

6

Using Assessment in Community Practice

For practitioners, if assessment is not directly related to and prescriptive of treatment, it is, at best, a waste of client and practitioner time and, at worst, unethical.

Mark A. Mattaini and Stuart A. Kirk, social work scholars and teachers

The difference between the most dissimilar characters, between the philosopher and a common street porter, for example, seems to arise not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education....they came into the world...very much alike.

Adam Smith, philosopher, social theorist

Erin was desperate for a job. Divorced with three children to support and recovering from a car accident, she faced severe financial difficulties. Though having only a high school education, Erin wrangled an entry-level filing job from the lawyer who represented her in the accident. Like George, Erin was a curious and thinking person. She noticed incongruities in one obscure case she was filing. Her initial hypothesis was that something was wrong with the file itself.

Erin showed initiative. Besides asking her boss about those irregularities, she left the office, drove to the Mojave Desert town of Hinkley, and talked directly to the affected family. Their health and housing situation made her suspicious that the problem extended beyond this one case. Her preliminary case theory led her to believe something was wrong in the community. Gathering facts, she investigated the Hinkley area with population less than 2000 had over a fourth of the residents older than five years old suffering from a disability. Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) maintained a gas compression pumping station for its natural gas transmission pipeline in Hinkley. The compression pumping station used hexavalent chromium, a carcinogen, as a rust inhibitor for the pumps.

Erin used ethnographic case study methodologies and available data. She gradually introduced herself and made a point of meeting everyone in the neighborhood and hearing their stories. As she attended picnics and sat in homes, she compiled evidence and learned people's strengths. She built trust because she

knew that, before she could help, she and the community had to become allies. Erin rolled up her sleeves and dived in, and that was appreciated by residents and plant workers who slipped her secret documents.

Even though without legal training, Erin refused to be intimidated by technical records, and she copied what seemed relevant. She insisted on her right to use public records and gathered soil and water samples. Eventually, Erin was able to document widespread health problems caused by PG&E's hexavalent chromium contamination of the community's drinking water. Erin's investigation led to a \$333 million settlement for 600 residents who sued the corporation with the help of her law firm. Erin Brockovich's determination to secure justice for these folks became the subject of a popular movie starring Julia Roberts. All this, because Erin developed skills in community assessment, advocacy, and social action to aid the community of Hinkley. (Dawson, 1993; Denby, 2000; Rogge, 1995)

Erin moved from a micro to a macro focus when she saw that the first family she contacted might be only the tip of the iceberg. Erin's use of community practice skills and community assessment took her beyond casework to community intervention. Her story illustrates that community assessment entails intensive investigation of community structures, systems, and forces for their impact on people. By continually

appraising the situation, she assisted hundreds of families who shared serious ailments and medical disorders. Her hands-on, collaborative assessment of community factors and subsequent social action brought success for the individual cases.

Assessment as a Basic Social Work Process

Assessment, as discussed in Chapter 5, serves as an umbrella term for a process that can have a wide or narrow, general or targeted focus. It builds a case theory that guides the intervention strategy. Community assessment methodologies can be employed to understand and assess any community, anywhere, anytime (see Chapter 5).

Assessment Frameworks

It is valuable to understand the community assessment methodologies for both case and community work. Whether examining the situations of clients or of community residents, relevant variables must first be identified. The assessment and case theory serve “to bring order out of the chaos of a *mélange* of disconnected variables” (Meyer, 1993, p. 3). To know the best approach to community work, Jeffries (1996) from the United Kingdom maintains that practitioners need to determine:

- the extent of change that is needed
- its feasibility, given the resources likely to be available in the community
- the likely resistance to or support for such change both within the community and from powerful decision makers who could be involved
- how much scope the community and the workers have to make decisions about actions needed to achieve that change, either through participation in organized decision-making processes or through community organizations—in other words, the community’s state of empowerment. (p. 107)

Auspices and Context

When we assess a community or the adequacy and effectiveness of a given program, we need to

be clear about our commitments. Are we a consultant for the system in question, are we employed by an agency, do we represent an advocacy group, or do we claim neutrality and disinterested status? Can we share affinities and perspectives with those who are being assessed? We should keep in mind our predispositions toward individual cases and programs. Basic decisions underlie any assessment: Whom do we listen to? Whom will we trust? How will we decide? Whose views count most? Answers can be influenced by the auspices under which we proceed—be it a county government, a non-profit organization, a credentialing body, a university, an agency, or a grassroots community organization. We are also influenced by our education and training in our assessment constructions (Robinson & Walsh, 1999; Worth, 2001). Assessment as critical community practice requires critical consciousness (Butcher, 2007).

Assessment: Information-Gathering Methodologies

Our assessment philosophy embraces openness and willingness to integrate input from many sources because it is critical to understand the community as a place that nurtures or inhibits people.

- We can encourage individuals and advocacy groups to explain, face to face, how their communities can become more responsive to their needs.
- We can use oral histories to solicit views on a service, an association, an organization, or a community.
- We can seek out state and national publications and other available data sources with relevant recommendations and information about the community.

Consumer-oriented assessments of problems and their discussions of appropriate responses also warrant our attention. Such discussions may focus on (a) how community life affects particular sectors or groups, (b) practical tips that might be implemented within a reasonable length of time, and (c) citizen participation and perception of rights.

For instance, older people and their advocates have suggested that communities assess their livability and make traveling easier. They argue for traffic lights to be set so that pedestrians have enough time to cross the street. They point out that bells or other sounds permit those with visual impairments to know when it is safe to cross. They also suggest the creation of large, separate paths to accommodate pedestrians and those using conventional two-wheeled bicycles and three-wheeled electric vehicles (Parker, Edmonds, & Robinson, 1989, p. 8).

An assessment philosophy establishes our attitudes, organizes our approach, directs many of our methodologies, and shapes our construction of reality. Critical consciousness and critical community practice dictates that assessment should be a two-way process (Butcher, Banks, Henderson, with Robertson, 2007). Let us look briefly at some assessment methodologies.

Historical and Available Information

Gathering background and historical information is a first step in a community assessment. It provides a foundation for more elaborate assessment and research. Practitioners should inquire whether community studies have been completed by others and are available locally. This often will save time in learning about the community. Sources of historical information are readily available and include news media files, agency reports, census reports, Web pages, and social

research community study reports, as well as background social science literature on the ethnic or functional community, and local universities' and colleges' social science and professional school faculty to serve as key informants. The U.S. Census is a mother lode of data organized by census tract, although the data may be outdated when finally made available. The practitioner should decide specifically what information is needed; otherwise, the search will be overwhelming as there is so much data available (Box 6.1).

Schneider and Lester (2001, pp. 155–156) provide a detailed example of a resources directory—that is, an inventory services that are available to meet identified needs. However, such lists, directories, and other formal tools achieve their value only in combination with understanding and experience. These information sources provide basic community information on social services. Once the social agencies are identified, their service areas, eligibility requirements, and access information can be obtained.

Good data users develop their own skills and develop a network of persons who can help with selection and interpretation of this information. Internet and Google searches are also helpful in finding data. It is the combination of information from documents and computers and understanding from experience and advice that leads to the effective selection of community resources.

The advantages of using historical and secondary data are the relatively low fiscal, time, and energy costs. Using available data is essentially the only way to learn about historical events,

BOX 6.1. Available Data Sources for Community Services

1. *Telephone book Yellow Pages* for community and social services listings by geographic area codes. Use a variety of telephone company listings, as the Yellow Pages listings require a fee for listing and are self-classified by the advertisers.
2. *Social agency registers* such as by social planning and social agency councils, Catholic Charities, Jewish Federations, United Ways, and national organizations' directories of member agencies.
3. *501(c)(3) agencies* from secretary of state for tax-exempt and donation purposes. The Internal Revenue System has an alphabetical listing that is not coded by states or ZIP codes.
4. *Public agency and government directories* for federal, state, and local government agencies within a governmental service geographic area.
5. *State contract and vendor lists* and lists from umbrella funding agencies. State vendor lists are public.
6. *Licensure agency lists of licensed professionals*. These lists are public.

since obviously they can't be experienced first hand. This data search is similar to a researcher's literature review: it lets you know what is known about the community.

There are many disadvantages to using available data, however. The data were probably originally collected for different purposes and will not correspond exactly with the assessment information needed. There can be a lack of congruence with the boundaries of the community you are studying. The reliability and validity of the data are difficult to assess if we do not know how they were collected and developed. The information may be dated, so the researcher should use multiple data sources and supplement available data with more contemporary confirmation.

Community Field Study Methodologies

Field study means "hitting the bricks" or "being on the ground" or one of the many other expressions of immersion in the community. A scientific, ethnographic approach is central to the community field study, in part because it makes us aware of our own ethnocentrism and cognizant of the logic and wholeness of others' cultural perspectives. Yin (1984) points out that most knowledge of the world has not been developed by carefully controlled laboratory experiments, but rather by looking at the natural world. The field case study methodology is the preferred methodology when (1) "how and why" questions are being posed, (2) the investigator has little control over the event or phenomenon, and (3) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin, 1984, p. 13). Community assessments fit these criteria.

How do we begin the field study? The approach, as with all field studies, combines the ethnographic with available data and quantitative methodologies.

Participant Observation

Community field studies use participant observation (P-O) methodologies. Spradley (1980), a pioneer in applying P-O methodologies to urban America noted that in P-O the researcher uses a systematic and disciplined manner to try to answer

the questions of concern while participating in the community. The goal is to acquire exhaustive knowledge of a group, including its construction of reality.

Yin (1972, p. 3), in an early classic study of applying P-O to the urban neighborhood, concluded that the two roles of participant and observer often conflict. Research observation of events is objective, but participating as a part of the phenomenon is subjective. If the researcher is an active participant, then the phenomenon can be altered, and the emotional involvement of the participant can call into question the credibility of the results. Thus, researchers need to be critically conscious of their involvement. A second observer can be used to establish reliability and reduce the bias inherent in the strain of the two roles. Working and reviewing with colleagues is helpful to the observation side of P-O. Objectivity and reliability can be enhanced and bias reduced by comparing the researcher's observations to other data sources and by comparing the findings to theory and models of the community.

Social workers, whether in casework or community practice, must master these two roles and reconcile their strains in any assessment and intervention. It is difficult to maintain a balance of both roles over time: the tendency is to drift toward being a participant (over-identification with case or client, "going native") or detaching and becoming solely an observer (and hence losing the bonding with the case and some of the nuances of relationship and belief bonding).

