

COMMUNITY READINESS ASSESSMENT

PURPOSES & BENEFITS

Conducting a community readiness assessment doesn't have to be complicated. These assessment tools help a group to determine the level of readiness or capacity in the community to address the issues of sexual and domestic violence. This will benefit the collaborative group's work in many ways, including:

- Providing a picture of where the community is presently at in addressing the issues of sexual and domestic violence.
- Ideas for how to move the community to greater levels of readiness and capacity to address the issues of sexual and domestic violence.
- Helping to inform community organizing planning effort in the next step of the toolkit.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The collaborative group can use this tool to:

- Understand what a readiness assessment consists of.
- The benefits of conducting a readiness assessment.
- The group's process steps to develop, conduct and interpret the findings from a readiness assessment.
- Understand a method to assess community readiness to use in their assessment work.
- Understand where the community is presently at in addressing the issues of sexual and domestic violence.
- Help develop an informed community organizing strategic plan (the next step in the toolkit)
- Use the levels of community readiness to move the community to greater levels of readiness and capacity to address the issues of sexual and domestic violence (the next few steps in the toolkit after strategic planning is completed).



COMMUNITY READINESS ASSESSMENT

What is a Readiness Assessment?

A process of gathering and interpreting information (i.e., data) about the community's readiness or capacity to address sexual and domestic violence in the local community, as well as the resources available to address these community problems within the local community. It is important to collect community readiness data from multiple sources.

Why is it important to conduct a Readiness Assessment?

- Sexual and domestic violence affect all communities
- Each community has unique challenges, needs, and strengths related to readiness to address the issues of sexual and domestic violence
- Can be potentially used as a baseline measure for later comparison
- Fosters community ownership and a sense of community among stakeholders
- Helps to develop an informed community organizing strategic plan (the next step in the toolkit)
- Helps in creating goals to increase community readiness and capacity (the next few steps in the toolkit after strategic planning is completed)

What are the steps/ways to Prepare Your Readiness Assessment?

While every readiness assessment looks different based on the stakeholders involved, there are some common steps/elements to be aware of as you create your readiness assessment. Keep in mind that it may take some time to conduct a needs and resources assessment, especially if one has never been done before. However, keep in the mind the goals/benefits listed above. Conducting a readiness assessment doesn't have to be overly complicated or exhaustive. You want to gather the information that you need to know about the community's readiness or capacity to address sexual and domestic violence so that you can develop an informed strategic plan.

1. Establish a Work Group

- Establish a subgroup to lead the process
- It is helpful if members have skills and experience with data, critical thinking, and evaluation, have access to data, are willing to contribute time, and are able to adequately represent the perspective of specific populations

2. Establish a Shared Understanding of the Work

- Develop a common definition for the group
- Define a readiness assessment
- Discuss past experiences conducting readiness assessments
- Decide logistics like: how often the group will meet, expectations for members, responsibilities, documenting progress, and how much time will be devote

3. Define the Geographic Area of Interest

- Consider county or city limits, zip codes, school districts, etc.
- Useful if members of the work group represent the area
- Consider if college and university campus populations should be included – sexual and domestic violence often occur at high rates on college campuses

4. Begin to Develop Questions and Collect Data to Include in the Readiness Assessment

Collecting readiness data involves two components: what the data to collect consists of and how to collect it. There are many ways to ask questions and collect data/information. Each data collection method can be



tailored to fit the amount of time and resources the work group has to invest. Each data collection method also has its own strengths and weaknesses. The work group will need to consider which data collection methods will be most useful. The next section below provides a brief summary of a framework for assessing community readiness or capacity, what questions could be included in a readiness assessment, and some of the common data collection methods.

Methods for Measuring and Collecting Data on Community Readiness

Community Readiness Framework – The following framework provides an overview of each of the levels or stages of community readiness on community issues like sexual and domestic violence. Using a readiness framework can not only help you assess the current readiness state, but also what the next readiness levels consist of, providing clues as to goals to move the community to greater levels of readiness and capacity. Collecting data using this framework can also help to demonstrate change over time, which is another measurable outcome to demonstrate the successes of the collaborative group’s work. Below are the community readiness stages/levels, the description of the stage, the goal to meet in order to move to the next stage and ideas for how to meet the stage goal and move to the next stage of readiness:

