

The ABCD Approach

- Asset-based community development PRINCIPLES:
 - Asset-based (built on positives, strengths, opportunities),
 - Relationship driven (centered on the people in the neighborhood working together), and
 - Locally focused (place based).
- Asset-based community development PRACTICES:
 - Asset mapping (finding all the good things), and
 - Asset mobilizing (doing something with the good things).



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The Choice of Perspective . . .



} **People and Communities have
*needs and deficiencies***

} **People and Communities have
*ideas, skills, and talents***



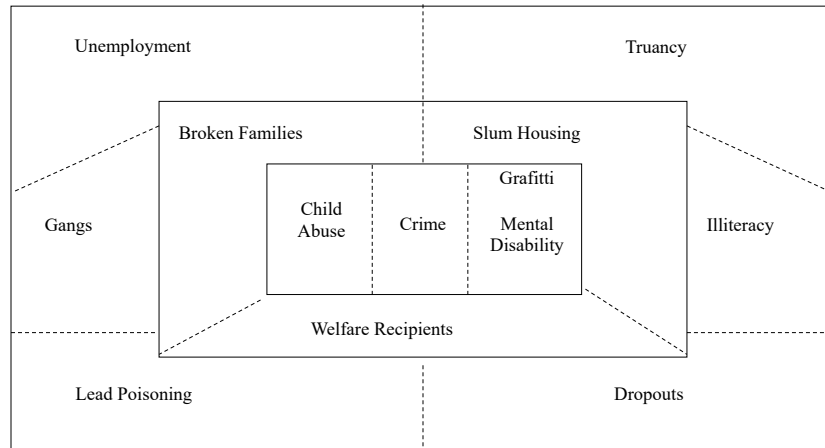
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Negative Assessment



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What's Wrong With This View?

From the Inside:

- The community may start to see itself negatively.
- Residents may withdraw and become isolated from their neighbors.
- Community members may feel hopeless and defeated, unable to have a positive impact on issues.
- Residents may stop trusting the agencies and institutions that should be working with them.

From the Outside:

- Agencies and institutions may see residents as part of the problem and not trust them to contribute to solutions.
- Outside investments may go to professionals with certain kinds of expertise, not to residents with local knowledge.
- Residents may be excluded from decision making and end up with programs and services that represent other people's idea, not their own.



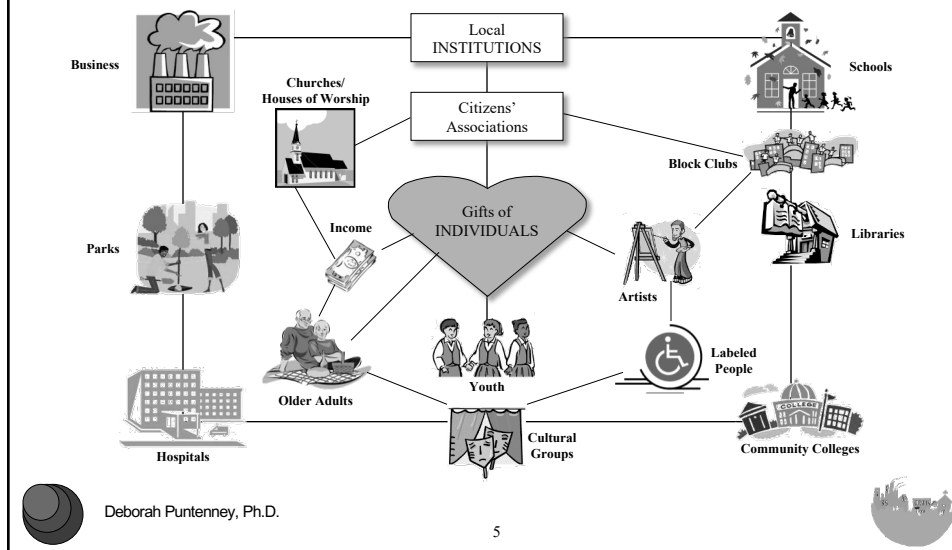
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Positive Assessment: Asset Map



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What's Right About This View?

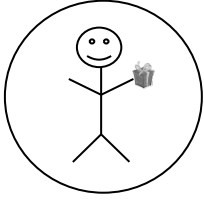
- The community embraces a more positive self-image.
- The community displays a “can do” attitude.
- Residents are validated as worthwhile, capable people.
- Residents see possibilities and not just problems.
- People see themselves as the potential producers of their own well being.
- The community feels more confident and powerful.
- Residents see that they are not alone, that there are partners for them in community work.

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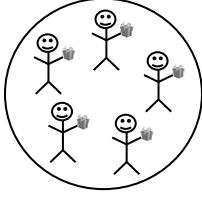
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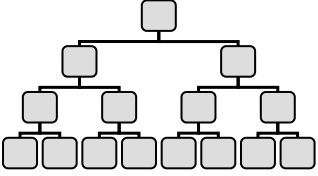
Gifts of Individuals




Power of Local Associations




Supportive Capacity of Institutions





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What's Really Different?

