



The Community Engagement Model

It is important to remember that communities, just like individuals, must be **READY** for change before it can truly happen. Each community is at a different stage of readiness, and trying to push a community into a level of change they're not ready for can be harmful to your progress. The Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research at Colorado State University has developed a model for community readiness. This is a great resource for beginning a community change effort. Information about this model as well as other community change research can be found at: www.triethniccenter.colostate.edu

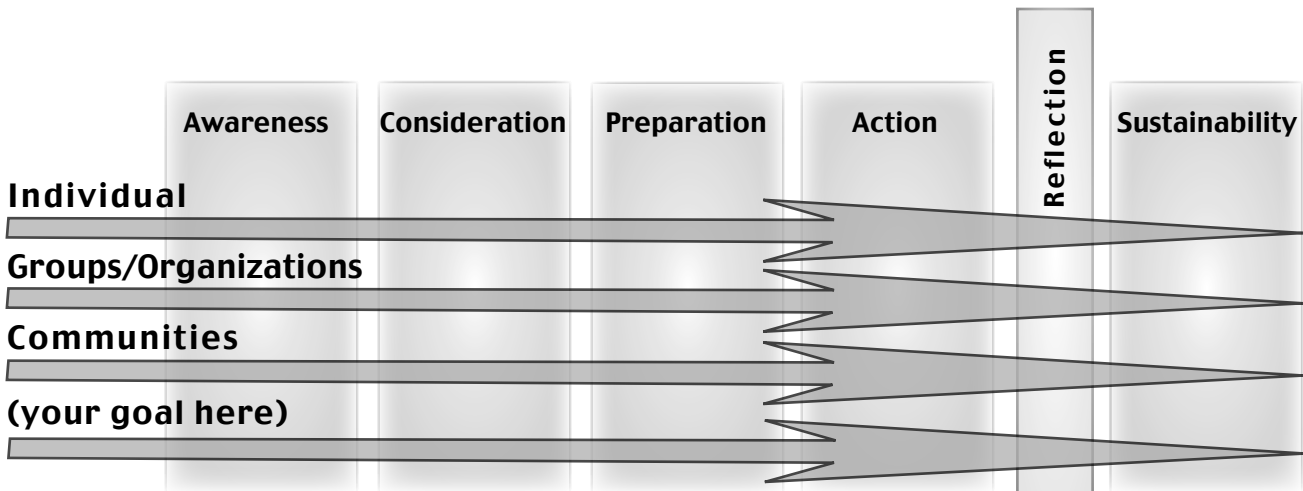
The way we think about individual behavior change can also apply to groups.

Often, as an individual begins to change a behavior, he or she will influence family and friends to change as well. This can create a "snowball effect." Sometimes, focusing our energy on a few key leaders or groups can have a great effect on moving others toward change.

Even as a community moves towards sustaining their efforts, we need to be mindful that people will be coming into and leaving the community. We will still need actions to help new members develop Asset-Building habits.

Evaluation can be very helpful in moving larger groups to change behavior. Through a survey or other measure we can show a community group what kinds of supports or behaviors their kids have, and inspire them to make changes. Using the same instrument later can help these groups stay committed and focused on community engagement.

Never forget the power of personal stories in moving and sustaining community engagement. This is key to creating a feeling of momentum for change that helps to get people "on-board." People want to be involved in things that are exciting and positive. Recognize your successes and celebrate those stories!



Awareness Most members of a community may not be aware of the issue, or they may not believe the issue is relevant to their community.

Consideration Individuals and smaller groups within the community are recognizing the issue and agreeing that action must be taken – the community climate is beginning to acknowledge the necessity of dealing with the issue.

Preparation Planning is occurring, information is being gathered, and resources are being sought and committed.

Action Activity or action is underway, but is still viewed as a new effort – data on the effectiveness of strategies is being collected and reviewed by the community.

Reflection Evaluation of outcomes occurs. This is a time for readjusting and recommitment.

Sustainability The strategies are embedded into the community through the culture, policy, programs, and sustainable action.