



# MINNESOTA SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

## COMMUNITY ADVOCACY CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY REPORT

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Background .....3

Community Advocacy Landscape ..... 4

National Landscape ..... 4

Minnesota Landscape..... 6

Gaps in Minnesota Community Advocacy ..... 11

Strategies and Best Practices to Increase Community Advocacy Capacity..11

Core Concepts and Definitions.....12

Community Engagement.....13

Key Principles of Community Engagement.....13

Best Practices of Community Engagement.....14

Best Practices for All Methods of Community Engagement ..... 15

Continuum of Community Participation .....15

Collective Impact Model.....16

Five Conditions of the Community Impact Model .....17

MN SUD CoP Input .....18

Acknowledgement .....19



## BACKGROUND

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) defines [substance use disorder \(SUD\)](#) as the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs and, “causes clinically significant impairment, including health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.”<sup>1</sup> Given these characteristics, SUD is a major predictor of overdose death. Exacerbated by the pandemic and changes in the formulation of certain substances, overdose continues to be the leading cause of injury-related deaths in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute on Drug Abuse.<sup>2,3</sup>

To combat this rising epidemic, the Minnesota Department of Human Services has sponsored the creation of the Minnesota SUD Community of Practice (CoP). The MN SUD CoP consists of individuals who are engaged in the field of SUD treatment and prevention in any capacity, including but not limited to individuals with lived experience, providers, family members, researchers, recovery peers and advocates. The MN SUD CoP aims to bring individuals from across the MN SUD treatment continuum together to engage in information sharing, competence development, rich discussion, and mentoring. Amongst other topics of interest, the CoP is working to identify methods for developing its members’ capacity for community advocacy. Additional information on the MN SUD CoP is available on the [MN SUD CoP website](#), which is continually updated with current information and new CoP learnings.

SUD community advocacy can be defined in various ways, but it typically involves individuals in the SUD space collaborating to share information, reduce stigma and other barriers, and influence how SUD is identified and treated. Advocates can include professionals in the SUD treatment field, community members, medical professionals, local, state, or national government, and individuals or friends and family of those with lived experience. Community advocacy is essential to improving SUD outcomes. By using and educating others on stigma-free language, individuals can begin to discuss challenges and identify solutions, understand recovery voices, and identify and create a network to support others in their recovery journey.<sup>4</sup>

Community advocacy networks focused on SUD are vast, with organizations dedicated to this work at the national, state, and local level. Health Management Associates (HMA) was tasked with identifying the national and local landscape of SUD community advocacy, suggesting resources for community advocates, and providing strategies to improve and expand community advocacy efforts. This report describes the community advocacy landscape throughout the nation and in Minnesota, as well as strategies and best practices for increasing engagement in community advocacy.

**The MN SUD CoP consists of individuals who are engaged in the field of SUD treatment and prevention in any capacity, including but not limited to individuals with lived experience, providers, family members, researchers, recovery peers and advocates.**

<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.

Updated June 6, 2023. Available at: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disorders#:~:text=Substance%20use%20disorders%20occur%20when,work%2C%20school%2C%20or%20home>. Accessed December 20, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. Drug Overdose Death Rates. Available at: <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates>. Accessed December 20, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Understanding Drug Overdoses and Deaths. Last reviewed May 8, 2023. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html>. Accessed December 20, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Ashford, R. D., Brown, A. M., Canode, B., McDaniel, J., & Curtis, B. (2019). A Mixed-Methods Exploration of the Role and Impact of Stigma and Advocacy on Substance Use Disorder Recovery. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 37(4), 462-480. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07347324.2019.1585216>.

## COMMUNITY ADVOCACY LANDSCAPE

SUD is a complex condition that interacts with systems outside of those dedicated only to recovery, including behavioral health, child welfare, justice, public health, healthcare, school, and other human services. These relationships are critical to understanding and effecting change within the SUD system and are described in greater detail in the *MN SUD CoP Treatment Outcome Gaps Summary, Strategies, & Recommendations Report*. This report will focus largely on state, local, and national community advocates whose primary individual or organizational focus is centered around SUD and recovery.

### National Landscape

The national landscape of SUD community advocacy is largely influenced by seven major SUD advocacy organizations, each of which has specific goals, focus areas, and resources related to SUD advocacy. These include:

- The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)
- Faces and Voices of Recovery
- The National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC)
- The National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP)
- Partnership to End Addiction
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD)
- National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR).

