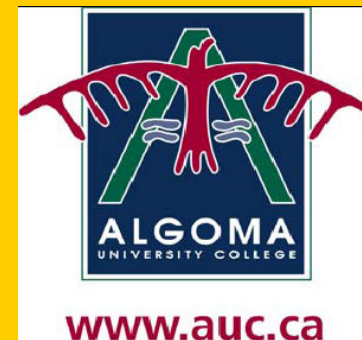# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT 2005

www.auc.ca

...to improve communication within Aboriginal communties...

Community Engagement Toolkit

This Toolkit has been designed to improve communication within communities, to promote a common understanding, and strengthen community partnerships that share community goals. The Toolkit may be used for Community Planning, to gather information from the community, and to help build a community vision of the future.

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Community Development Wheel

NORTH
develop solutions

EAST
meet

WEST
identify solutions

SOUTH
trust
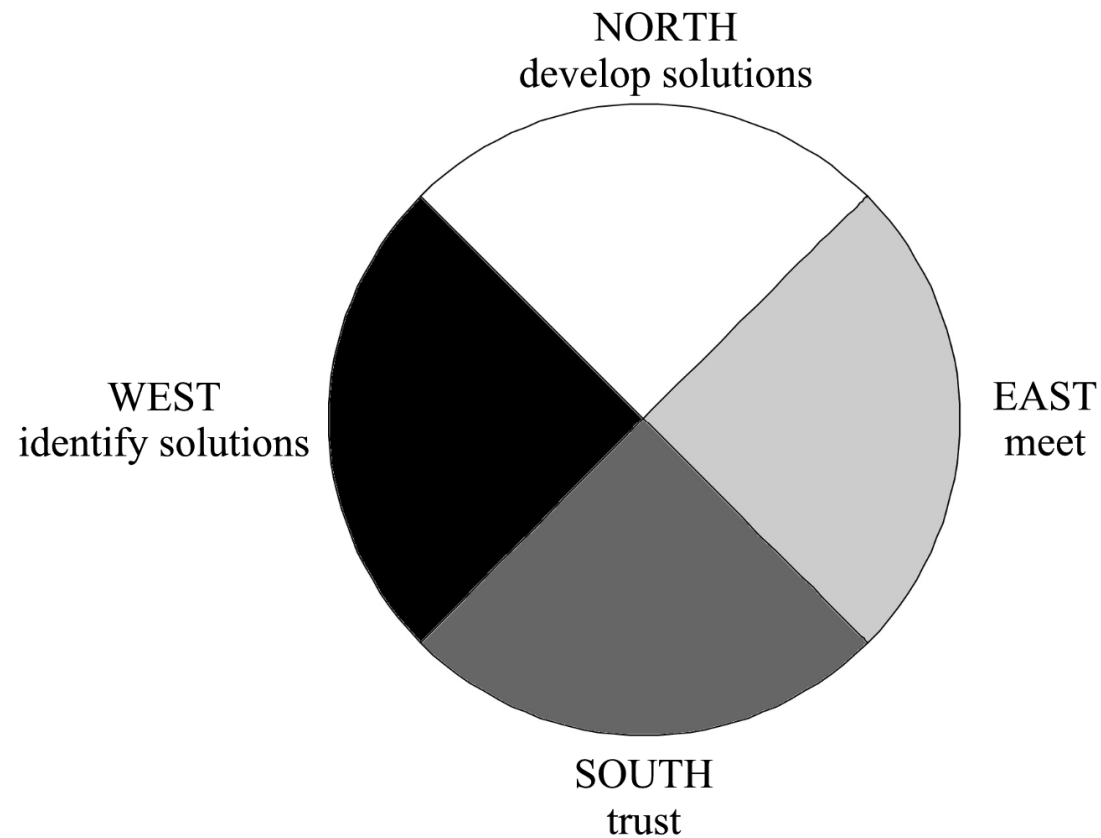
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Getting Started	Activities	Reporting	Next Steps
Get Approval	Historical Timeline	Organize Community Information	Decide Next Steps
Create Committee	Lessons Learned	Change Report if Necessary	
Make Plan	Vision Map	Take Report to Council	
Tell Community about the process	Mapping Strengths		

2

INTRODUCTION

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement means:
- community members are involved in the planning and decision-making process on a particular issue
- everyone is working with each other rather than one group doing the work for or to the others.

Community engagement is inclusive because:
People contribute and have a say in the development, planning and delivery of the program.
   This is done by:
- Listening - respecting local knowledge
- Respecting local leadership - both formal and informal
- Sharing power - identifying benefits to the community, measurements of success, and the advantages.

Why is Community Engagement important?
- Improves communication
- Helps to create a common vision of the future
- Includes everyone in the community
- Helps bring the community together
- Makes a community stronger and healthier

Community Engagement is Inclusive
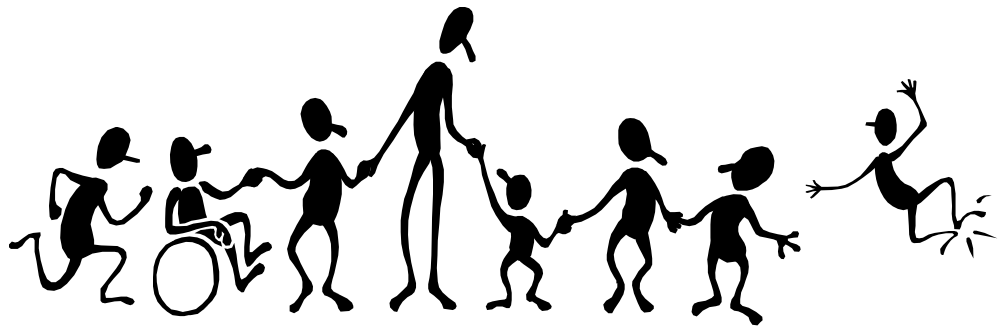
WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

A strong and healthy community

Plans for what they want

Builds trust within the community

Keeps the community informed about what is happening

Respects all community members regardless of their livelihood

Thinks about the needs of individuals and what the community needs to stay healthy

Understands the community and knows what it wants

Includes the whole community in the planning

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?
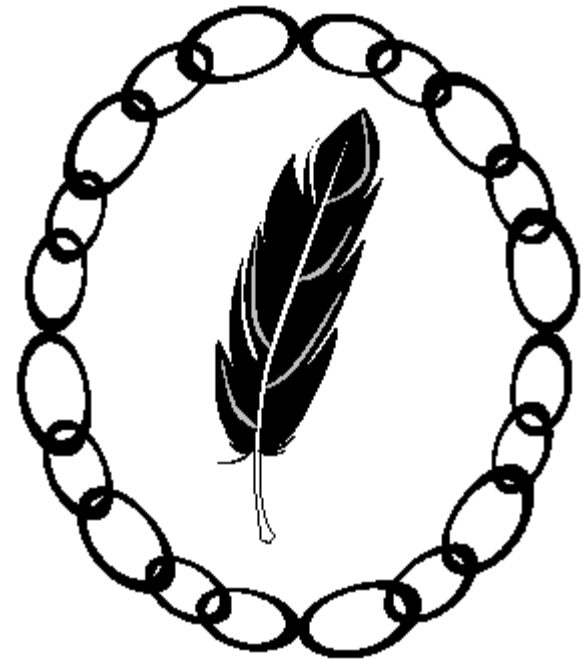
Why don't people participate when meetings are called?

