

Healthy Transition Initiative: Action Steps for Policy Development

<http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/HTItoolkit/>

Created by HTI Program Directors, Healthy Transitions Initiative

Step 1: Define your issue

These include identifying the core problem, defining it in a way that is appropriate to the community, and determining the focus. It will be helpful to view the issue through the political, moral, social, and cultural lenses of the community. In general, the broader the focus, the more time and resources it takes to achieve desired impact.

Step 2: Define the “community”

In the technology-based environment of today, community is more than where people live, but also includes how people are connected to a common interest or issue. Usually, the smaller the community, the more concrete and action-oriented the policy language can be. As the community grows in size and complexity, the policy language tends to be more general reflecting guidance, rather than actions.

It's important to understand the selected “community”, its political, cultural and social landscape, in ways that helps or hinders the action.

- a. How cohesive is the community and how do people network?
- b. What are the attitudes towards marginalized group?
- c. What is the community's worldview (norms, values, behaviors, attitude, and hidden rules)?
- d. What resources does the community have (time, money, expertise, etc.)?
- e. How do people communicate and how is information disseminated?
- f. Who are the opinion leaders (formal and informal)?

Step 3: Gathering information about the issue

The information includes what (What's going on?) and why (Why is it this way?). The more we understand about the issue and the context (political, moral, social and cultural) that shapes the issue, the more appropriate the policy action will be and its likelihood for success.

Critical information includes:

- a. How significant is the issue?
 - What is the prevalence rate and magnitude of the issue?
 - Is there disparity embedded in the issue?
 - How has the issue cost the community (human and financial)?
- b. What are the political, moral, social and cultural contexts that contribute to the issue or allow the issue to exist until today?
- c. What is the relationship of the issue to the core belief or value held by the community?
- d. What has worked to keep this issue from getting worse?
- e. Who is most affected by the issue and why?
- f. Who may benefit or lose from the policy action and why?

You can gather information from reviewing documents, conducting surveys, and talking to people. Involve the community in interpreting the data as it often reveal rich insight on what is really going on beneath the surface. It's also important to talk to different people to gather information as there will

be information that you don't realize are critical for the policy action.

Step 4: Identify what you want to achieve with the policy action

Clearly-articulated objectives will facilitate the development of a well-thought policy. The objective should correspond with the information that you have gathered and address the causes of the issue.

Step 5: Identify the type of policy appropriate for the issue, objectives, and the community

There are many types of policy and each has its distinct development process and impact. For example, procedure, standards or guidelines may be adequate if you intend to impact an agency. A Memorandum of Understanding may be appropriate for multi agencies. Legislation or regulation is for bigger and more complex system or community. It is important to select the type of policy that is feasible for the objective, resources, and the desired impact.

Step 6: Organize a Policy Team of people critical for the policy development

The Policy Team should have diverse representations of key stakeholders including leadership, management, line staff, community partners, advocates, young people, and family members. The diverse points of views help develop a well thought-out policy and minimize unintended consequences.

The Policy Team should establish common vision and agreed-upon course of action. Each member is committed to the objectives and the collaborative problem solving style emphasizing creativity and out-of-the box thinking. Learning is part of the policy development process and team members need to constantly ask themselves what information or knowledge they need to acquire for policy work.

Step 7: Conduct policy readiness assessment

The Policy Team conducts the policy readiness assessment to gather information on environmental opportunities and challenges that can facilitate or hinder policy development. Based on the assessment, the Team will develop strategies to improve its readiness level.

Step 8: Identify a team leader (individual or organization) to oversee the policy development process

The team leader oversees the process by keeping the team focused, holding each member accountable for the tasks, and maintaining team cohesion. The team leader assumes the overall responsibility to coordinate the efforts, monitor the progress, alert the Team on obstacles and coordinate efforts to problem solve. The assessment may produce information that helps in selecting the team leader.

Step 9: Identify the types of support needed for the policy

Based on the assessment results, identify the types of supports that need to be generated for the proposed policy. Leadership commitment is critical and support from the field (including advocates, youth and families, and providers) helps generate buy-in beyond the policy group.

Step 10: Develop action steps to move the policy action forward

Identify areas of opportunities and challenges from the assessment and develop strategies to maintain or take advantage of the opportunities and overcome challenges.

Critical Elements of Policy Development

Community Ownership of the Issue: To what extent do community stakeholders believe that the identified issue and the policy action are important for the “community” each represents? Identify community stakeholders, including youth and families

Community Knowledge about the Issue: To what extent do community stakeholders understand the issue and the policy development process?

Leadership: To what extent are appointed leaders and influential community members supportive of the issue and the direction of the policy action?

