

Calgary



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BUILDING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES IN CALGARY

Asset-Based Community Development Toolkit Study Guide

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Introduction

The City of Calgary created the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) toolkit in partnership with [Tamarack Institute](#) to support Calgarians in building connected communities. ABCD is an evidence-based approach that focuses on identifying and utilizing assets within the community to foster community connection. The purpose is to bring consistency and deepen knowledge for those who work with the community, such as organizations, staff, and/or volunteers.

This study guide is designed to be used alongside the online toolkit available at www.calgary.ca/abcd. Each ABCD online module includes videos, tools and resources to help you consider and reflect on your local context. The study guide includes the worksheets and many of the resources for easy reference as you work through the learnings. We encourage you to use the worksheets in each module to help you think about your ABCD process and build a plan, program, and/or activity that focuses on the community's gifts and assets.

We acknowledge the systemic barriers that limit the full participation of residents in their communities and recognize that the implementation of ABCD in community building requires an intentional effort to identify and remove barriers to participation along with using an asset-based approach.

Grab a pen and workbook, get a cup of tea, and start your learning journey.

Do you have any feedback on the toolkit or want to connect about ABCD? Reach out to us at abcd@calgary.ca.



MODULE 1 – What is ABCD?

Learning objectives

This module will provide an overview of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), including context, how it works, and resources and methods of its practice. After completing this module, you will better understand the various methods demonstrated successfully by communities across the globe and be better equipped to identify how ABCD can be applied in your context.

Module 1: Self-reflection

Where am I on my ABCD journey?

Scale:

1 = Not yet 2 = Just getting started 3 = We are part way there 4 = We are doing this 5 = We are there!

<i>Here are 10 questions to think about:</i>	<i>Low</i>					<i>High</i>				
1. Do you use strengths-based language – focusing on what is strong, not what is wrong – when talking about local communities?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Do you/your group have strong relationships with local people or groups?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Do you/your group have a good understanding of the strengths and assets that are available in your community?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. Are there grassroots initiatives, programs or activities taking place in your community led by community members?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Are there opportunities for community members to share their hopes for their community in meaningful and listened to ways?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Are there local connectors in your community who act as a bridge between people, organizations and institutions, and help to activate local assets?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. Does your group have diverse representation with equitable voices at your decision-making tables?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. Do you/your group build plans based on the passions, hopes or assets of local people?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. Has a community plan been developed that outlines community priorities and the role of people, groups and organizations?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. Do you/your group have a goal to enable more community-led initiatives?	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

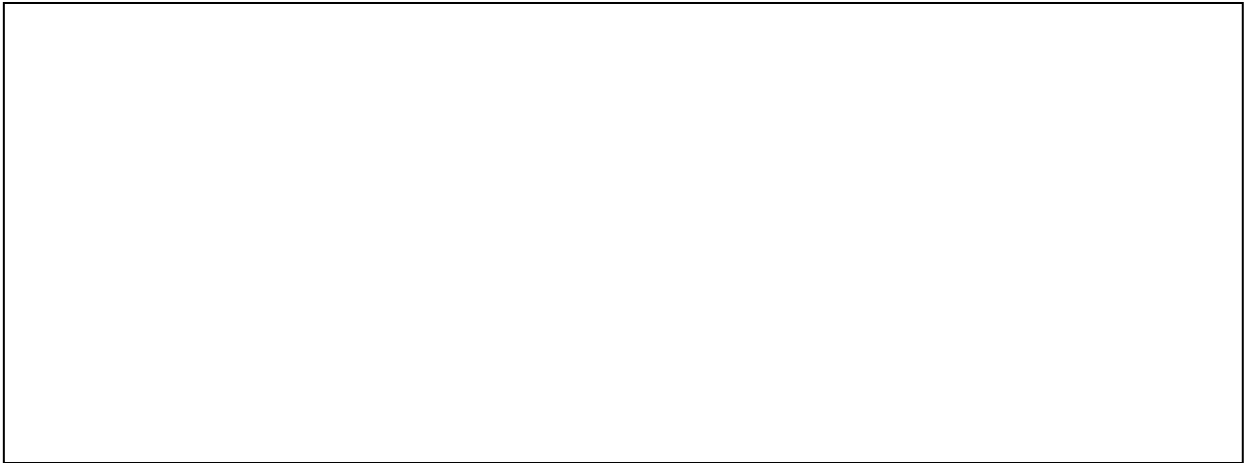
Add up your score to reflect on how well you are doing: _____

10-25 points – What are some ways you could increase your score?

25-40 points – You are doing well. Keep going!

40-50 points – Amazing work!

What have you learned by doing this self-reflection?

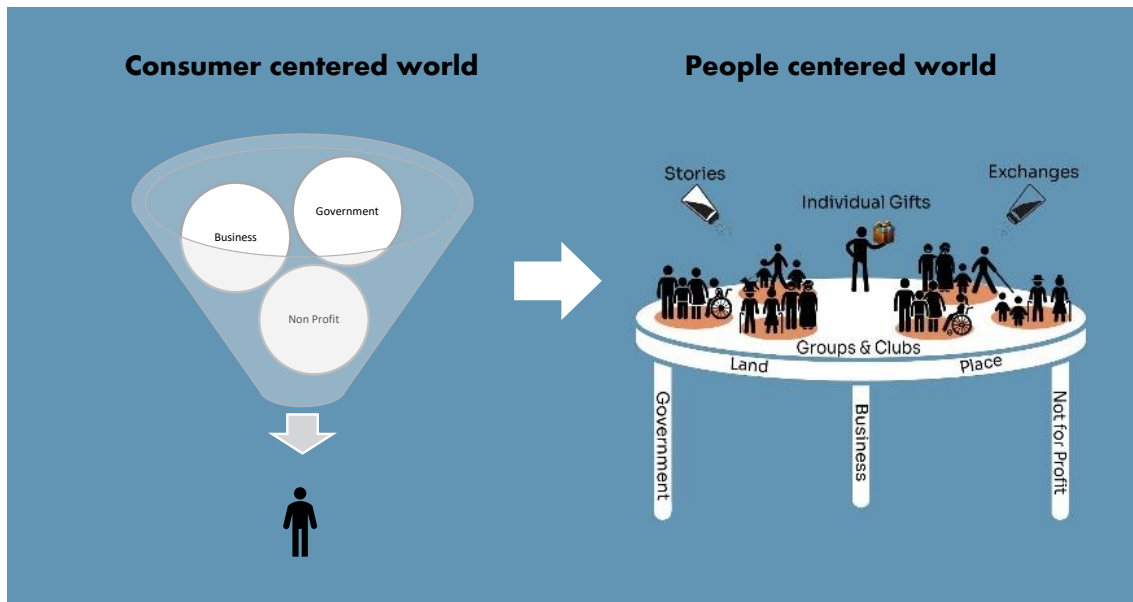
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their reflection on what they have learned.

TOOL | ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT A GLANCE

WHAT IS ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

“Asset Based Community Development” or ABCD looks for and starts from people’s gifts and strengths (assets). These assets equip people to create local opportunities and respond to needs and challenges in their neighbourhoods. ABCD goes beyond any individual’s gifts or particular group’s strengths to consider how these may come together to create broader changes for the common good within a community.

Where a deficit-based approach starts by identifying needs, asset-based community development identifies and builds upon community strengths. ABCD empowers individuals and groups to come together, with institutions in support when required, to develop their strengths, working together to build on the identified assets of all involved!



VALUES BEHIND ABCD

- **Starts with Gifts:** *Assets and Strengths, not deficits and needs*
- **Nurture Community Led Action:** When people in a community act together, they demonstrate their own power and leadership and can bring about positive change.
- **Build Relationships for Mutual Support:** ABCD believes that relationships are the core of flourishing communities.
- **Include Everyone:** ABCD does not just invite people to the table but builds a new table where everyone has a true place
- **Lead by Stepping Back:** ABCD shines a light on residents' power to contribute to and make decisions in their communities.
- **Value Small:** ABCD values small, grassroots, resident - driven approaches that use stories as the basis for learning, sharing and acting for change.
- **Believe in Possibility:** ABCD is rooted in hope. People in communities, even in extreme situations, can use their gifts to imagine ways to create change.



