

## Checklists for Assessing Readiness to Undertake Community Collaboration

“Readiness” describes the degree to which an individual, group, organization, or community is both *psychologically prepared* and *motivated to commit resources* to address a specific problem or engage in a specific activity. Often overlooked, readiness is integral to program success. Many a prevention program has failed because the community was just not ready to take it on.

The following checklists, reprinted from the *Facilitating Community Change Handbook*, can be used to assess individual, group, organizational, and community readiness to undertake community collaboration, a key element of prevention planning and implementation.

### Assessing INDIVIDUAL Readiness

Use this checklist to help you assess your own readiness for undertaking community collaboration.

- I understand and am willing to model the principles and values behind providing leadership for a community collaborative.
- I am open to learning new skills and behaviors, e.g., leadership, decision-making and group development skills.
- I listen well and have strong communication skills.
- I am willing to share my values and life experiences with colleagues and community members.
- I am willing to mentor and be mentored.
- I have a clear picture of the time it will take to support a change effort.
- My organization and family understand my commitment to this effort.
- I am open to people who don't look or act like me.
- I am willing to look beyond my own agendas to do what is best for my group and my community.
- I am willing to think and act proactively, not reactively.
- I understand the concept of sustainability and its implications for my choices.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of individual attributes checked

## Assessing **GROUP** Readiness

Have everyone in your group complete this checklist, then compare answers.

- We are ready to identify common goals and objectives.
- We have a strong leadership core of people within our group who are ready to “go the distance.”
- Our group understands the values and principles behind leading a community collaborative.
- We have members with group development skills, e.g., listening skills, facilitation, consensus-building and problem-solving skills.
- We have group members who understand the need for balancing process (the how) and product (the what).
- Our group members understand their roles clearly and know how they can contribute to group goals and objectives.
- Our group has clear working agreements (ways that help the group do its work effectively).
- Our group reflects the diversity of our community (e.g., ethnicity, race, gender, leadership style, and worldview).
- Our group members are networked to the community and understand its history, its politics, and its pathways.
- Our group members are willing to put community agendas before our own.
- Our group members “walk their talk.”
- Our group members have a sense of humor.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of group attributes checked

## Assessing **ORGANIZATIONAL** Readiness

Use this checklist to help you assess the readiness of your community’s organizations and institutions to participate in collaborative efforts.

- We have organizations or corporations that have a long history of active community involvement.
- Organizations that sponsor us have missions similar to our groups and have made community health improvement and quality of life a priority.
- There is a defined organizational structure that sponsors either have bought into or are willing to help create in order to support our community effort.
- Sponsoring organizations participate in collaborative planning and action and have employees involved in community work.
- Organizations and sponsors will benefit from attaching themselves to a community-wide event or series of events.
- Organizations and sponsors will provide the necessary financial or human resources, or will assist in recruitment of those resources.
- These organizations or sponsors are committed to continuous quality improvement and are committed for the long haul.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of organizational attributes checked

## Assessing **COMMUNITY** Readiness

Use this checklist to help you assess your community's capacity to act. Are citizens ready for change? Use this community readiness checklist to help you take your own pulse.

- We have enough acceptance from the larger community to move our effort ahead.
- Within our core group, we have the knowledge base, experience and talent to launch a broad-based community effort.
- There is a "buzz" going on about the need for new kinds of leadership and new approaches to getting things done.
- We have identified individuals and groups that may be threatened by our efforts and have relationships built with them or know people who do.
- We have people in our community who are strongly committed to the idea of bringing diverse voices together and have a strategy in place to ensure that all community voices are being engaged.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of community attributes checked

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of all attributes checked out of 37 possible attributes.

Generally speaking, if you can check at least 50 percent of the questions on each of the four lists, there is a good chance you have the resources and attitudes necessary to move forward. Checking fewer than 50 percent of the items doesn't mean defeat! Choose one or two attributes on each list and concentrate on improving those situations to the point at which they become an accessible asset (or a check mark!). Remember: Positive change takes time!