



BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY



A MANUAL FOR U.S. AIR FORCE FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

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This manual is dedicated to the directors and staffs of Family Support Centers in the Air Mobility Command, United States Air Force, for their vision, leadership, and commitment to strengthening the social fabric of Air Force communities.

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Acknowledgments

This manual represents the vision and commitment of Ms. CeCe Medford, Chief, and Senior Master Sergeant Eric Carlson, Superintendent, Family Matters Branch, Air Mobility Command, United States Air Force, who embraced the assumptions and principles associated with community capacity building in Air Force communities. Their leadership over the past three years has inspired Family Support Center staffs in the Air Mobility Command to see Air Force communities from an assets perspective and to address strengthening the interface between formal and informal systems of social care in their intervention and prevention activities.

Content in this manual is the product of workshops conducted with AMC FSC directors and staffs over the past three years. We are most appreciative of the efforts of three FSC directors, Mr. Jerry Armstrong (MacDill AFB), Ms. Joan Bueto (Travis AFB), and Ms. Flora Hoss-Mason (Charleston AFB), who reviewed earlier drafts of this manual for its responsiveness to Family Support Center training requirements. Family Support Center staffs at Scott AFB, Travis AFB, Fairchild AFB, and Pope AFB pilot-tested earlier versions of activities suggested in the manual. These workshops were instrumental in testing out assumptions from the community capacity model and in finding ways to better present and organize content and exercises.

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Building Community Capacity: A Manual For U.S. Air Force Family Support Centers

Prologue: Setting the Stage

What Is the Purpose of This Manual?

This manual is designed to guide Family Support Center (FSC) staff in developing an action plan for building base-level community capacity. Four objectives informed the development of the manual:

Readers will understand principles and concepts associated with a community capacity building framework.

Readers will apply Results Management® (RM) principles and concepts as a management strategy for building community capacity.¹

Readers will learn to use assessment data and other readily available information to understand and monitor the functioning of their communities, the results of their intervention and prevention efforts, and FSC agency performance.

Readers will identify intervention and prevention activities for building and sustaining community capacity.

FSC staff members are encouraged to use this manual as a self-instructional learning guide. The manual may also be used to augment the Building Community Capacity workshop provided by Dr. Gary Bowen and Dr. Dennis Orthner. Throughout the manual, a number of activities are suggested for readers that will help simulate the actual workshop and assist in the integration of concepts and community building steps and strategies. The manual may be particularly helpful for new staff members who were unable to attend the workshop or for those who need a refresher course in the principles and concepts associated with community capacity building and Results Management.

The manual is divided into two parts. Part I, Community Capacity Building Frameworks, includes two modules. Module I provides an overview of the Community Capacity Model that framed the recent AF report, *Communities in Blue for the 21st Century*.² Module II, Results Management, provides an overview of the principles and concepts associated with Results Management, a management strategy and resource allocation model for community capacity building. Results Management is a centerpiece in the process of building community capacity. The Integrated Delivery System (IDS) at every AF base worldwide received training in Results Management during the spring and summer of 2000.³

Part II, Steps in the Results Management Process, includes four modules corresponding to steps in the Results Management process: Mapping the Terrain (Module III), Assessing Community and Program Results (Module IV), Identifying Principles of Effective Agency Practice (Module V), and Developing and Implementing a Community Action Plan (Module VI). Module IV, Assessing Community and Program

¹Results Management is a copyrighted trademark for a training program developed by Dr. Dennis K. Orthner and Dr. Gary L. Bowen, School of Social Work, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. All rights reserved.

²Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., & Mancini, J. A. (1999). *Communities in Blue for the 21st Century*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.

³Bowen, G. L., & Orthner, D. K. (2000). *Air Force Community Needs Assessment Resource and Training Manual: A Results Management Approach*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.



Results, introduces the new Community Assets Inventory, which is based on the results from the 1999-2000 Air Force Community Needs Assessment.⁴ Module V, Identifying Principles of Effective Agency Practice, includes subsections on supporting unit leadership community networks, mobilizing informal community networks, and strengthening interagency community networks.