People have to want to participate - it's their choice

- Sometimes their lives are so busy that it's hard to participate
- Sometimes people are not comfortable speaking in large groups so they don't go to meetings
- Sometimes people are afraid to participate–they did once before, and it was not a good experience
- Sometimes people feel that there's no point in coming out, because they won't be listened to "nobody's going to pay attention to what I say"

A community engagement plan is an alternative to meetings

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

How can we engage the community so that everyone can take part?

Create Spaces

We need to "create spaces" for people to join in - lots of different ways so:
- busy people can still voice their opinion
- children and elders can join in
- some people can join in small groups

Two ways to "create spaces"

- Drop-In Activities
- Focus Groups

Drop-in activities and focus groups give people a chance to join in and have their voice heard. The drop-in activities take only a few minutes but the focus group can take up to 2-3 hours.

Both activities can provide good community information.

The information gathered from the focus groups is much deeper because:

- People have a chance to talk about their views to other community members.
- Talking can give important background information about what the community member is thinking.
- A record-taker makes notes so the Committee can think about the information later.
- What was said is recorded but not who said it.
- A Committee member is not usually at the drop-in activity, so the Committee does not hear the background information.
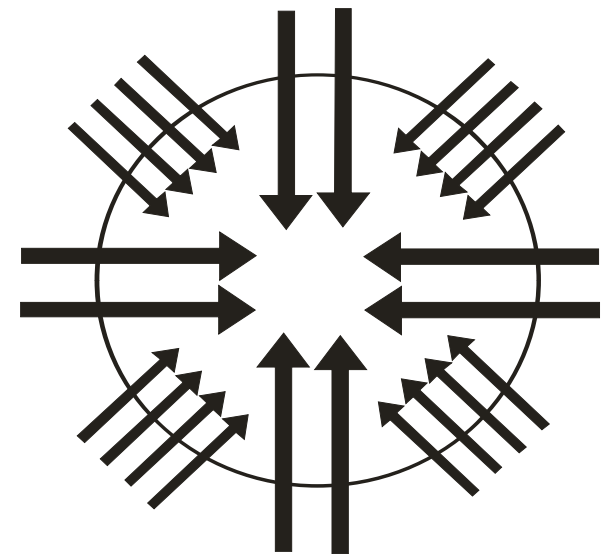
Many people can join in many different ways

Drop-In Activities

- Give community members a chance to take part easily and whenever they have time
- Can be done alone

Takes 10 to 15 minutes
Can be done alone

The Activities

- Take only 10-15 minutes to complete
- Can all be put up in the same place if there is room
  - If there isn't room the activities can be put up in different buildings
- Can be left up for a few days or longer so more people can join in
- Can be repeated a few times
- Can be set up before the focus groups starts or can run at the same time as the focus groups
- Are set up in a place that people:
  - Can get to easily
  - Are comfortable going
  - For example: the community centre, gymnasium, school hallway, band office, etc.

The Community Engagement Committee

- Sets up the activities
- Makes sure there are enough materials (i.e. paper, post-it-notes) to do the activities
- Takes them down when the activity is over
- Adds the information from the drop-in activities to the information from the focus groups to make the community report (*see Step 6*)

DROP -IN

Focus Groups

Are:
- Small meetings that bring together 3-10 people who share a common bond.
- Small groups of people doing the activities at the same time.

People are very busy. Sometimes it is difficult to get feedback from a large number of people from the community.
Focus groups are a good way of getting lots of different views without asking every single person to answer a lot of questions.

Two ways to create focus groups

People from different community groups
1. Have several focus groups to make sure that the whole community is represented

People from the same community group
2. Have a separate focus group for each community group

Examples of community groups
- ☺ • Youth
- ☺ • Elders
- ☺ • Women
- ☺ • Band employees
- ☺ • Members who work off-reserve
- ☺ • People with disabilities
- ☺ • People on social assistance
- ☺ • Any group or committee in the community
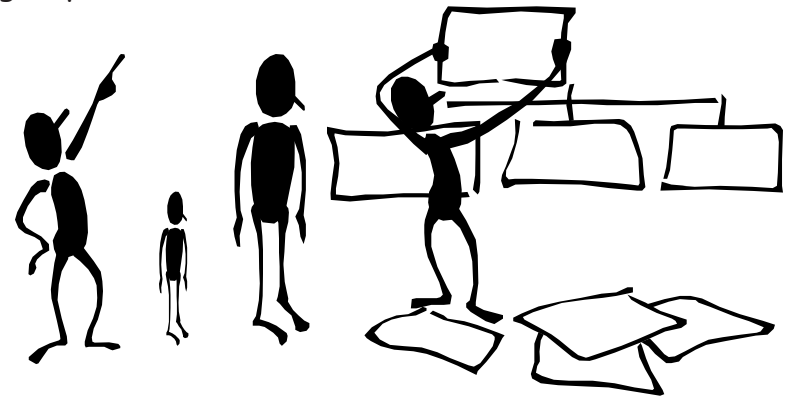
Small group doing activity at the same time

The same topic is discussed at all focus groups.
- Try to reach as many people as possible - at least 20% of the entire community
- Ideally 3-10 people for each meeting, but if only 2 people show up - the meeting should continue
- The meetings should last no more than 2 to 3 hours.

FOCUS GROUPS

Role of the Focus Group Facilitator

The person facilitating the focus group has a few important tasks:

1. **Create a "safe place"**
   - It is important to create a "safe space"
   - The facilitator creates a safe space by helping the focus group make a Group Agreement
     - It is made at the beginning of the focus group
     - The whole group makes the Group Agreement
     - It sets ground rules so that everyone feels respected and valued
   - People are free to choose whether or not to join in the focus group
   - If people choose to join in, they may refuse to answer any questions or leave the group at any time with no problems
   - If people choose not to join in, or to leave, they must be reminded that what was said during the focus group must remain completely confidential.

No one's name will be recorded.
No one's name will show up in a report.
People's identity will be strictly confidential.