Readiness Stage	Stage Description	Stage Goal	Ideas for How to Meet the Goal & Move to the Next Stage of Readiness
No Awareness Stage	Issue is not generally recognized by the community or leaders as a problem (or it may truly not be an issue).	Raise awareness of issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one visits with key community members. • Meet with existing and established groups. • Connect with friends and potential supporters.
Denial/ Resistance Stage	At least some community members recognize that it is a concern, but there is little recognition that it might be occurring locally.	Create awareness of the issues in this community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss descriptive local incidents related to the issue. • Approach and engage local educational/outreach programs to assist in the effort with flyers, posters, or brochures. • Begin to point out media articles that describe local critical incidents. • Prepare and submit articles for church bulletins, local newsletters, club newsletters, etc. • Continue strategies from previous stage.
Vague Awareness Stage	Most feel that there is a local concern, but there is no immediate motivation to do anything about it.	Raise awareness that the community can make changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information at local events. • Make presentations on the issue for existing groups. • Conduct informal surveys to see how people feel about the issue. • Publish newspaper editorials and articles. • Continue strategies from previous stages.
Preplanning Stage	There is clear recognition that something must be done, and there may even be a group addressing it. However, efforts are not focused or detailed.	Raise awareness with concrete ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce information about the issue through presentations and media. • Review existing efforts. • Visit and get investment of community leaders. • Conduct focus groups and make plans. • Increase media exposure through radio and TV PSAs. • Continue strategies from previous stages.

Preparation Stage	Active leaders begin planning in earnest. Community offers modest support of efforts.	Gather existing information with which to plan strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct school surveys. • Conduct community surveys. • Sponsor a community picnic to kick off the effort. • Conduct public forums to develop strategies from the grassroots level. • Utilize key leaders and influential people to speak to groups and participate in local radio and television shows. • Plan how to evaluate the success of your efforts.
Initiation Stage	Enough information is available to justify efforts. Activities are underway.	Provide community-specific information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct in-service training on community readiness for professionals and paraprofessionals. • Plan publicity efforts associated with start-up of activity or efforts. • Attend meetings to provide updates on progress of the effort. • Conduct consumer interviews to identify service gaps, improve existing services and identify key places to post information. • Begin library or Internet search for additional resources and potential funding. • Begin some basic evaluation efforts.
Stabilization Stage	Activities are supported by administrators or community decision makers. Staff are trained and experienced.	Stabilize efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan community events to maintain support for the issue. • Conduct trainings for community professionals and members. • Introduce program evaluation through trainings. • Increase media exposure detailing progress. • Hold recognition events for local supporters/volunteers. • Continue strategies from previous stages.
Confirmation/Expansion	Efforts are in place. Community members feel comfortable using services and they support expansions. Local data are regularly obtained.	Expand and enhance services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize the networking with qualified service agreements. • Prepare a community risk assessment profile. • Publish a localized program services directory. • Maintain a comprehensive database available to the public. • Develop a local speaker's bureau. • Initiate policy change through support of local city officials. • Conduct media outreach on specific data trends related to the issue. • Utilize evaluation data to modify efforts.
High Level of Community Ownership	Detailed and sophisticated knowledge exists about prevalence, causes and consequences. Effective evaluation guides new directions. Model is applied to other issues.	Maintain momentum and continue growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain local business community support and solicit financial support from them. • Diversify funding resources. • Continue more advanced training of professionals and paraprofessionals. • Continue re-assessment of issue and progress made. • Utilize external evaluation and use feedback for program modification. • Track outcome data for use with future grant requests. • Continue progress reports for benefit of community leaders and local sponsorship. At this level the community has ownership of the efforts and will invest themselves in maintaining the efforts.

Community readiness framework adapted from Plested, B., Edwards, R., & Jumper-Thurman, P. (2006, April). *Community readiness: A handbook for successful change*. Fort Collins, CO: Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research.

Measuring Readiness – Measuring community readiness and capacity levels to address sexual and domestic violence includes asking the following types of questions:

- What is the level of awareness of and concern about the issues of sexual and domestic violence and their impact on the community by community members, including key stakeholders, issue influencers, policy makers, etc.?
- What is the level of visibility/recognition of the collaborative group's (and/or, if applicable, other local sexual and domestic violence collaborative group's) work to address sexual and domestic violence by community members, including key stakeholders, issue influencers, policy makers, etc.?
- How many community members, including issue influencers, key stakeholders, policy makers, etc. are supportive of and/or involved in the issues of ending sexual and domestic violence and the work of the collaborative group?
- What policies are currently in place in the local community that support the collaborative group's work changes accomplished (this can also be measured at an organization level when the policy involves an organization, such as a school, for example)?
- Of those policies in place, how many are currently in practice (this can also be measured at an organization level when the policy change involves an organization, such as a school, for example)?

Collecting Readiness Data – Some of the common data collection methods for asking the above readiness questions could include key informant interviews, a survey, or a listening meeting.

1. Key Informant Interviews

These are interviews with important leaders and/or community representatives (public officials, survivor service specialists, abuser/offender treatment specialists, youth counselors, health care providers, administrators or staff of welfare organizations, police chiefs, local pastors). Use the results from your Stakeholder Map work completed during Step 1A – Setting Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Coming Together to identify key informants to interview, especially if they're not actively part of the collaborative group.