Resource materials and worksheets for activities suggested in the manual are included in a separate workbook, *Building Community Capacity Workbook*. This workbook is available from AMC/DPFF. In addition, Community Assets Inventories for bases in the Air Mobility Command are also available from AMC/DPFF.

The concept of community in this manual focuses primarily on the geographic settings in which AF members and families live and work.

How Is Community Defined?

Communities are defined by both their geographic and functional boundaries. This includes where we live and work; with whom we associate because of our daily activities; and those social relationships we seek out to meet our personal and family needs and desires.

Although AF members and families have identifications, memberships, relationships, and resources that extend beyond the installation and the local civilian community (functional boundaries), the concept of community in this manual focuses primarily on the geographic settings in which AF members and families live and work. In other words, we focus attention on the interactional boundaries encompassing the AF installation and the local civilian community.



Units and neighborhoods are considered the primary social addresses for AF members and families in this definition of community, and attention is focused on the

⁴Developed by Dr. Gary L. Bowen, Community Assets Inventories are available for all AMC bases from AMC/DPFF.



identifications, memberships, and connections members and families have within them. These workplace and neighborhood settings offer "social anchors" for members and families, serving as pathways to resources and opportunities in the broader community.

What Is Community Capacity Building?

In communities with high capacity, unit leaders, base agencies, and active duty AF members and their families:

Share responsibility for the general welfare of the community and its members, and

Demonstrate *collective competence* in taking advantage of opportunities for addressing community needs and confronting situations that threaten the safety and well-being of community members.

Community capacity is about community readiness and performance in the context of opportunity, adversity, and positive challenge.

Our two-dimension conceptualization of community capacity cuts across both formal (unit leaders and base agencies) and informal networks of social care (community members). Previous AF community mobilization efforts have not capitalized on the potential of informal networks as mechanisms of social care in the base community. These informal networks may range in size and structure—from small coalitions of concerned individuals within work units and neighborhoods to large groups that traverse the existing boundaries of work units and neighborhoods.

Community capacity building reflects a strengths perspective. From this perspective, community members are viewed as potential assets, capable of working in partnership with base agencies and unit leaders to promote members' and families' successful adaptation to Air Force life.

How Does Community Capacity Building Involve Family Support Centers?

Family Support Centers have historically worked to strengthen the operation of formal and informal support systems for military members and their families through community development, resource mobilization, and collective action. This role is perhaps best exemplified in the FSC by its information, referral, and outreach components.

Family Support Centers have a wonderful opportunity to renew their historical respect for community practice. AF leaders have called for strengthening the social infrastructure of AF communities; this includes emphasizing accountability and performance-driven management strategies in the operation of base agencies, and developing new base level initiatives for strengthening collaboration among AF human service agencies, e.g., the Integrated Delivery System (IDS). In a recent article, "Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force," the Air Force Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force underscored the importance of a strong sense of community for mission success.

Community capacity is about community readiness and performance in the context of opportunity, adversity, and positive challenge.

Community capacity building reflects a strengths perspective.



The Air Force believes that one of its most important attributes is a sense of community among its members and their families. Far more than simple "pride in the team," this factor builds the motivational identity and commitment that underlie our core values, career decisions, and combat capability. . . . The Air Force is rededicating itself to both maintaining this sense of community and finding new and more efficient ways of providing it.⁵

This opportunity to renew the traditional FSC commitment to community practice will complement the more remedial and specialized model of service delivery that is the hallmark of Family Support Centers.

What Assumptions Inform a Building Community Capacity Perspective?

Communities, like individuals and families, can be characterized by the way they function and the extent to which they achieve desired results.

Social relationships and experiences, especially those that are unit-based, represent the core components of quality of life in the military. These social relationships and experiences are both a part and a consequence of community capacity.

Base agencies, unit leaders, and community members share responsibility for the support of AF members and their families. No one agency, organization, or group can receive total credit or assume total responsibility for the results members and families experience.⁶

Community members want to be involved in supporting their community and its members, but they often lack information and opportunities for involvement.

Base agencies have numerous untapped opportunities to strengthen their partnership with unit leaders in support of members and families, mobilize informal mechanisms of social care in the community, and foster interagency collaboration in support of prevention initiatives.