Sometimes such qualitative P-O and case study methods are referred to as *naturalistic inquiry* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998), and the results are labeled *grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Regardless of the label, field studies entail a humanistic approach and an empathetic stance. In order to start where the client is, one must know and understand where the client is and the client's construction of reality. To understand a community, the practitioner needs to understand a community's many constructions of reality, although not necessarily agreeing with all of them.

Wexler Vigilante (1993) elaborates on the relevance of naturalistic inquiry's constructionism for social work practice. She asks us to "assume

that systematic data gathering cannot accurately reflect the complexities of human functioning. The ... strategy consists of the client and worker successfully framing and reframing the client's story until coherent and shared meanings are achieved" (p. 184). In naturalistic inquiry, as with most qualitative research, the emphasis, as with assessment in practice, is on meaning. People tend to define, construct, and give meaning to their world as a result of their interactions with others.

Lamb's (1977) recommended first steps, with some Web additions, are still relevant for understanding the area of study. Buy a map, including a street directory; look up local history; review *Rand-McNally's International Bankers Directory* (<http://www.faqs.org/copyright/rand-mcnally-bankers-international-bankers-directory-2/>), *Moody's Ratings Bank Credits* (<http://library.dialog.com/bluesheets/html/bl0527.html>), and *Standard & Poor's Register - Corporate* (<http://www.standardandpoors.com/home/en/us>) on the web. Hardcopies are sometimes available at the local library. The registers and directories will provide the names of local branches of bank and any local banks and their's and other corporation directors. Corporate, chamber of commerce, and state and local government web sites can be checked; census data reviewed, and any area studies by social workers detailing the city-wide distribution of types of cases and social problems assessed.

To study a neighborhood, Warren and Warren (1984) suggest combining key informants, available data, and *shoe leather* or *windshield* observation survey processes. First walk around city hall or central government buildings, pick up pamphlets on city services, and visit the central business district; obtain maps, the telephone book, and local newspapers; go by the library and chamber of commerce office to get a list of community organizations and their contact persons. Then drive and walk around the neighborhood, chat with people on the street, and ask them to define the boundaries of the area. After getting more settled, identify key informants and various networks and generally figure out "how the neighborhood operates" (p. 34). Again, exploration of the community's Web site, if it is a political-civic entity, is helpful.

Key Informants

Crucial sources of information in community case field studies are key informants. While any member or resident is a potential informant, key informants are those willing to initiate us into their world. Green (1995) calls them "cultural guides" (p. 102). Key informants are well-positioned insiders who can and will act as providers and interpreters of information for the outsider. They are people who are connected in the community and can provide an insider's perspective (Denzin, 1970, 202). Key informants are people who know about or have access to the information being sought. They can be indigenous people, elected leaders, or professional observers such as newspaper reporters. Cab drivers, ambulance drivers, firefighters, and police officers are familiar with various areas and with names of places. Natural leaders—people respected and listened to by others—are critical key informants.

The essential trait of a key informant is having information about the community and being willing to share it. If we can establish a working relationship with key informants, they are potentially valuable because they can "act as . . . de facto observer[s] for the investigator; provide a unique inside perspective on events . . . serve as a 'sound-ing board' for insights, propositions, and hypotheses developed by the investigator; open otherwise closed doors and avenues to situations and persons" (Denzin, 1970, p. 202). When selecting the first informants, Yin (1972, pp. 15–16) cautions that the participant-observer should avoid the natural biases of similar gender, age, and ethnicity. Key informants should represent a broad cross-section of the community, capturing its different segments and interests: business and commerce, public sectors, nongovernmental, not-for-profit, recreation, education, civic, faith-based, neighborhood, age differences, gender, ethnic diversity, media, social organizations, and so forth. The informants should not be just the recognized community leaders but should reflect all the community. A broad community spectrum of key informants lays the foundation for subsequent community action.

Quota, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques can be used to construct the key informant panels. In *quota sampling*, key informants are

selected based on the distribution of selected traits in the sample frame. When the sample of key informants matches the sample frame on the selected traits, sampling ceases. The intent is to improve the sample of key informants' precision in representing the community's traits. Quota sampling can address only known traits. In *purposive sampling*, the researcher seeks and selects key informants based on some specific traits representing a community trait. In *snowball sampling*, a technique used in both purposive and quota sampling, the original key informants are asked to provide the names of and introductions to additional key informants who have specific traits and represent additional segments.

Obtaining an introduction to a small town can be accomplished with brief stops at the most convenient gas station, the most noticeable church, the most active real estate office, a busy pizza parlor, and a central elementary school. At this point, business owners, principals, ministers, or anyone working in a community organization or business who has time can serve as an original key informant. As Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* shows, people like to talk about their neighborhood, town, and city. Every place is different and different informants have differing constructions, so the social worker has to explore. In our exploration we might be lucky enough to run into several of Wilder's stage managers to serve as key informants. Although the community itself will take a long time to know, newcomers can quickly start familiarizing themselves with it.

Hirsch's (1998) examination of a neighborhood outside Boston exemplifies other methodologies. She secured facts from the Census Bureau and learned that a third of the households in Jamaica Plain were below the poverty line and 46% of households owned no car. She also did her homework about the community's economy. Jamaica Plain, it turned out, had these business sectors: "hardwares, bodegas, clothing, used book, ice cream and thrift shops (small-scale commercial); check cashing, real estate, restaurants (service); beer making, pretzels (light industry); small-scale agriculture" (Hirsch, 1998, p. xii). Going beyond fact gathering to observation, Hirsch discovered the following gathering places:

Lockhorn's
Bob's Spa

Costello's
El Charro
The Midway
3M Market
Old Stag Tavern
Eddy's Market
Rizzo's Pizza
Fernandez Barber Shop
Franklin's CD
J. P. Record Shop
Cafe Cantata
Black Crow Caffe (pp. xiii–xiv)

This list's variety spurs us to think more broadly about key informants and hangouts in communities. Those places, in addition to home and work, nourish social connections "where one is more likely than anywhere else to encounter any given resident of the community" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 112). Dennis (as cited in Ward & Hansen, 1997, p. 70) suggests that gathering places be observed and monitored to keep tabs on community realities: "Learn how people live and work by observing housing. . . , neighborhoods, and primary work places. Monitor . . . public gathering places [such] as Laundromats, beauty parlors, restaurants, and bars. Use public transportation at various times. . . , Watch facilities such as emergency rooms, jails, and shelters for the homeless—action at these sites helps the observer understand the community's pressure points." We will explore this further in the "Community Assets Inventory and Mapping Protocol" section later in this chapter.

We can pinpoint the central area of a town or neighborhood and pick a central point, such as a key street corner, to make some instant but ongoing observations. These observations can provide a log of a community's social flavor and can help identify who might need what services. Here are notes from a community practice student's observations of a gentrified section of a large city:

Tuesday, 11 a.m. Many walking by are elderly (counted nine older people in the 5 minutes I stood here). I also noted five women pushing baby carriages—a couple looked like young mothers; the rest looked older and may have been babysitters. I saw a group of Hispanic women waiting for the bus but not any black people. I saw a handful of people, casually dressed, coming up out of the subway.

Tuesday, 6 p.m. People with briefcases and wearing running shoes pour out of subway exits—in 5 minutes, at least 50—almost everyone white adults. Bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Saturday, 2:30 p.m. From same vantage point, I saw large numbers of couples with small children, but very few older people. Again, almost everyone was white. The bus stop by the 7-Eleven appeared to be a meeting place for young people hanging out.

These findings might have program development implications. A number of possibilities can be explored if further observation reveals similar patterns. Among these are (a) potential needs of the elderly, and of house cleaners and babysitters who come into the area, such as day care for their children (or for residents' children); (b) whether play space is safe and adequate; and (c) possible discrimination in housing in the area, which could be checked out by testers.

Reviewing newspaper stories about incidents in a community of interest is another way to be observant. The idea here is to check things out: What does the community think about this incident? What is a problem for them? Observation and key informant interviews can be supplemented with available data and media reports for a more complete construction of a community.

If we begin to understand a culture well enough, we can interpret aspects of it for others (Schwab, Drake, & Burghardt, 1988). Circumstances often require social workers to make a case for client or citizen participation in decision making or for hiring a paraprofessional from the community. The more we understand, the better we can convey the worldview of another class or culture. Critical community practice and social justice require that their viewpoint be represented. It is helpful to learn to write complete description "about a specific phenomenon and its surrounding environment" (Karabanow, 1999).

Examples of Assessment

In this section, we will look at the physical and social worlds of three groups as depicted by a planner, an anthropologist, and a sociologist. Note how they use details to illustrate and give flavor to field studies. They describe their first looks at a place and a people and the means they used to conduct their studies.

Joseph Howell, the planner, portrays life on an urban block called Clay Street. His study of the blue-collar community opens with a long list of details he noticed, including "old cars jacked up on cinder blocks . . . the number of dogs and 'beware of dogs' signs . . . the chain link fences . . . the small gardens . . . old folks rocking on their porches . . . a few old, shabby houses, with excessive amounts of debris and junk out front—old toys, bedsprings, tires, and old cars. In one of these houses lived the Shackelfords" (Howell, 1973, p. 8).

Documenting lifestyles, Howell discusses this family's relationship with helpers: "Bobbi had her first visit from the caseworker. When she had been notified that the caseworker was coming to visit, she became very excited. She spent the preceding day cleaning and straightening the house, and when the caseworker arrived, Bobbi was ready. Everything was picked up and the house was very clean" (pp. 125–126).

This excerpt reveals that the family's behavior and values are complex. We cannot presume or assume after seeing one piece of the picture, like the yard. Howell assesses coping patterns and, eschewing stereotyping, distinguishes between "hard living" and "settled living" residents. He lets us hear directly from those in the area through reconstructed scenes and dialogue, which makes us care about those on the street. Such an orientation to a particular place makes us curious, rather than judgmental, about the Shackelford family and their "intense, episodic, and uninhibited" approach to life (Howell, 1973, p. 6). Thus, one purpose of a community study has been achieved—to highlight the life ways and values of a group. Of special interest to us, this study pinpoints how family events, crises, and problems can "fall outside the orbit of community service systems and how service systems are often insensitive to life situations of those they seek to serve" (p. xi). This represents a different way of examining service adequacy.

Field studies demonstrate that knowing more completely even a few families helps us better understand a community. Howell (1973) believes that participant observation consists of making friends, being where the action is, writing it all down, and pulling it all together.

Barbara Myerhoff, the anthropologist, studied a neighborhood within a community in

Venice, California, populated by Eastern European Jewish immigrants, including many elderly concentration camp survivors. The focal point for the residents was the cultural community connected with a senior citizen center, where “the front window was entirely covered by hand-lettered signs in Yiddish and English announcing current events” (Myerhoff, 1980, pp. 12–13).

