COMMUNITY LEAGUE TOOLKIT

OVERVIEW

This toolkit will provide public health competencies that Community Leagues can incorporate into their practices to continue providing communities the support they need!

WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH?

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities. This work is achieved by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching and responding to disease and injuries.
The definition of public health is different for every person. Whether you like to crunch numbers, conduct research, or work directly with people to help improve their health, there is a place for you in public health.

WHAT WILL YOU FIND HERE?

This toolkit includes a variety of public health competencies resources that will met your needs regardless of the stage of programming or initiative. The four stages include: access, assess, apply, and evaluate.

ACCESS

Exploring, finding & obtaining information about the community.
- Information Gathering

ASSESS

Understanding & interpreting information.
- Assessing Information
- How to Assess Information
- Assessment Framework

APPLY

Communicating and using the information to make informed decisions & programs.
- Creating an Action Plan
- Three Steps to Increase Participation
- Tips to Host Online Events
- How to Address a Problem

EVALUATE

Assess decisions & programs to find areas of improvement.
- Evaluation Process
- SMART Goals Worksheet
- Planning Framework
- Stop, Continue, Start
- Post Event Reflection

INFORMATION GATHERING

There are many ways to gather information, all of them valid in their own ways, and each have their strengths and weaknesses. Here are some ideas for you to consider getting more information on and from your community, ranked from most formal to least formal.

DEMOGRAPHICS & CENSUS

Understanding who lives in your community is the first step. Knowing what age groups make up your neighbours will help you think of what kind of community programs or events to hold, and how to best support the social and physical health of your community. Are your neighbours primarily mature couples without children? Young families? You can get a better glimpse of this through Neighbourhood Profiles from the City of Edmonton. You can click here and read up on your community's demographic information.

Reading up on the demographic information of your neighbourhood should be the first action you take in better understanding your neighbourhood; it can tailor your approaches in gathering more data and information, and can influence the platforms or forms that you use to get more useful information!

SURVEYING

Surveys can be incredibly helpful tools in finding out information from your neighbours if they are involved or invested in the community.

A good survey should be built up of questions that measure for one thing, and can offer a baseline for you and your community to make decisions that may affect programs, halls, and other resources, i.e., How much do you use the ice rink? 1-5, from not very often to very often., or How likely would you attend a similar event like this again? 1-5, not very likely to very likely.

Surveys are very flexible, and can target specific information very easily. Surveys should be short, sweet, and easy to complete to maximize response-rates from your neighbours. These surveys can be done through Google Forms and emailed to your neighbours, and can more easily provide analysis-easy data for you to understand. However, sometimes people don't have time to answer a survey, and may ignore it entirely, which is why surveys should be done in conjunction with other forms of information gathering.

SOCIAL MEDIA - POLLING

Social media is constantly changing, and so has its abilities to gather information. If you have an engaged community that has a social media presence, you can utilize it via platforms such as

Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, can administer polls where you see what members of your community think, as well as collect demographic information on your audience. Twitter and Instagram leans towards a younger audience, while Facebook leans towards a more mature audience. Instagram's "Story" function allows for polls and multiple choice questions, and Twitter allows for polling via a tweet function. Facebook has similar functions, and you can likewise poll your community, and it would be advantageous to start your Facebook Community League group if you have not already.

EFCL has toolkits on how to use social media for: Twitter Facebook, Instagram, and more!

COMMUNITY LEAGUE BOOTHS

Community League booths are a useful way to get out into the community and talk to members, and as well as providing information to them about upcoming events and build more relationships. These booths can be set up at local businesses, near the hall, schools, etc. These booths can be as simple a small table with a banner with some pamphlets, so they are low-cost ways to engage your community.

CASUAL CONVERSATION – AT COMMUNITY EVENTS

The least formal way to gather information, but potentially the most friendly way to do it is to chat with your neighbours after an event as they are leaving, or maybe even during an event. Asking a mix of yes/no questions and more open-ended questions can help you get their impressions of how it all went, and potentially gain more insights about ways to improve events in the future, or even get new ideas for events; your neighbours may have just been inspired by what they have experienced!

