



Wild, Wonderful &  
**HEALTHY**  
West Virginia

Community Engagement:  
Values and Pitfalls

January 14, 2021

**healthywv.org**

A PROGRAM OF  THE CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH DEVELOPMENT



## ABOUT THE CENTER

**The Center's mission** is to create a healthy future for West Virginia by improving the health of our residents and the strength of West Virginia's health care delivery system, especially in rural and underserved communities.

**Wild, Wonderful and Healthy West Virginia** works to create a culture of health in West Virginia's communities that supports the health and wellbeing of residents and creates a community environment supportive of business development.



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## WEBINAR INFORMATION

This webinar is being recorded and the recording will be available on the Center's website by January 15th.

To view the archived webinar, visit [www.wvruralhealth.org](http://www.wvruralhealth.org).

Please post any questions you may have in the Questions box in the grey GoToWebinar panel that popped up on your computer when you logged in. These questions will be answered in the Q&A period after Ms. Thompson's presentation has ended.



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**PRESENTER**

**Mildred Thompson**

**Health Equity Consultant and Coach**

# Mildred Thompson



- Health Equity Consultant and Former Senior Director at PolicyLink's Center for Health Equity and Place
- Work focusing on healthy food access, improving the built environment, and the systemic integration of health equity
- Former Director of Community Health Services for Alameda County's Public Health Department, Healthy Start, and San Antonio Neighborhood Health Center
- Former Member of the Health Disparities Subcommittee to the CDC Director's Advisory Committee
- Degrees in nursing, psychology and social work
- Textile artist and mother

# What is Community Engagement?

Who should be  
engaged?

- A process of **mutually beneficial** relationships with organizations, informal groups or individuals working together to improve community conditions



Defining  
Community:  
Who are you  
seeking to engage  
and why?



Why is high level  
engagement  
important?



# Principles and Values of Community Engagement



# Benefits of Community Engagement

- Builds community capacity and leadership
- Empowers community members by inclusion and partnerships
- Strengthens programs by having authentic input and voice
- Strengthens neighborhoods through civic engagement



# Key Principles

- Accept people where they are
- Active listening and honest dialogue
- Address issues related race, class and culture
- Deliver on promises: do not over commit
- Build on community assets and existing leadership
- Trust building requires time and patience
- Create opportunities for shared leadership
- Seek ways to build capacity: trainings, high level participation
- Translate community concerns and interest into shared vision
- Create mechanisms for resolving conflict
- Leave legacy and have impact



How to make it  
happen?



# Identifying and Engaging

- Outreach and recruitment strategies to targeted community leaders and organizations
- Seek affiliation by political leaders: school board, legislative leaders, and others
- Involve churches, and other religious/ spiritual organizations
- Involve consumers of services and residents



# Institutional Structures for Community Engagement

**Ascending  
Impact**



**Descending  
Impact**



# Challenges/ Pitfalls

- Conflicting priorities / Time constraints
- Cultural/ racial/ language barriers
- Unclear roles, expectations or outcomes
- Not feeling valued/power dynamics
- Distrust of governmental agencies
- Fears: being in the “system”; reporting to ICE/ deportation
- Lack of adequate resources to support engagement
- WIIFM (what’s in it for me?)



# Sustaining effective engagement

1. Having clear roles, responsibilities, outcomes, point-of-contact
2. Importance of being heard; your voice matters
3. Reducing barriers to participation: transportation; childcare; time of meeting;
4. Addressing conflicts/ immediate problem solving
5. Having administrative support for staffing engagement activities
6. Acknowledging and celebrating community participation



# Assessing Impact

Monitor and assess engagement from the beginning

Identify primary outcomes and create mechanisms for review

Seek input from constituent groups on outcome measures, for example:

- To what degree have changes occurred in programs since inclusion of community members
- Has there been an increase in participation in activities?
- Has there been changes in community outcomes?



# Community Engagement Exercise

## **Application: Impact of COVID on your community**

- Who is most at-risk?
  - Frontline/essential workers: medical/nursing home facilities, food processing facilities, grocery store workers, teachers, etc. (who else is at-risk?)
- Geographic risk factors
  - Rural communities: limited access to care, limited broadband access, limited transportation, significant health disparities, etc. (what are other risk factors unique to your area?)