Community capacity building augments and supports the direct service role, an integral component of base agency functioning.

Communities have multiple subcultures influencing the receptivity of community leaders, community organizations and groups, and community members to community capacity building activities.

What Are the Expected Benefits of Building Community Capacity?

Members and families experience more satisfaction with AF life, evidence higher adaptation to AF demands, report a greater sense of community, and demonstrate greater commitment to the AF and its mission.

Unit leaders encounter fewer members whose personal and family related problems impact individual or unit readiness.

Base agencies increase their effectiveness and efficiency as a resource for unit leaders and members and families.

⁵U.S. Air Force (1997, February). Global Engagement. A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force. *Airman Magazine*, p. 23.

⁶ In addition to strengthening the interface among base agencies, unit leaders, and community members, the local base community will increasingly need to build effective bridges with the civilian community, including linkages with both public and private human service agencies and organizations.



Who Contributed to the Development of the Manual?

This manual was developed by Dr. Gary L. Bowen, Dr. Dennis K. Orthner, Dr. James A. Martin, and Dr. Jay A. Mancini, with support from the Family Matters Office, Air Mobility Command (AMC/DPPF).

Dr. Gary L. Bowen, Ph.D., ACSW, is Kenan Distinguished Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He also holds a joint appointment in the Department of Communication Studies. Dr. Bowen is co-author with Dr. Dennis K. Orthner of the *Families in Blue* series that led to the development of Family Support Centers in the U.S. Air Force.

Dr. Dennis K. Orthner, Ph.D., is Professor of Social Work and Public Policy Analysis and Associate Director of the Jordan Institute for Families at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Orthner is co-creator with Dr. Gary L. Bowen of the Results Management community development strategy. This management strategy is being used successfully by human service professionals across a number of contexts to increase their program effectiveness and accountability to community stakeholders.

Dr. James A. Martin, Ph.D., BCD, is Associate Professor of Social Work and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. A retired Colonel in the Army Medical Department, Dr. Martin's military career includes a variety of clinical, research, and policy assignments. Dr. Martin recently co-edited *The Military Family: A Practice Guide for Human Service Providers*, which is available from Praeger Publishers.

Dr. Jay A. Mancini, Ph.D., is Professor of Human Development at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia. Dr. Mancini has consulted with the United States Air Force on its Family Support Center and MWRS (recreation) programs, and with the United States Army on its Family Advocacy, Army Community Service, and Child and Youth Services programs.

The authors served as consultants to the Family Matters Office, Air Mobility Command, United States Air Force, in writing this manual.



Part I Community Capacity Building Frameworks

Module I The Community Capacity Model

Objectives

Community result assessment anchors the community capacity building process.

Introduce the concept of community adaptation and community resilience

Review the community capacity model as a means to understand variations in community results across bases and across time for any one base

Define formal and informal networks of social care

Discuss community capacity as an emergent outcome that springs from the actions and interactions within and between formal and informal networks

Highlight the implications of the community capacity model for practice

Base Variations in Community Results

AF bases vary by a number of dimensions, including the nature of their mission and the demographic composition of the base population, geographic location, and the characteristics of the host community. They also differ in their success in achieving community results consistent with AF mission responsibilities and a positive quality of AF life. Community result assessment anchors the community capacity building process. In a recent article, Bowen, Martin, Mancini, and Nelson defined community results as "aggregate, broad-based outcomes that reflect the collective efforts of individuals and families who live within a specified area."⁷ These are results achieved and owned by members and their families.

Bowen and Orthner identify three such community results as the intended outcomes of community building efforts in the AF: (a) personnel preparedness, (b) family adaptation, and (c) base sense of community.^{8,9}

Community Results

Personnel Preparedness: Members demonstrate an ability to perform their duties with professionalism, dedication, and competence, and they are able to successfully meet their personal and family responsibilities.

Family Adaptation: Family members successfully manage their relationships as a

⁷Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., Mancini, J. A., & Nelson, J. P. (2000). Community Capacity: Antecedents and Consequences. *Journal of Community Practice*, 8(2), p. 9.