ASSESSING INFORMATION

Assessing information is an important part to making decisions, especially in public health! This part of the toolkit will tell you how to assess the information you may have gathered from your community. The information will be representative of the community needs. It is the step prior to taking action and is used to determine current situations and identify community issues for actions, establishing essential foundation for implementation of the services.

It helps to identify influences in the community.

It can show relationships that may have an effect on your evaluation.

WHY IS IT ESSENTIAL?

It can show what you're learning. Others can learn from you and start similar successful approaches; you'll be helping to improve community efforts and the quality of life for your neighbours!

It can help convince community members and sponsors in supporting your ideas, especially if it shows the positives of your programming!

You can often determine not only what worked or didn't, but why based off of the information you gathered. Factors like cultural issues or your approach for the community can be highlighted through how you assess it. This can help you adapt and change what you do to make it better!

More details can be accessed using this link.

HOW TO ASSESS INFORMATION

STEP 1: ORGANIZATION

Your first step, whether it includes countable numbers or not, is to organize the information collected. Chances are, there is a lot of information to sort through!

- Look at your information and get familiar with it.
- How do you want to organize it? Maybe keeping feedback from surveys in one file or separate it by event?
- Simplifying the information into smaller pieces.

STEP 2: REFLECTING ON YOUR QUESTIONS

What information did you want? Did you get it? Did the feedback offer a different perspective? This all serves to help understand what your community needs.

STEP 3: SUMMARIZE THE INFORMATION

- Identify important points like repeating ideas or other key insights.
- For information that uses numbers, summarize the responses to each question, if the answers are on a 1-5 scale, calculate their averages or list how frequently each option was chosen
- If there is information from unique respondents (e.g., those living on or off base; household income; community problems or needs) analyze their responses separately to see if there are significant differences.
- For qualitative information, summarize each focus group or interview if you did those. As you write, identify common ideas – that you think capture the important points being made. This list will change as you go through it!

## STEP 4: IDENTIFY OVERARCHING THEMES

- For example, compare what people said about their satisfaction with the service in interviews and on surveys. Compare what staff, community partners and program participants said were the service's best features.
- Focus on contradictions and hard-to-answer questions, as well as on answers that are clear and occur regularly. Both are useful and both can be positive. This phase can be challenging, rewarding, creative and fun.

STEP 5: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS

Begin writing the strengths and weaknesses. What are the recommendations and learning opportunities?

STEP 6: INTERPRET FINDINGS AND SHARE WITH TEAM

This can help the credibility of the information, and helps build your understanding of what community members want and feel about programs in the neighbourhood.
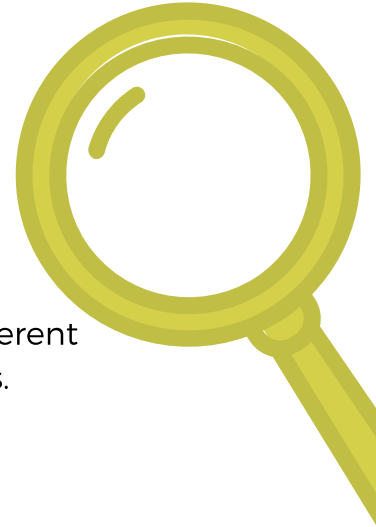
ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

How do you make a decision? You have to first look at the information and think about what's useful and what isn't as useful so that way you can come up with ideas to help your community's health.

QUESTIONS	DEFINITION	QUESTIONS TO ASK
IS IT RELEVENT?	Determine if the information is being appraised enough to the topic or related concerns of the community	Does this information address the issue(s)?
IS IT RELIABILE?	Understanding the completeness of the information gathered. If there is lack of data reporting.	Is the information clearly reported?
IS IT TRUTHFUL?	Knowing the risk of bias while collecting the information	Is the methods of gaining information appropriate? Am I confident about the findings? Are important factors being considered?
CAN IT BE APPLIED?	Understanding how this information can be transferred for public health practice.	Can I apply these findings for the event or program?

CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

WHAT IS AN ACTION PLAN?
An action plan is a way to make sure your vision is made concrete. It describes the way you will use its strategies to meet its goal.

WHAT
What action or change will occur?