While this does not encompass all organizations and agencies that advocate for individuals with SUD, it provides an overview of the work and resources currently available. For details about the work of these organizations, see Table 1.

**Table 1. National SUD Community Advocacy Organizations and Agencies**

Organization	Primary Goals and Initiatives	Resources
<a href="#">American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Mission:</b> “ASAM envisions a future when addiction prevention, treatment, remission, and recovery are readily available to everyone, profoundly improving the well-being of all people. Part of ASAM’s mission involves advocating for addiction treatment and people with addiction by advancing policy at national, state, and local levels.”</p> <p><b>2022-2025 Goals/Strategies:</b> Grow and Strengthen Involvement in Addiction Medicine, Expand Access to Addiction Medicine, Set the Standards for High-Quality, Evidence-Based Addiction Care, Educate the Addiction Workforce and Patients, and Maximize operational effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ASAM Advocacy Resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Advocacy State Advocacy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">2022 ASAM Advocacy Impact Report</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Four Big Ideas for the 118th Congress</a></li> </ul>

Organization	Primary Goals and Initiatives	Resources
<a href="#">Faces and Voices of Recovery</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Mission:</b> “Through collective efforts in recovery advocacy, community support, and education, we promote the right of every individual and family to recover from substance use disorder, while demonstrating the value and impact of long-term recovery.”</p> <p><b>Recent Advocacy Policy Efforts:</b>  <a href="#">The National Recovery Month Campaign.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Advocacy, Research, &amp; Innovation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Federal Policy and Advocacy Priorities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Recovery Stories</a></li> </ul>
<a href="#">National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC)</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Mission:</b> “NAADAC is committed to advocating for the best interests of its members, clients, communities, and the profession overall. Without the dedicated advocates who stand up for the profession, our members will not have a voice.”</p> <p><b>Upcoming Initiatives:</b> <a href="#">NAADAC 2023 Advocacy in Action Conference</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NAADAC Advocacy Resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Advocacy Webinar Series</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Public Policy Resources</a></li> </ul>
<a href="#">The National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP)</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Mission:</b> “Provide leadership, advocacy, training, and member support services to ensure the equitable availability and highest quality of addiction treatment... We are champions for recovery and leaders in expanding access to quality addiction treatment.”</p>	<p>Treatment provider policy <a href="#">advocacy agenda and resources</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NAATP <a href="#">State Advocacy Toolkit</a></li> <li>• NAATP <a href="#">Policy Agenda</a></li> </ul>
<a href="#">Partnership to End Addiction</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make Your Voice Heard</li> <li>• Provide resources for families impacted by addiction</li> <li>• Support an early and broad approach to SUD prevention</li> <li>• Protect youth from the harms associated with legal addictive substances</li> <li>• Expand access to quality addiction care</li> <li>• Make treatment affordable</li> <li>• Prevent overdoses and save lives</li> <li>• Ensure opioid litigation funds are spent on effective abatement strategies</li> <li>• Reduce racial disparities in addiction policies</li> <li>• Reduce stigma and raise public awareness about addiction and emerging threats.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Advocacy topics and personal stories</a></p>



Organization	Primary Goals and Initiatives	Resources
<a href="#">National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD)</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Statement:</b> Every one of us who has learned anything about alcoholism and drug dependence can perform an invaluable service merely by passing on our information as widely as possible; bringing the subject of alcoholism and drug dependence up as a matter of general interest; talking about it far and wide. We can thus break forever the ancient and outdated taboo on alcoholism and drug dependence.</p>	<p>NCADD <a href="#">Become an Advocate</a> for resources</p>
<a href="#">National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR)</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Mission:</b> NARR gives peers living in recovery residences a unified voice to a degree that has never been heard. Our vision is that all persons in recovery from addiction have access to the recovery support they need to live happier, healthier lives. Housing is essential for everyone, but people in recovery from alcohol and other drugs often need the peer support and safe, structured living environment that is found in a recovery residence. Together our voices can demand the funding and policy changes needed to make this vision a reality.</p>	<p>NARR recovery residence educational and advocacy <a href="#">resources</a></p>



## Minnesota Landscape

In coordination with national organizations and agencies, state and local community advocacy organizations are critical elements of meeting the overall goals of community advocacy because they are better able to tailor strategies to the needs of the community. As demonstrated through the MN SUD CoP, individuals living in Minnesota communities, particularly people who have lived experience with SUD, can provide insight into barriers and successes within the community. Furthermore, local advocates can focus on regional groups, cultures, races, sexual orientations, or other demographic factors based on community needs, whereas national organizations may be unable to apply a targeted approach.