⁸Bowen, G. L., & Orthner, D. K. (2000). *Air Force Community Needs Assessment Resource and Training Manual: A Results Management Approach*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.

⁹In the article by Bowen, Martin, Mancini, and Nelson (2000), "Community Capacity: Antecedents and Consequences," five community results were defined, including safety (the success to which members and families live free from violence and abuse, as demonstrated by the extent to which they are able to move about in their internal and external environments without intimidation or fear of physical or psychological harm), and health and well-being (the degree to which members and families remain free from preventable health-related conditions and illnesses, including the avoidance of alcohol and drug related conditions and events, and other health risk behaviors). These additional results are not included in the present discussion because they were not sufficiently assessed in the 1999-2000 Air Force Community Needs Assessment.

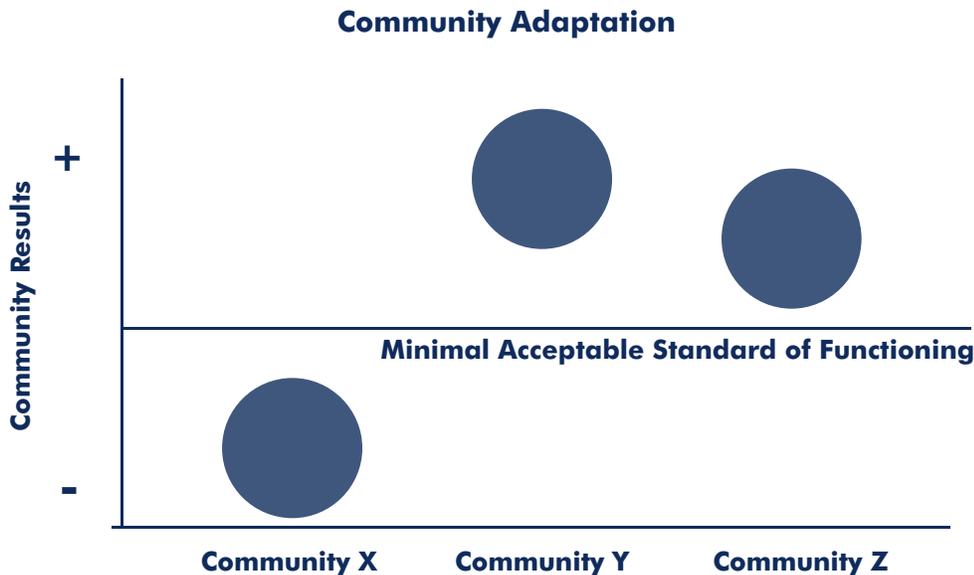


family unit in the Air Force as evidenced by working together as an effective team and by demonstrating commitment to family relationships.

Base Sense of Community: Members and spouses feel a sense of common identity, camaraderie, and rootedness in the base community as evidenced by active participation as community members.

Bases not only differ from one another in their ability to achieve desired results, but also the success of any one base may vary over time. At any single point in time, a base can be described as evidencing a current level of *community adaptation* that reflects its status on various community result indicators, e.g., the proportion of members who feel a sense of identification with the base community. Such indicators, which are used to assess a community result, are typically expressed as a proportion, a rate, or a count. The evaluation of community results at any one point in time requires some standard or standards for comparison. Such standards for comparison involve specifying the desired or expected level of community functioning on the indicators associated with the particular community result.

At any single point in time, a base can be described as evidencing a current level of community adaptation that reflects its status on various community result indicators.



When community results are examined over time, a base can vary in its level of resiliency. Unlike community adaptation, community resiliency is evaluated in the context of adversity (e.g., the loss of an aircrew in a training exercise, the Grand Forks flood) or positive challenge (e.g., an increase in the number of active duty members assigned to the base, the implementation of a base-level Integrated Delivery System). A community that *maintains, regains, or establishes* favorable community results over time despite adversity or positive challenge is considered resilient. This definition of resiliency includes situations where bases are able to use adversity or positive challenge as a stimulus to improve community functioning.

A community that maintains, regains, or establishes favorable community results over time despite adversity or positive challenge is considered resilient.