The ABCD Planning Process

We ask these questions in order:

1. As neighbours, what can we achieve by using our own assets?
2. What can we achieve with our own assets if we get some outside help?
3. What can't we do with our assets that must be done by outsiders?





Starting with the first question is important! Starting with the second or third questions usually results in residents not being strongly involved and less sustainable initiatives.

HOW IS ABCD DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT METHODS?

	Deficit Based	Asset-Based
Purpose	Changing community through increased services	Changing community through citizen involvement
Accountability	Leaders are professionals and staff, accountable to institutional stakeholders	Leaders are widening circles of volunteer citizens who are accountable to the community
Role of Assets	Assets are system inputs. Asset mapping is data collection.	Assets are relationships to be discovered and connected. Asset-mapping is self-realization and leadership development.
Resources	Money is the key resource. Falls apart without money.	Relationships are the key resource. Falls apart when money becomes the focus.
Operating Challenge	How do we get people involved?	How do we channel and build on people participation?
System Dynamic	Tends to spread itself thinner over time.	Tends to gain momentum over time.
Evaluation	Success is service outcomes, measured mostly by institutional stakeholders.	Success is capacity, measured mostly by relationships.

Source: Dan Duncan, ABCD Institute Faculty

WHY IS ABCD THE RIGHT CHOICE IN TODAY'S WORLD?

TO	FOR
<p>Role: "Expert"</p>  <p>Provided to Community (People as recipients)</p>	<p>Role: "Expert"</p>  <p>Provided for the Community (People as information source)</p>
WITH	BY
<p>Role: "Gapper"</p>  <p>Provided with the Community (People as Advisors)</p>	<p>Role: "Animator"</p>  <p>Provided by the Community (ABCD)</p>
<p>Adopted with permission: Cormac Russell, Nurture Development under Creative Commons License</p>	

THE ABCD JOURNEY

1. Connectors

Connectors are those people in our communities who discover people, assets, and weave them together to perform functions in their communities. Assets are the resources that we have ourselves to fulfill the nine functions of a community.



2. Collecting Assets

Gaining the knowledge of assets is often done through a process called asset mapping. The asset mapping process is usually led and conducted by the residents that call the community home.

- Individual Gifts
- Groups & Clubs
- Organizations
- Exchanges
- Land & Place
- Cultures & Stories



3. Connecting Assets

Once assets are collected it's important to connect them. Find the people who like the same things, people who have skills to teach, and others who want to learn things and connect them together. There are five ways to connect assets:

- Matching one-to-one
- Matching a person to a group of same interests
- Identifying people to do events/activities
- Matching different gifts that reinforce each other
- Identifying new connectors



4. Weaving Assets

Weaving is about connecting the assets to fulfill the core functions of a community. This results in a community feeling empowered, where more people are included, where more people feel autonomy, more ability to act, and it results in activities that are more sustainable.

- What can we achieve by using our own assets?
- What can we achieve with our own assets plus some outside help?
- What can't we do with our assets alone that must be done by an external group (gov, org, business)?



When these four elements are features of your community-building effort, it can be said to be an Asset-Based Community Development process. *To dive deeper into these four elements, see: [The Four Essential Elements of an ABCD Process](#)*

Module 1:

Discussion questions

1. If you had previously been unaware of Asset-Based Community Development:

After module 1, what aspects of your work do you feel align well with the ABCD approach? What have you already implemented?

OR

If you had been previously aware of Asset-Based Community Development: Are there elements of ABCD that have been missing from your relevant work or projects?

2. Of the various resources (Residents' gifts, community groups and clubs, local institutions, neighborhood land and places, exchanges, culture, stories and history), which do you feel like you/your group use well? Which resources are under-developed or under-utilized?

3. Of the various methods (discover, welcome, connecting, share, celebrate, vision) which come most naturally to you and/or your group? Which might require more work or effort to use? What ways might you lean into methods that are under-utilized?

4. Of the nine functions of community (enabling health, safety, ecology, economies, food production, raising children, co-creating care, celebrating together, inclusiveness) which best represents your group/community's strengths or focus? How might other functions be connected to those strengths?

MODULE 2 – Building trust and relationships

Learning objectives

This module will provide an overview of the 'why' and 'how' of building relationships with and within the community. After completing it, you will better understand how engagement approaches can impact the balance of power in each relationship and interaction and when different approaches may be appropriate.

ABCD Local Examples

Manchester Yard Sales – Finding Community Treasures

In Spring of 2023, Manchester residents, with support from the Community Social Worker (CSW) and Calgary Dollars, hosted their first ever yard sale in the courtyard of a local housing complex. Residents who helped organize the event or hosted a table, received a small Calgary Dollar honorarium which some could use towards payment of their rent. While attendance was low, residents were able to build relationships with one another, with one even cooking a collective meal for her neighbours who were also selling items.

And, out of little things, big things grow. Participants enjoyed both the experience and the animation of community so much, that they decided to host another event in the Summer. A resident applied for a Neighbourhood Grant to help with promotion, cover the costs of a City permit for the greenspace, and to provide light snacks for those who attended. This yard sale was a success for the neighbourhood's residents – with over 100 folks attending from all over Calgary, and every vendor selling at least one item.

As the Grant applicant and organizer noted: "I am proud of the sense of community and connection that the community yard sale created. When I first started planning the event my goal was to create a space where neighbors could come together, connect, and sell their items." It is through time, space, resident direction and concrete opportunities for connectivity that community is built.

Street connections are your best asset!

An Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach was piloted in the southeast communities of Copperfield and Mahogany through the City's This is My Neighbourhood Abundant Communities Initiative. In the southeast community of Copperfield, a Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator (NPC) was keen to engage with the ABCD philosophy and model as a neighbourhood block connector. Her street is home to roughly 130 households, fostering a well-knit community where most everyone is familiar with each other. Numerous events are organized annually to encourage neighbourly interactions.

For instance, the:

- Neighbour Day celebrations are renowned throughout the broader community, attracting about 100 residents from the street to a cost-free gathering sponsored by local businesses and friends.
- Lemonade Stand Day was created for children in the neighbourhood. Kids set up their stands and offering samples to tasting judges who roam from one stand to another. Post-tasting, the stands open for neighbours to support the young entrepreneurs by purchasing their offerings.
- Alphabet Dinner Club is a monthly event where residents dine at a restaurant corresponding to a different alphabet letter each month. This club started with 10 members from the street who were strangers before joining and now looks to expand with a second group.
- Neighbourhood Potluck Dinners is a gathering of shared meals and conversations evolved into collective action to support one another. During this event, a couple revealed the husband's early-stage dementia diagnosis. With the wife at work and concerns about her husband's ability to navigate home, the street stepped in to provide care, aligning with her work schedule to ensure regular check-ins. At that same event, a couple who were expecting a baby and new to Calgary without local family or friends, received an outpouring of support. A collection and delivery of two weeks' worth of frozen meals was organized to ease the new parents' transition.
- A private Facebook group was created with over 125 members serves as a platform for sharing resources, from lawn mowers to baking ingredients. It's a community watch and mutual care in the truest sense, where neighbours alert each other to open garage doors, assist with car troubles in the cold, and offer giveaways to street residents first.

Module 2: Worksheet

Taking stock of your relationship with a community

Think about the activities, services and supports that you are involved with. Where do they land across these four quadrants? You can do this independently or together with a team.