Tables 2-4 provide information on organizations in Minnesota that serve as SUD advocates within the community at both state and local levels, as well as organizations that are advocating for communities via participation in the MN SUD CoP.



**Table 2. Recovery Community Organizations\***

Recovery Community Organizations			
<a href="#">Begin Anew</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota Prevention and Recovery Alliance</a>	<a href="#">Recovery Cafe Frogtown</a>	<a href="#">Thrive Family Recovery Resources</a>
<a href="#">Continuum Care Center</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota Recovery Connection</a>	<a href="#">Recovery Community Network</a>	<a href="#">Twin Cities Recovery Project</a>
<a href="#">Doc's Recovery House</a>	<a href="#">Mission Restart, Inc.</a>	<a href="#">Recovery Engaged Communities</a>	<a href="#">WEcovery by Beyond Brink</a>
<a href="#">Face It Together Bemidji</a>	<a href="#">Niyah Recovery Initiative</a>	<a href="#">Recovery Is Happening</a>	<a href="#">Will Work for Recovery</a>
<a href="#">Minnesota Hope Dealerz</a>	<a href="#">Recovery Alliance Duluth</a>	<a href="#">Rise Up Recovery</a>	

\*Note: According to Minnesota [legislation](#), “a Recovery community organization” (RCO) means an independent, nonprofit organization led and governed by representatives of local communities of recovery. An RCO mobilizes resources within and outside of the recovery community to increase the prevalence and quality of long-term recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction SUD. RCOs provide peer-based recovery support activities such as training of recovery peers. RCOs provide mentorship and ongoing support to individuals dealing with SUD and connect them with the resources that can support each person’s recovery. An RCO also promotes a recovery-focused orientation in community education and outreach programming and organizes recovery-focused policy advocacy activities to foster healthy communities and reduce the stigma of SUD.” A list of Minnesota RCOs is included [here](#).

**Table 3. Other Minnesota SUD Community Advocacy Organizations**

Organization	Primary Goals and Initiatives	Resources
<a href="#">The Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH)</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Goal:</b> “MARRCH will develop an effective legislative platform that supports: MARRCH member interests (agencies, professionals and students); healthcare integration, and; advocacy for funding mechanisms that support the above.”</p>	<p>MAARCH <a href="#">Links and Resources</a> MAARCH <a href="#">Newsletter</a></p>
<a href="#">Minnesota Nurses Peer Support Network (NPSNetwork)</a>	<p><b>Mission:</b> “NPSNetwork’s mission is two-fold, to serve nurses in recovery throughout Minnesota and to provide education to the nursing schools, professional organizations, employers of nurses and the general public about the disease, recovery and the role of peer support.”</p>	<p>NPSNetwork resources (including videos, articles, and more)</p>
<a href="#">National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Statement:</b> “NAMI Minnesota depends on its statewide grassroots network to create change at the state and national level. There are many ways to stay up-to-date on public policies and to know when your voice is needed.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NAMI advocacy resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Legislative Updates, Lobby, and Volunteer Opportunities</a></li> </ul>
<a href="#">Minnesota Association of Sober Homes (MASH)</a>	<p><b>About MASH:</b> “The Minnesota Association of Sober Homes, Inc., or M.A.S.H. for short, was formed in the summer of 2007 in an attempt to form a unified voice for owners of sober houses in situations where a public voice became necessary. MASH is a NARR state affiliate for recovery residences.”</p>	<p><a href="#">MASH Story Highlights</a></p>



Organization	Primary Goals and Initiatives	Resources
<a href="#">Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation</a>	<p><b>Advocacy Statement:</b> “Through public advocacy efforts, the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation provides a trusted national voice on all issues related to addiction prevention, treatment and recovery. We facilitate dialogue among individuals in recovery from substance use disorder, those who are still in active use, and society at large. We are committed to undoing the stigma that surrounds the disease, shaping public policy, and educating people everywhere about alcohol and other drug problems and the promise of recovery.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Advocacy Updates</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Advocacy Events</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Addiction &amp; Recovery Podcast</a></li> </ul>