Formal and Informal Networks of Social Care

The community capacity model described by Bowen, Martin, and Mancini in the recent AF report, *Communities in Blue for the 21st Century*, proposes that variation in community results across AF bases and across time are explained by how successfully formal and informal networks of social care operate and interact with one another in the

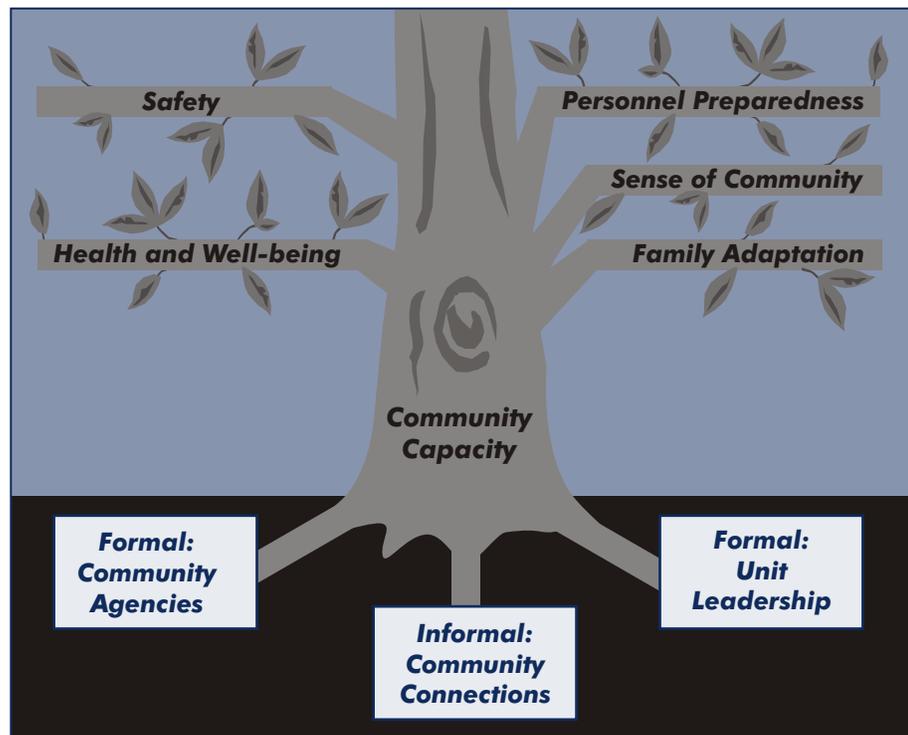




base community.¹⁰ Social care is defined as including tangible, informational, and socio-emotional support for active duty members and their families. The level of social care available to members and families through the combined forces of these networks can range from high to low.

Three networks of formal and informal social care are identified: (a) Unit Leadership, (b) Informal Community Connections, and (c) Community Agencies. Formal networks, which include unit leadership and base agencies, reflect the policies and systems of

Community Capacity Model



¹⁰Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., & Mancini, J. A. (1999). *Communities in Blue for the 21st Century*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.



social care that operate under military authority as instruments of socialization, support, and social control. Bowen and Martin refer to these formal networks as the community's central social power station, which includes turbines in the form of leadership, policies, norms of social responsibility, and various human service programs that generate resources for direct access, as well as power and resources for promoting informal community connections.¹¹ The effectiveness of formal networks of social care depends, in part, on securing input and participation from community members.

Informal networks, which include informal community connections, are voluntary and less-organized networks of personal and collective relationships and group associations, such as unit based support groups and relationships with work associates, neighbors, and families. Mutual exchanges and reciprocal responsibilities comprise the cornerstones of informal network construction. Bowen and Martin describe these networks as substations of social care in the community, which have turbines in the form of trust, commitments and obligations, information exchanges, positive regard and mutual respect, and norms of shared responsibility and social control. As compared to formal networks, informal networks play a more active role in the day-to-day life of members and families—they typically operate as the first level of social care when members and families need support and assistance.

Bowen and Orthner refer to these networks in the community capacity model as program results because they can be influenced by the intervention and prevention initiatives of base agencies. Each network type is defined below as a program result—knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors associated with successful performance.