<p>Provided to the community People are recipients of service. Decisions are made without community input.</p>		<p>Provided for the community Programs, services and supports are provided to a community with input on what is needed.</p>	
<p>In which situations do we work in this quadrant?</p>	<p>What enables us to engage authentically when working in this quadrant? Think of key behaviours, expectations, processes and roles.</p>	<p>In which situations do we work in this quadrant?</p>	<p>What enables us to engage authentically when working in this quadrant? Think of key behaviours, expectations, processes and roles.</p>
<p>Provided with the community Community as advisor. Community groups work together with external supports, and co-develop and co-lead initiatives.</p>		<p>Provided by the community Community groups lead initiatives.</p>	
<p>In which situations do we work in this quadrant?</p>	<p>What enables us to engage authentically when working in this quadrant? Think of key behaviours, expectations, processes and roles.</p>	<p>In which situations do we work in this quadrant?</p>	<p>What enables us to engage authentically when working in this quadrant? Think of key behaviours, expectations, processes and roles.</p>

Reflection questions:

1. What patterns do you notice about where the majority of your work lands?

2. What are the ways you could show up differently when working in each quadrant?

3. Which work might be better positioned to be community-led? How can you best enable community-led work?

Module 2:


Discussion questions

1. Think about the principles for authentic engagement:

- **Understand the story of place** – Do we understand our relationship to the community, why we are engaging and how deep we should go?
- **Recognize all expertise** – How can we ensure context expertise (those who have lived experience of a situation) is amplified and integrated into the work? How can we truly listen, learn and reduce barriers to participation?
- **Understand power** – How can we be a power broker so that those closest to issues can shape outcomes? How can we understand system barriers to participation and access to power?
- **Ensure contribution** – How can all people, including those that have barriers, contribute in meaningful ways?
- **Show accountability** – How can we demonstrate that we listened, and that the communities' contributions shaped the outcome? Do we understand the history and culture of the community.

Which of these principles are you/your group actively using? Which principles do you want to focus on with more intention?

2. Based on your reflections in the *Taking stock of your relationship with a community* worksheet, what hopes do you have for establishing deeper trust and relationships with various people and groups you connect with?



MODULE 3 – Finding connectors

Learning objectives

This module will help you explore connectors — people in our neighbourhoods who discover people and their assets and weave them together to perform functions in their community — their role, how to identify them, and where to find them. After completing this module, you will be better equipped to identify and support connectors in your community and navigate some of the common traps related to this critical role.

Module 3:

Connectors at a glance

Who are connectors?

Connectors are those people in our communities who discover people, assets and weave them together to perform functions in their community.

To support and grow the functions of community, we use all of our assets: people, their gifts, community groups and stories. Just because you have these assets does not mean that anything will get done. Imagine ingredients but no meal.

We need connectors who actively set the table and suggest recipes to help the community work together. Something must happen to activate people and their gifts. Connectors' main purpose is to:

1. Identify what gifts people have to contribute.
2. Identify community groups and connect them to each other to explore how to work together.

Role of a connector

- Being able to build relationships and make connections between people from different backgrounds. Being a relationship connector.
- Being able to find and bring together people and resources in communities and groups.
- Being a good team player, extending trust, being mature, and handling situations with sensitivity.
- Asking who is missing and how can we connect with them
- Being creative, curious, and a good listener.
- Having a deep dedication to building communities, fostering relationships, and includes everyone. Helping to bring in voices of those who don't normally participate in the community.



Who are the community connectors?

Natural connectors: Connectors come from within the community. These connectors know the community and are trusted. They are the ones you see in the park, the local businesses and who knock on doors.

Paid connectors: Hiring a full- or part-time connector can greatly activate local resources and leadership. It's important to invest time in finding the right person who is committed to knowing the community well. It is important to trust and support them in their role alongside you or other staff. While ensuring their independence, integrate their efforts and achievements into the overall work and culture of your organization, group or project.

Community groups and clubs: Volunteers are at the heart of community groups. Connecting a person's gift and assets to the right activity will lead to volunteers being happy and participating. Community groups and clubs are also able to connect what is happening in the community to programs and activities (e.g., form a group of people who walk their dog who then work together to build a dog park).

Organizations: Staff are key connectors to programs and services. Staff can support all the levels of connectors to resources and supports.

How do you find connectors?

- Look for networking groups that are already formed and meeting, such as coffee groups, cultural or interest groups, as well as different age groups.
- Ensure that connectors are representative of their community and have varied life experiences.
- Participate in community activities and volunteer so that you get to know the people and observe the connectors.
- Snowball: Ask people in the community who they know is a connector, then ask those people who they recommend. Once you hear the same one to two names, that could be your person.
- Organize a networking gathering. People who like to connect and meet people will show up. It might just take a few events to get traction or momentum.
- Go to where people are talking, and sharing ideas and opinions, such as community group meetings or council meetings. See who likes to speak their minds. Talk to those who organize community meetings. They may not be the ones who speak but are great connectors.
- Observe people at events – who keeps coming out to your events? Who brings people with them?
- Finding someone's "why" – create different points of entry so people can come in (i.e., create senior cards for holidays, then try to get them more connected).

Examples of Block Connector Programs

- City of St. Albert's [Neighbourhood connector program](#)
- City of Calgary's [Highland Park Block Connector Program](#)
- City of Leduc's [Block Connector Initiative](#)
- City of Spruce Grove's [Connect the Block](#)
- Town of Devon's [Neighbourhood Connector program](#)

Read The City of Calgary – Community Connector Model success tips to learn more.

Module 3:

Discussion questions

1. How could you find community connectors in the communities you engage with?
2. In what ways could community connectors be more deeply connected with your initiatives? What benefits would that bring?



The City of Calgary Community Social Work Community Connector Model Success Tips

What is a Community Connector?

A Community Connector is a paid community leader who engages and connects with their neighbours to learn about their community, identify local interests and needs to support community building ideas. An important role of Community Connectors is to identify local assets and skills and mobilize their networks to create opportunities for knowledge sharing.

Why use a Community Connector Model?

A Community Connector Model can help cultivate resident capacity for community leadership roles, future employment opportunities and the ability for those experiencing financial barriers to participate in community life. Community Connectors provide local knowledge and know-how on how to best engage their neighbourhood and leverage personal connections to create the foundation for community building work. This enhances the reach of a project by increasing community access and cultivating trust. Community Connectors can create community connections and build on relationships at a deeper and more sustainable level.

Practices for Success



BEST PRACTICES
HIRING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a job posting with clear role descriptions • Be intentional in hiring candidates that represent the community • Consider gender, age, culture and life experiences representation • Share job postings through local channels like community partners, agencies and in public spaces • Design interview process intentionally – this is a great opportunity for candidates to develop their employment skills through practice • Interviews should be scheduled with all partner organizations at the table to ensure that someone is available to answer all questions, including human resource or payment questions • Ensure all organizations involved (funders, fiscal agent etc.) have a solid understanding of their role and responsibilities towards community connectors • Ensure all organizations are involved in designing the hiring process to ensure goals are met • Formal contracts with a Community Connector must be clear, concise and in line with the hiring organization’s best practices
TRAINING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a training and on-boarding process for Community Connectors to set them up for success. Orientation topics may include background information on the community development process and safety training • Utilize or develop guidelines and policies around working alone situations, gender considerations, door knocking and other engagement activities • Make different types of resources available that support the learning process. Use materials in plain language and provide practical examples • If more than one Community Connector is hired, provide opportunities for the team to come together to share ideas, work collectively and make decisions
PROVIDING FEEDBACK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regular supervision and opportunities to discuss challenges, learnings and opportunities • Develop ways of evaluating the work that Community Connectors do, as well as the broader project. Potential measures can be quantitative and qualitative, such as number of new residents engaged, number of resident leaders and volunteers and anecdotal stories of success.
EXITING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up termination and exiting processes <p>As successful Community Connectors near the end of their contracts, it is important to have a succession plan in place. This plan could include bridging community contacts; developing a sustainability plan, wrapping up outstanding projects and collecting/compiling all reports.</p>

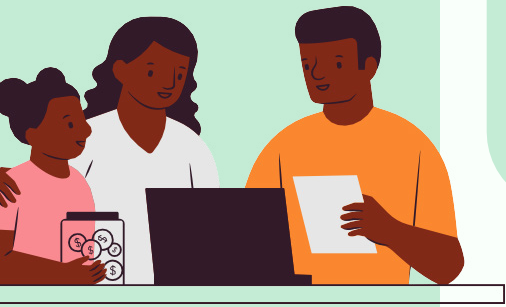
Community Connectors



What are Community Hubs?