Rather than looking at a community in terms of demographics or 5-year plans, Myerhoff looks through the eyes of particular individuals. The words of encouragement on the signs say a good deal about those being beckoned. Social workers can use this method, too, and learn by looking at details that accrue to become the physical environment and cultural life of those with whom they work.

Rebecca Adams, the sociologist, studied a nonplace, affinity community. For over a decade, she inquired into the lives of Deadheads, fans of the rock band the Grateful Dead who followed the band around the country and represented one element of a loose national community. Adams observed by traveling with them, and she reached the non-traveling element through questionnaires and dialogue in the Grateful Dead’s newsletter and magazines. Many Deadheads stayed in touch with Adams by telephone, letter, and e-mail; for example, after the death of Jerry Garcia (the Dead’s lead guitarist/singer), 150 fans wrote to Adams. Local and nearby concerts provided a setting for studying the world of fans. Adams (1998) explains, “I began my field research project by standing in line at Ticketmaster and at the Greensboro Coliseum, by spending time in the parking lot before the shows, and by attending all the shows in the run. I also interviewed police officers who were on duty at the concerts, people cleaning up the parking lot the morning after the run was over, and staff members at nearby hotels and restaurants” (p. 10). Sometimes, field researchers act as interpreters for a community that is unknown to or misunderstood by the public. In such a liaison role, Adams gave interviews to radio stations, television stations, newspapers, magazines, and independent film companies.

Like Howell, Myerhoff (1980) worked with individuals within an area. She knew 80 center members and spent time with 36. She describes her method, with the reminder that there is no

definitive way to “cut up the pie of social reality. . . . I tape recorded extensive interviews . . . ranging from two to sixteen hours, visited nearly all in their homes, took trips with them from time to time outside the neighborhood—to doctors, social workers, shopping, funerals, visiting their friends in old age homes and hospitals. . . . I concentrated on the Center and its external extensions, the benches, boardwalk, and hotel and apartment lobbies where they congregated” (p. 29).

Immersed in the lives of those who attended the center, Myerhoff spent time in nursing homes and hospitals and at funerals or memorial services. She probed for their viewpoint, asking questions such as “Do you think that being a Jew makes the life of a retired person easier or harder in any way?” (p. 46).

Some parts of any community are harder to reach than others. Like Howell and Myerhoff, Adams needed guides, but prospective key informants viewed her as unsympathetic or as an undercover police officer (a “narc”). She had to prove herself by mastering the community’s special language and grasping its value system. For instance, Deadheads felt that the federal government was engaged in a “war on some drugs.” Adams writes about identifying a guide: “Two groups that were particularly difficult for me to approach were drug dealers and members of a Deadhead cult known variously as the Church of Unlimited Devotion, the Family, or simply the Spinners. It was particularly important that I gain the trust of these two groups, because they tended to be the most orthodox of Deadheads. . . . [One Spinner eventually] commented on drafts of chapters, challenging my interpretations of data and steadfastly reminding me that Deadheads are not all affluent” (1998, pp. 18–19).

In a community case study, the community practitioner is first a learner, not an expert coming in. The practitioner will share and key informants will share, affecting each other and the process, so there is emphasis on interchange, “mutual learning,” and “respect” (Daley & Wong, 1994, p. 18). Case studies conducted in natural settings introduce practitioners to groups and individuals who help the practitioners see life in non-mainstream communities with new eyes. The experience teaches a practitioner how to be a critically conscious practitioner and avoid

being irrelevant or condescending. Such studies may assist the practitioner to “speak the same language” as the community, to obtain a clearer sense of the clients’ worlds, and to share their reality constructions. Abbreviated versions of such studies may be appropriate in work with marginalized populations or before doing outreach to new communities. Even modest community case studies are valuable supplements to surveys.

Surveys

“Survey” means to look at and examine something. Survey data collection designs are frequently used in community planning and community assessment. They are generally used to gather information from a large number of respondents or subjects at a particular time point. They often involve written questionnaires or telephone interviews. Surveys are perhaps the most common design in social science research. The U.S. Census Bureau uses survey methodologies and designs in the census.

Survey Options

Common types of social or community surveys include citizen surveys, general population surveys such as the U.S. Census, target population surveys, and service provider and consumer satisfaction surveys. The time and expense involved in doing complete population surveys can be prohibitive, but using well-crafted samples and sampling methodologies can reduce expenses. A practitioner wanting to do a limited survey should consult with a trained researcher, who usually can be found at a local college. Some public service agencies have such experts in house. Practitioners using community surveys should review survey designs and methodologies, which are discussed in introductory social work research texts such as Rubin and Babbie (2007, pp. 365–389). We will focus here more on the informal survey methodologies useful in community case studies than on formal survey research designs.

Informal survey techniques are readily available to practitioners. Informal surveys are used to gather information on the life of a community or some part of it. They include ethnographic

surveys and require observation, participant observation, and ethnographic and focused interviewing skills similar to field case studies; these are necessary practice skills for a community practitioner or social worker. Ethnographic interviewing is more structured than an informal conversation but is more casual and open-ended than a questionnaire survey. It is similar to focused interviewing in its features and concern for understanding the respondent’s meaning (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956). The interviewer seeks to discover facts and understand their significance to the informant.

Observational survey methods include walk-arounds, drive-arounds, or shoe leather and windshield surveys. These surveys are conducted by walking or driving through a community and observing the features and behavior patterns: what is the residential pattern, what are the commercial establishments, where do people congregate, and so forth. These surveys move easily to P-O methods, with the observer talking with people, often starting with impersonal social places such as bus stops, eateries, bars, video stores, and grocery stores.

More structured P-O surveys include the use of key informants, snowball sampling, and networking. Like chain letters and pyramid schemes, the snowballing sampling process is repeated until it yields no additional informants or you are confident that the information obtained is complete and valid. It is conceptually possible through this process to reach anyone in the community (“six degrees of separation”).

Mall surveys are a survey technique that falls between formally structured surveys and informal surveys. They use developed questions and criteria, but somewhat haphazard purposive sampling methodologies. However, they are relatively inexpensive and quick ways to obtain information. They are called “mall surveys” because marketers, in trying to determine consumer buying patterns and preferences, interview people at shopping malls. The survey procedure, like a quota and purposive sample, uses a profile of the traits of people from whom information is sought. Questions to determine if the respondent fits the preferred profile are asked first, and the balance of the questions are asked to those respondents fitting the profile. The technique is

BOX 6.2.**Multifaceted Assessment Vignette**

To comprehend a subcommunity or network, we often must increase our knowledge of that entity. We may need to particularize our assessments as well.

A social worker in a speech and hearing clinic is about to meet with the deaf parents of a preschooler with a profound hearing loss, who are coming in to talk about the child's schooling needs. We will use this vignette to look at a subsystem. This is an opportunity to study a system and, as a byproduct, our preconceptions (reflexive assessment).

- Assessment of supportive service systems will be influenced by how professionals conceptualize persons with differences. Assessment of the educational needs of this child will be influenced by whether the worker views a disability as a personal tragedy, a variable to consider, something culturally produced by society, or a target of social oppression (Oliver, 1990, Chapter 1; Reagan, 2002).
- Cultural diversity (ethnic and other cultures viewed as existing at the periphery of our society) must be factored into the design and implementation of assessment.
- Examination of past change efforts and perceptions of the problem by others significant in the arena or subsystem will be important (Cox, 1995).

Many assessment variables exist at the societal level, where there are competing views. Talk of multiple perspectives may strike us merely as semantics or rhetoric until we apply the idea in this case and confront the huge, ongoing debate as to whether deafness is (a) a medical condition causing social isolation compensated for with signing, "a poor substitute for language," or with mainstreaming; or (b) a special culture that communicates with a different but equally rich mode of language expressed by the hands and face instead of the tongue and throat (Dolnick, 1993, p. 40; see also Sacks, 1989, p. ix). Some in the self-identified deaf community see themselves as "a linguistic minority (speaking American Sign Language) and no more in need of a cure for their condition than are Haitians or Hispanics" (Dolnick, p. 37). Describing the controversy, Dolnick points out dissimilarities to such ethnic minorities, since "90 percent of all deaf children are born to hearing parents" (p. 38). These various splits illustrate why assessments must consider social context, current theories (Cox, 1995, p. 155), and various tensions beneath the surface.

Many challenges come to the fore in a subsystem analysis. When we learn that our taken-for-granted assumptions are in question, we have no easy answers,

but we can list pros and cons. The implications of these differing perspectives for treatment, schooling, and living arrangements, for medical intervention with cochlear implants or nonintervention, for identity and reality, are heightened by the fact that a decision about a baby's first language needs to be made very early. Having so much at stake in making the best decision makes the situation more pressing. One camp alleges that deaf culture has an anti-book bias and that without reading skills, dead-end jobs are common; the other camp argues that signing introduces children to language much earlier (see, for example, Dolnick, 1993, pp. 46, 51; Sacks, 1989, p. x).

An educational assessment must take note of these differing philosophies. What did the parents decide to do with their baby? How far have they gone down a certain path? Do they want to turn back or continue? How do they view their child's degree of hearing loss: (a) as a personal problem (e.g., child's temperament), (b) as a social problem (e.g., child's future), (c) as no problem at all (e.g., child can communicate satisfactorily), or (d) as affecting a decision to be made? Luey, Glass, and Elliott (1995) warn that "social workers must look at the complicated and interrelated dimensions of hearing, language, culture, and politics" (p. 178). Social workers may be dealing with the emotional upset of hearing parents who have a deaf child or the disappointment of deaf parents who have a hearing child. Just as likely, they may need to gain acceptance for a particular child or for the deaf community. Thus, this social worker must establish the family's self-definitions, listen to the "experiencer" (Oliver Sacks's word—the child in this case), and weigh community and societal factors. Practically, the community and the world beyond must be assessed for resources; the family may decide to move to a community with a public school system featuring mainstreaming, may decide on a particular bilingual approach, or may find the local deaf community and move in a different direction. The worker also must figure out what the agency has to offer. Linking this family with community organizations may be as therapeutic as personal counseling. If the problem for the child is acceptance and the clinic does not engage in advocacy, then the worker must join with those who do on the family's behalf (Harris & Bamford, 2001).

An assessment process should attune us to the realities of a given subsystem. Did the worker arrange for someone to sign or interpret whenever the deaf parents come in to talk over options? Is that service wanted by the consumer (McEntee, 1995)?

adaptable to locations where people congregate other than malls and can be conducted over the telephone. These surveys can be used to collect information for a wide variety of purposes and uses.