- Instead of seeing problems, we focus on opportunity.
- Instead of listening only to outside experts, we listen to neighborhood residents.
- Credibility and power come from relationships, not credentials.
- “Leader” describes every involved person, not just a few.
- We move from serving people to empowering people.
- Everyone can contribute, and everyone’s contribution is important.



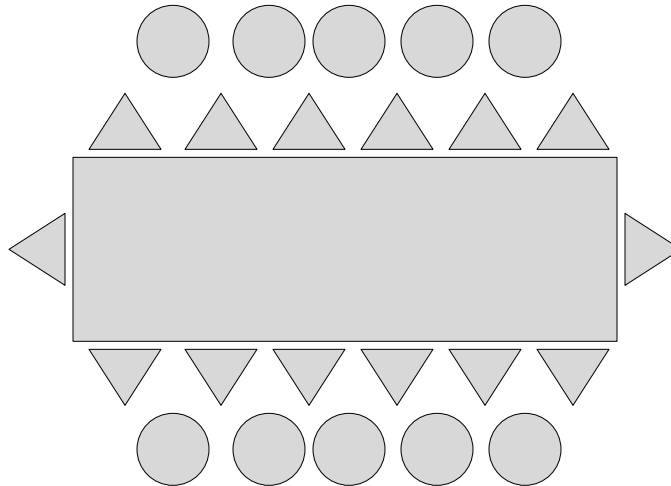
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Typical “Community” Table



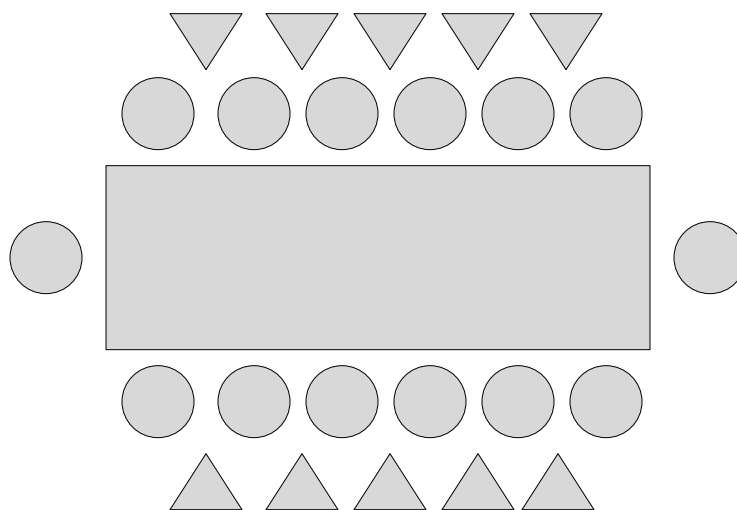
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Setting the Community Table



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Determinants of Community Well Being

Determinants of a healthy community:

- Social Relationships – how much time we spend with friends, family, community . . .
- Physical Environment – where we live, the quality of the housing, streets, and parks, what’s in the air . . .
- Economic Environment – availability of jobs, level of income of residents, commercial and retail opportunities . . .
- Personal Behaviors – what we eat, how much we drink, whether we smoke, whether we exercise . . .
- Access to medical care – can we get help when we need it . . .

Determinants of a safe community:

- Residents who know each other.
- Residents who act together in public.
- Residents who work with the institutions charged with helping keep communities safe.
- In other words: collective efficacy, or the ability to work together to achieve a vision.



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How Do Those Things Happen?

1. Residents know about and build on the community’s assets, capacities, skills, and opportunities.
2. Community building efforts seek broad-based participation, value collaboration, and welcomes everyone’s contribution.
3. Residents know each other, trust each other, and work together to build their vision while focused on positives.
4. Community builders take ownership, leadership, and pride in the work they are doing.
5. Residents advocate for both healthy individual behavior AND the policy changes that will support healthy living.



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Six Types of Community Assets

Actors

1. Talents and skills of local people.
 2. Associations, and the network of relationships they represent.
 3. Institutions, agencies, and professional entities.
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Context

4. Infrastructure and physical assets:
 - Land, property, buildings, equipment.
5. Economic assets:
 - Productive work of individuals, consumer spending power.
 - Local economy, local business assets.
6. Cultural assets.



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What Do You Do With These Assets?

- 1. What do we want to do?**
 - What are our goals?
 - What is our vision for a healthier community?
- 2. What do we have here that we can start with?**
 - What are our assets and capacities?
 - Who is willing to participate?
- 3. Who else should be involved?**
 - What kinds of support will residents need?
 - Which organizations and institutions can we partner with?
 - Who else needs to know about what we're working on?



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