Community Hubs are welcoming and inclusive spaces where residents go to make friends, pursue common interests, and find support when they need it. It's a place that's welcoming, inclusive and connecting.

People are at the heart: community hubs are more than just spaces – they are filled with people dedicated to working with residents to identify social needs, bring to light community assets and create opportunities for connections. Community Social Workers and Hub Site Leads focus, among many things, on providing important information on supports and services and creating and nurturing positive relationships in the community.




Community Connectors have been a long-standing feature of Community Hubs since the initiative's early days. **Community Connectors are community leaders who engage and connect with their neighbours and community partners to learn about their community and identify interests, needs and assets to strengthen neighbourhoods.** Individual Hub Sites tailor these roles to meet the unique needs of their catchment area and work. Connectors are working to develop their community's capacity to support residents in urgent and growing priority areas; topics including of food security, mental health and wellness. Other Community Connectors are Indigenous residents and are sharing valuable learnings about Indigenous culture and practices with the community. Community Connectors do this by identifying emerging issues in the community, exploring and developing residents' connections with sites, and organizing resident-led events.



The Community Connector model helps cultivate resident capacity for community leadership roles, future employment opportunities and the ability for those experiencing financial barriers to participate in community life. By developing opportunities for resident leadership and economic participation in communities, the Community Connectors program supports the commitment of the Hubs initiative to deepen sustainability.



Get more information on the United Way website!

 www.calgaryunitedway.org

community hubs
initiative

WHERE COMMUNITY HAPPENS



Two Connector Initiatives at a Glance: Tale of Two Communities – Exploring ABCD Model in Highland Park and Manchester

Highland Park Block Connector Program

The program began in 2020 to assist residents to connect with one another and local resources during the height of the pandemic. The program had one coordinator and 8 block connectors that worked with their Community Social Worker and Community Association. Connector Coordinator is a resident leader hired by the community social worker to support the Block Connectors. Their role is to coordinate quarterly connector meetings, provide ideas for small block events, function as a point person to gather and share information, learn about other skills and assets in the community, and create own opportunities for neighbours to meet. Some examples of the work in Highland Park are;

- Neighbourhood Art Walk -residents displayed various artwork on sidewalks and front lawns.
- Highland Park Rocks- residents painted brightly colored rocks with positive messaging and left them throughout the neighbourhood.
- Lemonade Stands- Community held a lemonade stand day where kids sold lemonade to neighbours.
- Library of Extraordinary Humans- Developed a library of individuals with skills and assets within their own community, like a catalogue of people. The library was used to connect neighbours looking for certain skills or expertise. For example, if someone needed a person to teach a cooking class, they could find a neighbour with those skills in the Library of Extraordinary Humans.

Manchester Neighbourhood Connector Initiative

The program began in June 2022 and consisted of one Connector Coordinator and 9 Neighbour Connectors that were supported by the Community Social Worker. As Manchester community has several multi-unit housing complexes the program was developed to reduce isolation of those living in these complexes by creating opportunities for residents to interact and participate. The connectors were supplied starter kits and training on how to host community meetups and small gatherings. The goal was to create neighbourhood level opportunities for residents to participate and engage in activities. As well the Neighbour Connectors were able to promote community assets and assist new residents with learning about resources. Some examples of the work in Manchester are;

- Welcome Packages to New Neighbours
- Coffee Meetups
- Card Games and Chat Night
- Paint Night
- Secret Santa
- Community Dinners



MODULE 4 – Community listening

Learning objectives

This module will help you develop a deeper understanding of engaging with and listening to communities, including both methods and barriers to accomplishing this critical aspect of ABCD work. After completing it, you'll be better equipped to identify and implement the appropriate listening method for your specific context, with an added focus on building trust and relationships in the process.

ABCD Local Examples

Smudging, community and reconciliation

Based on residents' desire for continued cultural connections, quarterly smudge sessions with an Elder were organized by two resident volunteers at a Southwest apartment complex and the Community Social Worker (CSW). In addition to the smudge sessions, the CSW worked with the Elder and residents to create a smudge kit (shell, wooden matches, medicines and educational information) for use within the building so that neighbours would have access to supplies and knowledge needed to smudge. The smudge kit and sessions have been very impactful. Stories were shared about loss and life and community. Residents expressed the importance of having this type of connection in their lives — whether it was something they had not been connected to in their early lives or they had become disconnected from over time. Participants in the program were identified as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous; all had a shared a common history of experiencing houselessness. This work is an example of the concrete actions necessary to further the promise and premise of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and promote authentic belonging, understanding and inclusion.

We Welcome Winter

In December 2023, the Community Social Worker in Huntington Hills, together with the neighbourhood's Community Connectors, partnered with environmental and recreation program providers to host a *We Welcome Winter!* event. The initiative was designed to bring folks together to embrace winter, encourage physical well-being and reduce social isolation. By all these measures, the event was a great success. Furthermore, in addition to providing time for residents to develop relationships with each other, it also afforded people the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of, and congruence with, the precious gift of our physical environment and neighbourhood parks.

Outdoor Fitness Classes Connecting Neighbours in Evergreen

In 2023, the Calgary Evergreen Community Association (CECA) identified a programming gap as a lack of activities being offered to families in their community. A pilot project was proposed that encouraged residents of all ages to participate in community-based, active outdoor Zumba and Yoga classes. The community association worked with their Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator to apply for the Inspiring Neighbourhoods Grant. The purpose of this project was to help families in Evergreen who stayed in town during the summer months to remain engaged and active while connecting with their neighbours throughout the weeks of July and August. These weekly programs were drop-in, free to anyone interested in attending and took place at various Evergreen greenspaces. The classes were well attended, and participants of the program reported they enjoyed spending time with family, being active outdoors and connecting with fellow residents. The program was considered an overall great success and the community association hopes to continue the program in the summer of 2024.

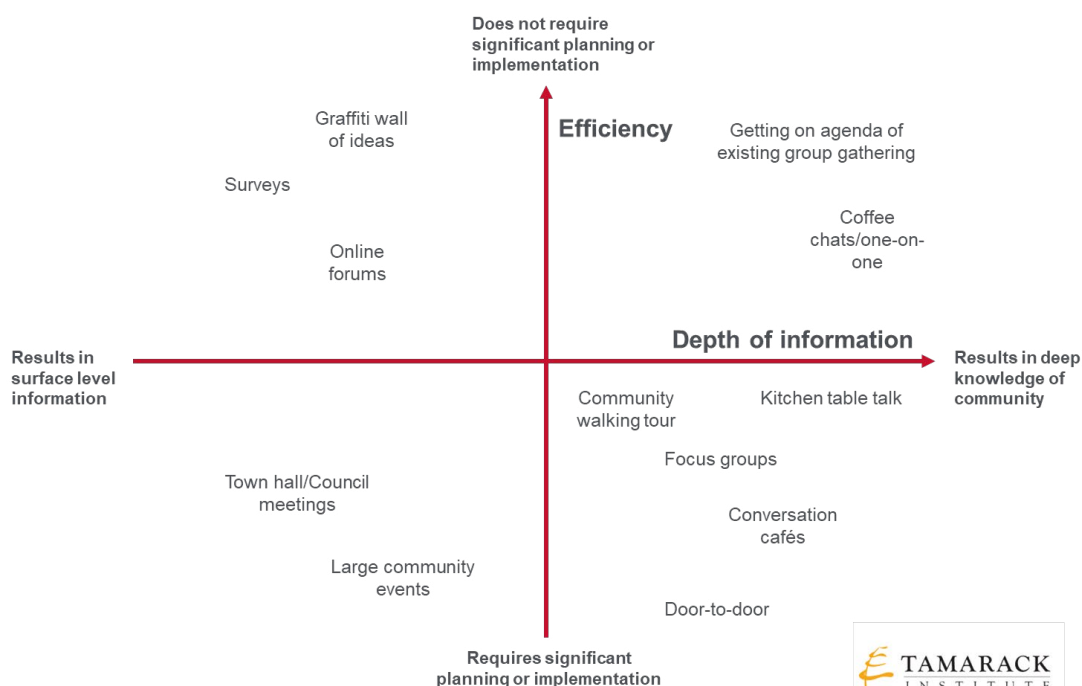
Module 4:

Community listening at a glance

Community listening can take various forms

- **Small conversation:** Individual conversations with community members can provide deeper insights into their unique perspectives, hopes, experiences and needs (example: kitchen conversations).
- **Community forums and online platforms:** Online forums and platforms dedicated to specific communities or neighborhoods can serve as spaces for ongoing dialogue, discussion and collaboration among members (example: neighbourhood Facebook groups).
- **Facilitated small groups:** Small groups of community members are brought together to discuss specific topics or issues in more detail, providing insights and perspectives that may not emerge in larger settings.
- **Event-based activities:** These are events that are organized with a large number of people attending to get feedback or ideas. Examples include town halls, open space or conversation café, or even something casual like a lemonade stand.
- **Surveys and questionnaires:** These tools allow community members to share their opinions, preferences and concerns on various topics, providing data for analysis. Note: surveys are best done with one of the above forms to understand the responses.

Common methods of community listening



Here are some things you can do to demonstrate and model active listening:

- **Attentive silence:** Allowing the speaker to talk without interruptions.
- **Nonverbal cues:** Nodding, maintaining eye contact, and using gestures to show understanding and interest.
- **Reflective responses:** Paraphrasing or summarizing what the speaker said to demonstrate understanding.
- **Clarifying questions:** Asking open-ended questions to gain further insight or clarify points.

Barriers to community listening

- Tension between taking time to listen, and the pressures to take action.
- Preconceived ideas: Making assumptions or judgments before fully understanding the speaker's perspective.
- Lack of proximity to people with diverse perspectives; lack of planning to reduce barriers to engagement (refer to Inclusive Engagement guide).
- It's important to understand cultural norms about dialogue and listening practices. In some cultures, it may be ok to ask direct questions but in others a different approach may be needed.

Module 4:

Discussion Questions

1. Think about the uniqueness of your community – What are the ways that listening currently happens in your community? What are the best ways to bring people together? Where are people already gathering?

2. Thinking about the different ways to listen (small group conversations, event-based activities, surveys, etc.) which ones might work well for your initiative? Which ones would you like to try? How could you leverage existing community assets to make them happen?

3. Thinking about the communication dynamics of debate and dialogue, what can you do to create spaces that promote dialogue?



Guide | How to host a listening conversation

Imagine:

People of all ages, from every sector in our community, from all experiences, working together to actively create a welcoming and thriving future for our community... a place where all who live here know that they belong... a place where everyone's gifts and talents are honoured and shared... and a place where we all play a role in creating the future we want to live into.



It all begins with a conversation

How does this hope become a reality? It all begins with a conversation and an experience of community between neighbours. This is the starting point... and the guiding force... that will help us harness the collective wisdom and creativity needed to realize our shared hopes for the future.

A shared vision for the future can help us to galvanize our collective energy and resources, and focus them on achieving shared priorities that benefit our entire community.

The most inspiring and compelling shared visions are grounded in the individual ideas, experiences and aspirations of a diversity of people. These visions are positive and inspiring because each of us can see our own vision reflected in the broader shared vision.

How to get started

Choose a space that invites conversation

- ✚ Somewhere relatively quiet and free from distractions and interruptions.
- ✚ Somewhere familiar and accessible to all who want to participate.
- ✚ Somewhere comfortable with enough room for everyone to sit in one big circle.

Make it welcoming

- ✚ Be sure to greet and welcome people.
- ✚ Introduce people to each other.
- ✚ Thank them for coming.
- ✚ Make it celebratory – flowers, snacks, music all help create a sense of joy and fun.

Logistics and supplies

- ✚ The conversations last approximately 1.5 hours depending on the number of questions you want to explore.
- ✚ Bring along nametags, markers, paper and pens in case people want to take notes or draw pictures to represent their vision for the future.
- ✚ Ask people to fill in a name tag and sign a consent form with their name, email list and phone number so that we can keep them informed of how this work is unfolding.
- ✚ You will need someone who can take notes or consider using an audio recorder if that makes it easier to capture the conversation.

Opening the conversation

Set the context

- ✚ Take a few moments at the start to outline the purpose for the conversation.
- ✚ Explain why and how you personally decided to get involved.
- ✚ Let people know that the ideas they share today will be combined with those generated by many other conversations like this one.
- ✚ Conversations that are happening throughout the community in the next month or so in order to build a consensus of the kind of community we want to be part of in the future.
- ✚ Tell people they are welcome to continue to be part of this process as it unfolds.

Create a safe container “to hold” the conversation

The goal of a great conversation is to help people to think together. To achieve this, it is often helpful to outline, and get agreement on, guidelines for the conversation. These can include:

- ✚ Turning off cell phones
- ✚ Listening with attention
- ✚ Being comfortable with silence
- ✚ Speaking with intention
- ✚ Asking questions
- ✚ Being open to new ideas and possibilities
- ✚ Being tolerant and willing to shift your opinion
- ✚ Attending to the well-being of the group
- ✚ Having fun!

The conversation guide

Getting warmed-up (25 minutes)

Ask people to form into groups of three and share their answers to the following question (10 minutes):

- Share a story of a powerful experience of community that you've had. What made it powerful?

Then, when all have shared their story, invite them to capture their insights to the following questions (15 minutes)

- Given the stories we've shared, what do we see as the benefits of community?
- What do we see as the challenges of community?
- What do we see as the job /purpose of community?

Exploring the desired future for our community (35 minutes)

Ask people to close their eyes and imagine that it is five years into the future and this community has succeeded in creating a welcoming, dynamic and thriving place (10 minutes):

- What does our community look like?
- What has made the community successful?
- How do we know that it is welcoming and inclusive?
- What are you personally most pleased about?
- What unique contributions are the community recognized for?
- What businesses, programs and services are offered?
- Who are the organizations, groups and individuals that have contributed to the community's success?
- What has been important about how the community's success was achieved?

Invite people to share their drawings and ideas in groups of three and then capture the common elements and unique ideas that emerge across all their pictures (15 minutes.)

Debrief with the entire large group (10 minutes)

Invite each person to share one thing that they are taking away from this conversation today... Thank everyone for coming.

Identifying and mapping our assets

When the conversations are completed, encourage participants to spend a few moments to complete the remaining questions (if needed). This would be a great time to hand out an Asset Inventory Survey (if you have one). A survey would allow you to:

- Evaluate your experience and the impact of this conversation.
- Compile a profile of the perspectives engaged by this project.
- Identify potential projects for shared action.
- Map the assets (gifts, talents and knowledge) that residents of our community are willing to share.

This survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Conversation wrap-up

- Thank and acknowledge your host.
- Thank everyone for coming to the conversation.
- Remind them to finish the survey and hand it in a before they leave.
- Check in with your note taker (we strongly recommend you have one, but it is ok if you don't) to review the conversation.

Don't forget to...

Remind participants that the conversation they have been part of today is part of a community-wide project that will build consensus around a shared community vision and identify opportunities for shared action.

Tell participants who are interested how they can stay involved and continue contributing to the project. Here are some examples:

1. **Signing the registration list** (and give us your phone number, email or social media handle) so that we can send you periodic updates and information about what we are learning from this process.
2. **Recommending other groups** in the community who you think would be interested in contributing to this project (i.e., We are hoping to engage at least [insert your target #] people).
3. **Attending the community events (if planning them)**. We are planning to host an event to share what we are learning and create an opportunity to identify possible projects.
4. **Staying Involved!** If you would like to help with this project (organizing events, hosting your own conversation or anything else) please contact [insert name].