**Table 4. Minnesota Organizations Advocating through Participation in the MN SUD CoP**

Minnesota Organizations Advocating through Participation in the MN SUD CoP			
<a href="#">CloseKnit</a>	<a href="#">Empower Treatment Center</a>	<a href="#">Continuum Care Center</a>	<a href="#">UCare Plan</a>
<a href="#">GrassRoots in Action</a>	<a href="#">NUWAY Alliance</a>	<a href="#">MACV</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota Department of Health</a>
<a href="#">University of Minnesota</a>	<a href="#">HealthPartners Plan</a>	<a href="#">Frazier Wellness Services</a>	<a href="#">Kyros</a>
<a href="#">Steve Rummler HOPE Network</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota Prairie County Alliance</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota Council of Health Plans</a>	<a href="#">Blue Cross Blue Shield Minnesota</a>
<a href="#">Anoka County</a>	<a href="#">Bemidji State University</a>	<a href="#">AA Minneapolis</a>	<a href="#">St. Louis County</a>
<a href="#">Hennepin County</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota Department of Human Services</a>	<a href="#">Bold North Recovery</a>	<a href="#">Avivo</a>
<a href="#">Beyond Brink</a>	<a href="#">Alluma</a>	<a href="#">Ramsey County</a>	<a href="#">YourPath Health</a>
<a href="#">Wadena County</a>	<a href="#">Refocus Recovery</a>	<a href="#">Optum</a>	<a href="#">Northland Counseling Center</a>
<a href="#">Salvation Army</a>	<a href="#">Rice County</a>	<a href="#">Independent Management Services</a>	<a href="#">Vinland Center</a>
<a href="#">Living Free Recovery</a>	<a href="#">Wright and Associates, LLC</a>	<a href="#">Essentia Health</a>	<a href="#">Olmsted County</a>
<a href="#">Southwest Health &amp; Human Services</a>	<a href="#">Pennington County</a>	<a href="#">Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe</a>	<a href="#">South Country Health Alliance</a>
<a href="#">Peony Recovery</a>	<a href="#">Isanti County</a>	<a href="#">Anchor Recovery</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (MIWRC)</a>

Minnesota Organizations Advocating through Participation in the MN SUD CoP			
<a href="#">Minnesota State University</a>	<a href="#">Recovering Hope Treatment Center</a>	<a href="#">Red Lake Nation</a>	<a href="#">Waseca County</a>
<a href="#">Missions, Inc.</a>	<a href="#">Mayo Clinic</a>	<a href="#">Faribault &amp; Martin Counties</a>	<a href="#">Project Turnabout</a>
<a href="#">Bois Forte Band of Chippewa</a>	<a href="#">Mental Health Resources</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota Addiction Professionals (MNAP) an NAADAC state affiliate</a>	<a href="#">Motivational Consulting</a>

### Gaps in Minnesota Community Advocacy

Minnesota has an array of community advocacy networks, however, gaps in the SUD system have been identified during the Minnesota SUD CoP, one of which is related to cultural sensitivity. Although some of the organizations listed in Tables 2-4 are tailored to the needs of specific communities and demographics, additional work is needed to equitably identify and advocate for communities facing disparities across all systems, including SUD. Examples of how to improve equity and address gaps are provided below. For more information on gaps in the MN SUD treatment continuum, review the *MN SUD CoP Treatment Outcome Gaps Summary, Strategies, & Recommendations Report*.

### STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES TO INCREASE COMMUNITY ADVOCACY CAPACITY

As described previously, numerous entities share a common purpose or mission. These organizations were formed as tax-exempt nonprofits, and their work is largely guided by a paid or volunteer staff. A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization may engage in some lobbying, but excessive activities to influence legislation can lead to the loss of tax-exempt status<sup>5</sup>. Given this limitation, an independent community voice is critical to advocating for change. This approach relies on the collective opinion of citizens to advocate for issues of concern to them that can affect policy and legislation.



<sup>5</sup> IRS. Lobbying. Updated December 4, 2023. Available at: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/lobbying>. Accessed December 20, 2023.



