

CB101: Community Building

Overview

CB101 - Community Building Basics was originally designed and prepared by Brenda Herchmer with input from Mia Lee and editing by Caroline Sparks. Development was funded by the Arctic Inspiration Prize. CB101 was completely revised for Program delivery by Caroline Sparks.

Description:

This learning event explores the meaning and value of “community.” Recreation offers many opportunities to build and strengthen community. A community development approach engages the people in your community and encourages positive approaches to local issues.

Learning Objectives:

- Explore the meaning and importance of community.
- Identify some basic elements of a community development approach.
- Develop a personal approach to building community through recreation.

Required Learning Activities:

- RLA: My Community’s Personality
- RLA: My Community Philosophy

Week 1:

We use the word ‘community’ a lot without really exploring its meaning. Community is not just about place. It is about people, their shared experiences, and their relationships that foster a sense of belonging. It is through community that people fulfill human needs (food & shelter, identity & belonging, learning and accomplishment). Community building is a strengths-based approach that works with (not for) local people. Recreation builds community through activities that foster belonging and a commitment to wellbeing and quality of life.

Key teaching points:

- “Members of a community have a sense of trust, belonging, safety, and caring for each other. They have an individual and collective sense that they can, as part of that community, influence their environments and each other. The treasured feeling of community comes from shared experiences and a sense of... shared history. As a result, people know who is and isn’t part of their community.” (Chavis & Lee, 2015)
- Community forms in ways other than geography. It develops through interests and common characteristics. Recreation, sport, arts and culture; as well as faith, school, volunteer and work settings foster community. Internet has changed our world and we now find communities online. We also need community for a strong economy, to protect the environment, and to learn together.
- Remember the goals of the Framework for Recreation in Canada? Recreation is a natural, safe and non-threatening place to build a sense of community. Have you considered that youth are attracted to gangs as it gives them a sense of belonging and community? How much better to find belonging through recreation and sport.

Reflective questions to encourage learning:

- What is ‘community’?
- Where do you find a sense of community?
- What do you experience when you are part of a community? Are all experiences positive?
- How does or could recreation strengthen your community?
- What does Zach tell us about the importance of recreation and community?
- What do you value most about your community?

Week 2:

Community building is field of practice sometimes referred to as community development. Its commitment is to engage and empower local people to decide and act upon issues and opportunities that impact their wellbeing and quality of life for all. Building community involves engaging the right people—those with lived experiences—an empowering them by developing their strengths, assets and

capacity to achieve positive outcomes. Recreation leaders who develop a personal philosophy oriented towards community building will contribute in ways that benefit the greater community.

Key teaching points:

- Community Building in recreation settings is focused on supporting and empowering people to build relationships and a culture that enriches lives, promotes active and healthy lifestyles, and provides opportunities for individual and community growth.
- Engaging community is about bringing people together and developing relationships among different people and multiple sectors. These relationships will help the community take control and act upon issues and opportunities.
- When working with community, there needs to be a role and place for everyone. Value knowledge gained from lived experience. Reduce and remove barriers to participation. Keep in mind that not everyone will participate, but give them the choice of whether to participate or not.
- People are a community's most valuable resource. Invest in them and treat them as such. Being inclusive empowers and educates others which leads to more effective solutions.
- The World Health Organization (2019) explains 'empowerment' as a process through which people "gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their live" Control is gained by increasing assets and attributes, and building "capacities to gain access, partners, networks and/or a voice."
- Through recreation, social capital is increased. "Social capital is the value that comes from social networks, or groupings of people, which allow individuals to achieve things they couldn't on their own" E. Bakken Center, 2016).
- Using a community building approach in recreation helps our activities and programs contribute to broader outcomes and the Benefits of Recreation. Recreation can strengthen community leadership, build trusted relationships, foster health and wellbeing, encourage strong self-esteem and positive self-image, and improve quality of life and happiness. Recreation leaders who develop a personal philosophy oriented towards community building will contribute in ways that benefit the greater community.

Reflective questions to encourage learning:

- What does 'engage' mean? In what ways do you engage your community?
- Who are the people with lived experience ('context experts') in your community? How can you include them?
- What does 'to empower' mean? What does it feel like to be empowered as an individual or as part of a community?
- What are the strengths and assets of your community?
- What are some of the barriers to community building you have experienced?
- What opportunities do we have to strengthen community through recreation?

Required Learning Activity #1: My Community's Personality

Complete by: Sunday after the first conference call

Each community is unique, shaped by its people, geography, culture, economy, etc. Recreation encourages connections and participation in local activities which, in turn, strengthens the community.

Think about your own community. In a post, describe:

1. Your community's personality as it is now. You may want to describe your community as if it was a person, an animal, or something in nature.
2. The personality you would like your community to become.
3. How recreation can help your community become that personality.

Required Learning Activity #2: My Community Philosophy

Complete by: Sunday after the second conference call

This RLA encourages you to develop your own philosophy about how you work with community. Your philosophy comes from your heart (values), head (beliefs), and hands (actions).

1. Reflect on the discussions and ideas shared in CB101 and the role of recreation in building community. Develop 3 or more responses to each of the heart, head, and hands statements.
 - In my heart, I value...
 - In my head, I believe...
 - From my hands, I will...
2. In a post, share your philosophy and explain how your philosophy influences you as a recreation leader. Choose to use a template or your own format.

Resources:

- CB101 Presentation
- CB101 RLA#1 Examples - https://files.recnorth.ca/LEres/CB101_RLA-Sample.pdf
- CB101 RLA#2 Example - https://files.recnorth.ca/LEres/CB101_RLA2-Sample.pdf
- My community philosophy template - https://files.recnorth.ca/LEres/CB101_RLA2-Template.pdf

Activities:

- 2 Required Learning Activities

References:

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