Community Readiness:

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Readiness is the degree to which a community is prepared to take action on an issue. Community readiness by nature is a process that involves a group of dedicated people in your community and should not be pursued alone. IN addition to committing to work with others in your coalition and in your community, you must have a commitment to three primary steps to consider engaging a community readiness assessment: (1) The steps and process of assessing community readiness for change; (2) A desire to increase community capacity; (3) Willingness to follow through with a plan to create the climate for change possible.

Primary steps and questions to ask to start this process:
1) What is the primary issue you wish to address in your community? Who decided this? How did you decide this? Is it based on funding, anecdotal or crisis information, data, key leaders?
2) No single issue exists in a vacuum, however, some issues are too broad to tackle realistically. Is this a specific issue or is it a general area that is defined by many issues? What are some of the sub-issues or describing issues that help describe or "operationalize" your primary issue? (Substance abuse may be defined as underage drinking, access to alcohol, lack of law enforcement etc.).
3) How would you define your community? (village, neighborhood, group of villages, city?)
4) Who are the important individuals or key informants who must be involved to inform you, make decisions, provide resources, or make change happen in your community? Generally there are four to ten individuals but this will vary depending on the size and structure of your community.
5) How involved or aware are these individuals in regards to the primary and sub-issues listed above? Do any of these individuals talk to you about this issue? Do they participate on a coalition or group with you where you discuss the issues?
6) What is your current awareness of your community's readiness? Based on the primary or sub-issue you have identified, complete the following five questions using your personal or your coalitions knowledge of the community:

A. <u>Community Efforts</u>: To what extent are there efforts, programs, and policies that address the issue?

B. <u>Community Knowledge of the Efforts</u>: To what extent do community members know about local efforts and their effectiveness, and are the efforts accessible to all segments of the community?

C. <u>Leadership</u>: To what extent are appointed leaders and influential community members supportive of the issue?

D. <u>Community Climate</u>: What is the prevailing attitude of the community toward the issue? Is it one of helplessness or one of responsibility and empowerment?

E. <u>Community Knowledge about the Issue</u>: To what extent do community members know about the causes of the problem, consequences, and local implications?

F. <u>Resources Related to the Issue</u>: To what extent are local resources – people, time, money, space, etc. – available to support efforts?

7) Although it is important to use your knowledge, it is also important to involve others in your community and explore other resources, observations, and opinions on how to address the issue. This involves reaching out to other leaders and key informants who may not be currently involved with your efforts. One way to do this is to engage these individuals in a structured conversation (open-ended interview). Attached is a sample or template interview (survey) for collecting information from key informants in your community. Using language that you feel people in your community understand, rewrite these sample questions to address your primary issue or sub-issue that was chosen by your community. Note that there is some redundancy built into these questions to explore similar but separate dimensions of community readiness such as knowledge of an issue and knowledge of resources available to address the issue. You may still find that some of the questions are not essential. It is also helpful to partner with another person to review these independently and then share your versions.

8) List individuals from your community that you would like to include in your efforts. Individuals may be youth, elders, policy leaders, cultural leaders, faith leaders etc.

9) Completing the full Tri-Ethnic Center Community Readiness Survey is a commitment to your community but does require your time and energy. Prevention and early intervention staff are prepared to assist you in this process. If you are interested, additional information can be obtained at the Tri-Ethnic web site located at the end of this primer.

Community Readiness Assessment Interview Questions

A.   COMMUNITY EFFORTS (programs, activities, policies, etc.)
   AND

B.   COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE OF EFFORTS

1. **Using a scale from 1-10, how much of a concern is this issue in your community (with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "a very great concern")? Please explain.** *(NOTE: this figure between one and ten is to provide a reference point.)*

2. **Please describe the efforts that are available in your community to address this issue.** (A)

3. **How long have these efforts been going on in your community?** (A)

4. Using a scale from 1-10, how aware are people in your community of these efforts (with 1 being "no awareness" and 10 being "very aware")? Please explain. *(NOTE: this figure between one and ten is to provide a reference point.)* (B)