The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) in the late 1980's and early 1990's provided a prime example of how community advocacy, independent of a formal organization, can effect change. Formed as a grassroots political group working to end the AIDS pandemic, ACT UP drew attention to the crisis largely through organized demonstrations. ACT UP leaders initially debated whether to register the organization as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to allow contributors tax exemptions. Eventually they decided against it, because "they didn't want to have anything to do with the government."<sup>6</sup>

## Core Concepts and Definitions

Before engaging in community advocacy, individuals need to understand common terms and phrases associated with equitable advocacy efforts, as listed below. Figure 1 also provides a visual example of how to understand differences in ensuring equality, equity, and justice.



**A community** is a group of people who are brought together by something in common. This can include things like cultural background, shared experience, and geographic location. One person can belong to many different communities.



**Community engagement** is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.



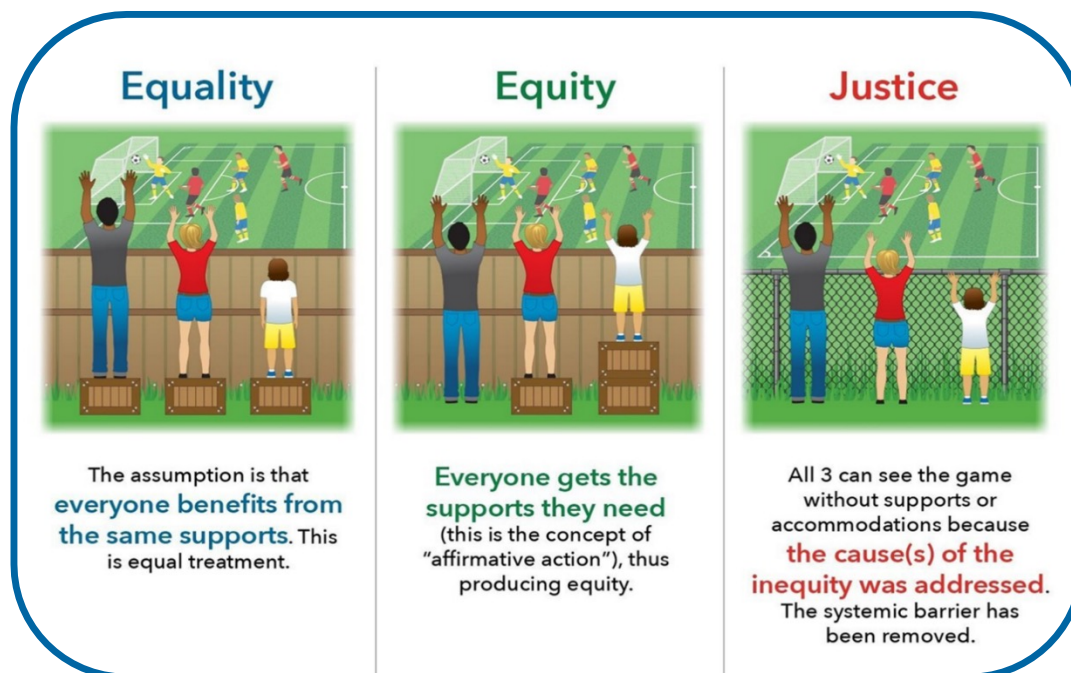
**Community advocacy** is the process of influencing decision-makers and public opinion to achieve positive change for a specific cause or issue. Effective community advocacy relies on the ability to mobilize and organize community members to unite and act.



**Health equity** exists when all people can attain their full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of the color of their skin, ancestry, level of education, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, the job they have, the neighborhood in which they live, socioeconomic status, or whether they have a disability.

<sup>6</sup> Maria Maggenti interview with Sarah Schulman and Jim Hubbard. ACTUP Oral History Project. February 16, 2005. MIX: The New York Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film Festival. December 11, 2005. Available at: <http://www.actuporalhistory.org/interviews/images/maggenti.pdf>. Archived at: (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210423235136/http://www.actuporalhistory.org/interviews/images/maggenti.pdf>) 2021-04-23 at the Wayback Machine.

Figure 1. Understanding Equality, Equity, and JusticeThe Future of Public Health Initiative



## Community Engagement

Community engagement can be a complex task. To be effective, individuals need to recognize and respect the diversity and assets of the communities they are engaging. It takes time to build strong relationships, and it takes even longer to repair relationships that have been damaged. Following are key principles and best practices for community engagement.

