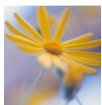


Community-based

Short Definition:

Community-based refers to a philosophical approach in which communities have an active role and participate in highlighting and addressing the issues that matter to them. Community-based means being in the community that you serve, geographically and philosophically; a community-based approach invites communities to actively design, develop, and deliver their own FASD prevention and intervention strategies. This challenges community members to identify what the issues are and to work together to address those issues (Van Bibber 1997).



Definition: The definition of community-based programming varies depending on who is asking and for what purpose. Generally speaking, community-based refers to a philosophical approach in which communities participate in addressing health issues. Situating a program or service in a community without this philosophical approach makes it *community-placed* rather than *community-based*.

Health organizations around the world have discovered that local knowledge and resources are valuable as a way of addressing complex health issues in a more contextual or wholistic manner (Baker & Brownson, 1998). An FASD community based prevention approach is a good example of a complex issue requiring a broader wholistic response. A program developed for pregnant women or mothers and children, for example, would have to incorporate the context of family, community, and nation.

Community-based approaches enable communities to actively design, develop, and be involved in the delivery of their own FASD prevention and intervention strategies. This approach challenges community members to identify what the issues are and to work together to address those issues (Van Bibber, 1997).

Local knowledge and resources are utilized in program design and delivery including:

- Community participants are involved in designing or modifying the program.
- The program is designed to meet the unique needs of the community.
- The program is delivered at the community level.

Communities are diverse in structure and nature. A community can be defined as a geographic place such as a town, village, or neighbourhood. It could be a small northern community or an urban neighbourhood. Community can also mean a group of people who share a sense of belonging, common identity, or perhaps a shared set of values and norms. Community may also be formal/informal collective organizations or associations (eg. Friendship Centres). Community-based approaches could look very different for the many types of communities.

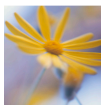
We must learn that every community is unique and has its own belief system.

We have to be respectful, no matter what their belief system. . (CAAN2004)

Community-based approaches – Key Elements

1) Wholistic framework

Whether program planners use terms like ecological framework or wholistic approach, there is a common understanding that the health and well-being of an individual is dependent upon a range of factors and relationships. An individual is influenced by his or her interpersonal relationships of family, friends, and other community members. Social, economic, political, and cultural factors also impact the well-being of individuals.



A wholistic framework that acknowledges and makes explicit these relationships and connections is required when addressing the complexity of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

2) Tailoring programs to the needs, strengths, and resources of the community

A natural outcome to building capacity and building good relationships within a community is the creation of a strength-based approach to programs or services.

Community-based programs begin with where the individual or family is at in terms of their healing journey and the community in which they live.

In Saskatchewan about 70% of people don't live in [Aboriginal or Reserve] communities and never will. ...traditions are different on-reserve and off-reserve. We have to look at what is happening in cities. Cities are filled with Aboriginal people and they have their own culture. (Patterson, Reimer 2004).

Programs and services designed to meet the unique needs of different communities require that community members have the opportunity, knowledge, and ability to participate in development of such programming. A first step in community participation is valuing the role of local input, knowledge and resources:

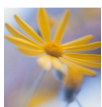
- Knowledge of the problem, including the root causes.
- Knowledge of the local resources and access to local resources such as sport facilities or transportation to on the land sites.

3) Participation of those affected by the program or service.

Capacity building offers the “tools” for full participation of community people. The following are indicators drawn from an inner city community-based agency whose priority is building capacity within its populations of people who work and are served by the agency (Canadian CED Network 2005):

- Number of Training sessions and number of participants
- Number of Workshops and participants
- Type of Mentoring; number of people mentored; personal stories of experience and skill/knowledge development.
- Learning circles
- Cultural development

Finally, a community-based approach can create community involvement in deciding, designing, and delivering programs. This builds ownership and inclusion.



Community-based Approach in Action – An example

One example of a community-based approach is the **Ma Mawa Wi Chi Itata** agency in Winnipeg whose name means “*we all work together to help one another*”. *Through the guidance of community members, the agency is providing better service, building capacity, creating community leadership, and responding to community needs.* (Canadian CED Network, 2005)

Potential Indicators of activities and practice, program, and community outcomes informed by Community-based approach:

Please note: Indicators of an approach are found in and supported by the program’s activities and flowing from that, program, participant, and community outcomes. Hence, evaluation activities related to approaches should be directed at assessing relevant outcomes in these areas.

Programming builds capacity of knowledge, skills, and ability if it is lacking in any of those areas. Capacity-building includes:

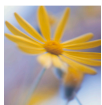
- Training, mentoring of staff
- Orientation and training of board or decision makers of the program
- Building collaboration with other agencies and resources in the community

Program reflects the local culture, including:

- Cultural knowledge and cultural resources such as knowledge of traditional practices
- Connections to the land
- Ceremonies and rituals
- Belief systems and values

People to whom the program is directed participate in:

- developing the program
- attending program activities
- providing feedback on making changes to the program
- Feel a sense of ownership that this is “their” program
- Feel included



References

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Van Bibber M. (1997). *It Takes A Community. A Resource Manual for Community-based Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects*. Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada.

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