We may decide that we can benefit from any information about certain potential service users' needs/preferences or their knowledge of available services. For example, let's say our target group is women whose lives are actually threatened by their weight (Wiley, 1994). Doing a survey of physicians would run into confidentiality issues and would miss women who avoid doctors. We could design a mall survey questionnaire and administer it on a given Saturday in front of department stores, factory outlets, and shops selling large-size women's fashions. The challenge would be to get the stores' cooperation—they may want to screen the questions for potential offensiveness—and to select obese respondents. Surveyors would have to be trained to recognize and tactfully approach obese respondents. Our results could serve as a pre-test, since responses would help us design a more relevant (and perhaps less fat-phobic) questionnaire that could be administered outside diet stores, the clothing stores again, and so on.

However, shoppers are not a representative group of all obese women. Some obese women who are self-conscious may stay at home and shop online; the obese shoppers may be more self-confident and assertive. Thus, our mall survey's sample is not a random probability sample and our findings will have limited generalizability. However, if a purposive sample is obtained, we can obtain indicative and preliminary information.

Community Information Gathering and Assessment Group Techniques

Various group methodologies lend themselves to gathering information and beginning the assessment process and fall within the scope of critical community practice. These methodologies use groups composed of community participants, similar to key informants, who represent the community or community segments. All of these techniques require some preliminary community assessment in order to structure the group and recruit participants.

Advisory groups are composed of community representatives and are used to provide a range of information on the community or other subjects. The composition is guided by the type of information sought, networks to tap, and political considerations. Advisory groups can be ongoing. They can be beneficial in terms of the advice they provide and the links they offer to various community interests. A significant weakness of advisory groups, however, is that the participants' social power often affects the group's internal processes, creates a contagion for conformity, and limits expressions of differing opinions. We will discuss advisory groups later in this chapter in the section "Community Assets Inventory and Mapping Protocol."

Nominal groups are composed of individuals with disparate interests, capacities, information, or influence to capture different parts of the community. Nominal groups can be composed of clients, potential clients, service providers, funders, or other participants. Nominal groups usually are given structured exercises in which each participant works silently alongside other individuals and then answers questions when called on until the meeting is opened to free discussion. A moderator might pose a question and ask each participant to list ideas. Each would give one answer from these lists when it is her or his turn until each participant has reported each response. Thus, 8 to 10 people sit in a group but talk in rotation as a facilitator records all ideas; eventually these will be discussed and may be ranked. The initial round-robin sharing format prevents individuals from taking over the brainstorming session (Siegel, Attkisson, & Carson, 1987) and gives an equal voice to reticent members (Alcorn & Morrison, 1994, p. 36). This technique can help to avoid disruption when the groups comprises people who hold different stakes in a particular question, such as health care financing, or who have different amounts of social power or group skills.

The processes, in summary, involve (1) individual generation of ideas in writing, (2) round-robin feedback from group members, with each idea noted in a terse phrase on a flip chart, butcher paper, blackboard, or other similar medium, (3) discussion of each recorded idea for clarification and evaluation (and bargaining),

(4) individual voting and priority setting, with group decisions being mathematically derived through rank-ordering or rating.

Nominal group meetings can also be held consecutively; for instance, landlords could give their opinions in one group and tenants in another at an earlier or later time. Nominal groups are generally task-specific and are not ongoing groups (hence the label, nominal group). The ideas generated can be the participants' ideas regarding community behavior, resource needs, patterns of interaction, or other topics where there may be diversity of representation and community interests. Specific group composition depends on the range of interests sought.

Delphi groups, a specialized form of nominal group, use reiterative but anonymous processes involving individual input and feedback. Participants anonymously provide their opinions on a question and the arguments defending their positions. Positions and arguments are collated and circulated and the process is repeated with the extreme positions (those with little agreement) eliminated after the second round. Because opinions are given anonymously, the Delphi group process allows all of the members to participate freely. However, Delphi group managers should be forewarned that participants often try to make their social power known in the expression of their opinions.

Focus groups are relatively homogeneous groups formed to give input on specific questions or topics, usually about what appeals and doesn't appeal to them about messages, ideas, and products. Sometimes this is done with a written, predetermined agenda or set of questions. Kreuger (1988) defines a focus group as "a carefully planned discussion group designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. It is conducted with proximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer. ... Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion" (p. 18). A carefully constructed focus group representative of a specific population or part of the community can provide much information on the population's values, attitudes, and opinions, and why they think and feel the way they do. The crucial issues are whether the focus group truly represents the population, whether members of the group

believe they can reveal their true preferences in the group situation, whether social acquiescence and desirability bias will influence group members, whether "group leaders" will emerge and stifle the process, and whether the group moderator can adequately manage but not lead the group. It is assumed that because group participants do not know each other in other roles and are socially similar, open communication will be enhanced. Having a diverse group may inhibit open expression by all members. For diverse populations, different focus groups should be used for each population cluster.

Focus groups differ from Delphi and nominal groups because focus groups do not seek group consensus or any sort of group decision; rather, they are used to gather information, and group decisions are avoided. Focus groups differ from "brainstorming" groups in that no effort is made to engage in problem solving. Broadcast and print media frequently use this form of opinion gathering during political campaigns. Focus groups differ from community forums in that specific detailed information is sought, the questions are predetermined, and the participants are chosen for representativeness.

Focus Group Methodology

Protocol and Participant Selection. Agencies can conduct focus groups for assessment purposes on their own or with assistance from a facilitator. As the point is not to reach a consensus but to air many ideas, members of the group react to each other's suggestions and opinions are refined. The sessions are recorded for later study. The results must be qualified, however, because we cannot generalize from small samples.

If the researcher seeks a cross-section of the community in terms of income, race, education, and other factors, multiple focus groups are needed. Otherwise the social power of participants will enter the process and the focus group will evolve into a nominal group. The homogeneity of composition is an effort to reduce social influences within the group. Most focus group sessions meet once only for about 2 hours. Working people find it hard to arrive early in the evening. Older people prefer daytime hours and are more likely to expect to have transportation money provided. Sometimes participants are

given a modest sum, but more often they are provided with a meal or refreshments because they are volunteering their time. The goal of bringing people together in this way is to encourage them to give their candid opinions. If we interrogate them or ask them questions calling for a yes or no answer, we will learn little. We are trying to create the atmosphere of a study group, not a courtroom or research laboratory.

Purpose: To Provide Valuable Information. Individual and group reactions can provide insights into issues of comprehension, suitability, and acceptable phrasing. This is why politicians test campaign themes on focus groups. Let us explore focus group methodology by understanding how a group can serve as a test audience. In the recent past, federal regulators and the apparel industry were considering voluntary warnings for sleepwear. A focus group of middle-aged and older participants was asked their preferences regarding flame-resistant fabric, warning labels, or both, to protect themselves or frail, older parents with cognitive or physical limitations. (Older people have high mortality rates associated with fires involving apparel, especially nightwear.) The meeting opened with a videotape documenting a burn hazard. The group then examined and discussed several proposed wordings for a cautionary label in sleepwear. Participants examined handouts of alternative warnings, which were also printed on big signs and displayed at the front of the room. The discussion that followed made clear a common misconception among the participants: that a labeled product must be more dangerous than an unlabeled product. Without more education, honesty might backfire in the marketplace. The advocates involved had failed in many ways to anticipate how members of the public would react, which is precisely why focus groups can be helpful.

Community forums are community meetings held either to impart information to the community or to receive information from the community. A sample forum could be titled: "Taking the Pulse: A Community Exchange to Gather Information About _____ Needs in _____ County." The forum provides an opportunity for participants to make their positions and opinions known to the forum's sponsors or

other target audiences. The advantages of forums as an information-gathering technique is that they are relatively inexpensive, may allow the researcher to obtain information from a range and number of people, and also allows information to be shared with participants. Forums can help form or expand the researcher's network of key informants. Forums, however, can be easily "stacked," with biased results, and can become overtly political. Community members with strong interests, whether or not they represent significant cross-sections of community interests, can take over the forum by obtaining a large and vocal turnout, creating social acquiescence, turning the forum into a quasi-decisional group, or biasing the meeting through triangulation by strategically placing themselves in the group for group contagion. The community forums of the 2009 national health care policy debates illustrated forums often at their worst: some participants were loud and hostile and aggressive to the point of carrying firearms.

Methods of Data Gathering From Community Events

Public Participation. Critical community practice and social work ethics support civic involvement, open government, and public participation in decision making. We learn through community meetings and events. Participants will have the opportunity to talk and to hear the options, and perhaps will even read the final report. Today many open meetings are mandated public hearings (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 1990, p. 69). In various fields, for obligatory and democratic reasons, individuals are allowed more say. A citizen could travel from forums about cable television rate hikes to national health coverage. The researcher must remember the current competition for everyone's time when using public information-gathering and assessment methodologies.

Current and potential service users envision something tangible coming out of such interchanges and expect their recommendations to be taken seriously. To be credible and ethical, we must not falsely raise expectations, and we should want input if we ask for it. Town meetings must be accessible (transit, building, audio loops, interpreters, etc.), too.

Meeting Protocol. Suggestions for running any meeting are covered in Chapter 9. The warnings here involve only those matters that may color or cloud the assessment process. The trend to give more say to the community means that meetings can be taken over by a group with an especially obdurate agenda—such as those on either side of the abortion rights, capital punishment, gun control, health care, or immigration issues. A few people can take over or can divert the group from the agenda. The group leader must remain alert but open. For example, a meeting to discuss the perceived need for more day care might be attended by parents who oppose day care, prefer after-school care, or want help in coordinating relief time for families teaching their children at home. Genuine needs may exist, making it inappropriate to tell these parents that they came to the wrong meeting. We may not agree with or like everyone who comes to public meetings, but worthwhile information can often be obtained from unexpected or unreasonable sources.

To avoid disruption, some people who run meetings make a show of letting everyone take part but actually regulate the proceedings tightly to ward off or reject unwanted input. We should anticipate that community people will organize and try to control meetings; this is part of the process. We want to be sure that in small gatherings each person present is offered equal time, and that in big gatherings access to the microphone is handled fairly. Moderators can set time limits and establish ground rules (“Avoid arguing with someone else’s statement; just make your own”) without squelching participants. It is common for sensible ideas to appear garbled or self-serving in their delivery; therefore, input is properly measured by the usefulness of the suggestion, not the speaking skills and demeanor of proponents or their stance on issues.