5. **What does the community know about these efforts or activities?** (B)

6. **What are the strengths of these efforts?** (B)

7. **What are the weaknesses of these efforts?** (B)

8. Who do these programs serve? (Prompt: For example, individuals of a certain age group, ethnicity, etc.) (A)

9. Would there be any segments of the community for which these efforts/services may appear inaccessible? (Prompt: For example, individuals of a certain age group, ethnicity, income level, geographic region, etc.) (A)

10. Is there a need to expand these efforts/services? If not, why not? (A)

11. Is there any planning for efforts/services going on in your community surrounding this issue? If yes, please explain. (A)

12. What formal or informal policies, practices and laws related to this issue are in place in your community, and for how long? (Prompt: An example of "formal" would be established policies of schools, police, or courts. An example of "informal" would be similar to the police not responding to calls from a particular part of town, etc.) (A)

13. Are there segments of the community for which these policies, practices and laws may not apply? (Prompt: For example, due to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, etc.) (A)

14. Is there a need to expand these policies, practices and laws? If so, are there plans to expand them?   Please explain. (A)

15. How does the community view these policies, practices and laws? (A)

C. LEADERSHIP

16.   Who are the "leaders" specific to this issue in your community?

17. **Using a scale from 1 to 10, how much of a concern is this issue to the leadership in your community (with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "of great concern")? Please explain.** (NOTE: this figure between one and ten is to provide a reference point.)

18. **How are these leaders involved in efforts regarding this issue? Please explain. (For example: Are they involved in a committee, task force, etc.? How often do they meet?)**

19. **Would the leadership support additional efforts? Please explain.**

D. COMMUNITY CLIMATE

20. Describe _____ (name of your community).

21.   Are there ever any circumstances in which members of your community might think that this issue should be tolerated? Please explain.

22. **How does the community support the efforts to address this issue?**

23. **What are the primary obstacles to efforts addressing this issue in your community?**

24.   Based on the answers that you have provided so far, what do you think is the overall feeling among community members regarding this issue?

E. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ISSUE

25. **How knowledgeable are community members about this issue? Please explain. (Prompt: For example, dynamics, signs, symptoms, statistics, effects on family and friends, etc.)**

26. **What type of information is available in your community regarding this issue?**

27. **What local data are available on this issue in your community?**

28. **How do people obtain this information in your community?**

F. RESOURCES FOR PREVENTION EFFORTS (time, money, people, space, etc.)

29. **To whom would an individual affected by this issue turn to first for help in your community? Why?**

30. On a scale from 1 to 10, what is the level of expertise and training among those working on this issue (with 1 being "very low" and 10 being "very high")? Please explain. *(NOTE: this figure between one and ten is to provide a reference point.)*

31. Do efforts that address this issue have a broad base of volunteers?

32. **What is the community's and/or local business' attitude about supporting efforts to address this issue, with people volunteering time, making financial donations, and/or providing space?**

33. How are current efforts funded? Please explain.

34. **Are you aware of any proposals or action plans that have been submitted for funding that address this issue in your community? If yes, please explain.**

35. **Do you know if there is any evaluation of efforts that are in place to address this issue? If yes, on a scale of 1 to 10, how sophisticated is the evaluation effort (with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "very sophisticated?")?** *(NOTE: this figure between one and ten is to provide a reference point.)*

36. **Are the evaluation results being used to make changes in programs, activities, or policies or to start new ones?**

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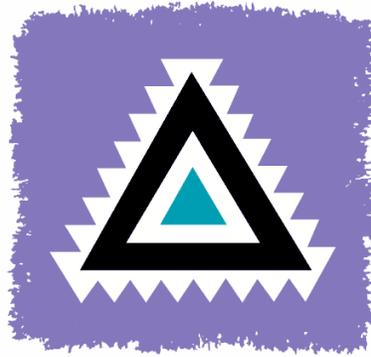
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