Module 4:

Listening activity

Talk to five to ten people that you know and have a conversation with them. Ask them these four questions and document their ideas.

<p>What is your vision or hope for our neighbourhood?</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More recreation activities for people other than the arena (if arena was on the chopping block).</i> • <i>To have meeting space available (lobby at arena) that is resident led.</i> • <i>Something for mental health service (wellness house).</i> 	<p>What do we want to see happen in our neighbourhood? (Ideas)</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mom and tot time- craft circle</i> • <i>Mingling opportunities - food truck, bbq book sales, soccer, lions club and church</i>
<p>Who do you know that can help make it happen? (Individuals, organizations, leaders – make sure you get a name and contact information.)</p>	<p>What resources will we need to make the ideas happen?</p>

Reflection worksheet | From debate to dialogue community engagement workshop

Reflection 1 (15-30 minutes)

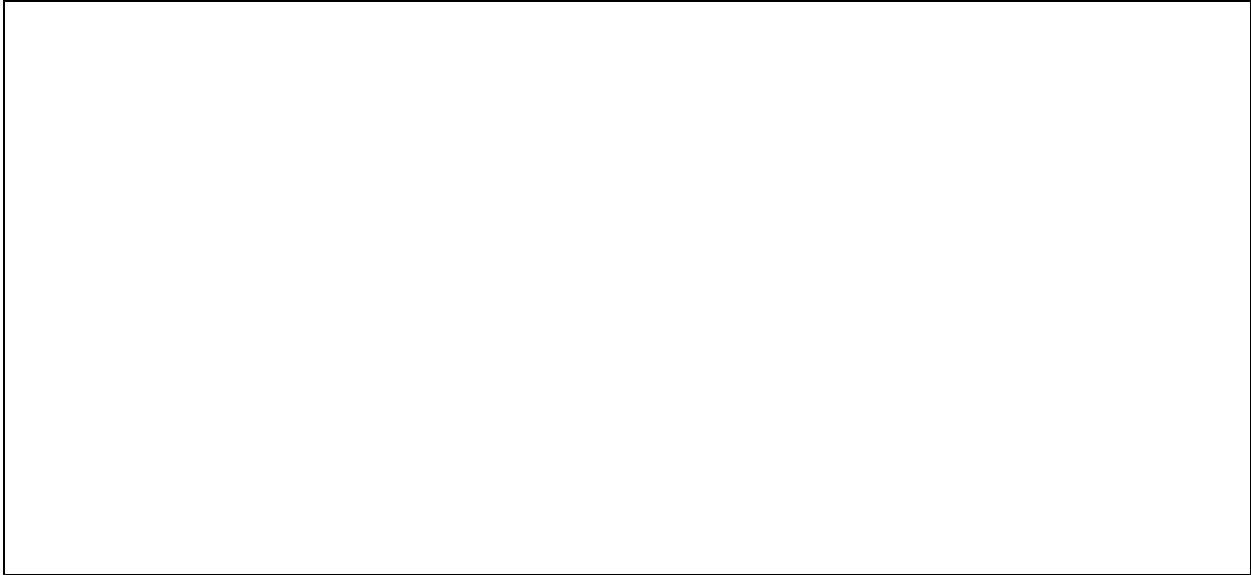
Reflect on your experiences with dialogue and debate.

Debate	Dialogue
Oppositional: Two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.	Collaborative: Two or more sides work together toward a common understanding.
Winning is the goal.	Finding common ground is the goal.
Listening to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.	One listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning and find agreement.
Affirms a participant's own point of view.	Possibility of enlarging and changing a participant's point of view.
Defends assumptions as truth.	Reveals assumptions for reevaluation.
Causes a critique of the other position.	Causes introspection on one's own position.
Defends one's own position as the best solution and excludes other solutions.	Opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.
Creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.	Creates an open-minded attitude: openness to being wrong and an openness to change.
One submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.	One submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.
Calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.	Calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.
One searches for glaring differences.	One searches for basic agreements.
One searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.	One searches for strength in the other positions.
Involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feeling or relationship, and often belittles or depreciates the other person.	Involves a real concern for the other person, and seeks to not alienate or offend.
Assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.	Assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

Sources:

- Catherine Flavin-McDonald and Martha L. McCoy, *Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities*. Pomfret, CT: Topsfield Foundation, 1997, p.47.
- Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR).

What patterns do you notice? In what situations and places are you more likely to find one of these modes?



Reflection 2 (15-30 minutes)

Reflect on your own comfort with being in a dialogue mode:

Behaviours that support dialogue:

Suspension of judgement when listening and speaking.

When we listen and suspend judgment, we open the door to expanded understanding. When we speak without judgment, we open the door for others to listen to us.

Respect for differences.

Our respect is grounded in the belief that everyone has an essential contribution to make and is to be honored for the perspective, which only they can bring.

Role and status suspension.

Again, in dialogue, all participants and their contributions are absolutely essential to developing an integrated whole view. No one perspective is more important than any other. Dialogue is about power with, versus power over or power under.

Balancing inquiry and advocacy.

In dialogue we inquire to discover and understand other perspectives and ideas, and we advocate to offer our own for consideration. The intention is to bring forth and make visible assumptions, relationships, and gain new insight and understanding. We often tend to advocate to convince others of our positions. Therefore, a good place to start with this guideline is to practice bringing more inquiry into the conversation.

Focus on learning.

Our intention is to learn from each other, to expand our view and understanding, versus evaluate and determine who has the "best" view. When we are focused on learning we tend to ask more questions, try new things. We are willing to disclose our thinking so that we can see both what is working for us and what we might want to change. We want to hear from all parties so that we can gain the advantage of differing perspectives.

Source: The Dialogue Group. Retrieved from:

https://uactgco.weebly.com/uploads/2/7/0/2/27026981/what_is_dialogue_-_the_dialogue_group.pdf

What behaviours do you find easier and harder? What opportunities do you see to foster these skillsets?

MODULE 5 – Asset collecting, connecting, and weaving

Learning objectives

This module will help illustrate the important difference between asset mapping, connecting and weaving. It includes detailed information on types of assets and where to find them.

After completing this module, you will be able to go beyond creating an asset map and connect assets in a manner that allows communities to do for themselves and what supports you and your organization can do.

ABCD Local Examples

Food, community responses and solidarity

The *Beltline Fridge & Pantry Project* was launched on October 14th, 2023. The initiative was the result of over one and a half years' dedicated work by eight residents who wanted to tackle aspects of food insecurity in the area. The residents, working with their Community Social Worker (CSW) and Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator (NPC), obtained close to \$10 000 in grant funding from Inspiring Neighbourhoods Grants, Beltline Community Investment Fund, Calgary Dollars and a Neighbourhood Grant, to ensure that a professional contractor and local artist could be engaged to complete the design. They also worked with local businesses to obtain discounts on the fridge and cleaning supplies, created a social media profile and consulted with other fridge and pantry initiatives throughout the city to learn from their experiences, both successes and challenges. This 24/7 initiative, based on the honour system, helps with elements of food insecurity in our city.

However, the reality is that food insecurity is not simply about a lack of food; it is more the product of income insecurity, wealth inequity and inadequate – or absent – public policies. As one noted “We are a group of volunteer residents passionate about food security and dignity. We believe food is a human right and should be available to everyone. We believe in solidarity, not charity.”

Recognizing that the *Beltline Fridge & Pantry* will not be a solution to the issue of food insecurity in the Beltline, this initiative certainly demonstrates the power of community and neighbours mobilizing to take care of their neighbours. And it serves as a reminder that an individual's private troubles are, in fact, collective issues.