### Key Principles of Community Engagement

The key principles of community engagement include:

- **Research:** Understand community culture, norms, values, power and political structures, economic conditions, social networks, demographic trends, and history.
- **Self-identification among community members:** Some communities and individuals may have intersectional identities, meaning they are members of more than one group that historically has been marginalized or oppressed.
- **Prioritize unheard perspectives:** Give space and power to the perspectives of those whose voices are least heard.
- **Value others' time:** Never expect community members to volunteer their time and value their contributions through stipends, reimbursement, or support of one of their priorities.
- **Avoid tokenism:** Individuals should never be expected to speak on behalf of or represent an entire community.
- **Recognize strengths and assets:** Even communities that experience the greatest health and economic inequities have strengths, assets, and resources that should be acknowledged and leveraged.



- **Be proactive:** Reach out to potential partners and community members as soon as possible.
- **Ensure communication is ongoing:** Collaboration requires continual opportunities for conversation and sharing
- **Be transparent:** Be honest and forthcoming about the purpose and how you will use the input you receive.
- **Meet people where they are:** Be flexible in your approach. Go to the community—where members gather—and work to build relationships and trust. Look for opportunities to immerse yourself in the community you are trying to reach by attending community events and groups.

## Best Practices of Community Engagement

Successful community engagement also involves:

- **Establish a specific goal:** Have a clear idea of the issue or campaign's goal when reaching out to supporters.
- **Create a timeline:** Many advocacy issues or campaigns are dependent on when specific legislation comes to a vote. Frequently communicate the timeline to partners.
- **Plan activities that fit your goal and operating scale:** Not every advocacy tactic works for every campaign. Understand how various activities can help to achieve the desired goal.
- **Determine the purpose:** Articulate the reasons for engaging a community. How can community engagement influence the outcome? What can the individuals learn or achieve as a result of the process? What change that will come about because of this work?
- **Identify target audiences:** Who does the campaign want to reach? Why are these individuals or groups important to furthering the cause? Create a list of audiences, leaders, or influencers to attend meetings, serve as advisors, or interact with the organization in other ways. Share this list with stakeholders and remember to ask, "Who is not on this list but should be because this work directly affects them?"
- **Mobilize community through advocacy:** Structured advocacy gives the community a voice that is non-political, strategic, and evidence-based. Best practice advocacy begins with a clear and realistic request supported by evidence and community support. Advocacy strategies and campaigns aim to influence funding and resources.



## Best Practices for All Methods of Community Engagement

Assess Preferred Methods	Develop a Mix of Communication Channels	Ensure Accessibility	Reduce Bias	Get Active Consent
<p>Whether planning for in-person or virtual engagement, or a combination of both, be sure to choose a method that is accessible and appropriate for the community. If appropriate and available, use an existing community meeting.</p>	<p>Consider a mix of traditional and non-traditional communication channels for spreading the word about your community engagement opportunity. You may also choose a variety of methods along the continuum.</p>	<p>You need to consider many different aspects of accessibility, including physical accessibility, language, culture, and location. Identify and address other barriers to participation, like childcare, food, or transportation.</p>	<p>Asking open-ended questions gives you the chance to learn something unexpected and provides space for discussion. Questions should not perpetuate stereotypes, introduce biases, or stigmatize members of the community.</p>	<p>Obtain at least verbal consent for most methods of engagement. Give participants consent forms to sign if you plan to use audio recordings, video recordings, or take photos publicly.</p>

## Continuum of Community Participation

Many activities classify as community engagement. Most are state led as they apply to funding and priority setting. Additionally, some of these activities are formal and others are informal. Examples of community engagement activities include Community of Practice and Collective Impact models (described further below). Figure 2 outlines the various forms of community engagement activities across a continuum and provides the purpose, methods, promise, and when to use each form of engagement. As you move from “Inform” on the left-hand side to “Empower” on the right, the engagement activities become increasingly community led, which means communities take the lead in identifying priorities, overall direction, and decision-making through better data collection, resource sharing and policy.