Sample Group Agreement
- One person speaks at a time
- Be respectful of each other

ROLE OF FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR
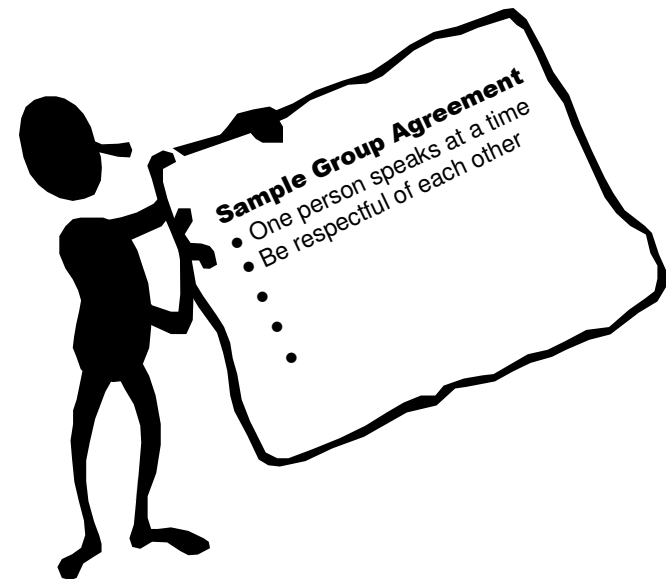
2. **The Facilitator keeps the meeting moving forward**
   - Make sure that people understand the focus group process and how it fits into the Community Engagement process
   - Let community members express their opinions
   - Do not become involved in the discussion. The facilitator will have time to voice his/her opinion another time
   - Be sure everyone understands what the speaker is talking about
   - Ask the speaker questions that will help everyone understand

3. **Keep good records**

   Make sure that the record taker
   - records correctly
   - records completely what people say
   - does not record anyone's name - only what was said - not who said it

Make sure everyone understands that what is said during the focus group stays inside the focus groups

ROLE OF FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR

Section 1: GETTING STARTED

STEP #1

     GET APPROVAL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
        Meet with Chief and Council to get approval for the Community Engagement Plan

STEP # 2

     CREATE A COMMUNITY ENGAGMENT COMMITTEE
        The Committee guides the process.
        Each community is unique and things will work differently in each place.

A couple of community members with a strong interest in the subject start the committee. They are the core committee. They look for other community members to join the committee. The core members will need to invite other people to be on the committee.

Committee Members
- Everyone in the community is welcome to volunteer for the committee
- Committee should represent the community
- Committee should be a good mix of elected leaders, non-elected leaders, and community members like teachers, mothers, elders, business owners (men and women), and youth
- Members should be from different family groups and/or different clans
- Other people or groups may have experience in community engagement
  - maybe someone could be on your Committee
  - they could offer suggestions from their experience

GET APPROVAL FROM COUNCIL

Committee Size

Committee is made up of 6-10 people

The Committee is small

Many people may want to be on the committee

There will be many ways for people to volunteer and help with the project even if they are not on the committee

The Committee should encourage many people to help them organize the activities and spread the word about the project

The Committee:

Meets

To develop the community engagement plan (see *Step # 3*)

Meets Regularly

Project is short - At least once a week or once every two weeks

Project is long - At least once every month

<u>**Regular meetings give the committee a chance to:**</u>

- Make sure that the project is on track
- Talk about ideas and other concerns that may come up
- Bring up community members' ideas or concerns before/between community meetings
- Decide
  * what needs to be done
  * who is going to do it
  * when they are going to do it
  * how other community members or organizations could help

CREATE A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Answers Questions

Committee members are resource people for the community.

Committee members answer questions

* Informally during the project
* Formally during community meetings (see *Step #7*)

If the committee is being asked a lot of questions the community may need more information

Review communications plan and give community more information (see *Step # 3*)

CREATE A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
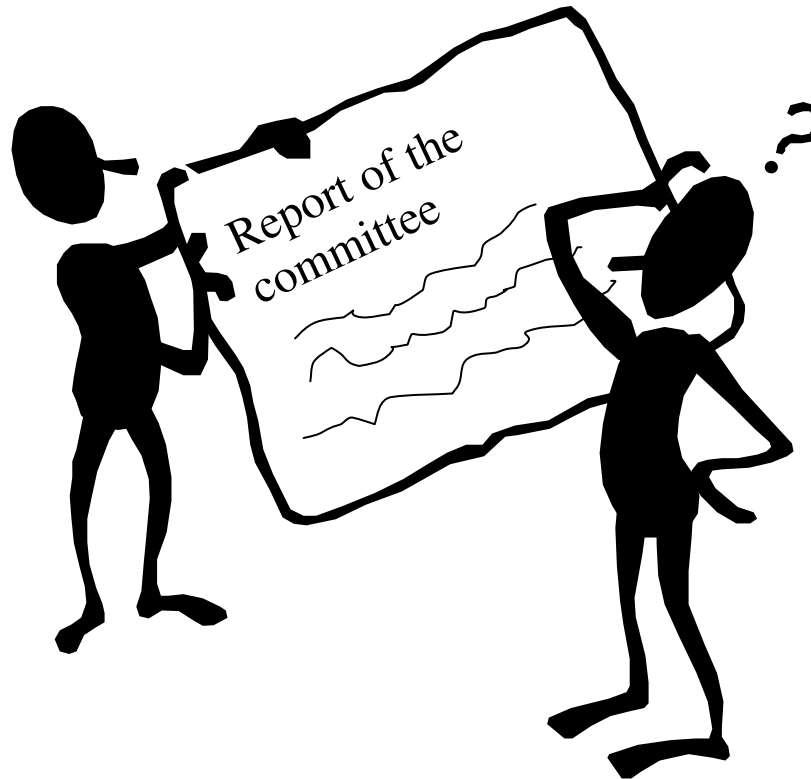
MAKE A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

A community engagement plan should focus on strengths and accomplishments—both community's and each person's

Getting the community engaged will take some time.
Communities are all at different stages and readiness to engage.
It may be a new process for many people.
Expect to spend one or two years to get the process going.
Be prepared to spend time.

Planning Steps

The Committee Makes the Community Engagement Plan

The committee may want to have some more people help with making the plan to get more input and feedback.
The committee could ask other people with experience to help.