Program Results

Leader Support: Base and unit leaders promote connections between members and families in their units, demonstrate knowledge and skill in helping members and families balance work and family issues and cope with AF demands, and help members and families secure support services.

Informal Community Connections: Informal network members reach out to make connections with one another, exchange information and resources, and, when needed, help others secure support from community programs and support services.

Community Agencies: Base agencies demonstrate a customer orientation in the coordination and delivery of intervention and prevention services as evidenced by community members' satisfaction with base programs.

From the perspective of intervention and prevention planning, an important function of formal networks is to strengthen informal community connections. Formal networks may grow at the expense of informal networks.¹² For example, community agencies may plan and sponsor events for community members that community members are capable of planning and sponsoring for themselves. When unit leaders and base agencies perform functions the informal community is capable of providing for itself (i.e., overfunctioning), informal community networks may be diminished. When the system of formal and informal networks is fully operative and complementary in a base community, a protective and resilient web of support surrounds and sustains members and families.

¹¹Bowen, G. L., & Martin, J. A. (1998). Community Capacity: A Core Component of the 21st Century Military Community. *Military Family Issues: The Research Digest*, 2(3), 1-4.

¹²McKnight, J. L. (1997). A 21st-Century Map for Healthy Communities and Families. *Families in Society*, 78, 117-127.

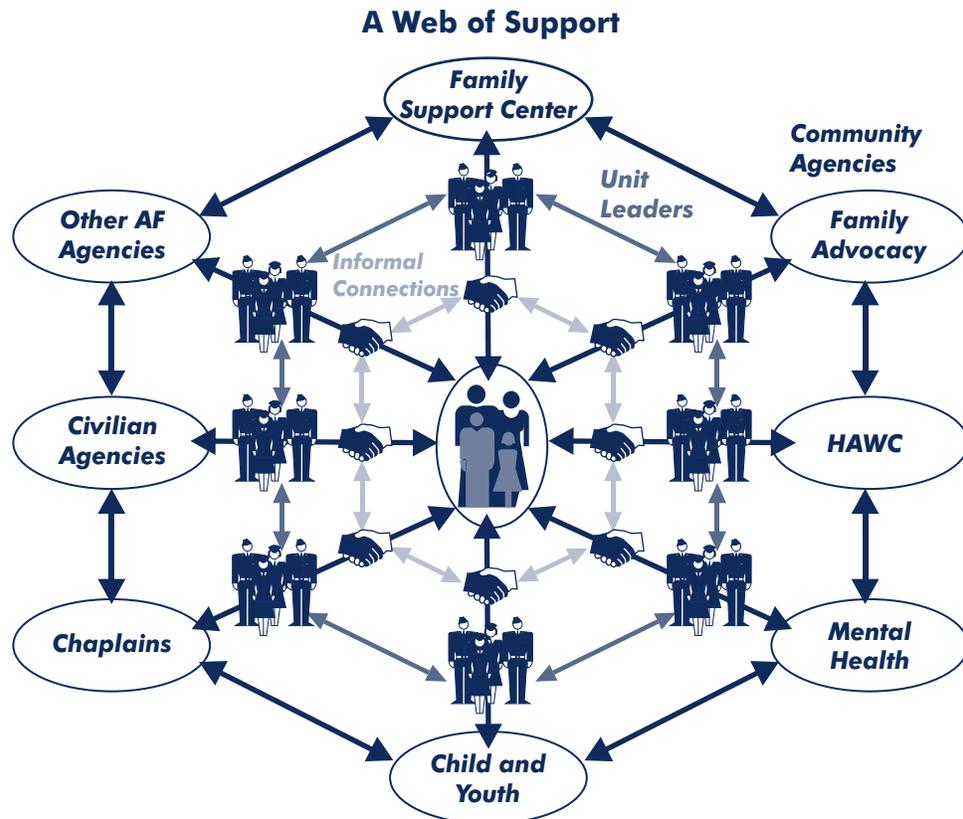
An important function of formal networks is to strengthen informal community connections.

When the system of formal and informal networks is fully operative and complementary in a base community, a protective and resilient web of support surrounds and sustains members and families.