Follow-Up Analysis After the Meetings. During a forum, an agency staffer and someone who lives in the community should take notes on each point made and who said it. He or she can then organize the notes, using tentative headings, and have the moderator check them for errors. We must sort out what we heard, using these notes and our own memories, or, better yet, listening

to a tape and noting the intensity of feelings expressed on given topics—from represented groups in particular. Next, we must separate needs from preferences and gripes, not by how participants characterized what they were saying but by customary use of the following terms:

1. *Need:* Essential, necessity, requirement
2. *Desire, wish, or preference:* Want, choice, longing
3. *Complaint:* Gripe, grievance, objection, protest

Despite a focus on the need for day care, say, complaints may have poured out about a particular caseworker or about how a current program is being run. This mixes needs, desires, and gripes. A useful tactic is to set aside a designated time on the agenda for participants to air their complaints and preferences, after the discussion of community needs. If this is done before this discussion, the meeting may never get to it!

Assessment Needs: Other Ways to Listen to the Community. To gather community impressions, practitioners can go to those sectors believed to have the most intense needs (whether served, underserved, or unserved to date), interview key informants, and use the target group to validate objective data (Siegel, Attkisson, & Carson, 1987, p. 93). Newer possibilities involve electronic networks and interactive media. Those interested in needs and preferences can monitor sectors of a community via Web pages and e-mail mailing lists.

Although practitioners and managers must know how to put on successful forums, they may be better off attending already scheduled community events than holding their own. We may hear better from the back rather than the front of the room when we do not have to be in charge. Getting out into the swim of things is something we know we should do, but we often lack time. Professionals shouldn’t neglect community-wide celebrations and specialized events where they can gain information and exposure: Hispanic International Day, Strawberry Festival, Ice Carnival. We must look for opportunities to interact with the public and other providers. For example, if it is our turn to oversee our office’s booth at the mall, then we should visit every

other organization's table to gather information (to check service gaps and overlaps) and renew contacts.

Community Power Structure Studies

A community power structure study, largely using the above methodologies, explores the configuration and dynamics of the system of influence at the local level and the characteristics of dominant individuals. Its intent is to identify the names and rankings of persons who are perceived to exercise power in the locality where they live or work.

Full-blown power studies using any approach can take a year, but modest exploratory or short-cut studies can be completed more rapidly, especially if an earlier study is available. Newspaper offices and political science, economics, or sociology departments at colleges or universities are starting places to unearth such a study.

Power Study Reputational Methodologies

We can look at studies undertaken by a journalist to illustrate how successful power structure studies are conducted and what they tell us. A journalist conducted a survey of 27 community leaders (often called a panel in power structure literature) to elicit the names of "folks with real clout" in a large, mostly metropolitan county (Sullivan, 1992, p. 1). The leaders were asked to name "influential individuals . . . not necessarily those with the big jobs or titles, but the 10 people they would want on their side if they were trying to get something big accomplished" (p. 1). The runaway winner in the survey turned out to be fairly similar to county influentials in other informal studies (who are often concerned with growth), because he was a developer. His family connections also fit the picture—a father who had been acting governor and a grandfather who had run a political dynasty in the county. That the winner was also a political columnist and cable-TV talk-show host illustrates a newer route to influence. The school superintendent, county executive, and a U.S. representative were the runners-up. Public service does not equate automatically with power; in this study, not one of nine county council members was in the top 10

with real clout or sway. Influence can also be wielded by those who serve the community outside of office: the former president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) ranked eighth. Power's distribution is changing with the growing influence of media stars as the faces of power.

Almost invariably when the results of local power studies are in, we know, an acquaintance knows, or someone in our family knows an individual on the long list, if not the top 10 list, fairly well. Reading community power studies makes it clear that we have more access to influentials than we may realize. We will discuss the "six degrees of separation" in Chapter 10, "Using Networks and Networking."

Problem Studies Methodology

In any problem/services study we should first locate relevant studies conducted in our locale or in similar communities, to discover the variables that define problems and their solutions. We are looking for multidimensional and systematic studies of (a) social problems, (b) private and public sector programs addressing problems (that have been field tested) and other solutions for these problems, and (c) implementation critiques (issues, cost/benefit analyses, evidence of consumer satisfaction).

To start a community problem study, we want to check with the geography, public administration, and business departments at local universities and with police, transportation, health, recreation, and other government offices. Professionals there may have conducted research in relevant areas or may have capacities to pinpoint problems such as domestic violence by neighborhoods or wards that our organization lacks.

Numerous offices such as city planning departments have acquired a technology called Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a type of management information system that can provide new insights for community situations through sophisticated graphics and information maps (Elwood, 2001). According to Mason, Cheung, and Walker (2009), GIS provides "a powerful set of tools that captures, manages, analyzes, and visualizes spatial data" (p. 23). Their project looked at urban youth enrolled in a

substance abuse program in Washington, D.C. GIS produced a “geographically specific listing of the teens’ daily activity locations, as well as evaluative descriptions of various geographical environments” (Mason, Cheung, and Walker, 2009, p. 23). The GIS was able to describe and visualize 186 unique locations and was able to assign them rankings of either protective or risk location. Human service workers and organizers can use GIS to link data to the target group’s environment (McNutt, 2000). Telephone complaints about rodents can be mapped so the neediest neighborhoods quickly and regularly receive rat traps and other interventions (Richards & Croner, 1999). Students in Raleigh, North Carolina, created a school archive using GIS in combination with oral histories of its graduates and discovered how the community surrounding the school had changed over time (Alibrandi, Beal, Thompson, & Wilson, 2000).

Hoefler, Hoefler, and Tobias (1994) suggest several reasons to use this new study tool:

One of the key theoretical viewpoints of social work is that the client must be viewed in the context of his or her environment. Yet, as clients’ environments frequently differ from our own, we may overlook or misunderstand the effects of their environments on their problems. GIS can help us keep track of both the physical and social aspects of those environments. . . .

GIS easily addresses such questions as: Where do our clients come from? Are we accessible to our clients by public transportation? Are there geographic concentrations of particular client problems? And, if we need to change location or add satellite offices, where are the best areas to be? (p. 117)

Local Republican and Democratic parties are additional sources of GIS technical expertise. They may have created digital maps on such subjects as values or attitudes, residential density, and voting participation that could be of use. According to Novotny and Jacobs (1977), “What makes GIS so appealing to political campaigns is that it allows a small group of people to take a multitude of geographic and demographic data, from marketing and consumer research to property tax information and U.S. Bureau of the Census statistics, and render them all on a colorful multilayered map that is far more accessible to use than a mere spreadsheet of tables and numbers” (p. 268). Computer graphics can enhance community studies through the generation of

show-and-tell materials for political meetings, fundraising efforts, and so on.

In a community problem/services study, the researcher collects information according to the social problem criteria discussed in Chapter 3 to address the community problem. The following are important for constructing and staging the social problem for intervention:

- Determine the quantifiable nature of the condition and whether the quantifiable definition is generally shared (basis for staging the condition as a community problem and the basis for social intervention)
- Determine specific deviations from what and whose norms, standards, and ideology (basis for building coalitions and developing support to build significant action groups¹)
- Determine whether the deviation is viewed as an individual and/or a social deviation (what parts are individual and what parts are socially caused)
- Determine the ideological frame of reference used that shapes all other definitions
- Determine the elements, degree, and interrelationships of social etiologies, not assuming unitary causation (provides a direction for intervention)
- Determine the social costs: To whom does the condition represent a social cost? By what criteria? Who pays? (forms a basis for making remediation)

Community Assets Inventory and Mapping Protocol

Community asset inventories and maps locate a community’s assets, resources, and strengths. They are the converse of problem studies. Community assets are anything that can be used to improve the quality of community life and the lives of its people. The most complete application of asset mapping literally surveys individuals within the geographic area to find out what skills, gifts, and capacities people have.

The protocols for community assets mapping are guided by the goals of the particular inventory and mapping exercise. The protocols require the range of methodologies discussed in this chapter to survey the assets and locate them

in the community. While the protocols are generally linear, reiteration often is required as knowledge of the community's boundaries and composition is refined.

1. *Definition of the community and specification of the community's boundaries*

The definition and specification of the community and clearly boundaries are essential (Office of Learning Technology, 2003, p. 9.). The boundaries determine the key informants for the assets inventory and mappings. Community unit size ultimately is determined by the intensity of the needed assets inventory and maps and the time and resources available for the process. A community development approach with maximum citizen participation is optimal. This requires some existing sense of community identity by key informants. Size of community is a critical consideration. If the community boundaries are too large, the inventorying task either is overwhelming or superficial. Smaller community units allows for intensity of assets inventory and mapping, and greater opportunities for networking and social capital development. These smaller units eventually can be aggregated to form a larger community unit. Some preliminary community assessment by the available data methodologies is advisable in setting community boundaries (Allen, 2005; Robinson, Vineyard, & Reagor, 2004; Sustainable Jersey, n.d.).

2. *Selection of key informants*

No single person or small group has knowledge of all a community's assets. Selection of key informants should reflect the community's composition and complexity as well as the reasons for doing a community assets mapping. The key informants provide the data for the assets inventory and mappings. Different assets are important to different community segments and interest groups in the community. The asset mapping process needs to be inclusive of all community segments and interests. Asset mapping celebrates differences rather than homogeneity.

3. *Identification of asset sets for inventory*

The objective is to get as complete an inventory as possible, whether at a neighborhood level, community-wide, or county-wide—whatever the geographic community. Within the geographic community, a functional community of interest approach can be used to organize the data. If small areas are inventoried, individual assets may also be surveyed and mapped. Sources for identifying potential asset sets include available data sources such as the phone book, preliminary reviews with key informants, neighborhood and community groups, the local media, and often "directories" that have been developed in the community. Preliminary asset sets are helpful to key informants in identifying assets.

The assets sets provided here are preliminary and illustrative only. The sets categories

Some Preliminary Data Sets

- Assets of individuals: individual skills of actual or potential volunteers, mentors, and community resources
- Assets of associations: community organizations, cultural organizations, self-help and health groups, interest clubs, crime watch, friends of library, sports leagues, social action groups, labor unions, political organizations, faith-based organizations, civic and fraternal organizations, and more
- Assets of institutions and formal organizations and agencies: public and private schools, libraries, public and civic agencies, not-for-profit social and community welfare and United Way agencies, medical and health vendors, community centers, police and fire stations, cultural organizations, not-for-profit arts and profit entertainment, religious institutions (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples)
- Assets of economic and business organizations: Chamber of Commerce and business associations, trade groups, vendors and merchants, job training programs.
- Assets of natural resources: parks, farms, ranches, forests, green spaces, open spaces, wetlands
- Assets of physical structure or places: parks, schools, hospitals, places of worship, recreational resources, libraries, buildings, governmental facilities, community centers.

in any assets inventory and mapping are not exhaustive or always mutually exclusive. The sets are refined and expanded as the assets inventories are developed. The task is not to develop a clean typology of assets but an inventory of assets. It is to guide key informants in developing a comprehensive inventory of community assets. A single individual or organization generally has multiple assets. The assets inventory and map is of assets, rather than units.

