

# Engaging All Voices to Build Community Wellness



## Your Presenter



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## Tamarack Learning Centre: Theory of Change

We believe there are **five interconnected practices** that lead to impactful **community change**. We support our learners in the following areas:



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## Think - Pair - Share



What are issues and/or questions you have in community engagement?



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# Creating Community Wellness Building Blocks

Authentic community engagement is the intentional process of **co-creating solutions** in partnership with **people who know best**, through their own experiences



# The Community Engagement Paradox

PARADOX



The internet and social media have made it easier to connect

**BUT, at the Same Time....**

- The complexity of issues;
- Scarcity of funding; and,
- Shrinking public attention spans

**Has made the job of community changemakers more difficult than ever.**

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# Common Engagement Challenges

- Lack of representation
- High community expectations
- Lack of equity
- Negative Past Experiences
- Consultation and Volunteer Fatigue
- Engagement as a Checkbox
- Directional shifts/no follow through
- Potential Conflict
- No coordination across dept.
- Community dissatisfaction with engagement techniques selected
- Limited internal capacity/scarce resources / facilitation skills
- People don't show up
- Overbearing participants



## Loneliness: A Growing Reality



- 2015 Angus Reid Survey:
  - **32% of Canadians** report a very strong **sense of belonging** to their community;
  - **38% of Canadians** report they “**don’t feel they have a stake**” in their local community
- 2014 Statistics Canada data:
  - **1 in 5** older Canadians describe themselves as “**lonely or dissatisfied with life**”;
  - **64%** of Canadian post-secondary students reported feeling **very lonely** within the last 12 months



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## The Importance of Community Leadership

“Given the task of rejuvenating a region and the choice of \$ 50 million, or \$ 2 million and 20 committed local leaders, we would choose the smaller amount of money and the committed leaders.”

- McKinsey & Company (1994)



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## The Sparks of Resurgent Cities



Source: [Lessons from Resurgent Cities](#),  
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

- Core Drivers: Leadership and multi-sector collaboration
- Community Catalysts: key institutional leaders, collaboration, a focus on economic development
- City revitalization: instigators who take responsibility for bringing about improvement.”

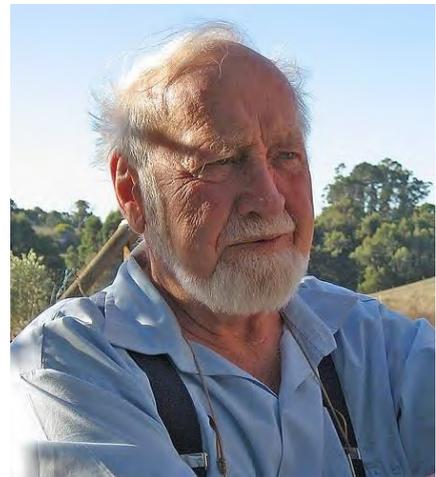


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## The Importance of Community Leadership

**“I can’t save the world on my own...it will take at least three of us.”**

- *Bill Mollison,*  
*A Permaculture Movement Founder*



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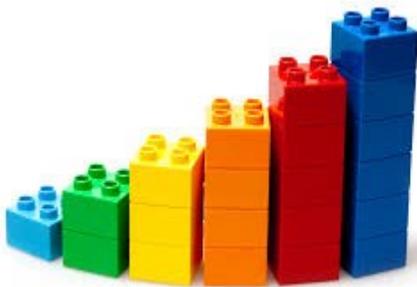
## Benefits of Engagement for Individuals



- Humans are hardwired to live in community but evidence shows that **our actual experiences** of community have been **steadily declining** since the 1960s.
- It is estimated that **6 million Canadians** are socially isolated and loneliness is as harmful to health:
  - It has the same health impact as smoking **15 cigarettes** a day
  - Social isolation can be **twice as deadly as obesity**;
  - Increases the **risk of dementia by 64%**



## 7 Building Blocks for Authentic Engagement



1. Set appropriate expectations
2. Always educate
3. Close the loop
4. Build relationships
5. Recognize different kinds of expertise
6. Establish ownership
7. Take an asset-based approach



## Community Engagement Continuum

|              | INFORM   | CONSULT   | INVOLVE  | COLLABORATE   | EMPOWER  |
|--------------|--|---|--|---|--|
|              |   |  |   |          |             |
| <b>GOAL</b>  | To provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and solutions. | To obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.        | To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood. | To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision from development to solution. | Shared leadership of community-led projects with final decision-making at the community level. |
| <b>STYLE</b> | "Here's what's happening."   | "Here are some options, what do you think?"                                       | "Here's a problem, what ideas do you have?"  | "Let's work together to solve this problem."  | "You care about this issue and are leading an initiative, how can we support you?"             |

### At your table

Discuss a recent engagement event that you coordinated.