Strengths:

- Assesses people who are knowledgeable about the topic

Weaknesses:

- Knowledge may be limited because they do not know about people not being served

2. Surveys

Surveys can be a way to assess the perspectives of a greater number of community representatives.

Strengths:

- Can be representative of whole population

Weaknesses:

- Difficult to collect
- Knowledge may be limited because they do not know about people not being served

3. Listening Meeting

Various community individuals are invited to a meeting(s) and asked about their understanding of readiness and capacity in the community. Some typical key elements of listening meetings include:

- 10-15 individuals
- Predetermined set of open-ended questions
- Variety of people for a focus group or a similar group (i.e. parents, teachers)
- Helps capture attitudes, feelings, beliefs, and behaviors

See the Example Listening Meeting Process at the end of this document as an example guide for facilitating a listening meeting. The questions asked can be adapted to include some or all of the questions listed in the "Measuring Readiness" section of this document above.

Strengths:

- Can help spread the message about the topic

Weaknesses:

- Attendance can be difficult if not widely marketed

Interpret the Data and Identify Key Findings

Following data collection, your workgroup will be in a position to review and interpret the data to identify key findings. This is a process of reviewing the various data sources and answering a few questions as a workgroup that will provide an interpretation of what has been collected. See the List of Questions to Consider at the end of this document to help interpret the data you've collected.

Additional Tips & Key Points to Remember

- In addition to the internal resources in your workgroup to help develop the readiness assessment, remember that KCSDV can also serve as a resource.
- Stay focused on the questions.
- It's the job of the collaborative partners to collectively interpret the meaning of the data and not on any one person, making it more doable.
- The readiness assessment doesn't have to be exhaustive. Remember that your goals you're trying to accomplish with this assessment are to:
 - Get a good sense of community readiness.
 - Help make the case for what you want to do.
 - Get data to inform strategic planning.
 - Use this data to support the strategic plan implementation (i.e., the group's community organizing work).
 - When relevant, use this data to help obtain funding for your collaborative group's community organizing work.

EXAMPLE LISTENING MEETING PROCESS

PURPOSE

The meeting is designed to provide an opportunity for local community residents to have input regarding the strengths and needs of our local community related to sexual and domestic violence. Participants will include members of the community, including business men/ women, leaders of local nonprofits, school administrators/ teachers, etc. The “end-in-mind” of meeting is to identify specific areas that need to be addressed by the community and the collaborative group.

LOGISTICS

Recommended Materials & Logistics:

- Name tags
- One large flipcharts
- Handout of Data
- Voting dots
- Meeting location
- Food/Refreshments

WHEN & WHO	WHAT	NOTES (--) & TAKE AWAYS (->)
5 minutes Who?	<p>- Recently may have heard about local community efforts to better understand the needs of the community and its role in helping address those needs.</p> <p>The findings from your input, as well as other information we are gathering will help us set future direction and help make decisions for the future. We want to make sure we are going as far as possible to end sexual and domestic violence in our local community.</p> <p>Today is a beginning to understanding the potential for future partnerships, activities, and focus. Thank you in advance for coming.</p>	
5 minutes.	Facilitators introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the meeting with stated goals.	-> Goals on flipchart

	<p>Facilitator reviews the goals of the listening meeting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your thoughts and opinions about sexual and domestic violence in our local community • Help in providing direction for future activities <p>Facilitator will emphasize the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information used in conjunction w/ data collected from a variety of sources ○ This information is to help give direction to the collaborative group – Other things to consider as well...this is ONE aspect of the decisions they have to make in the future ○ No one's name will be used in the reported information ○ The session will take no more than 1 ½ hours ○ Turn cell phones to manner mode ○ Restrooms location(s) ○ If you need to leave at anytime, that's fine. We hope you stay for as much of the session as possible. <p>Facilitator asks if there are any questions.</p> <p>Facilitator checks with group to assure that requested accommodations are satisfactory.</p>	<p>-> Take as much time as is necessary to answer any questions the group may have before starting.</p> <p>-> Correct any problems related to accommodations before starting the group.</p>
<p>10 minutes.</p>	<p>Facilitator ask a series of "pop-up" questions to: (a) help in understanding the background of who is participating, (b) create a safe environment, (c) explain the purpose of the focus group, and (d) explain that it is OK to have different opinions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Let's get to know each other a little bit... ○ Raise your hand (or say yes) if you can answer yes to any of these questions... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I have lived in XXX all my life. ▪ I moved here from a different place. ▪ XXX (whatever season it is currently) is my favorite 	<p>- - Do not record responses.</p>

