

Who do I contact for more information?

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Useful resources

Web

www.communitydevelopmentlearning.org.uk
(Federation of Community Work Training Groups)

www.cedc.org.uk/
(Community Education Development Centre)

www.communitiesforhealth.net/
(Communities for Health)

www.cdf.org.uk
(Community Development Foundation)

www.comm-dev.co.uk
(Standing Conference for Community Development)

www/hda.nhs.uk
(Health Development Agency)

Publications

Developing Healthier Communities
'An introductory course for people using community development approaches to improve health and tackle health inequalities' (2004)
Available from HDA.

Feedback, information,
suggestions?

Please contact:
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CEHI



Gateshead Centre
for Enabling Health
Improvement

Fact sheet 2:
Community Health
Development

A factsheet to support, develop and share health improvement practice in Gateshead

October 2004

Community Health Development

A successful approach

Community Health Development is a tried and tested approach that is particularly successful in reducing health inequalities and improving health. Many workers across Gateshead engage in such activity - recently, Health Visitors, Nursery workers and Sure Start staff were involved in training to support their skills in Community Health Development. It is an approach that seeks to work with communities, utilising local skills and knowledge to generate local solutions.



It is perhaps best understood by describing some of its characteristics.

Community Health Development:

- Is a holistic approach
- Is a process by which a community is enabled and empowered to define its needs
- Supports communities to develop the confidence and resources to take action to address them
- Recognises importance of social support and social networks
- Support concerns and needs to be identified by people themselves, rather than being imposed from outside.

Constant revision

Unlike more traditional community intervention approaches that might start by bringing a goal or target, with Community Health Development approaches, the objectives and goals emerge through the process and are subject to constant revision. In the conventional approach, these emergent learnings are sometimes referred to as "unintended outcomes" - interesting deviations from the original plan. In the community development approach, these deviations are not unintended; they are the plan.

Challenging and dynamic

Community Health Development can be a challenging way of working but it is dynamic, and seeks to release problem solving and skills that will develop capacity and creative solutions to our work. The award winning Health Communities Collaborative is a project that seeks to use Community Development principles to support local communities to tackle local health issues in Gateshead. (See later for contact details)

Longer term investment

Workers can sometimes be nervous about managing such an approach and it is certainly one that often requires longer-term investment. The benefits can be great, enabling communities to become active agents for change, allowing relocation of professional skills and energy and providing a successful way of engaging with those communities we traditionally find hard to reach.

"Community development is a way of tackling a community's problems by using the energy and leadership of the people who live there."

DN Thomas (1995) in *Community Development and Involvement in Primary Care* Freeman R et al King's Fund (1997).

Key roles in Community Health Development

Develop working relationships with communities and organisations:

- Make relationships within communities
- Develop strategic relationships with communities, organisations and within partnerships.

Work with Communities to plan for change and take collective action:

- Work with communities to enable plans and decisions for action
- Enable community participation in planning and decision making
- Work with communities to identify needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities

Develop community organisations;

- Encourage the best use of resources
- Facilitate the development of capacity in communities - skills, learning, resources and processes
- Contribute to planning and preparation
- Contribute to project closure or exit strategies

Encourage people to work and learn from each other:

- Contribute to the development of networks
- Facilitate the development of community groups/networks
- Facilitate ways of working collaboratively
- Promote and support learning from practice and experience

Work with Communities to develop and use frameworks for evaluation:

- Support communities to monitor and review action for change
- Facilitate the development of evaluation frameworks

Reflect on and develop own practice and role:

- Identify and reflect on own practice, knowledge and values
- Evaluate and develop own practice
- Review and meet own learning and development needs



**Adapted from national Occupational Standards in Community Development Work, Federation of Community Work Training Groups*