**Figure 2. Community Participation Continuum**

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by state</li> <li>State holds power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by state</li> <li>State holds power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by state</li> <li>State holds power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-led</li> <li>Power is shared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by community</li> <li>Community holds power</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose</b>	Provide information	Get and incorporate feedback	Ensure needs and interests are considered	Partner and share decision-making power	Support and follow the community's lead
	One-way communication	One-way communication	Two-way communication	Two-way communication	Two-way communication
	Address immediate needs or issues	Inform the development of state programs	Advance solutions to complex problems	Advance solutions to complex problems	Problems and solutions are defined by the community
<b>Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town halls</li> <li>Community meetings</li> <li>Media</li> <li>Social media</li> <li>Materials</li> <li>Web</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus groups</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Surveys</li> <li>Stakeholder groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audience &amp; user testing</li> <li>Advisory groups</li> <li>Steering committees</li> <li>Community conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective impact</li> <li>Coalition building</li> <li>Partnership building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community immersion</li> <li>Community mobilization</li> </ul>
<b>Promise</b>	We will keep you informed about this project	We will listen to you and incorporate your feedback into our project	We will ensure your concerns and needs are reflected in our project	We will work with you in planning all aspects of this project	We will implement the project you come up with
<b>When to use</b>	There is no alternative because of urgency, regulatory reasons, or legal boundaries	You want to improve an existing service or program but the options of change are limited	You need community perspective and buy-in to successfully implement the project	Community members have a strong desire to participate and you have the time to develop a partnership	Community members want to own the project and you are committed to a long-term relationship
<b>The Goal = working toward community-driven engagement</b>					

Source: Washington State Department of Health. Community Engagement Guide. Available at: <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/1000/CommEngageGuide.pdf>. Accessed December 21, 2023.

### Collective Impact Model

Another strategy to lift community voice is to follow the Collective Impact model – a disciplined, cross-sector approach to solving complex issues on a large scale. John Kania and Mark Kramer of FSG: Social Impact Consultants introduced the approach in a 2011 Stanford Social Innovation Review article. It includes five conditions, which when applied comprehensively, have demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in addressing a range of issues.



### Five Conditions of the Community Impact Model

#### COMMON AGENDA

All participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem, and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

#### SHARED MEASUREMENT

Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensure efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

#### MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

#### CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and appreciate common motivation.

#### BACKBONE SUPPORT

Creating and managing collective impact requires a dedicated staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.



## MN SUD CoP Input

During the October 25, 2023 MN SUD CoP meeting, participants were randomly assigned to breakout rooms to discuss community advocacy in Minnesota. In addition to other thoughts and ideas, participants were asked to suggest ideas for group norms the CoP should implement, and suggest how the MN SUD CoP can transition to a collective impact that is community-led. A summary of breakout room discussions is provided below.

### What group norms should the MN SUD CoP implement?

- Center discussions around “voices of experience”
- Prioritize methods to engage “voices of experience” (both in the CoP and outside advocacy work)
- Include the “voice of experience” representatives on boards/panels
- Include “voices of experience” who are diverse, including racial and ethnic backgrounds, locations, ages, and people “new” to recovery
- Avoid reducing individuals to their addiction; prioritize names and self above disease
- Ensure everyone feels welcome. Prioritize value and respect other’s time and opinions
- Level-set goals and priorities for all organizations involved
- Use plain language whenever possible to better include all participants
- Acknowledge other challenges facing the SUD community, including housing, mental health, food access, etc.
- Establish methods to share and receive information among participants (email, website, etc.)
- Commit to advocacy work outside of the CoP
- Understand that while we are establishing “norms,” there is no such thing as “normal”

### How can the MN SUD CoP transition to a collective impact that is community-led?

- Find sustainable funding pathways for SUD working (including payer reimbursement) to move away from reliance on grant funding
- Support and fund organizations that meet the needs of priority populations
- Use grant funding dollars (such as Opioid Settlement) to improve SUD outcomes.
- Find ways to demonstrate outcomes of collaborative efforts
- Build sustainable structure, roles, and norms so everyone knows their roles
- Identify the correct time and method for transitioning to community-led work so previous efforts do not get lost
- Reduce administrative burdens on smaller community advocacy, treatment, and non-profit organizations. Consider organizations that can help reduce the burden by performing administrative activities
- Come with a shared goal of moving past conversation and toward actual change

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- researchers or members of the academic community who are SUD subject matter experts and who do not have financial relationships with treatment providers
- SUD treatment providers
- recovery community organizations
- the Minnesota Department of Human Services
- the Minnesota Department of Health
- the Minnesota Department of Corrections
- county social services agencies
- tribal nations or tribal social services providers
- managed care organizations
- individuals who have used SUD treatment services
- individuals from other communities that are disproportionately impacted by SUD

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