	<p>season in Kansas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I wish it were XXX (whatever season is coming next) already. ▪ I wish it was XXX (whatever season is the opposite of the current season) again. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everything is just the way it needs to be in our community...no room for improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a lot changing in our community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I believe that we can successfully address the challenges that face our community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I think it is important for the collaborative group to listen to community residents. 	<p>-> No matter what we think of the weather, we all care about Kansas and Kansans. We all have different opinions and that is OK. Don't have to agree all the time.</p> <p>-> As with anything, we are happy some of the time and not so happy other times. We want to hear about what is working well and what is not and about what could be done differently in the future.</p> <p>-> Change is always happening and something that takes planning to address. That is partly why we wanted to hear from you. Things are changing and lets be prepared.</p> <p>-> Thank you for being honest. Keep it honest throughout the meeting.</p> <p>-> Concerned community residents are the real experts at how those services should be run. We want to know more about how they can better serve you in the future and how we can all work together to make the system better.</p>
30 minutes	<p>Facilitator tells the group... A few definitions are likely useful to make sure we are all on the same page...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate partner – People who are married, married but separated, formerly married, dating casually or in committed relationship, cohabiting, or former/current boyfriend/girlfriend. • Domestic Violence means physical, sexual, or threats of physical or sexual harm, emotional, economic abuse or isolation by a current or former intimate partner. • Sexual Violence means physical, verbal or threats of harm that are sexual in nature. This can be harassing comments, jokes, unwanted physical contact that is sexual in nature of 	<p>-> Create a brainstorming environment. No judgment of ideas, the more ideas the better, piggy-backing on someone else's ideas is fine.</p>

	<p>any kind. This can be by someone the victim knows (e.g., acquaintance, relative, friend, partner or a stranger).</p> <p>OK, let's get started on hearing from you. Let's talk about you and your hopes for the future. Let's brainstorm a list.</p> <p>What would our community look like if we were successful in ending sexual and domestic violence?</p> <p>What are some of the related strengths of our community to help?</p> <p>What are some of the related challenges we face as a community?</p>	<p>-> Flipchart for each question</p>
--	---	--

<p>15 minutes.</p>	<p>Facilitator tells the group... Focus the remainder on the TOP Challenges based on common themes/ideas.</p> <p>Wow, that was great information. Here is our next step, we need to look at all of this information and decide on some themes... a word or two that captures lots of these ideas. How about the word... (based on information use words like communication, funding, transportation, etc.).</p> <p>Now that we have themes, it will help us to know which themes you think are most important in helping end sexual and domestic violence – meaning the ones that needs most of our attention as we plan for the future. Use your dot to “vote” for the most important themes.</p>	<p>-> Develop several themes based on all information on the walls.</p> <p>-> Vote with dots (IF NEEDED). Each person gets three dots and will use these to place one on each theme they think is important.</p>
--------------------	--	--

<p>30 minutes.</p>	<p>Facilitators “dig deeper”... Let’s look at the “most important” theme. Tell us more! What’s missing?</p> <p>OK, let’s say we want to get this area “Just right.” What would it look like if it was “Just Right?”</p> <p>Now if we get it “Just Right” there would be things that would be important to continue to do, things that could be left behind, and maybe other things to add.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To get it “Just Right” what needs to be continued? ▪ To get it “Just Right” what needs to be changed? ▪ To get it “Just Right” what else would be needed/what is missing? 	<p>-> Facilitators switch roles to allow for observation of group dynamics and interaction with facilitators.</p> <p>-> Probe for stories or examples.</p> <p>-> Complete the “dig deeper” and the “just right” for one theme before moving to another theme.</p>
<p>15 minutes.</p>	<p>Finally, given what we have talked about ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What can our collaborative group do to help address these ideas? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What should they be doing more of? ▪ What could they be doing less of? 	<p>-> Create a brainstorming environment. No judgment of ideas, the more ideas the better, piggy-backing on someone else’s ideas is fine.</p>
<p>5 minutes.</p>	<p>Wrap-up:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thank participants for their willingness to attend and openly share their ideas. 	

LIST OF QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What does this data tell us about magnitude of sexual and domestic violence in our community?
2. What does this data tell us about possible assets/resources to capitalize on?
3. What are the strengths and limitations of this data (e.g. who was left out, how was data collected)?
4. Do we have a clearer picture of the community's perspective on the issues of sexual and domestic violence?
5. Do we have the data we need to develop an informed strategic plan based upon the community's perspective?
6. Does the data give us clues that will help to inform our community organizing efforts?

If you answer "No" to question 8, 9 and/or 10 above, also ask:

7. What information do we need and where can we find it?
Note: If the additional information needed isn't available, then move forward knowing that you've obtained the data that you can in order to develop an informed strategic plan.