The committee should:

Set aside special time

- Set aside special time to develop the plan
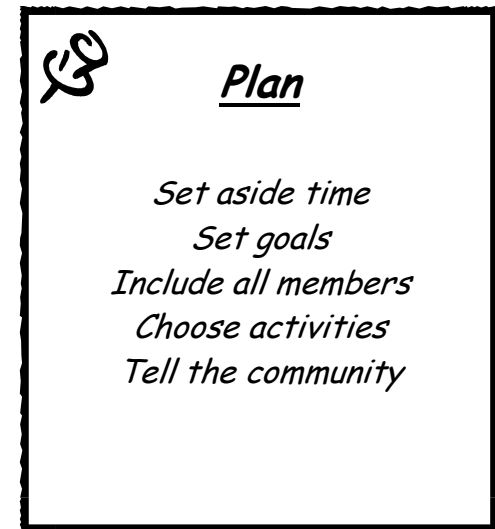
Set Goals

- what you want to learn from the community

Include

Youth and other groups who may not usually be asked their opinion, such as low income, disabled, etc.

- How can these people be engaged?
- Where do you usually find them?

Plan

Set aside time
Set goals
Include all members
Choose activities
Tell the community

MAKE A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

<u>Choose Community Engagement Activities</u>

Community needs are different. Choose Community Engagement activities that would best fit your community

•The community is more likely to enjoy taking part and do the activities if:

⇒   The time they spend together is fun

⇒   It is a good learning experience

It is very important that people leave the meeting or the gathering feeling good about themselves and their community.

<u>Plan for telling the community</u>

•Ask the committee what to tell the community about the community engagement process

•Ask the committee how to reach everyone in the community

Think about:

- What questions will the community have about the project?
  - Be sure the questions are answered
- The community will want to know how the information you collect will be used

Tell community members:

- Why you are doing it
- The time and dates of the activities
- They are invited to join in community engagement activities
- There will be different ways to join in - drop-in and small focus groups
- A phone number or way for people to reach the Committee if they have questions

Why it is important for community members to join in:

- Local voices and knowledge are valuable
- Community members know their community
- Community members bring new ideas or different ways of seeing things
- Everyone can help build a strong and healthy community

MAKE A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Step # 4
TELL COMMUNITY ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN
The Committee
- Must decide where to post the information
- Ask community members to help them spread information about the project
- Ask other organizations and businesses if the committee could talk about the community engagement process at their meetings

Information about Community Engagement plan can be posted at the:
Tribal council, post office, band office, health centre, day care, grocery stores, churches, gas stations, restaurants, schools, and announced on the community radio.

Some other ideas:
- A community newsletter is a great place to start, one that goes into everyone's mailbox.
- A press release from Chief and Council announcing the engagement strategy
- Some open houses in different parts of the community to explain what you are doing
- Go to different organizations and ask to be on their meeting agendas, so that you can tell them what you are doing.

<u>**Give the community lots of notice before any meeting dates - one month in advance if possible**</u>

Band Office

TELL COMMUNITY ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Section Two: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
Step# 5

The chart below shows the drop-in activities and the focus group activities
- The Lessons Learned Activity is used in the Focus Groups not the Drop-In
- All four Focus Group Activities are done during the same meeting

Activity	Drop-In Activities 10-15 minutes each	Focus Group Activities 2-3 hours
Activity # 1	Historical Timeline	Historical Timeline
Activity # 2	(can't do as a drop-in activity)	Lessons Learned
Activity # 3	Vision Map	Vision Map
Activity # 4	Map of Strengths	Map of Strengths

- With a few changes the activities can be done at a drop-in or at a focus group
- The Committee combines the information from the drop-in activities and the focus groups activities to make a report (See Step # 6, Organize Community Information)
- How to run the activity as a drop-in or focus group activity is below

ACTIVITY # 1 Historical Timeline

<u>Goal:</u> To learn about community history.
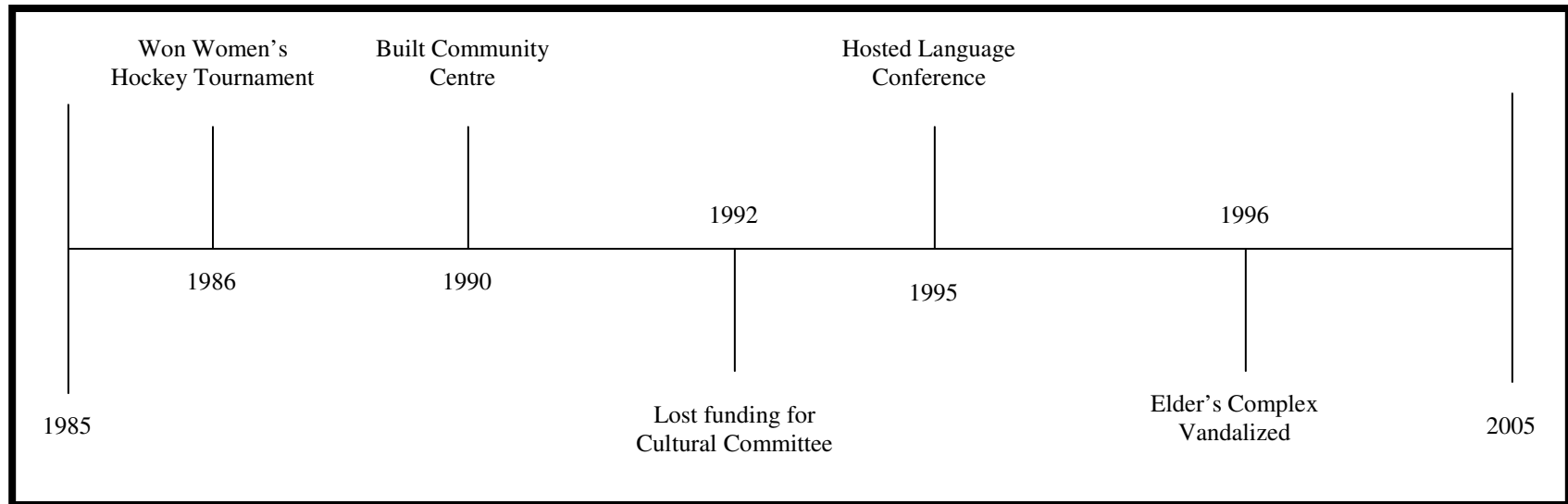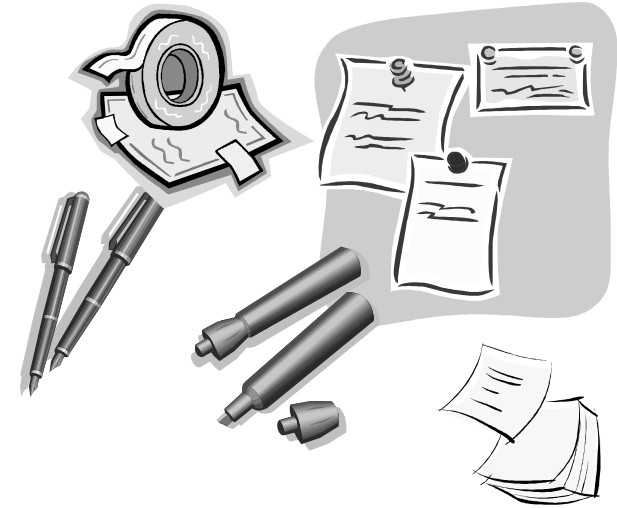
<u>What is a timeline?</u>
- It's a line with dates and events that are recorded along the line
- Records past events for about a 20 year period

<u>Why do we make one?</u>
- Reminds us of our history
- What we have lived through
- How far we have come
- Things we have overcome
- It gives a chance for all community members to identify event(s)
  that are important to the community, and First Nations people.