- Where did it sit on the engagement continuum?
- What did you do to create effective engagement?

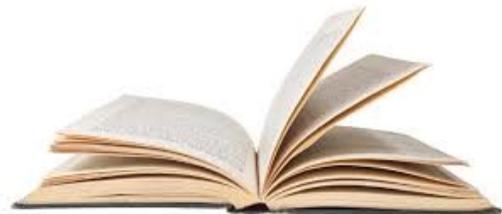


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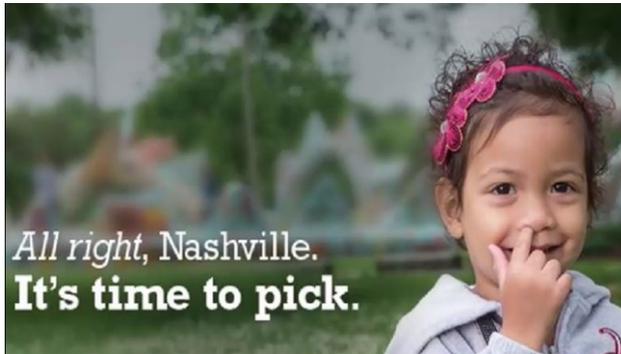
# Authentic Community Engagement

## *Authentic Community Engagement* **Always Educate**

It's important for the community  
to be well-informed for  
so bi-directional trust can  
be established.



## Authentic Community Engagement Always Educate



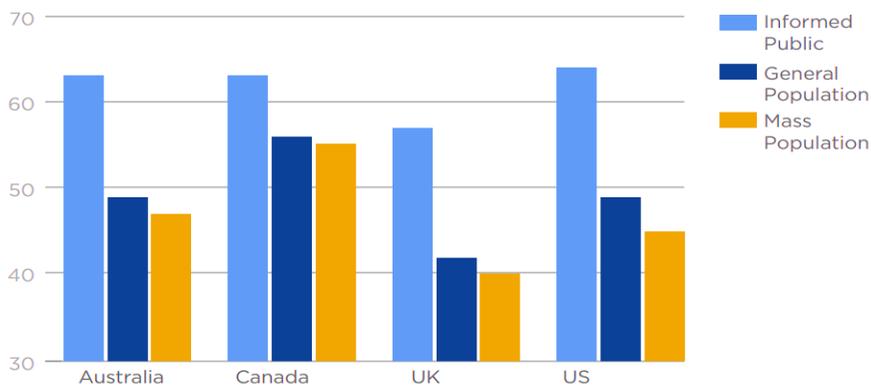
Inform your community in ways that cut through the clutter:

- Videos, infographics
- Plain language, humour, surprise
- Explain why it should matter to them
- In the right channels
- Through word of mouth



## Authentic Community Engagement The Link Between Information & Trust

2015 Public Trust in Institutions



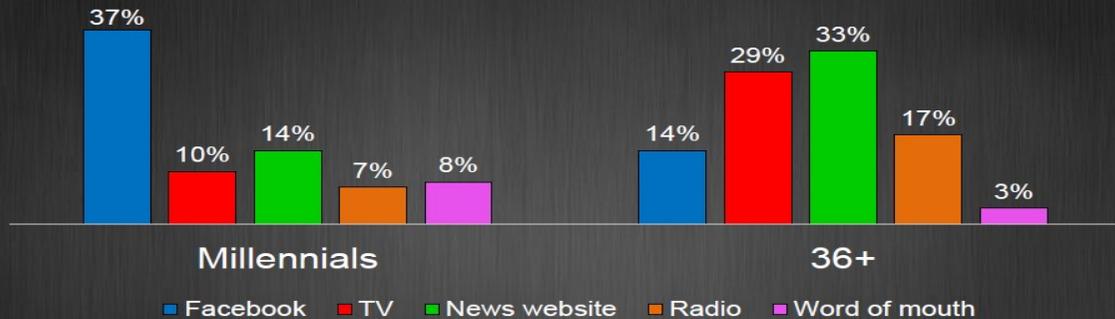
Source: <http://www.edelman.com/insights/intellectual-property/2016-edelman-trust-barometer/global-results/barometer/global-results/>



## Authentic Community Engagement

# Different Audiences Rely On Different Sources

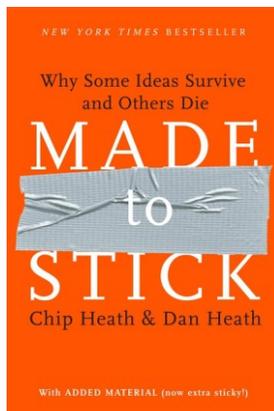
If a major news event occurred, where would you most likely hear about it first?