WHO
Who will carry it out?

BY WHEN
When will it occur and for how long?

RESOURCES
What resources are needed to carry out the change? Money, staff, materials?

COMMUNICATION
Who should know about what?

THREE STEPS TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION

1 IDENTIFY WHICH GROUPS OR DEMOGRAPHICS CAN BE REACHED TO ATTEND YOUR EVENTS OR PROGRAMS.

Identify who would benefit from attending your events

- Who in the community benefits the most from your events/program?
- What groups are currently underrepresented from your events?

Create conditions that will allow the greatest diversity of people to participate.

- Language: use clear language and if possible additional languages that are spoken in your community.
- Child care: offer child care services at group functions.
- Transportation: try creative solutions (e.g. community vans or car pools)
- Time: ask about preferred meeting times & begin/ending meetings on time.
- Welcoming atmosphere: if possible provide refreshments, introduce new people and plan social activities that encourage members to get to know each other personally.

2 CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION.

Communicating "sticky" messages (ones people remember) about the your event:

- Use images that convey the appropriate tone (e.g. serious, funny, friendly).
- Memorable sayings (e.g. "Be part of the community - get involved") and narrative stories (e.g. about why this is important to particular groups)
- Specific prompts: be clear about what people could do and when.
- How the event fits with the circumstances of people's lives: how it is compatible with their available time, the places where they live or work, and the situations they experience.

Use specific channels of influence to reach target groups of people:

- Informal networks & naturally occurring groups: faith communities, support groups
- Public and non-profit organizations: health, human service agencies, libraries
- Businesses: theatres, convenience stores, beauty salons, bars
- Community events: soccer games, arts festivals
- Print materials: brochures, fact sheets, newsletters, posters, flyers
- Broadcast media: e.g., television, radio

3 CREATE AN EVENT ATMOSPHERE THAT FOSTERS PARTICIPATION

Ask why people or organizations would want to be involved:

- Address issues of genuine concern to the greater community.
- Involve community members and organization in defining and creating solutions to the problem or goal.
- Include a diverse membership with a variety of strengths and resources.
- Make special efforts to welcome new members and new ideas.

Incorporate the "6R" qualities into the activities to keep people involved. These should include:

- Recognition: people want to be recognized for their contributions.
- Respect: people want their values, culture, ideas, and time to be respected and considered in the organization's activities.
- Role: people want a clearly meaningful role in the community that makes them feel valuable and in which they can make a contribution.
- Relationships: people want the opportunity to establish and build networks both professionally and personally.
- Reward: people expect the rewards of participating in events.
- Results: people respond to visible results that are clearly linked to things that are important to them and their participation. Share pictures or stories about your events.

Some community leagues have incorporated fundraising or giving back to their community into their events with great sucess!

TIPS TO HOST EVENTS ONLINE

KNOW YOUR TECH

Set aside some time to become familiar with the chosen platform and test a session before trying it participants (check out the video, audio and different features). Set your stage by making sure your camera is facing you, your room is well lit, and your internet and devices are working.

In large groups ask participants to mute themselves when not speaking to reduce background noise.

START SIMPLE

As your welcoming participants review some of the features and any rules for the event. Check in with participants by asking for a thumbs up on camera or a quick yes/no in the chat box. Let them know they can ask for help.

MANAGE ENERGY

To limit distractions, change the activities on a regular basis. So options include: utilizing the chat feature, using polls, breakout sessions, or even self-led activities. Try to keep sessions no longer than 2 hours and include breaks for people to stretch or walk away for a short time.

INVITE PARTICIPATION

To avoid events feeling one-sided offer many opportunities for connection Use general check in questions to encourage feedback. Get creative with your interaction, by using visuals or tools like Sli.do.

FOLLOW UP

This is a learning process for all of us, ask for feedback on what you can do to improve next time. Collect emails to send any highlights that came from your event or on share relevant resources.

Try to look ways to support less-heard voices or those who are unable to be on video or speak (e.g. reading the chat)..

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HOW TO ADDRESS A PROBLEM

COVID-19 has presented many challenges for people of all walks of life. Community Leagues can play a role in their communities' response to COVID. An example of developing a COVID-19 safe program is in red, italicized points.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR COMMUNITY PROBLEM & WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.