<u>Materials Needed:</u>
Flipchart paper, masking tape, markers, pens and post-it notes.

Won Women's Hockey Tournament	Built Community Centre		Hosted Language Conference	
		1992		1996
1986	1990		1995	
1985		Lost funding for Cultural Committee	Elder's Complex Vandalized	2005

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

DROP-IN ACTIVITY 5 to 10 minutes

<u>Preparation</u>
1. Hang two flip chart papers on the wall horizontally
2. Draw a line in the middle of the paper from one end to the other
3. Divide the line into one year marks, beginning with 20 years ago

<u>Steps</u>
Question: "What events have been important to the community WE live in, and other First Nation communities? What important events do you remember?"

1. Provide post-it notes and markers to anyone who stops by

Ask each person to:
1. Write each event on one post-it note
2. Place the post-it-notes above the line, on the line or below the line. Placing the post-it-note above the line lets people know that the event was good. A post-it-note on the line shows that the event was both good and not good. A post-it-note below the line shows that it was an event that was not good

FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITY 15 to 20 minutes

<u>Preparation</u>
1. Hang two flip chart papers on the wall horizontally
2. Draw a line in the middle of the paper from one end to the other
3. Divide the line into one year marks, beginning with 20 years ago

<u>Steps</u>
4. Hand out post-it-notes and markers to everyone
5. Ask the questions, "What events have been important to the community WE live in, and to other First Nations?" "What important events do you remember?" [watch people to know when to go to the next step - give 5 - 10 min.] Ask them to write each event on one post-it note.
6. Ask group to be ready to place the post-it-notes above the line, on the line below the line. Placing the post-it-note above the line lets people know that the event was good. A post-it-note on the line shows that the event was both good and not good. A post-it-note below the line shows that it was an event that was not good
7. Ask people to hang the post-it-notes on the flip chart paper one at a time and explain them. Ask each person to talk about the event(s) they remember
    At the end of the session the group will have a historical timeline of events that were important to themselves, the community, or First Nations

MAKE ONE COMMUNITY TIMELINE

The Community Engagement Committee adds together the timelines from the drop-in activities and all the focus groups to make one Community Timeline.

ACTIVITY # 2 Lessons Learned

FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITY

Goal: To gain a deeper understanding about past events.
It will help the community to talk about their views and gain insight into their history.

Steps (20-30 min)

For each post-it note on the Historical Timeline the focus group members fill in a chart about the event.
1. What succeeded?
2. What failed?
3. What were the obstacles?
4. What lessons were learned?

LESSONS LEARNED

failure?

event

success?

obstacles

ACTIVITY # 3 Vision Map

Goal: To create a map showing peoples' visions for the community
It gives community members a chance to show their vision of what they want for the community in the future.

What is a Vision Map?
- The Vision Map is made up of drawings and words
- Creates a picture of an ideal community
- It does not have a time frame
- Includes present community and future vision of the community
- Everyone works together to create it

Why do we create a vision map?
· Identifies the values that the community wants to take with them into the future.
· Creates a vision of what is possible
· Beginning of change

Strong values
☺ Have kept First Nations alive
☺ Gives us a strong foundation
☺ Helps us deal with change

Take strengths from the past and move into the future
Historically we came from a background of healthy sustainable living with a relationship with the land. Traditional people thought about sustaining their way of life by not over fishing or hunting. We must keep those thoughts in mind when planning for today and tomorrow.

Materials needed
Magazines, markers, flip chart paper, glue or tape and scissors

VISION MAP

VISION MAP: DROP-IN ACTIVITY

Preparation
1. Hang up two flip chart papers horizontally on the wall

Steps
1. Think about what values you would like the community to take into the future
2. Think about what you would like your community to be like in the future
3. Draw pictures on post-it notes using markers or cut pictures from magazines showing your vision
4. You can add words to describe your picture
5. Add your post-it notes to the Vision Map
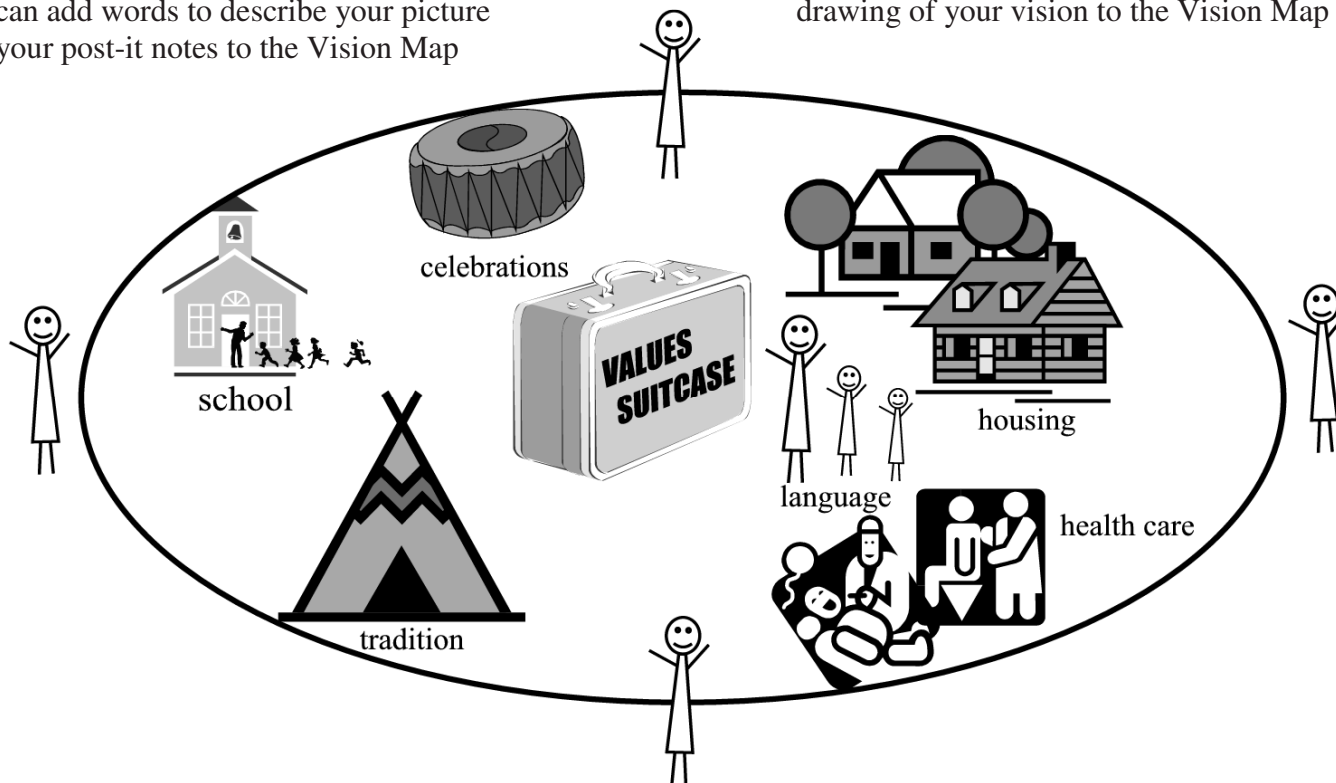
VISION MAP: FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITY

Steps (20-30 min)

1. Think about what values you would like the community to take into the future
2. Think about what you would like your community to be like in the future
3. Draw pictures of your vision on post-it notes using markers or cut pictures from magazines showing your vision
4. You can add words to your picture
5. Look to see if your vision is on the map. If it is not add your drawing of your vision to the Vision Map

celebrations

school

VALUES SUITCASE

housing

language

health care

tradition

VISION MAP

MAKING THE VISION STATEMENT

The Community Engagement Committee gathers the drop-in Vision Map and all the focus groups Vision Maps together. They are looked at to see similar themes. Each map must be looked at carefully. The Vision Statement is made from all of them.

The Vision Statement says what the community wants to do and may include how to do it. It must be clear and to the point. It must reflect your community and give the idea of the vision and what the community wants to become.

SAMPLE VISION (OR MISSION) STATEMENT

Sample 1:

A strong vibrant community which provides every member with a strong sense of belonging and meets their spiritual, emotional, mental and physical needs.

Sample 2:

The Mission of the Moose Cree First Nation is to revive and preserve our cultural, traditional and spiritual beliefs in order to enhance a healthier community in which we live together and respect one another for the betterment of our future.

(Moose Cree First Nation website accessible at:http://www.moosecree.com/chief-council/mission-statement .html)

VISION MAP

ACTIVITY # 4 Mapping Strengths

Goal: To give community members a chance to identify the community's strengths. It is a powerful picture of what the community thinks its own strengths are.

Why do we identify strengths?

Identifying strengths:
- Focus on strengths rather than needs, problems or concerns
- Focus on the community's own resources
- Provides the community's own view about their resources
- Allows the community to get to know itself in a good and healthy way
- Overcomes feelings in the community that are not good
- Gives community members and the whole community strength
- Helps the community realize that we have the ability to keep going and continue to grow through difficult change
- Helps community members realize that we **CAN** do it

Materials needed:
Flip chart paper, paper, markers, tape and post-it-notes

MAPPING STRENGTHS DROP-IN ACTIVITY
Preparation

Hang up paper and steps.
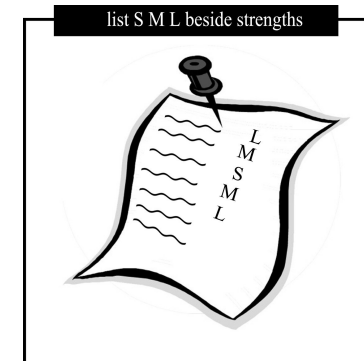Have post-it notes, markers,
paper and pens for people to
use.

STEPS:

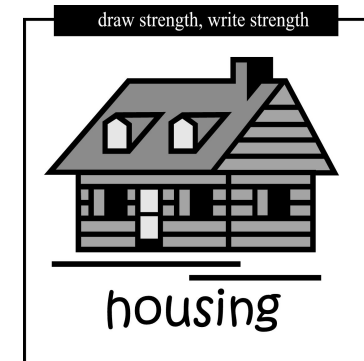1. What do you feel are the
strengths of the community?

2. Write strengths down one
side of the paper.

What do you feel are the strengths of
the community?

list of strengths
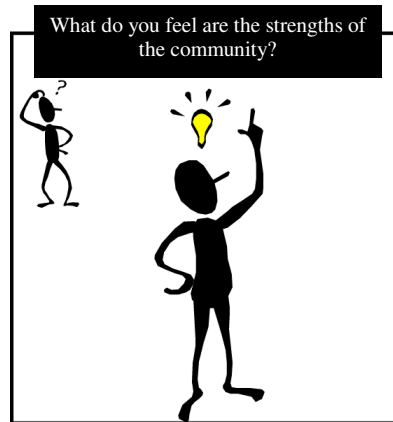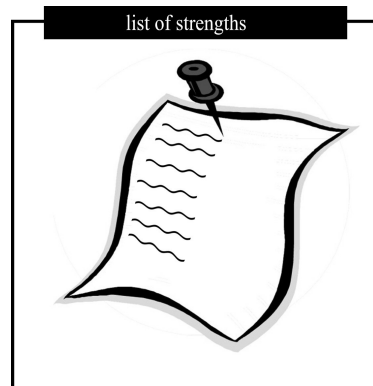
3. For each strength decide if
it is a small, medium or large
strength. Beside each strength
put Small (S) Medium (M) or
Large (L)

list S M L beside strengths

L
M
S
M
L

4. Use one post-it note for
each strength. Use a marker to
draw a picture of the strength,
mark it S M or L and label the
strength.

draw strength, write strength

housing

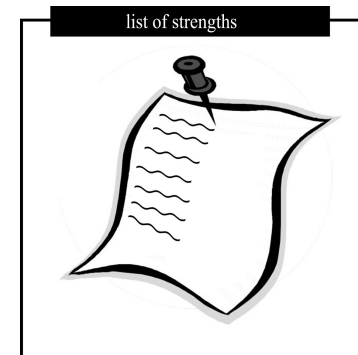5. Put post-it-notes on the
Map of Strengths