ABACUS DATA

## Authentic Community Engagement

# Make Your Message Sticky



- Sticky Messages: A great idea + positive results
- Effectively communicating your ideas and results is **IMPORTANT** for building momentum
- Messages that Stick are:
  - Understood
  - Remembered
  - Changes something for the receiver



## *Authentic Community Engagement*

# 6 Principles to Create a Sticky Message



### Principle #1 SIMPLE

- Prioritize your information
- Focus on your core message
- Can you use an analogy?



### Principle #2 UNEXPECTED

- Get attention with the unexpected
- Keep attention with curiosity
- For your message to stick the audience must want it



### Principle #3 CONCRETE

- Use sensory language.
- Paint a mental picture
- **The Velcro Theory:** hook many types of memory into the delivery of your message



### Principle #4 CREDIBLE

Ideas get credibility from:

- Outside authorities
- Within (people they know & trust)
- Human scale statistics
- Vivid details



### Principle #5 EMOTIONAL

- People care about people (not numbers)
- Remember WIIFY (What's in it for me?)
- An appeal to identify can trump self-interest



### Principle #6 STORIES

Stories drive action through:

- Simulation (shows what to do)
- Inspiration (motivation to do it)
- Stories help show new possibilities & how an issue could change

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## *Authentic Community Engagement*

# Tips for Closing the Loop



- Thank the community for their participation
- Tell them how their feedback is being used
- Show the impact of their contribution
- Always educate
- Be creative and have fun in how you report back



# Tips for Closing the Loop

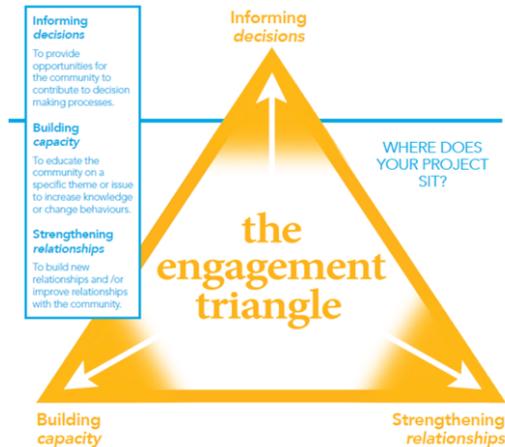


## Your Task

On one sheet of paper – design your organization or collaborative approach to engaging citizens in a way that they can understand what you are doing.

Share at your table.

## Authentic Community Engagement Build Relationships



Community Engagement is no longer solely about decision-making.

- Increase knowledge
- Empower local groups
- Strengthen community resilience



Source: [www.capire.com.au](http://www.capire.com.au)

## Authentic Community Engagement Tips for Building Relationships



- Have a flexible agenda that allows time for story sharing
- Listen well (try appreciative inquiry)
- Focus on shared goals and shared experiences



# The Voice of Community – An Asset Based Approach



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**Content Experts** are professionals with formal power, knowledge, tools, and resources

**Context Experts** are citizens with lived and living experience

# Adopt the Lens of Assets

**A Deficit Lens Focuses On...**



**An Asset Lens Focuses On...**



**“Like all magnificent concepts ABCD ignites the imagination. It’s impossible to look at the world in the same way once you see it through the lens of ABCD.”**

- Al Etmanski



## Asset-Based Community Development The Tools of Community

“Institutions and associations are both important “tools” for the work of communities. Each has its particular purpose. What doesn’t work is when we use the wrong tool.”

- John McKnight



|                                      |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>CONTROL</b>                       | <b>CONSENT</b>       |
| <b>PRODUCES GOODS &amp; SERVICES</b> | <b>PROVIDES CARE</b> |
| <b>CLIENTS OR CONSUMER</b>           | <b>CITIZEN</b>       |
| <b>NEEDS</b>                         | <b>CAPACITY</b>      |