Bringing every one into the decision making process including youth and families

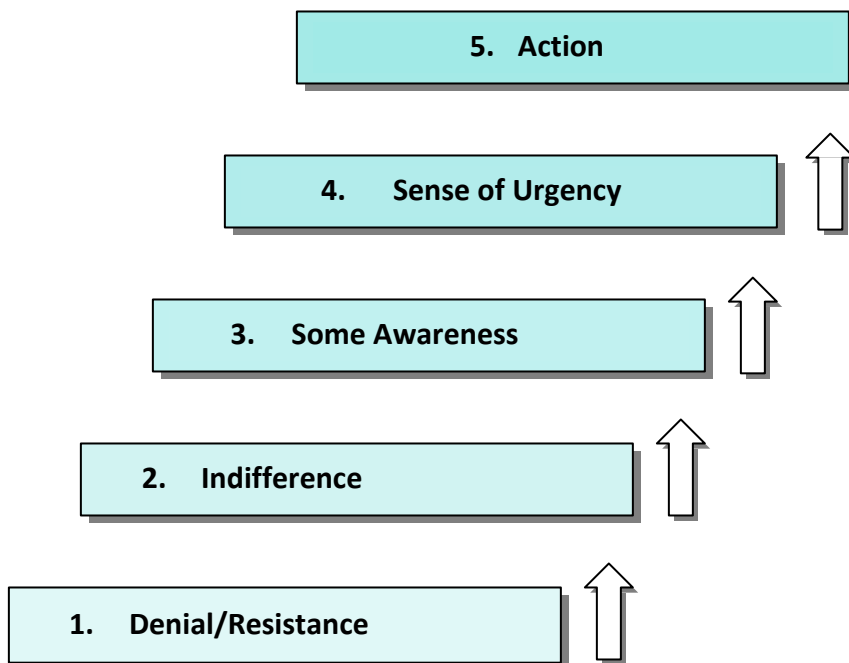
Community Climate: What is the prevailing attitude of the community toward the issue? Is there a sense of urgency that something needs to be done?

Community Collaboration toward a Common Goal: To what extent do community stakeholders solve problems and resolve conflicts in a collaborative manner?

Allocation of Resources Needed: To what extent are resources – people, time, money, space, etc. – available to support the policy action?

Your community’s status with respect to each of the critical element establishes a profile of the opportunities and challenges for the proposed policy action.

Stages of Readiness



Community Ownership of the Issue

Stages	Characteristics	Strategies Moving Forward
1. Denial/ Resistance	At least some stakeholders hold an unfriendly attitude toward the issue and oppose the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct public awareness campaign and social marketing • Develop elevator speech
2. Indifference	Majority of stakeholders believe that the issue exists but there is no need to do anything about it at present. They believe that there are other things that are of higher priority. Or, they feel that they can support the policy action in principle as long as it does not require them to devote resources into it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people on intellectual level by providing facts and information • Connect people on emotional level and engage them on what they care or fear about (strategic sharing) • Develop stakeholder' ownership of the issue • Practice NetWeaving • Build alliances
3. Some Awareness	Majority of stakeholders believe that the issue exists and the policy action probably could help. However, their understandings are vague and they are at a loss of what to do. Or, they believe that something needs to be done, but not necessarily now.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Return on Investment data • Provide consultation and technical assistance on policy development • Help people develop personal stake in the issue
4. Sense of Urgency	There is a clear recognition that the issue is important and something must be done now. Most feel that each has a genuine ownership of the issue and can articulate the negative outcomes if no policy action is taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize the Policy Team • Review lessons learned from previous policy efforts and other communities that have engaged in similar efforts • Build consensus on policy action • Developing action steps on who, what, and when (who is assigned what action steps and when should actions occur)
5. Action	Community stakeholders agree on the actions needed and are committed to participate in the policy action. All can articulate what their individual roles are in the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement action steps • Track progress • Consider new strategies as necessary • Maintain stakeholders' buy-in and policy team's cohesiveness and trust

Community Knowledge about the Issue

Stages	Characteristics	Strategies Moving Forward
1. Denial/ Resistance	At least some stakeholders have inaccurate understanding of the issue and what needs to be done to address it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct public awareness campaign and social marketing • Develop elevator speech • Young people and families share their lived experiences.
2. Indifference	Majority of stakeholders have general understanding of the issue but little interest in knowing more about it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people on intellectual level by providing facts and information • Connect people on emotional level and engage them on what they care or fear about • Develop stakeholder' ownership of the issue • Practice NetWeaving • Build alliances
3. Some Awareness	Majority of stakeholders have general understanding of the issue but not enough to articulate the negative outcomes of doing nothing. They express interest in knowing more about it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data on Return on Investment (outcome and cost impact) • Develop stakeholder' personal stake in the issue
4. Sense of Urgency	Majority of stakeholders have clear understanding of the issue and can articulate the negative outcomes if no policy action is taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize the Policy Team • Review lessons learned from previous policy efforts and other communities that have engaged in similar efforts • Build consensus on policy action • Develop action steps on who, what, and when (who is assigned what action steps and when should actions occur)
5. Action	All stakeholders agree on the actions need to address the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement action steps • Track progress • Consider new strategies as necessary • Maintain stakeholders' buy-in and policy team's cohesiveness and trust