MAPPING STRENGTHS

MAPPING STRENGTHS FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITY

Takes 1.5—2 hours
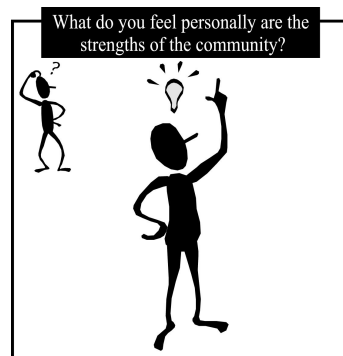
paper and pens

1. Hand out paper and pens
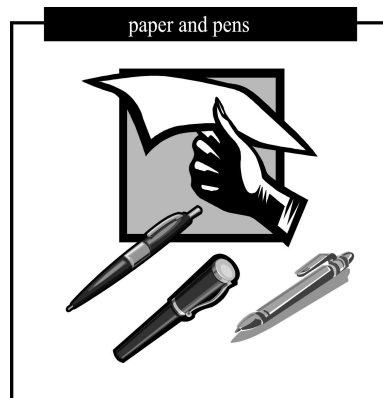
3. Write the strengths down one side of the paper

list of strengths

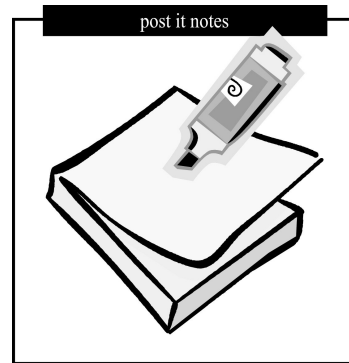**What do you feel personally are the strengths of the community?**

2. Ask the question, "What do you feel are the strengths of our community?"

4. Decide if the strength is a Small (S), Medium (M) or Large (L) strength. Beside each strength put a S. M, or L

list S M L beside strengths

MAPPING STRENGTHS
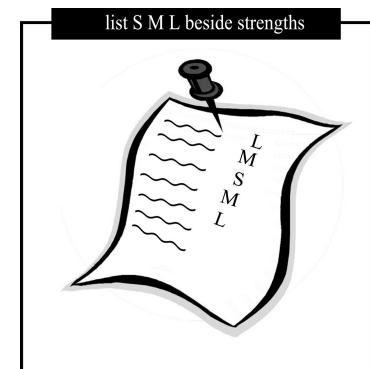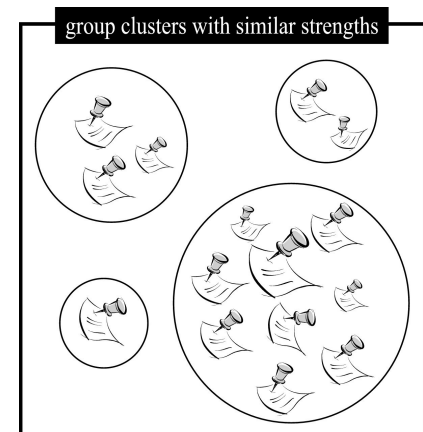
5. Collect pens.   Hand out markers. Hand out post-it notes.

post it notes

7. When everyone has finished ask the group to add their strengths to the Wall one at a time and explain them.
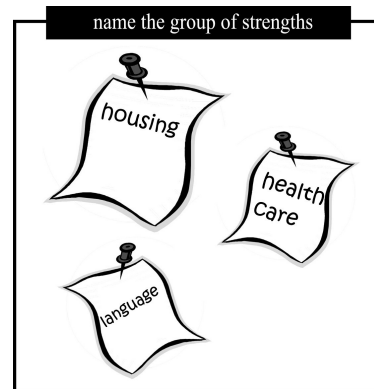

Add Strengths to the wall.
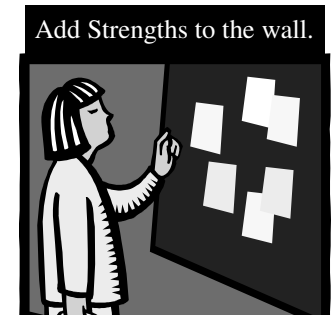
6. Ask group to draw each of their strengths on a post-it note and write the strength on it and label it. One strength per note. People are asked to draw rather than use works because a picture is worth 1,000 words. It helps people think of other things like the larger picture. Pictures spark new ideas.
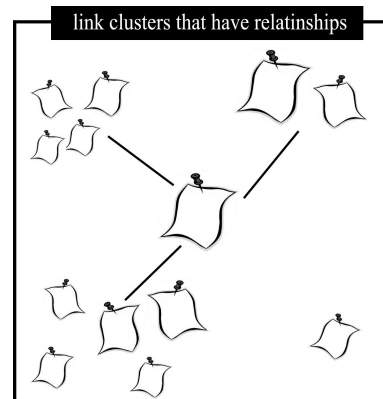

draw strength, write strength

housing
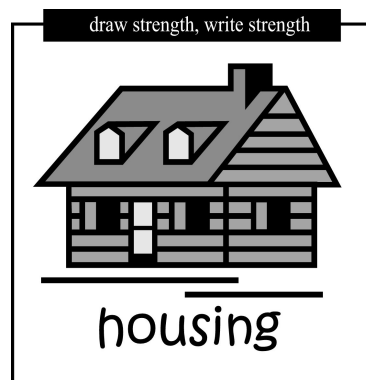
8. Ask the group to arrange similar post-it notes into groups. Everyone must agree to move the post-it note before it can be moved.


group clusters with similar strengths

MAPPING STRENGTHS

9. Name the group

name the group of strengths

housing

health care

language

10. The group draws lines to connect the groups that are related to each other.

**link clusters that have relatinships**

11. Ask people if there are any groups that take away from another group. If so people may want to draw a jagged line between the groups. When everyone is satisfied with the arrangements of the notes and showing the relationships let the group know that this is their "Map of Strengths"

mark strengths that take away from other strengths
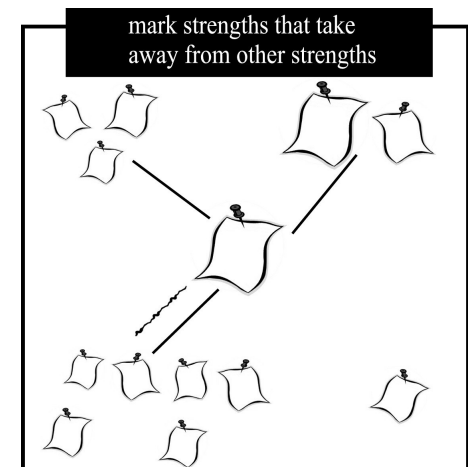
MAPPING STRENGTHS

12. Closing Circle
     This is an opportunity for people to provide their thoughts on their participation. Ask them if they have any final thoughts on the community's strengths.