# Community Engagement Exercise

## SOLUTIONS

### **Who are the most important stakeholders?**

1. Effective outreach strategies: identify ways to safely engage.
2. Useful messaging: what is most important to communicate?  
Which tools can be used to communicate most effectively?
3. Sustaining engagement: How to maintain engagement during COVID era and beyond? Creating win-win strategies.  
How to measure community impact?





# Message Mapping

Key Message 1	Key Message 2	Key Message 3
Supporting Fact 1-1	Supporting Fact 2-1	Supporting Fact 3-1
Supporting Fact 1-2	Supporting Fact 2-2	Supporting Fact 3-2
Supporting Fact 1-3	Supporting Fact 2-3	Supporting Fact 3-3

<p><b>Key Message 1</b> The future of our state and communities depends on healthy West Virginians.</p>	<p><b>Key Message 2</b> Social determinants of health are a primary driver of health outcomes in our communities and our state.</p>	<p><b>Key Message 3</b> Strategies that focus on addressing social determinants of health have the most impact on a community's health.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Fact 1-1</b> Employers need a healthy, productive workforce and are more likely to locate in communities where employees and their families have an opportunity to live healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Fact 2-1</b> An individual's overall health is determined not only by the healthcare they receive, but by the conditions in communities (social determinants of health) where they live, learn, work, and age.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Fact 3-1</b> Policies, systems, and environmental/ infrastructure (PSEs) changes are the most effective ways to address social determinants of health in a <i>sustainable</i> and long-term way.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Fact 1-2</b> The current health of our workforce impacts employers' decisions to locate in our state and your community.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Fact 2-2</b> Addressing Social Determinants of Health must be done at the community level in communities throughout WV. We cannot improve health outcomes through state action alone.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Fact 3-2</b> Cross-sector teams that engage those with lived experiences are more likely to be successful at implementing PSEs and positively impact the health of their community.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Fact 1-3</b> A community's health and economic prosperity are intricately linked. When community health is poor, so is community prosperity. We can't have one without the other.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Fact 2-3</b> Many of WV's health disparities (heart disease, obesity, depression, etc.) are directly attributable to social determinants of health.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Fact 3-3</b> Creating a culture of health in our communities requires coordinated, collective community action to implement sustainable solutions.</p>

# Community Engagement Exercise

## SOLUTIONS

### **Who are the most important stakeholders?**

1. Effective outreach strategies: identify ways to safely engage.
2. Useful messaging: what is most important to communicate? Which tools can be used to communicate most effectively?
3. Sustaining engagement: How to maintain engagement during COVID era and beyond? Creating win-win strategies. How to measure community impact?





# Mildred Thompson



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# Webinar Learning Series

View 2020 Webinars at: <https://wvruralhealth.org/events/>

1. *Piloting a Community Health Infrastructure Investment Fund in WV*
2. *Community Engagement in Planning for Community Infrastructure*
3. *Unleashing Abundance in our Communities*
4. *Value-Based Messages for Health Equity in Public Policy: How to Effectively Communicate with All Policy Makers*
5. *Investing in Kentucky's Future: Community Driven Strategies for Obesity Prevention and Building Resilience in Children*

**Look for more exciting webinars in 2021**



## COVID-19 VACCINE FACT

When large numbers of people in a community are vaccinated, fewer people get sick, saving lives.

#CommunityImmunityWV

## **Vaccine Fact**

**Community immunity begins with each one of us.**

**Together, we can stop the spread of COVID-19. Learn more at [vaccinate.wv.gov](https://www.vaccinate.wv.gov)  
#CommunityImmunityWV**



## **Vaccine Fact**

**Choosing to get vaccinated against COVID-19 helps protect the health and wellbeing of our communities. Together, we can stop the pandemic and build #CommunityImmunityWV.**

*We all take small steps every day to protect ourselves and each other.*

*This season, there's one more thing we can do.*

**Get Your Flu Vaccine.**



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- Printable flyers and posters for clinics
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- Website buttons and banners
- Social media profile frame
- Social media content

**How to Help Your Family**

## FIGHT THE FLU

*Getting your flu vaccination is the best way to protect those in your family 6 months and up.*

**Other ways to protect your family:**

- Wash hands frequently
- Sanitize Toys
- Teach kids to cough into their elbow
- Keep kids home from school and childcare if they have flu-like symptoms

**EveryOne AddsUp!**



**Thank you for taking part in this webinar!**

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