- State of your community problem/goal to be addressed
  - *Connecting neighbours safely during a pandemic*
- Specific behaviours that need to change
  - *In person, indoor gatherings are high-risk and can't be done*
- Improvements in community-level outcomes that should result
  - *Engaging neighbours in COVID-19*

STEP 2: ASSESS THE LEVEL OF THE PROBLEM OR GOAL TO BE ADDRESSED

- Direct observation of the problem or goal
  - *COVID-19 prevents in-person gatherings*
- Conducting surveys about the behaviour
  - *What does your community want for an event during COVID-19?*
- Interviewing key people in your community
  - *Are there people in your community that might have ideas?*

## STEP 3: DESCRIBE THE PRIORITIZED GROUPS & WHO WILL BE INVOLVED

- Targets of change or prioritized groups for whom behaviors or outcomes should change
  - *Ensuring that your at-risk neighbours can still socialize*
- Agents of change or those implementing the initiative/program/event
  - *Community League and potential partners*

STEP 4: INDICATE HOW YOU WILL OBTAIN COMMUNITY INPUT

- Personal contacts - Who will you speak with about what?
  - *"What are some events you'd like to do?"*
- Community forums - What public situations would present an opportunity for you to discuss the problem or goal, and how will you use the opportunity?
  - *Virtual town halls for the Community League instead of in-person meetings*
- Concerns surveys or interviews - What questions of whom will you ask about the problem or goal and potential solutions?
  - *"What are some event's you'd like to do? Do you feel like this proposed event is safe?"*

STEP 5: ANALYZE THE PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE INITATIVE

- Those for whom the current situation is a problem. Who is affected by the issue, problem, or goal?
  - *The entire community because of the nature of COVID-19*
- What are the negative/positive consequences for those directly affected and the broader community?
  - *Mental health and social isolation relating to COVD-19*
- Personal and environmental factors to be influenced (i.e., people's experience, history, knowledge, skills, barriers, opportunities, social support, living conditions)
  - *At-risk groups, including elderly people, those immunocompromised and those with limited access.*
- The behavior or lack of behavior that causes or maintains the problem. Who benefits and how?
  - *Unhygienic practices and no social distancing can spread COVID-19*
- The appropriate level at which the problem or goal should be addressed
  - *Community level: shared resources and individual level: personal caution*
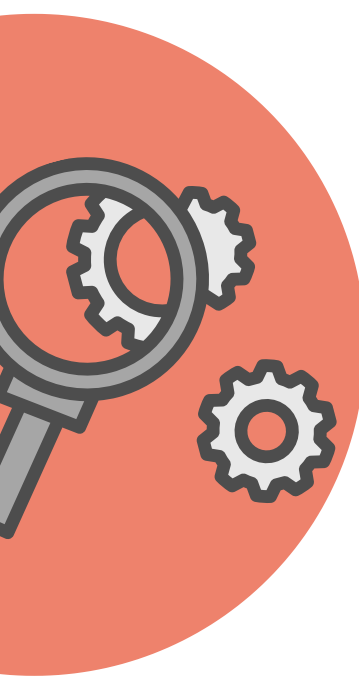
STEP 6: SET GOALS FOR WHAT "SUCCESS" WOULD LOOK LIKE.

- A description of what success would look like. How will the community or group be different if the initiative is successful?
  - *People are happy and safe, and feel connected with eachother*
- Those goals the initiative is targeted to accomplish. How will you know if your initiative is successful?
  - *People respond positively to surveys about their enjoyment of the event*
- The specific objectives the initiative will achieve. What will change by how much and by when?
  - *Feeling less isolated or disconnected feelings*
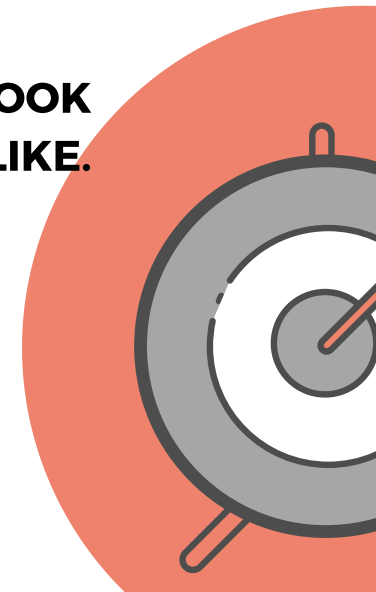
EVALUATION PROCESS

STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR EVENT GOALS

The first step of designing an event evaluation is defining your event goals and desired outcomes. An event goal planning sheet can be a useful resources to start thinking about what your event is hoping to achieve. Use SMART goals to plan your events! See **page 16** for a worksheet on SMART event goal planning.

STEP 2: DEFINE YOUR EVENT ACTIVITIES

Once event goals have been defined, the next step is to define how these goals will be measured. It's always good to have a set of measures for each activity in order to assess whether they were carried out the way it was planned and whether or not the activity is supporting your event goals.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY THE EVALUATION TOOLS

Once you have defined your event activities, think about how they can be measured to support your event goals. To do this you will need evaluation tools like the one listed to the right!

Event planning checklist.

EVALUATION TOOL EXAMPLES:

- Survey
- Interview
- Checklist
- Personal observations
- Attendance
- Feedback boxes
- Casual conversations

STEP 4: COLLECT YOUR INFORMATION

Once you have determined what tools you will be using for your evaluation, it's time to develop a plan for collecting your evaluation information. Developing a plan will help you determine who will collect the information, when and how.

See **page 17** for an Evaluation Planning Framework.

STEP 5: REFLECTION

After your event and information collection, it's time to: reflect on your event and identify gaps between what was intended for your event vs. what was actually achieved and how that impacted your event goals. This process helps you determine if your event goals were achieved, and if not, what got in the way and what you could have done differently to reach your goals.

## STEP 6: MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS OR CHANGES BASED ON YOUR LEARNINGS

The final step of the event evaluation process is taking your evaluation learnings and thinking about potential considerations or implications for future events.

Use the Stop, Continue, and Start exercise on **page 18** to explore your learnings.

STOP: What aspects of the event did not work well and can you stop doing?
CONTINUE: What aspects of the event went well and would you like to continue?
START: What should you start doing for future events like this one?
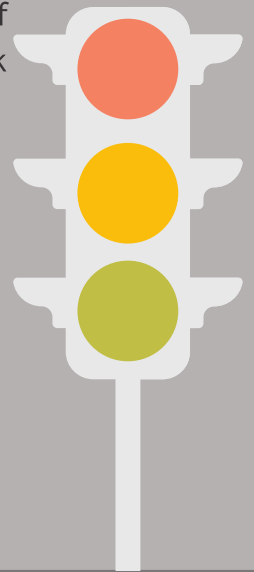
SMART GOALS WORKSHEET

1 SPECIFIC
What exactly do you hope to accomplish with this event?

2 MEASURABLE
How will you know when you have reached your event goal(s)?

3 ACHIEVABLE
Is your event goal(s) realistic with effort and commitment? Do you have the needed resources ? If not, how will you get them?

4 RELEVANT
What is the relevance of your event goal(s) to your community organization?

5 TIMELY
When will you achieve your event goal(s)?

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

EVALUATION QUESTION What do you want to know about this event?			
EVENT ACTIVITIES What are the event activities you are evaluating?			
MEASURES What can you measure?			
INFORMATION COLLECTION What information are you collecting?			
COLLECTION TOOLS What specific tools will be used to collect information?			
TARGET GROUP Who will you be collecting information from?			
RESPONSIBILITY Who is responsible for collecting the information?			
COLLECTION TIMING When will the information be collected?			

STOP, CONTINUE, START

STOP

What aspects of the event did not work well and can you stop doing?

CONTINUE

What aspects of the event went well and would you like to continue?

START

What should you start doing for future events like this one?

POST EVENT REFLECTION

Do you think the event achieved its goal?

Did the activities run according to plan?

What resources were used for the event? were they enough?

What were the highlights?

What was the promotion plan for the event? Was it successful?

Were there external factors that impacted the success of the event?

What aspects of the event could be improved?