

COMMUNITY BUILDING

STRENGTHENING SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Best Practices

A sense of community is an intangible yet vital component of a healthy community. It encompasses elements such as image, spirit, character and pride, along with processes such as communication, inter-group relations, and networking. Developing a sense of community is a challenging long-term endeavor, requiring the hard work of many people. To develop and/or strengthen sense of community, the following are important points to consider.

- Every living person has some gift or capacity of value to others. A strong community recognizes this and helps individuals use their capacities. This helps people feel valued, empowered, and connected to the people around them and their community
- Recognize and appreciate the uniqueness of each community member, and what they have to contribute.
- Encourage and celebrate diversity. As well as racial and cultural, include diversity of opinion, viewpoints, and ideas.
- Allow people to share their spirit. This includes accepting people's emotions and stories.
- Encourage celebration in the community. Celebrate small as well as big successes.
- Encourage learning together as well as playing together.
- Promote open communication about everything that is going on in the community. This facilitates interest and involvement.
- Focus on open communication about what is going on in the community and how people can be involved. This will facilitate interest in activities.
- Encourage positive communication about the community, leaders, volunteers, and activities. This will help facilitate a positive image both within and outside the community.
- Make volunteering in a community easy and rewarding so members will enjoy their experience and have pride in their work.