4. *Selection of data collection methodologies and data collection*

Generally a steering committee composed of key informants from different community segments is formed to advise on data sets and collection methodologies that will work best in the community.² The approach should take into account the amount of time the key informants are willing to volunteer and the technical and organizational needs of the inventory methods. The methodologies typically involve the range of data collection tools discussed in this chapter: available data, observations, interviews, written surveys (Allen, 2005; Office of Learning Technology, 2003). The group techniques presented earlier in this chapter can be used as a data collection methodology and can help define the asset sets. The steering committee can be an ongoing advisory group or can function as a short-term nominal group.

5. *Constructing the inventory and the assets maps*

Remember, community assets inventories and mapping are about locating and inventorying strengths and assets and connecting people and organizations in the community to build community networks, cohesion, solidarity, and social capital. The inventories can catalog assets by geographic or functional asset sets used in data collection and develop new ways of classifying the assets. As a resource assessment tool, assets inventories and mapping should indicate the vertical or horizontal relationship of the asset to the community (vertical and horizontal relationships were discussed in Chapter 4). Asset mapping reveals the assets of the entire community and highlights the interconnections among them, which in turn reveals how to

access those assets. Connections to people can also become connections to resource-filled institutions. Assets location mapping can use GIS mapping in *Zagat*-type maps, probably by asset sets to reduce the “business” of the maps (Aronson, Wallis, O’Campo, & Schafer, 2007; Mason, Cheung, & Walker, 2009).

Eco-mapping and social network maps, discussed in Chapter 10, address the relationships and connectiveness of a community’s assets to an individual or family. Eco-mapping, initially developed in family therapy, is a mapping of relationships between community assets that are part of a household’s environment or ecology. The process involves asking people to list resources and to describe exchanges. For instance, they designate people to whom they can turn, such as a brother-in-law who fixes cars or a former daughter-in-law, as well as people by whom they are oppressed or drained, such as a lonely widowed mother or a brother who is becoming addicted to Ecstasy (Cournoyer, 2000, pp. 40–43). The resulting chart diagrams human relationships (for instance, a family or friendship group) and may include formal and informal resources and natural helpers (Miley, O’Melia, & DuBois, 1998, pp. 243–244).

Another way of finding out about resources and linking the community asset map to the individual or family is a social network map. The end product here is another graphic, but one that lists social supports such as neighbors, businesses, churches, self-help groups, or clubs that the individual or family does or could access (Miley, O’Melia, & DuBois, 1998, pp. 340–341). From it we may be able to see links to social institutions.

Outreach and Assessment Methods

Outreach and assessment intertwine in two ways. Community assessment may help determine the best means of outreach. Assessment can be made possible through outreach to less well-known segments of the population. Typically, outreach involves systematically contacting isolated people in their homes or wherever they reside (institutions, streets), or in the neighborhoods where they congregate, and

linking them to services and financial programs for which they are believed to be eligible. Directories can be part of outreach, as can 800 or 888 telephone numbers. Outreach is also used to expand an agency's program (a) into new settings and communities, thus making a service or resource immediately and more widely available; (b) into new time periods to reach a target group, as has been done with midnight basketball; and (c) into client "linkage" with institutions, the community, or other clients to enhance "peer support" (Wells, Schachter, Little, Whyllie, & Balogh, 1993).

Outreach has information-gathering and assessment potential as well as a client recruitment and case-finding strategy. It is an obligation of critical community practice. Takoma Park, Maryland, hired organizers to canvass wards full of newcomers to register people to vote in city elections but also to learn about immigrant concerns (for instance, whether illegal immigrants were being taken advantage of in their everyday transactions) (Becker, 2001). Outreach involves an interesting mix of giving and getting knowledge (Glogoff & Glogoff, 1998).

Varieties and Methods. Outreach methods vary. Some government agencies are mandated to alert potential service users or beneficiaries—for instance, regarding food stamps or Supplemental Security Income. They often perform outreach through public service announcements. In contrast, homeless shelter director Mitch Snyder (1946–1990), the legendary District of Columbia homeless advocate, used to take hamburgers and blankets out around 10 P.M. to individuals who chose to stay on the streets rather than come in from the cold. While distributing the food and blankets, he gained intelligence from those on heat grates about specific fears people had about coming indoors and which people on the streets were the sickest or most violent. A continuing education program on mental health, on the other hand, employed more conventional but equally important ways of reaching out to older people: selecting accessible community sites, allowing registration at the first class so that frail people did not have to make an extra trip, and printing materials in large type (Blackwell & Hunt, 1980). Telephone hotlines offering legal assistance to

the poor or elderly have been tried in several localities as a way to make information more available, as well as a means of collecting information on the types of requests received over time. The University of Maryland at Baltimore has a Social Work Community Outreach Service that links university resources with community groups and residents (Cook, Bond, Jones, & Greif, 2002). Support groups can be initiated, in either a public or a circumspect manner (Anderson & Shaw, 1994), as a form of outreach. Many churches and legal groups have initiated innovative outreach to immigrant groups.³

As shown in a newspaper story by Levine (2002) entitled "Word Gets Out on Children's Insurance," methods of outreach can be direct or indirect:

It is advertised during back-to-school nights and baseball games, in beauty parlors and liquor stores, on yo-yos and toothbrushes. The creative lengths to which state and local officials go in publicizing the Maryland Children's Health Program know few bounds. At the local bowling alley? On a Frisbee? Why not? Their work has paid off by the tens of thousands since the program began in 1998. Nearly 95,000 previously uninsured children have health coverage—a yield more than 50 percent greater than officials originally predicted and success that these days draws applause from outside policy experts. (pp. 3, 6, reprinted with permission of the *Washington Post*)

Methods of outreach can be expected or unexpected: If skywriting in Spanish were the best way to identify a service and encourage its use for a particular target group, and resources were not at issue, then it would be an appropriate mechanism. Direct, personal outreach must, of course, be made as nonthreatening and non-disruptive as possible.

Outreach can be done using the Web and the Internet in some nonthreatening ways. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection used e-mail technology as an easy, low-cost method of soliciting commitment. The outreach targeted the listserv, an e-mail distribution list, of the 420 employees of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The campaign focused on four behaviors: (1) checking tire pressure; (2) replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs); (3) assessing refrigerator efficiency; and (4) purchasing green

power (Artz & Cooke, 2007, p. 260). An introductory e-mail was sent, followed by an e-mail 2 weeks later introducing the first commitment. As the weeks followed, the other three topics were introduced by e-mail. The e-mails allowed recipients to demonstrate their commitment by replying to the e-mail. E-mails were sent again a few days later to those people who demonstrated their commitment by asking whether they followed through with the committed action. The evaluators found that e-mail “served as a viable mechanism for social marketing” (Artz & Cooke, 2007, p. 271). E-mails allowed for efficient dissemination of the campaigns and allowed recipients to provide feedback and input to the department. There are limits and cautions, however. Not all people have Internet service and can be reached by e-mails. In an era where “spam” e-mail dominates, some people may simply ignore these messages.

The philosophy is to meet people where they are in every way we can—through their own language or their own stores (e.g., botanical shops in Puerto Rican communities), accommodating them in their own environment and in ours (getting rid of barriers such as stairs), providing services or programs in a way and at a time that is convenient, and conveying messages at an appropriate level of comprehension. It is important to assess the informational requirements of the public. We can be creative in community education: comic books, for instance, can be part of adult education and advocacy efforts. The immigrant outreach networks organizations that serve non-English speakers use graphics to reach out to their target populations. We will continue our discussion of communication and outreach in Chapter 11, the marketing chapter.

The Write-Up

Once information is collected, it needs to be organized so it can be used in constructing a case theory for change. Analytic techniques for building the case theory are discussed in the subsequent chapters. These techniques are used to organize and assess the information that is collected and may guide the collection of information, but assessment does not collect information. The wind-up, if there is a final wind-up,

of any community study is the report to relevant constituencies. This is especially true for a comprehensive community study. We finish the study by writing a report and having it double-checked by our key informants. In ethnographic field studies this is referred to as *member-checking* (Bisman & Hardcastle, 1999, pp. 66–67, 220). A sample of topics to cover in a report includes:

1. Community description:
 - Geographic, corporate, jurisdictional boundaries
 - Demographics, statistics, subgroups
 - History, community strengths today
 - Political structure, governance
 - Economic structure, major or key employers
 - Social services structure
 - Mutual aid, community action organizations
 - Potential or actual civic and service problems
 - Power relations
2. Description of the information-collection methodologies:
 - Interviewing, “hearing” the community in new ways
 - Observing, analyzing
 - Collecting illuminating anecdotes, stories
 - Following methods used by social scientists
 - Providing orientation materials (map, photographs)
 - Being aware of personal bias, limits of analysis

Communication About Need. Neuber and associates (1980) defined need assessment as “a communication medium between consumers and service providers,” which can affect “the planning and evaluation of the various services to be delivered to the community and consumers” (pp. 62–63). Need assessment is also an ongoing process that involves the community in a form of continuous quality improvement (D. Menefee, personal communication, June 1995). Need assessments may be client-oriented (population at risk) or service-oriented (addressing gaps and fit).

To give an example of the latter, a graduate student thinks she has identified a need. Her dream is to start her own agency after she leaves school to provide housing for post-high-school-age youth. She wishes to find a niche in the transitional housing market and has several

communities in mind, but she wants to find out if such a service is essential, in the opinion of local practitioners, and desired by decision makers in the area. The student believes a service-oriented need assessment will help her to determine in which locality there will be a positive fit and where her plan will most likely succeed.

Integrating Methods to Suit Assessment Needs

When practitioners wish to know their clients' worlds better, or when program development or another course of action is underway, several of the methodologies discussed here can be combined or their elements mixed to fit the situation. Community studies can be as personal as ethnography and as impersonal as computer analysis of available data. Approaches are mixed and matched to fit the situation and available resources. Assessment processes involve compiling available information, developing new information, or extracting relevant new information with the old. Neuber and associates (1980) urge

us to obtain data from the range of qualitative and quantitative assessment methodologies.

Disciplines usually evolve a few specialized assessment methods but adapt most of their methods from sources such as sociology, political science, or planning. In community health, for instance, surveys and descriptive epidemiological studies are common methods used to carry out an assessment (Spradley, 1990, p. 382), just as needs identification and assessment methods, including surveys, are common in social work.