As the first line of support for military members and families, unit leaders play a particularly important role in the community network—they stand between informal networks on one side and base agencies on the other. They offer information, support, and advice to members and families struggling to cope with the demands of AF life, promote informal community connections within the unit (e.g., sponsorship of new members, social activities, family support groups), invite base agencies to provide informational seminars to unit members, and, if needed, refer members and families to

Unit leaders play a particularly important role in the community network.



The concept of community capacity is the link between the operation of formal and informal networks of social care in the base community and community results.

base agencies for support services and programs. In many respects, the unit is synonymous with community in the Air Force, and the identity of members and families typically comes more from the unit than from the resident installation or the local civilian community.

The operation of formal and informal networks may vary as a consequence of the mission, size, location, and demographic composition of the base community. For example, the location and size of the base community may influence the range and quality of community support services, as well as the ease with which members and families who live off base can attend on-base activities and events. The operation of informal networks may be seriously constrained at bases embedded in large metropolitan areas, and where members are dispersed from one another across a wide geographic area.

Community Capacity

From the perspective of the community capacity model, the concept of community capacity is the link between the operation of formal and informal networks of social care



in the base community and community results.¹³ Community capacity involves two components assumed to mutually reinforce each other over time. First, community capacity reflects the extent to which unit leaders, base agencies, and community members demonstrate a sense of *shared responsibility* for the general welfare of the community and its members. When network members share responsibility for the general welfare, they invest their time and energy in making the community a better place to live, work, and play, as well as work together to promote the common good.

In addition to feelings of shared responsibility, unit leaders, base agencies, and community members demonstrate *collective competence* in taking advantage of opportunities for addressing community needs and confronting situations that threaten the safety and well-being of community members. They pull together in the context of opportunity, adversity, or positive challenge to identify community needs and assets, define common goals and objectives, set priorities, develop strategies for collective action, implement actions consistent with agreed-upon strategies, and monitor results.

As defined above, community capacity represents behaviors and action rather than the potential for action. When community capacity is high, military members and families have access to symbols, resources, and opportunities to respond successfully to duty requirements and mission demands; develop community identity and pride; meet individual and family needs and goals; participate meaningfully in community life; solve problems and manage conflicts; and affirm and maintain stability and order in personal, family, and work relationships—all of which are indicators of community results associated with personnel preparedness, family adaptation, and base sense of community.

Networks and Community Capacity

Community capacity springs from the actions and interactions *within* and *between* base and unit leaders, community members, and base agencies—a social energy that flows from the union between formal and informal community networks. As such, community capacity is distinct from the processes from which it emerges—the fund of capacity is more than the sum total of actions in formal and informal networks. The *bonding* (within) and *bridging* (between) activities by these formal and informal networks of social care associated with high community capacity provide the cornerstones for achieving community results associated with personnel preparedness, family adaptation, and base sense of community.¹⁴

Bonding, which Robert Putnam describes as "sociological superglue," captures the cohesion, trust, and positive regard within groups, such as within informal networks of social care.¹⁵ Putnam describes *bridging* as the "sociological WD-40," or the strength of ties among individuals across groups, such as the working relationships between unit leaders and representatives of base agencies. The ongoing processes of bonding and bridging among members from various segments of the community form a complex

¹³Although community capacity is defined in the community capacity model as the link between formal and informal networks of social care and community results, it operates more as a "black box" in the model—known to be there in some form, but exactly what goes on within it is difficult to capture from a measurement perspective. As a consequence, community capacity is assessed indirectly—it is assumed to be high when either formal and informal networks are operating effectively or when community results are being achieved.

¹⁴In his book *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam (2000) credits the concepts of *bonding* and *bridging* of social networks to R. Gittel and A. Vidal (1998), *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

¹⁵Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Community capacity represents behaviors and action rather than the potential for action.