Residents' share skills in Falconridge-Castleridge

Residents in Falconridge-Castleridge were supported by their Community Social Worker to develop a series of workshops where people share their skills, talents, and knowledge with other community members. The idea for the skill-building series arose after a community member had successfully hosted a cooking workshop. Participants in the initial workshop noted that as they got to know each other they learned about a host of hidden talents that could be shared with others in the neighbourhood. Community members recognized that hosting further skill sharing sessions would help hone volunteer and leadership confidence and capacity, provide space for folks to share their knowledge, and support increased connectivity in Falconridge-Castleridge. In addition to the specifics of pickling, dreamcatchers, henna and the making of face cream, residents are clearly demonstrating that everyone has skills to add to the common good, and that we all play a role in collective well-being.

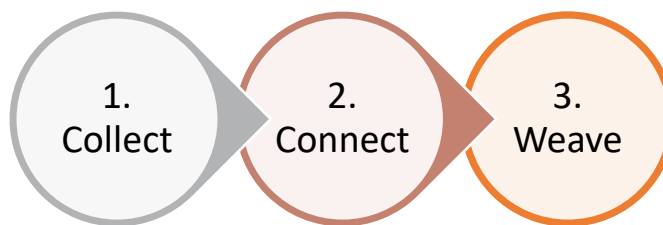
Module 5:

Asset mapping guide

Asset collecting, connecting and weaving is the process that is known as asset mapping. It starts with identifying assets that are available from within the community. And then, more importantly, it's a process for connecting and engaging the community to unlock the talents of people to help solve problems and build a better community.

Asset maps are not just another list of resources. The most important part is to weave and connect the resources. By doing this, you will activate people and their local communities in a way that honours their wisdom and experience. Asset mapping has the potential to support the development of plans that help to balance power, engage those who have been historically excluded from full participation in society, and create a new way for people, groups and organizations to work together.

There are three Steps to Asset Mapping:



This process will help you to activate your list of assets so that the people in the neighbourhood can work together to create change and make the community healthier.

Step 1: Collect

Document your community assets in one place. It might look like a list or a spreadsheet.

Sample list of assets

What are some of the gifts you are willing to share?	What skills are you willing to contribute?	What are you passionate about?	What could you teach?	What do you want to learn?
<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing (8) • Rap • Taking pictures • Arts (3) • Artist • Crafts (4) • Drawing (3) • Dance • Crochet • Sewing <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletics (4) • Basketball (4) • Baseball (3) • Football • Soccer 	<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painting (9) • Drawing (4) • Crochet (5) • Rapping • Sing (2) • Play instruments • Woodworking (3) • Arts and crafts (2) • Beading • Dancing • <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach volleyball • basketball • Biking • Soccer coach 	<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing/painting • Music (5) • Singing (5) • Photography (6) • Art (6) • Acting • Photography (5) • Craft show • Woodworking • Dancing • Crocheting • Cross stitching • Guitar playing • Rap <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball (3) • Soccer (1) 	<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting • Rap • Drawing (3) • Painting • Recorder • Sewing • Quilting • Crochet (3) • Singing (2) • Crafts • Dream catchers, jewelry, DIY projects • Beadwork • Art (2) • Play an instrument • Guitar playing • Photography 	<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line dancing • Bead work • Painting (3) • Draw • Sewing/quilting (4) • How to play an instrument • Arts and crafts • Rap • Shoe art <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer skills • Basketball <p>Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to build a house/how to build / treehouse

Step 2: Connect

Looking at your list of assets, how can you connect them together? Example: The chart below is a neighbourhood list of assets. Neighbours could plan a craft show using the gifts from those who have the skills to teach those who want to learn.

What skills are you willing to contribute?	What are you passionate about?	What could you teach?	What do you want to learn?
<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painting (9) • Drawing (4) • Crochet (5) • Rapping • Sing (2) • Play instruments • Woodworking (3) • Arts and crafts (2) • Beading • Dancing <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach volleyball • basketball • Biking • Soccer coach 	<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing/painting • Music (5) • Singing (5) • Photography (6) • Art (6) • Acting • Photography (5) • Craft show • Woodworking • Dancing • Crocheting • Cross stitching • Guitar playing • Rap <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball (3) • Soccer (1) 	<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting • Rap • Drawing (3) • Painting • Recorder • Sewing • Quilting • Crochet (3) • Singing (2) • Crafts • Dream catchers, jewelry, DIY projects • Beadwork • Art (2) • Play an instrument • Guitar playing • Photography 	<p>Music, crafts and arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line dancing • Bead work • Painting (3) • Draw • Sewing/quilting (4) • How to play an instrument • Arts and crafts • Rap • Shoe art <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer skills • Basketball <p>Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to build a house/how to build / treehouse

Ways to connect assets:

1. **Identifying more connectors** – These are people who have connector interest (those who identify that they like being in groups, greeting, welcoming people). They are the community activators.
2. **Matching one to one** – Two people with the same interests sharing and learning together. Connect two gardeners together, or a gardener and someone who wants to learn to garden.
3. **Matching a person to a group of same interest** – If you find someone who is interested in supporting youth, you connect them with a youth club/group.
4. **Identifying people to do events/activities** – We imagine an event and put together people who have the skills to do it.
5. **Reinforcing activity** – Those who have diverse gifts that could reinforce each other. For example, connect a cookie baker and a businessperson to open a cookie shop.

Step 3: Weave

How do these activities connect to the functions of your neighbourhood?

Weaving example

Activity	Health	Care	Security	Children	Economy	Ecology	Food production
Connect walkers together	People get active	Builds relationships	Eyes on the street		Stop at local business for water	Picking up litter	
Cooking classes	Eating healthier			Kids attend the classes and learn/teach	Buy local foods		Big batch cooking and sharing with neighbours
Fix it café		Retired professionals using gifts and contributing				Reduce waste, and reuse and repurpose	Food preparation and exchange production
Craft show		Social connectedness		Teach children new skills	Bartering and selling local crafts		

Create a table with the following columns to weave your activities with the functions of your community. Feel free to customize the columns based on what is important to your community. For example, this could be key pillars of a community plan or the top priorities of a community.

Activity	Insert your pillar, priority or function.	Insert your pillar, priority or function.	Insert your pillar, priority or function.	Insert your pillar, priority or function.	Insert your pillar, priority or function.

Thinking about your organization/group's activities: Where are there duplications? What shifts could be made to better align or leverage resources?

Bucket your ideas using the prompts of – What should we stop doing? What should we shift to support? What should we think about doing?

Stop doing	Shift to support	Think about doing

Here are some traps to avoid when doing asset mapping:

- Asset mapping is not a photo or a google map.
- Mapping assets is not about platforms or lists... it's about what you do with the list that will lead to change.
- Asset mapping cannot be done the same in every community (when you have seen one community, you have only seen one community). It needs to fit with the community.
- An asset map is not a finished product but is constantly changing and finding new ways to connect assets.
- Asset mapping is about connecting not counting.
- Scale is important... the smaller the scale, the easier it is to build trust and relationships and to make connections.
- Asset mapping is about engaging with all the people so that they are more civically empowered.

Module 5:

Discussion questions

1. If you are thinking about collecting assets, how could you plan on using the mapping?

2. What are some ways you can gather assets in your community?

- How can you document them so they can be used?

3. What are some of the barriers that might prevent people from sharing their gifts?
 - How could you create safe spaces to engage those who are unengaged or who have been historically excluded to share their gifts?

4. If you bring a municipal, business or organization perspective, how can you step into the role of the table legs to support the tabletop? In what ways can you shift how you work to reduce barriers to resources and enable community-led initiatives?

MODULE 6 – Bringing it all together

Learning objectives

This module will help you combine the insights and resources from across this training to successfully reframe your community work from an asset-based lens, overcoming the traditional approach of focusing on deficits. After completing this module, you will be better equipped to internalize this critical mindset shift, empowering you to move forward in your community work in a more effective and relational manner.

Asset-Based Community Development

Start with gifts:
Assets & strengths, not deficits & needs, are the true building blocks of healthy communities.