Moving from Assessment to Action

What will be the outcome of all this self-scrutiny, community examination, and assessment? Using the data, insights, and community contacts gained from study and assessment, appropriate steps become more apparent. Possible action plans include:

- Finding community connections for service users
- Mobilizing community resources for clients

Illustrative Example

Your Juneau, Alaska, office has been successful at community building and has received federal stimulus money to open an office in Sitka, a town of about 9,000 residents about 70 miles away by air. You have only a tourist's superficial knowledge about Sitka. Located on Baranof Island on Alaska's panhandle, it is the state's largest port system and among the top ten ports by value in the United States. It has lumber, salmon, and halibut fisheries; tourism; a college; and a Coast Guard Air Station. But you can't see Russia from Sitka, even on a clear day.

In order to carry out the stimulus grant, you have to know Sitka better. A community study is needed. Your director asks you to move to Sitka early to start this study, which may provide guidance on hiring and programming. He gives you the names of three townspeople whom he has met: George P. of the Alaska Marine Conservation Council, Nancy F. of the nonprofit Island Institute, and Lesley A., who runs day tours for cruise ships. The director tells you to investigate the area in four ways and report back in a month.

1. Conduct a field study to learn more about the culture of any minority, low-income, fringe, or

disreputable groups in the area that might be overlooked in the community-building process. What are your first steps?

2. Conduct a field study to gain an overview and a sense of town character. Identify community assets. What are your first steps?
3. Conduct a power structure study to find out who openly and who quietly controls the community. What are your first steps?
4. Find out who has recently conducted problem-oriented community studies. Try to prioritize community concerns. What are your first steps?
5. Would you do the studies in this order or another order? Explain your rationale.

For a metropolitan, multicultural version of the exercise, use Fresno, California; Greensboro, North Carolina; San Antonio, Texas; Las Vegas, Nevada; or Nashville, Tennessee. All have multi-ethnic populations.

- Selecting appropriate community interventions (development, problem reduction, education, sector mobilization, prevention, promotion)
- Organizing sectors of the community around an issue

Look back to the beginning of the chapter to see a prime example of mobilizing legal resources and organizing a community around an issue. Erin Brockovich's story depicts the progression from assessment to action quite well.

Linking Assessment, Problem Solving, and Intervention⁴

Activating citizens and ameliorating problems are the objectives of community assessment community-building processes. As Mattaini and Kirk argue (1993), "if assessment is not directly related to and prescriptive of treatment, it is, at best, a waste of client and practitioner time and, at worst, unethical." The overriding task of the community practitioner is to help groups respond to the vicissitudes of life while keeping long-term community welfare on the agenda. A need for community problem solving usually exists when (a) there are many individuals or a class of people involved, with problems that are viewed as being large or serious enough to pose some threat, real or imagined, to the well-being of the community; or (b) the community experiences pressure due to problems in the operation of a system, such as problems in communication or socialization (see Chapter 4) (Box 6.3).

The community practitioner intervenes, on behalf of an agency or organization or as part of

a coalition, in the workings of the community system and its parts. Since the magnitude, complexity, and responsibility of the task of addressing either type of problem are almost overwhelming, what is needed is a way to think about the job. A guide that points up difficulties and charts ways of overcoming obstacles is helpful.

Here are 8 ideal steps that seek to explicate the thinking, case-theory building, and behavior of a community practitioner engaging in problem solving:

1. Problem intake (identification, delineation of initiator system, preliminary assessment, delineation of a social problem and target systems)
2. Selection of potential problem-solving actors (construction, preliminary determination and location of the client, action, change agent systems)
3. Determination of desired goals and potential consensus (assessments and assets inventory)
4. Specification of types of action outcome (e.g., alleviate condition, control, rehabilitate, prevent, innovate), recruitment of change agent, action, implementing systems
5. Analysis of the facets of the anticipated intervention (case theory and implementing system)
6. Inventory and evaluation of resources (refinement of assets inventory and mapping)
7. Implementation of decisions made to reach solutions (allocation of resources, intervention)
8. Evaluation (ongoing feedback)

BOX 6.3.

Construing the Situation

When a problem or case is brought to your official notice, you must decide how narrowly or broadly to interpret it. For example, Rosenthal and Levine (1980, p. 401) point out that an individual complaint about discrimination in a local government's handling of a job promotion might be investigated in one of the following ways:

- As an individual complaint only: Did the government agency discriminate against this person?

- As a class complaint: Does the government agency discriminate against all persons in certain categories?
- As a broadly construed class complaint: Does the entire government discriminate against all persons in certain categories?

We will collect data for our organization's own use to learn what should be done and, later, after a decision is made about how to proceed, we will collect additional data to support what we want from third parties who can effect solutions. During this process, we look to agency stakeholders for insight intelligence and look to community people who have a stake in a problem and its solution for action intelligence.

Community problems, public concern for those problems, and the authority to do something about them cross institutional, geographic, and special interest boundaries (Turner, 1963a, b). This makes community work and problem solving interesting and challenging. There are no clearly detailed road maps; worse, there is an absence of well-marked roads and there are many potholes. Any guide simply specifies the points of the compass that we need to chart our daily practice excursions.

Based on community problem-solving steps (see Chapters 1 and 3), the emphasis may seem to be on all head and no heart. However, that view overlooks the emphasis on spirit found in actual practice. Belief in a cause and commitment are necessary because, in the final analysis, we must recognize that disturbances of the status quo are inherent in community organizing and planning. Resistance is to be expected. A second aspect of spirit requires that the practitioner learn to be comfortable with uncertainty. This is the companion of change and development. A third requirement is for the practitioner to master feasibility management:

practitioners must work with what is feasible at the moment they need to take action. Thus, the task of the community problem-solving practitioner is to constantly stretch the parameters of what is feasible and determine the moment for action. This, then, is the spirit of purpose and determination.

A Continuous Cycle. Assessment, problem solving, and intervention processes flow together. As a prime example, Bracht and Kingsbury (1990) conceive of community organizing in five overlapping stages: "community analysis, design and initiation, implementation, maintenance and consolidation, and dissemination and reassessment" (p. 74).

Box 6.4 illustrates the cycle of assessment, intervention, and reassessment. It provides an example of the use of a community-oriented viewpoint in planning a specific program. Note how closely the steps correspond to the fundamentals emphasized in this chapter. This section has sketched the later phases of the assessment process. Additional forms of intervention will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Notes

1. *Significant* is defined tautologically as having sufficient social power to place the concern on the public's agenda for consideration.
2. See "Community Information Gathering and Assessment Group Techniques" earlier in the chapter.
3. Examples include the Immigration Outreach Service Center at St. Matthew Catholic Church, <http://www.ioscbalt.org/>; The National Immigration

BOX 6.4.

Steps to Establishing Successful Worksite Health-Promotion Programs

1. Build community support.
 - a. Assess community norms, culture, and activities.
 - b. Establish community advisory board.
2. Assess worksite culture and social norms.
 - a. Capitalize on opportunities to facilitate the program.
 - b. Identify and modify existing barriers.
3. Solicit top management and union support.
4. Use employee input in planning.
 - a. Conduct employee surveys.
 - b. Appoint employee steering committee.
 - c. Appoint worksite liaison.
5. Provide ongoing programming with environmental and social supports.
6. Conduct periodic program evaluation.

Source: Sorensen, Glasgow, & Corbett (1990, p. 160). Copyright © 1990 by Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

Assessing Our Links as Professionals with the Community

How Engaged Am I In This Community?

What Is My/Our Place In This Community?

Professionals need to make and use contacts. To analyze the contacts we already have and to find out the degree of our engagement as human service workers in our community, we can start by listing who knows us, and whom we know. For example, our agency Web page or annual report should reveal part of the local and regional professional network that we maintain. In whose newsletter is our agency mentioned? The organization chart (see Chapter 9) sketches our agency's organizational ties to governing, oversight, and funding bodies, and a task environment analysis (see Chapters 2, 4 and 11) can delineate our professional linkages with parallel and competing agencies. This process will help identify informal community partnerships. We can trace formal linkages, but personal ties are equally noteworthy; after all, social movements and other change efforts are built on networks of friends. Since a variety of people are connected with an agency, from fundraisers to secretaries, multiple informal local networks of relationships exist. One way to tap such links and explore relationships among social actors is with a social network survey (Cross, Borgatti, & Parker, 2002).

Capturing factual information about community links is a matter of becoming more systematic in identifying ties:

- Inventory community groups and organizations with which agency staffers are affiliated personally and professionally. Which of these could you call upon for assistance? For example, one social worker may have links with the National Guard, an Alzheimer's support group, and a youth gang, plus the usual memberships in professional associations.
- Look at a list of social institutions and mark those

where you have some type of "in" due to knowledge, connection to staff, and so on.

- Have members of the agency's client and community boards also engage in this exercise; you may see different ties.
- List the organizational representatives in each coalition to which your agency or organization belongs.
- Do a media audit: Write down each media outlet that you rely on for information, and star the ones you could tap for coverage.
- In the above evaluations, state whether the nexus is significant or superficial.
- If staffers are willing to do a collective exercise, Mat-taini (1993) suggests an eco-map, substituting your agency for the family at the center of the graphic.
- Another group exercise has everyone who is part of the agency draw individual sociograms, a picture of who is connected to whom. These will graphically display the relationships and interactions within the group of agency employees and volunteers (Johnson, 1995). Results can be revealing; weak linkages or active dislike among subgroups within the agency may reflect weak ties and subgroup tensions within the community. See Chapters 8, 9, and 10 of this volume and Valdis Krebs's "An Introduction to Social Network Analysis" Web site (<http://www.orgnet.com/sna.html>).

Ultimately, we seek to be in right relationship with our community collaborators. We want to be accountable to the public and to truly involve service users in decision making: that means actual input, not just ratification of staff plans (see Chapter 14).

In summary, determining whether agencies are effectively and strategically involved in community and have a community orientation requires many mechanisms and must be an ongoing assessment procedure.

Law Center, http://www.nilc.org/dc_conf/flash-drive09/Health-Care-Access-Reform/pb13; and the Immigration Outreach project of New York City's City Bar Justice Center, <http://www.nybar.org/citybarjusticecenter/projects/immigrant-justice/immigration-outreach-project/overview/>

4. This section is based on work by Hardcastle (1992) and Turner (1963b). Also see Cox (1995).

References

Adams, R. G. (1998). Inciting sociological thought by studying the Deadhead community: Engaging publics in dialogue. *Social Forces*, 77(1), 1–25.

Alcorn, S., & Morrison, J. D. (1994). Community planning that is "caught" and "taught": Experiential learning from town meetings. *Journal of Community Practice*, 1(4), 27–43.

Alibrandi, M., Beal, C., Thompson, A., & Wilson, A. (2000). Reconstructing a school's past using oral histories and GIS mapping. *Social Education*, 64(3), 134–139.