Leadership

Stages	Characteristics	Strategies Moving Forward
1. Denial/ Resistance	Leadership at the community stakeholder segments hold an unfriendly attitude toward the issue and oppose the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people and families share their lived experiences. • Leaders hear from other leaders re. their views on the issue.
2. Indifference	Majority of leadership at the stakeholder segments believe that the issue exists but there is no need to do anything about it at present. They believe that there are other things that are of higher priority for their time and efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data on Return on Investment (outcome and cost impact) • Continue dialogue with other leaders who are experienced in the issue.
3. Some Awareness	Majority of leadership at the stakeholder segments believe that the issue exists and the policy action probably could help. However, their understanding is vague and they are at a loss of what to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review lessons learned from previous policy efforts and other communities that have engaged in similar efforts
4. Sense of Urgency	There is a clear recognition among the leaders within stakeholder segments that the issue is important and something must be done now. Most can articulate the negative outcomes if no policy action is taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader(s) appoint representatives on policy team • Build consensus on policy action • Develop action steps on who, what, and when (who is assigned what action steps and when should actions occur)
5. Action	Leaders within the stakeholder segments agree to devote resources needed to facilitate the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders are informed of the implementation efforts, progress, and barriers • Leaders help overcome barriers • Maintain leaders' buy-in and trust

Community Climate

Stages	Characteristics	Strategies Moving Forward
1. Denial/ Resistance	The community in general holds an unfriendly attitude toward the issue and opposes the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct public awareness campaign and social marketing • Develop elevator speech • Young people and families share their lived experiences.
2. Indifference	The community in general believes that the issue exists but there is no need to do anything about it at present. It believes that there are other things that are of higher priority for our time and efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people on intellectual level by providing facts and information • Connect people on emotional level and engage them on what they care or fear about (strategic sharing) • Develop community's ownership of the issue
3. Some Awareness	The community in general believes that the issue exists and the policy action probably could help. However, the citizens' understanding of the issue is vague and they are at a loss of what to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for community people to share their perspectives to create new understanding and work together to form action plans with outsider facilitation
4. Sense of Urgency	The community in general agrees that the issue is important and something must be done now. Most can articulate the negative outcomes if no policy action is taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish communication pathways to keep the community informed and receive feedback
5. Action	The community in general agrees on the specific actions to be taken to address the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining stakeholders' buy-in • Addressing issues of policy team's cohesiveness and trust

Community Collaboration toward a Common Goal

Stages	Characteristics	Strategies Moving Forward
1. Denial/ Resistance	At least some community stakeholders have a history of not working well with other agencies/originations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness campaign • Social marketing • Elevator speech • Strategic sharing
2. Indifference	Majority of stakeholders state that the collaboration helps. However, they do not engage in active collaboration. Their agencies' status quo is very important to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people on intellectual level by providing facts and information • Connect people on emotional level and engage them on what they care or fear about (strategic sharing) • Developing ownership of the issue • Net weaving and build alliances
3. Some Awareness	Majority of stakeholders have worked well with each other. They have a general agreement that something needs to be done for the issue but are at a loss of what to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing specific data on cost of doing nothing and long- and short-term benefit of policy action • Developing personal stake in the issue
4. Sense of Urgency	There is a clear recognition that the issue is important and something must be done now. Most can articulate the negative outcomes if no policy action is taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing lessons learned from other communities or previous policy efforts • Build consensus on policy action • Organize the Policy Team • Developing action steps on who, what, and when (who is assigned what action steps and when should actions occur)
5. Action	Active leaders are identified to lead the action and others have all agreed to the specific roles they play in the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing action steps • Tracking progress • Considering new strategies as necessary, • Maintaining stakeholders' buy-in • Addressing issues of policy team's cohesiveness and trust

Allocation of Resources Needed

Stages	Characteristics	Strategies Moving Forward
1. Denial/ Resistance	At least some community stakeholders hold an unfriendly attitude toward the issue and oppose to devoting any resource to the issue or the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness campaign • Social marketing • Elevator speech • Strategic sharing
2. Indifference	Majority of stakeholders believe that the issue exists but there is no need to do anything about it at present. They believe that there are other things that are of higher priority for our time and efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect people on intellectual level by providing facts and information • Connect people on emotional level and engage them on what they care or fear about (strategic sharing) • Developing ownership of the issue • Net weaving and build alliances
3. Some Awareness	Majority of stakeholders believe that the issue exists and the policy action probably could help. However, their understanding is vague and they are at a loss of what to do or if they can afford to devote resources to the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing specific data on cost of doing nothing and long- and short-term benefit of policy action • Developing personal stake in the issue
4. Sense of Urgency	There is a clear recognition that the issue is important and something must be done now. They agree on the resources needed to address the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing lessons learned from other communities or previous policy efforts • Build consensus on policy action • Organize the Policy Team • Developing action steps on who, what, and when (who is assigned what action steps and when should actions occur)
5. Action	All community stakeholders agree on what specific resources each will provide to the policy action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing action steps • Tracking progress • Considering new strategies as necessary, • Maintaining stakeholders' buy-in • Addressing issues of policy team's cohesiveness and trust

For more information, contact Ming Wang at mwang@utah.gov or (801) 538-4276