MAPPING STRENGTHS
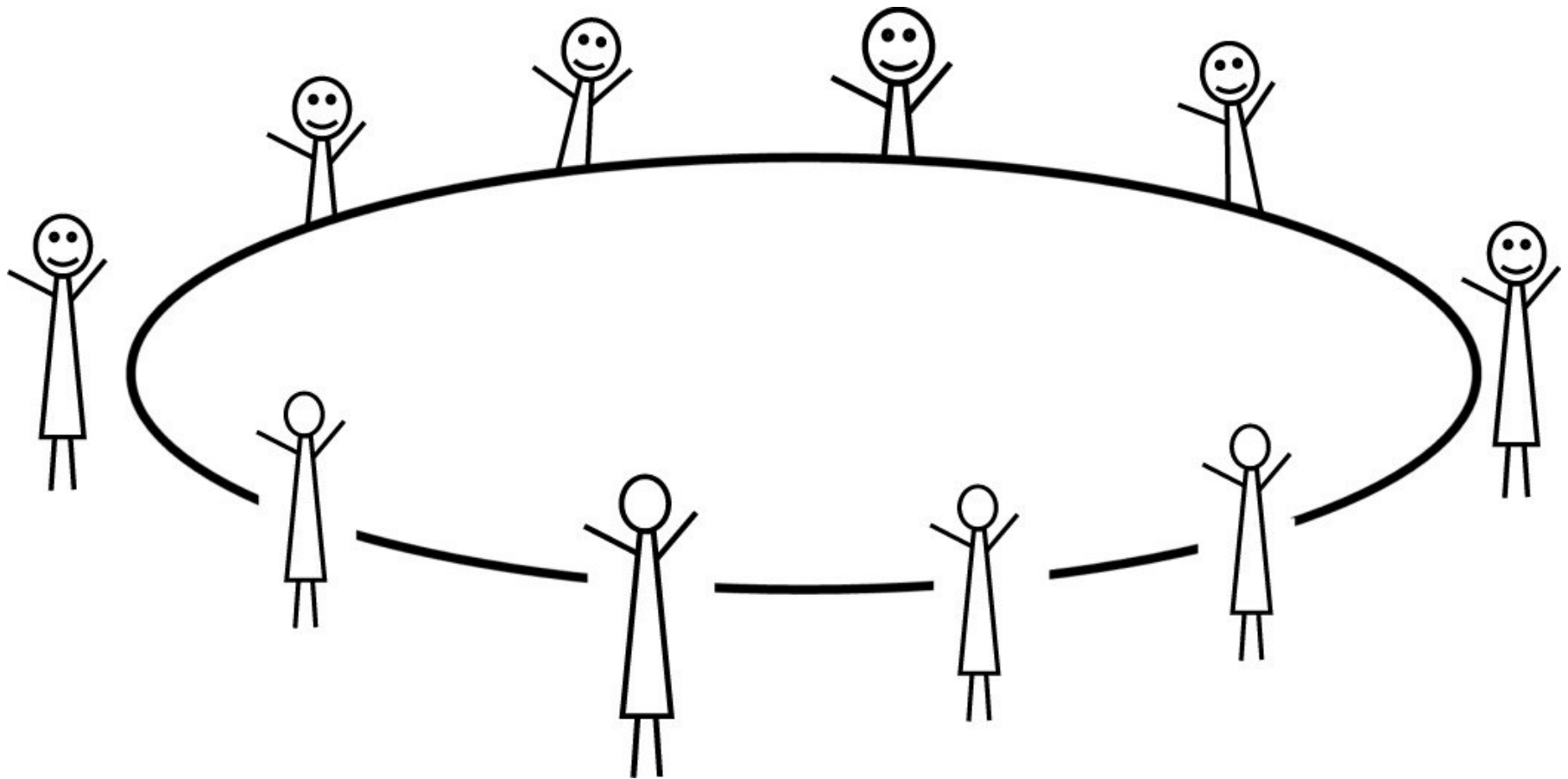
Section Three: REPORTING

Step #6
ORGANIZE COMMUNITY INFORMATION
The Committee:

- ☺ Combines the information from the drop-in activities and the focus groups activities
- ☺ Makes a written report that summarizes the community's input
- ☺ Report can include pictures or drawings of community input

Step #7
COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Committee sets up community meetings
- At the end of the project
- After some steps are finished if the project runs for a long time
- Invites all community members and Council

Why should the Committee hold community meetings?

To tell community what committee has found out

Gives everyone a chance to talk about the project and give feedback

More heads are better than one

Take ownership of the engagement process

More likely to join in and work toward community goals

Everyone can contribute and make a difference

Builds a strong community

ORGANIZE COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Step #8
CHANGE THE REPORT IF NECESSARY
The community may have very good ideas or suggestions about the report.
The report may need to be changed.

- Committee adds new ideas and suggestions to report
- Ask the committee for other ideas on how to make sure that everyone in the community knows about the results. A community feast to celebrate the end of the project might be one way.

Step # 9
TAKE THE REPORT TO COUNCIL
Committee Chair reports to Council

- Tells Council what the Committee has been doing
- May report a few times
    - ☺ If the project runs for a long time
    - ☺ After some steps are finished

Committee gives a final report at the end of the process

CELEBRATE!!!

Step #10
DECIDE NEXT STEPS

What the committee does next depends on:
☺   What the report found out
☺   What the community and Council would like to do

This may mean that the Committee may continue on to follow through with Council and community plans.
For example they may need to:
- write a grant proposal
- conduct feasibility studies
- develop business plans
- contact outside resources

NEXT STEPS
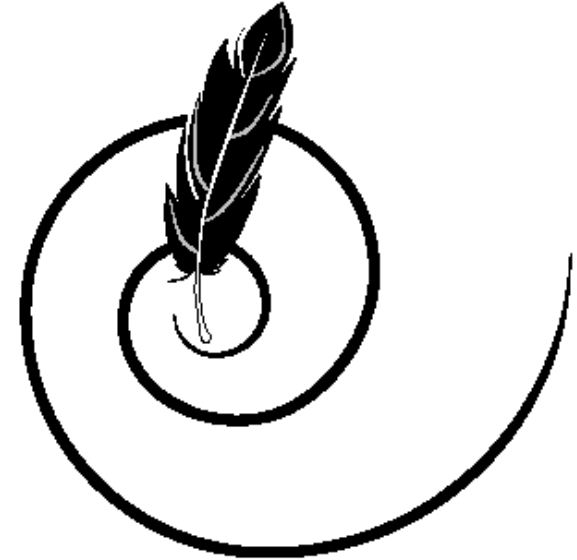
SUMMARY

The community engagement process works on many levels to help community members build a strong and healthy community. It assists community members' gain deeper understanding about the community while working toward a common goal.

Community members are more likely to join in community engagement activities again and work together when they feel safe, included and their voices are valued. All community members have something to offer.

Community engagement is an ongoing process. Once the process begins community members may see other chances to become involved in the community in different ways. Another community engagement process could begin around a different community goal.

SUMMARY