Allen, J. C. (2005). *Community asset mapping and mobilizing communities*. Coeur d'Alene, ID: Idaho Governor's 6th Annual Roundtable.

Anderson, D. B., & Shaw, S. L. (1994). Starting a support group for families and partners of people with HIV/AIDS in a rural setting. *Social Work*, 39(1), 135–138.

- Aronson, R. E., Wallis, A. B., O'Campo, P. J., & Schafer, P. (2007). Neighborhood mapping and evaluation: A methodology for participatory community health initiatives. *Journal of Maternal and Child Health*, 11, 373–383.
- Artz, N., & Cooke, P. (2007). Using e-mail listservs to promote environmentally sustainable behaviors. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 13(4), 257–276.
- Becker, J. (2001, April 26). Activists, politicians court minorities: Changing demographics could influence elections. *The Washington Post*, p. T16.
- Bisman, C. D., & Hardcastle, D. A. (1999). *Integrating research into practice: A model for effective social work*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Blackwell, D., & Hunt, S. (1980). Mental health services reaching out to older persons. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 2(4), 281–288.
- Bracht, N., & Kingsbury, L. (1990). Assessing the community: Its services, needs, leadership, and readiness. In N. Bracht (Ed.), *Health promotion at the community level* (pp. 66–88). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Butcher, H. B. (2007). Toward a model of critical community practice. In H. B. Butcher, S. Banks, P. Henderson, with J. Robertson, *Critical community practice* (pp. 51–76). Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.
- Butcher, H. B., Banks, S., Henderson, P., with Robertson, J. (2007). *Critical community practice*. Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.
- Cook, D., Bond, A. F., Jones, P., & Greif, G. L. (2002). The social work outreach service within a school of social work: A new model for collaboration with the community. *Journal of Community Practice*, 10(1), 17–31.
- Cournoyer, B. (2000). *The social work skills workbook*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Cox, F. M. (1995). Community problem solving: A guide to practice with comments. In J. Rothman, J. L. Erlich, & J. E. Tropman with F. M. Cox (Eds.), *Strategies of community organization: Macro practice* (5th ed., pp. 146–162). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.
- Cross, R., Borgatti, S. P., & Parker, A. (2002). Making invisible work visible: Using social network analysis to support strategic collaboration. *California Management Review*, 44(2), 25–41.
- Daley, J. M., & Wong, P. (1994). Community development with emerging ethnic communities. *Journal of Community Practice*, 1(1), 9–24.
- Dawson, S. E. (1993). Social work practice and technological disasters: The Navajo uranium experience. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 20(2), 5–20.
- Denby, D. (2000, March 27). Hell-raising women: And the men who love them. *The New Yorker*, 135–136.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Dolnick, E. (1993, September). Deafness as culture. *The Atlantic Monthly*, pp. 37–40, 46–53.
- Elwood, S. A. (2001). GIS and collaborative urban governance: Understanding their implications for community action and power. *Urban Geography*, 22(6), 737–759.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.
- Glogoff, L. G., & Glogoff, S. (1998). Using the World Wide Web for community outreach. *Internet Reference Services Quarterly*, 3(1), 15–26.
- Green, J. W. (1995). *Cultural awareness in the human services: A multi-ethnic approach* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hardcastle, D. A. (1992). *Social problems, needs and social policy: A conceptual review*. Baltimore: University of Maryland at Baltimore School of Social Work.
- Harris, J., & Bamford, C. (2001). The uphill struggle: Services for deaf and hard of hearing people—issues of equality, participation and access. *Disability and Society*, 16(7), 969–979.
- Hirsch, K. (1998). *A home in the heart of a city*. New York: Northpoint Press.
- Hoefler, R. A., Hoefler, R. M., & Tobias, R. A. (1994). Geographic information systems and human services. *Journal of Community Practice*, 1(3), 113–128.
- Howell, J. T. (1973). *Hard living on Clay Street: Portraits of blue-collar families*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Jeffries, A. (1996). Modeling community work: An analytic framework for practice. *Journal of Community Practice*, 3(3/4), 101–125.
- Johnson, L. C. (1995). *Social work practice: A generalist approach* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Karabanow, J. (1999). Creating community: A case study of a Montreal street kid agency. *Community Development Journal*, 34(4), 318–327.
- Kettner, P. M., Moroney, R. M., & Martin, L. L. (1990). *Designing and managing programs: An effectiveness-based approach*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kreuger, R. A. (1988). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lamb, R. K. (1977). Community life: How to get its pulse. Suggestions for a study of your home town. In F. M. Cox, J. L. Erlich, J. Rothman, & J. E. Tropman (Eds.), *Tactics and techniques of community practice* (pp. 17–23). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.
- Levine, S. (2002, January 3). Word gets out on children's insurance. *The Washington Post, Montgomery Extra*, p. 3, p. 6.

- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Luey, H. S., Glass, L., & Elliott, H. (1995). Hard-of-Hearing or Deaf: Issues of ears, language, culture, and identity. *Social Work*, 40(2), 177–182.
- Mason, M., Cheung, I., & Walker, L. (2009). Creating a geospatial database of risks and resources to explore urban adolescent substance use. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, 37, 21–34.
- Mattaini, M. A., & Kirk, S. A. (1993). Points & view-points: Misdiagnosing assessment. *Social Work*, 38, 231–233.
- McEntee, M. K. (1995). Deaf and hard-of-hearing clients: Some legal implications. *Social Work*, 40(2), 183–187.
- McNutt, J. (2000). Organizing cyberspace: Strategies for teaching about community practice and technology. *Journal of Community Practice*, 7(1), 95–109.
- Merton, R. K., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. (1956). *The focus interview*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Meyer, C. H. (1993). *Assessment in social work practice*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Miley, K. K., O'Melia, M., & DuBois, B. L. (1998). *Generalist social work practice*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Myerhoff, B. (1980). *Number our days*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Neuber, K. A. (with Atkins, T. A., Jacobson, J. A., & Reuterma, N. A.). (1980). *Needs assessment: A model for community planning*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Neuber, K. A. (with Atkins, T. A., Jacobson, J. A., & Reuterma, N. A.). (1980). *Needs assessment: A model for community planning*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Novotny, P., & Jacobs, R. H. (1977). Geographical information systems and the new landscape of political technologies. *Social Science Computer Review*, 15(3), 264–285.
- Office of Learning Technologies. (2003). *Community learning asset mapping: A guidebook for community learning networks*. Gatineau, Que., Canada: Human Resources Development Canada. Retrieved November 12, 2009, from <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/hip/lld/olt/Resources/toolkit/mapping-guidebook.pdf>
- Oldenburg, R. (1999). *The great good place: Cafes, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons and other hangouts at the heart of a community*. New York: Marlowe & Co.
- Oliver, M. (1990). *The politics of disablement*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Parker, V., Edmonds, S., & Robinson, V. (1989). *A change for the better: How to make communities more responsive to older residents*. Washington, DC: American Association of Retired Persons.
- Reagan, T. (2002). Toward an "archeology of deafness": Etic and emic constructions of identity in conflict. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 1(1), 41–66.
- Richards, T. B., & Croner, C. M. (1999). Geographic information systems and public health: Mapping in the future. *Public Health Reports*, 114(4), 359–373.
- Robinson, C. M., Vineyard, M. C., & Reagor, J. D. (2004). Using community mapping in human ecology. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 96(4), 52–54.
- Robinson, K., & Walsh, R. O. (1999). Blunders of interdisciplinary education: Our first experience. *National Academies of Practice Forum*, 1(1), 7–11.
- Rodwell, M. K. (1998). *Social work constructivist research*. New York: Garland.
- Rogge, M. E. (1995). Coordinating theory, evidence, and practice: Toxic waste exposure in communities. *Journal of Community Practice*, 2(2), 55–76.
- Rosenthal, S. R., & Levine, E. S. (1980). Case management and policy implementation. *Public Policy*, 28(4), 381–413.
- Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2007). *Research methods for social work* (6th ed.) Belmont, CA: Thompson Brooks Cole.
- Sacks, O. (1989). *Seeing voices: A journey into the world of the deaf*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schneider, R. L., & Lester, L. (2001). *Social work advocacy: A new framework for action*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Schwab, B., Drake, R. E., & Burghardt, E. M. (1988). Health care of the chronically mentally ill: The culture broker model. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 24(3), 174–184.
- Siegel, L. M., Attkisson, C. C., & Carson, L. G. (1987). Need identification and program planning in the community. In F. M. Cox, J. L. Erlich, J. Rothman, & J. E. Tropman (Eds.), *Strategies of community organization: Macro practice* (4th ed., pp. 71–97). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.
- Sorensen, G., Glasgow, R. E., & Corbett, K. (1990). Involving work sites and other organizations. In N. Bracht (Ed.), *Health promotion at the community level* (pp. 158–184). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Spradley, B. W. (1990). *Community health nursing: Concepts and practice* (3rd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

- Sullivan, W. P. (1992). Reclaiming the community: The strengths perspective and deinstitutionalization. *Social Work*, 37(3), 204–209.
- Sustainable Jersey. (n.d.). *Community assets mapping*. Retrieved November 12, 2009, from: www.sustainablejersey.com/listserve
- Turner, J. B. (1963a, May). *The continuing debate: Community organization or community planning?* Paper presented at workshop on planning, group work, and recreation. Cleveland, OH.
- Turner, J. B. (1963b, February). Guidelines to a search for a theory of priority determination. Paper presented at the Inter-Community Staff Conference, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH.
- Ward, J., & Hansen, K. A. (1997). *Search strategies in mass communications* (3rd ed.). New York: Longman.
- Warren, R. B., & Warren, D. I. (1984). How to diagnose a neighborhood. In F. M. Cox, J. L. Erlich, J. Rothman, & J. E. Tropman (Eds.), *Tactics and techniques of community practice* (2nd ed., pp. 27–40). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.
- Wells, L. M., Schachter, B., Little, S., Whyllie, B., & Balogh, P. A. (1993). Enhancing rehabilitation through mutual aid: Outreach to people with recent amputations. *Health and Social Work*, 18(3), 221–229.
- Wexler Vigilante, F. W. (1993). Work: Its use in assessment and intervention with clients in the workplace. In P. A. Kurzman & S. H. Akabas (Eds.), *Work and well-being: The occupational social work advantage* (pp. 179–199). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.
- Wiley, C. (Ed.). (1994). *Journeys to self-acceptance: Fat women speak*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.
- Worth, A. (2001). Assessment of the needs of older people by district nurses and social work: Changing culture? *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 15(3), 257–266.
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and method*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (1972). Participant-observation and the development of urban neighborhood policy. New York: The New York City Rand Institute.