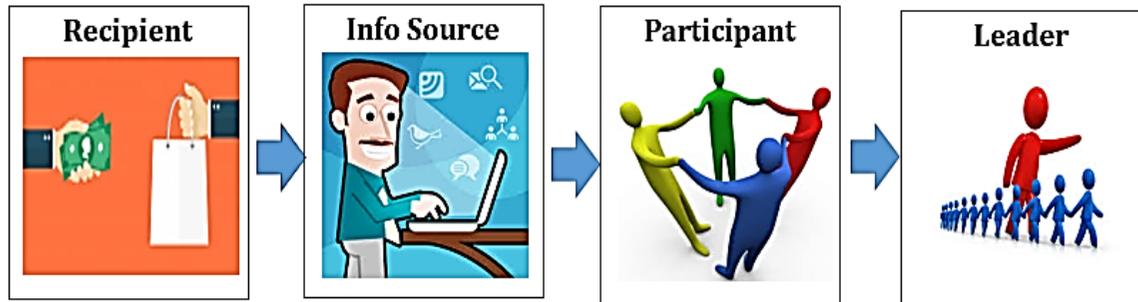


Source: ABCDInstitute.org



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## Asset-Based Community Development The Progression of Citizen Power



Source: ABCDInstitute.org

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## Asset-Based Community Development 3 Planning Questions



ABCD creates a virtuous circle of sustainable community action.

1. What can we do with our neighborhood resources?
2. What can we do with our neighborhood resources if we get some outside help?
3. What can't we do with our resources and therefore must be done by outsiders?



Source: ABCDInstitute.org

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# The Benefits of Community-Led Development

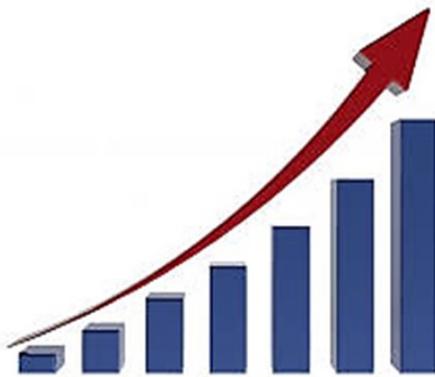


- Builds on **local** knowledge, character and culture
- Results in more holistic and **innovative projects**
- **Multiplies** available resources
- Creates **ownership** that leads to less vandalism and greater maintenance, programming and use by community
- Builds stronger **sense of community**



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## Asset-Based Community Development 4 Reasons It's Gaining Momentum



1. Simple
2. Usable
3. Universal
4. Tested and Proven Effective

 Source: ABCDInstitute.org



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## 3 Observations of Asset Based Community Development



Source: Al Etmanski



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1. **Communities** become healthier and more resilient
2. **Citizens**, acting through voluntary associations are the richest source of social innovation
3. **Professionals** can undermine the capacity of individuals, families, networks and associations to take responsibility for each other and the planet.

## 3 Challenges With ABCD



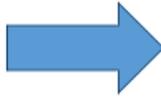
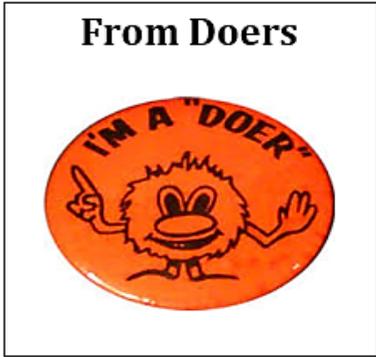
Source: Al Etmanski



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1. **ABCD is Not a Recipe** – Applying ABCD requires discipline, rigour and commitment.
2. **ABCD's Relationship to Power** – ABCD is still sorting out its relationship to powerful community structures such as government, professionals and money.
3. **ABCD is Counter-cultural** – ABCD is an approach that stands in contrast to powerful societal forces including: consumerism, the economy, deference to experts and technical solutions.

# Asset-Based Community Development Organizational Mindset Shift



Source: ABCDInstitute.org

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## Building a Multi-Sector Approach

## The Case for Multi-Sector Collaboration



- No one sector, working alone can effectively address complex issues
- Complexity is best addressed with a multi-sector approach
- “Context experts” are as necessary as “content experts” in generating effective solutions to complex issues.



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## Harnessing Collective Wisdom



Stances that support the arising of collective wisdom

- Suspend certainty
- See the whole
- Seek diverse perspectives
- Welcome all that is arising
- Trust in the transcendent



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## 4 Leadership Roles to Build Community

1. **Consciousness Raiser** – Invest in raising awareness about an issue (e.g. a speakers' series)
2. **Convener** – Host meetings and gatherings where citizens can meet and share ideas
3. **Catalyst** – Make something happen in order to kick-start other actions (e.g. building a plaza to spark economic development)
4. **Facilitator** – Offer high-quality facilitation so meetings are productive and generate action



Source; *Community Building: How to Do It & Why It Matters* by Ed Everett



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## Building Community Wellness

What will you change in your engagement processes which will build community wellness?



- Comments?
- Questions?