Value Small:
Grassroots, resident-driven approaches that use stories as the basis for learning, sharing and acting for change.



Equity and justice:
ABCD fosters a world where all people thrive.



Lead by stepping back: ABCD shines a light on residents' power to contribute to and make decisions in their communities.



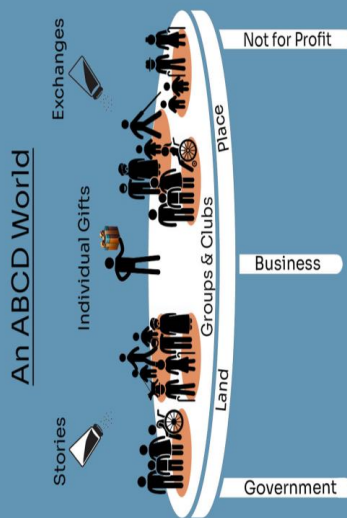
Build relationships:
Relationships are the core of flourishing communities of mutual support.

Nurture community-led action: When people in a community act together, they demonstrate their own power and leadership towards positive change.

Believe in possibility: People in communities, even in extreme situations, can use their gifts to imagine ways to create change.

Include Everyone:
ABCD does not just invite people to the table but builds a new table where everyone has a true place.

Connectors uncover the resources: gifts, skills, passions, knowledge of the community



What can be brought together to perform community functions?

1. As a community, what can we achieve by using our own assets?
2. What can we achieve with our own assets if we get some outside help?
3. What can't we do with our assets that must be done by outsiders?

Nine community functions

Inclusion	Local places & land	Celebrating
Safety	Enabling health	Local economies
Co-creating care	Raising children	Local food production

TOOL | EVALUATING ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation is an important part of community work to assess the effectiveness, quality and performance of your programs and activities. In community-based evaluation, everyone is involved in collecting data and sharing the real stories of the community. This helps the community to own the data and help others to understand and act. This approach values all voices, especially community members, in defining, designing, implementing, and interpreting the evaluation. The key to ABCD is to start with what is already in the community, your assets, and use them to build the future you want to see. When it comes to evaluating ABCD it must start with and come from community

HERE ARE FOUR WAYS TO EVALUATE ABCD WORK:



Connections and social capital – Count connections among people and count the actions that come from the relationships. Who is now connected who wasn't previously? How have relationships formed and grown? Another way is counting connectors (they help build affinity and place-based relationships).

Ways to track connections:

- Track the number of people organizing initiatives, number of people participating, number of partners (businesses, nonprofits) involved etc.
- Measure the strength of relationships - two or more connections, positive or negative relationships
- Ask survey questions about the number of neighbours they could ask a favour of etc., sense of belonging, sense of connection to neighbourhood, feeling that they belong in the community.
- Make lists, keep track of attendance, log activities.

Example ABCD evaluation questions:

- Who is doing the work? How do they work together?
- How are the individuals' skills and contributions found and mobilized?
- How many groups were formed and what did they contribute?
- How many connections were made in the community and what did they produce with their assets?
- What differences were made by having local people and the groups at the centre of the process?

Action Outcomes - Tracking what happened as a direct result of the connections. To document these outcomes, it's necessary to follow up on each outcome so that the actions can be identified and quantified. Using an [outcome diary](#) can help to keep track of the outcomes of the relationships. For example, after individual dog walkers were connected, over time they supported each other, then they worked together to build a dog park.

Tracking Outcomes:

- Track the number of grants submitted, the number of activities implemented
- Track the impact of network engagement on goal achievement and life satisfaction
- Document the level of [engagement](#)
- Track and document [local stories](#)

Change attitude - Making connections with people that result in actions may create a change in the attitude of people. You can measure attitude change by asking a series of questions at the beginning of the activity and then ask again following the activity, or after a period of time has passed. Make sure you ask the same questions to determine whether there has been a change.

How to gather data on attitude:

- Pre and post questions around trust and belonging
- Personal interviews
- Participation feedback

Example questions:	←—————→ 1= Very Low 3=Moderate 5= Very High				
How connected do you feel to the people in this community?	1	2	3	4	5
How aware are you of the different experiences & perspectives of people in this community?	1	2	3	4	5
How interested are you in working together to strengthen your community?	1	2	3	4	5

Community participation - Creating connections and local activity can lead to more community participation and a sense of purpose. This can lead to an increase in people attending meetings, participating in local community associations as well as greater presence at the meetings of city council or its committees. Using observational analysis, counting the change in the meetings can be useful in demonstrating more participation in local democracy.

Ways to track participation:

- Tracking the attendance of meetings
- Tracking municipal voting by communities
- Participation of those who speaking at council
- Tracking the number of community event permits



EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS

Indicators are from the [Quality of Life Framework](#)

- If communities foster social connection and people are connected they live, they will have a better quality of life.
 - Indicator - Someone to count on
- If people participate in community life and are invested in solutions to challenges they will feel a sense of purpose and meaning
 - Indicator - Sense of meaning and purpose
 - Indicator - Confidence in institutions and government
- If people are connected we will have stronger and safer communities
 - Indicator - Personal safety
- If we have communities that embrace culture, health and wellbeing they will be healthier and happier.
 - Indicator - Life satisfaction
 - Indicator - Sense of belonging to local community

EVALUATION RESOURCES

- CASE STUDY | [Evaluating Community Efforts: A Vivo Story](#)
- Tool | [Sense of Community Index](#)
- Tool | Getting to Impact: [Outcome Diary](#)
- Resource | [What Counts](#)
- Resource | [4 Essential Elements of an Asset-Based Community Development Process](#)
- Webinar | [Evaluating your ABCD efforts](#)

CASE STUDIES | USING ABCD IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS

Using ABCD to put a Community Plan together

In traditional models of housing services, responsibilities typically include social housing programs and property management of houses. But what if we changed the purpose of housing services so that they build a sense of community and support the development of neighbourhood plans? This is what coordinators at the Lakeview Harbourside neighbourhood have been working on for the past year as members of Cities Deepening Community. This case study explores the role of the coordinators and how they shifted away from *doing for* residents to supporting residents to *do for themselves*.

CASE STUDY | [Using ABCD to put a community plan together](#)

ABCD and systemic shift from a needs-based to a strengths-focused poverty reduction initiative

New Brunswick is Canada's largest Maritime province by area; boasts a population of 760,000; and is Canada's only officially bilingual province, with 30% of residents identifying French as a first language. It is known for its laid-back and friendly culture, strong sense of community, lush natural spaces, and large fishing and agricultural industries. With only three urban centres (Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton), it is also amongst Canada's highest rural non-farm populations.

New Brunswick's study highlights the benefits of a systemic shift from a needs-based framework to a strengths-focused, asset-based approach to poverty reduction. When governments align with and resource communities to identify the unique strengths and aspirations that exist in each unique community, building capacity to support the gaps, it creates a stronger foundation from which to foster prosperity for all.

CASE STUDY | [Shifting From Needs to Assets in New Brunswick](#)

Becoming an Asset Based Community Development City

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is a theory that looks at the gifts and assets of people that exist within a neighbourhood allowing them to respond to, and create local opportunities. ABCD's emphasis is on strengths, connections, citizen leadership, and the recognition that individual gifts become powerful when they are connected. This case study

outlines the collaboration between neighbours and the City of Edmonton in the development of an Asset-Based Community Development initiative.

CASE STUDY | [Becoming an Asset Based Community Development City](#)

Evaluating Community Efforts: A Vivo Story

There are several organizations and municipalities who are focusing their efforts on neighbourhoods. But how do they know their efforts are making a difference when there are many factors, people and programs involved? How do they show funders what they have done is making a difference? Vivo has spent time looking at their own evaluation efforts and have come up with some great ways to evaluate their community change work.

This case study is an example of how an organization evaluated their community efforts. It demonstrates that evaluation does not have to be complex, and that systematic observation is an example of a simple and easy way to evaluate community change efforts.

CASE STUDY | [Evaluating Community Efforts: A Vivo Story](#)