refer to the Tools section to access a sample of a contingency finds application.

Keeping the community informed

Keeping the community engaged in your initiative is key to ongoing excitement beyond launch.

"I can't say strong enough the value of the micro health grant. You are getting people constantly trying to think of new ideas to promote health and wellness in the community. We are looking for innovated ways to improve the health and wellbeing which is broad."

- Steering Committee Member

Ideas for keeping your community informed include:

- Press releases
- Local newspaper
- Facebook
- Posters in the community
- Community events, such as health fairs

An example of a press release can be found in the Journey Document (refer to Tools section).

Tracking progress: Is it working?

Monitoring and Evaluation

The purpose of evaluating an initiative is to figure out if intended outcomes are being met, to ensure accountability, transparency and continued stakeholder engagement.

What is a logic model and why use one?

Logic models may help in evaluating your program and can act as a tool for designing the evaluation approach. Outputs and outcomes on the logic model can be measured and reported on and results can be shared with your team for improvement purposes.
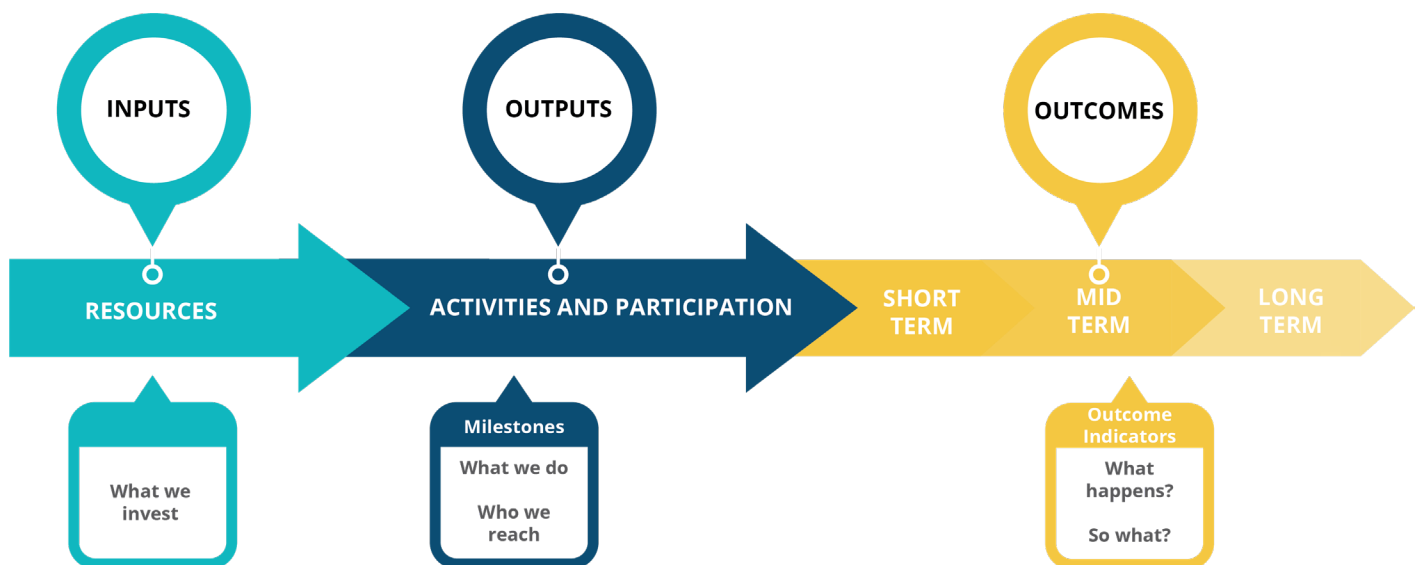
In the context of the Hope Health & Well-being Initiative, logic models were created for the overall initiative, the coordinator positions and the transit initiative. Logic models for the Hope initiative can be viewed in the Journey Document (refer to Tools section).

In creating the logic models, skills were built within the coordinator team. The logic model development worksheet tool is based on the Tearless Logic Model. Another helpful resource for building logic models includes the Better Evaluation – Logic Model Tutorial.

Photo credit: Sara Kozicky

How did we do it: Evaluation

There are many approaches for evaluation; however, a developmental evaluation approach is worth looking at for a community-based health initiative. With this approach, feedback and learnings are built into the program as they happen. This is a utilization focus, meaning information that is collected is intended to be used in a practical real-time way for program quality improvement.[2] For more information on developmental evaluation and how it compares to a traditional evaluation, please visit the Better Evaluation Website.

You can use the following resources for developing your evaluation plan:

- Center for Disease Control's evaluation plan template: Evaluation Plan Template - CDC
- Better Evaluation – Rainbow Framework, which is a guide to creating an evaluation plan.

Of note, making logic models and an evaluation plan should be done as early as possible in an initiative, ideally in the planning phase. They can be changed as needed and when made earlier can help improve the initiative and the end results.

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[2]Better Evaluation. (2018). *Developmental Evaluation.* Retrieved from Better Evaluation: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation

Summary of Tools and Resources

Resources:

* This is not a comprehensive list of resources available to support a similar initiative. These are the resources we found most helpful.

- Handbook for Community Readiness Assessment
- Community Toolbox- Identifying and Analyzing Stakeholders and Their Interests
- International Association of Public Participation Spectrum
- Public Health Ontario Planning Toolkit
- Community Planning Tool- Applying a Health Equity Lens to Program Planning
- Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia
- Mind Mapping 101: By hand and electronically
- Six Sigma Daily Impact Effort Matrix
- Collective Impact
- Tearless Logic Model
- Better Evaluation- Logic Model Tutorial
- Evaluation Plan Template- CDC
- Better Evaluation – Rainbow Framework (a guide to creating an evaluation plan)
- Better Evaluation- Developmental Evaluation

Tools:

* These tools are internally produced Fraser Health documents, many specifically for this initiative.   To save you time in your project, we are happy to share.

- Journey Document
- Project work plan template
- Stakeholder analysis template
- Communication plan template
- Impact Matrix Template
- Expression of Interest (EOI) Application
- Expression of Interest (EOI) Contract
- Coordinator Quarterly Report Template
- Macro Health Grant Application
- Micro Health Grants Application
- Micro Health Grants Application Tracking Form
- Micro Health Grant Steering Committee Decision Letter
- Contingency Funds Application
- Logic Model Worksheet

* For copies of these documents and tools, please contact Anne Todd at Anne.Todd@fraserhealth.ca.

Acknowledgements

This toolkit was developed due to requests to learn more about the Hope Health & Well-being Initiative from other communities, health authorities and health care professionals. The communities of Hope and the Fraser Canyon have seen positive results of the initiative, including improved collaboration, innovation and health promoting services for the community. Initiative stakeholders, including community agencies, were interviewed to shape the recommendations of the toolkit and are thanked for their insight into the initiative and their dedication to improving health and well-being in Hope and the Fraser Canyon. If you would like to reach out to someone on the initiative team for further information, please contact Petra Pardy at Petra.Pardy@fraserhealth.ca.

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