The ongoing processes of bonding and bridging among members from various segments of the community form a complex union that powers community capacity and provides a means to achieve community results.



union that powers community capacity and provides a means to achieve community results.¹⁶

Community Capacity and Community Results

From an epidemic model of community effects, the relationship between community capacity and community results is viewed as positive but not necessarily linear. In other words, proportional increases in community results may vary as community capacity increases from low to high. Community capacity may also have upper and lower threshold effects in its relationship to community results. Above a certain level of community capacity, further increases in capacity may not be associated with additional yields in community results. On the other hand, once community capacity declines below a certain level, community results may drop precipitously. This is consistent with Crane's epidemic model of community effects in which problems spread like a contagion once a certain level of community vulnerability is reached.¹⁷ Of course, these upper and lower break points partly depend on the combination of demands and stressors faced by the base community.

The influence of community capacity on the community results achieved by individuals and families at any single point in time may vary over the work and family life course.

The influence of community capacity on the community results achieved by individuals and families at any single point in time may vary over the work and family life course.¹⁸ Families may need community capacity to be particularly high during the more demanding stages of work and family careers, for example, when they are juggling early career demands, raising young children, and struggling with limited finances. Air Force families may need community capacity to be high in times of peak operational demands, such as during large-scale deployments (e.g., the Persian Gulf War mobilization).

Implications for Community Practice

In the community capacity model, formal and informal networks of social care are the leverage points in influencing community results associated with personnel preparedness, family adaptation, and base sense of community. As these networks merge through bonding and bridging activities into an integrated and supportive system of social care, the capacity of the community increases. The sense of shared responsibility and collective competence among formal and informal networks that define high community capacity provide members and families with both a base of support and a safety net in managing the demands and stressors associated with work, family, and community roles. Base and unit leaders and community agencies play a key role in AF communities as mechanisms of social care and as builders of informal community connections.

Individuals and families become vulnerable, particularly to the unique stressors and demands of military life, when they lack informal connections with other members and families—these informal connections are seen as the first level of social care for members and families. Recent findings from the *Communities in Blue* report suggest that while the “instinct of community” is present in AF communities, especially in situations of

¹⁶In their earlier analysis of community networks, Bowen, Martin, Mancini, and Nelson (2000) refer to *bonding* and *bridging* activities as first-level, second-level, and third-level effects.

¹⁷Crane, J. (1991). The Epidemic Theory of Ghettos and Neighborhood Effects on Dropping Out and Teenage Childbearing. *American Journal of Sociology*, 96, 1226-1259.

¹⁸For a fuller discussion of this point, see Bowen, G. L., Richman, J. M., & Bowen, N. K. (2000). Families in the Context of Communities Across Time. In S. J. Price, P. C. McKenry, & M. J. Murphy (Eds.), *Families Across Time: A Life Course Perspective* (pp. 117-128). Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.



adversity and positive challenge, many AF members and families perceive a decline in the military norm of "taking care of our own." Many AF members and families reported few concrete ties to the AF community, as well as an attitude and behavioral shift toward individual identity, autonomy, and self-reliance.

In the context of these findings, formal networks must be careful not to take over the role of informal networks or *overfunction* in responding to the support needs of members and families. As a system of social care, formal and informal networks are inextricably connected—formal systems must work to strengthen rather than replace informal networks as the primary system of social care for members and families. Considerable untapped opportunities are present in AF communities for formal networks of social care to develop partnerships and micro-collaborations to strengthen informal networks. From this perspective, members and families are viewed as assets waiting to be deployed rather than as needs waiting to be met—the cornerstones in community building efforts.

The FSC's history and mission is entirely consistent with a community capacity building perspective. From the perspective of the community capacity model, the FSC can strengthen its role in building community capacity by (a) forming partnerships with unit leaders, (b) strengthening its interface with informal community networks, and (c) adopting a more collaborative approach in its work with other community agencies. These three roles can be expressed in the form of three goal statements for framing a community practice agenda for Family Support Centers:

FSC staffs maintain a two-way partnership with unit leaders to assist unit leaders in strengthening informal ties among members and families and responding proactively to their support needs and requirements.

FSC staffs work as a coach, role model, and partner with community members and local community and neighborhood groups to strengthen informal ties among members and families and to increase opportunities for citizens to engage in the community as participants rather than spectators.

FSC staffs model a collaborative, integrative, and community-focused approach in working with base and civilian agencies.

The FSC is in a position of leadership among base communities in efforts to engage unit leaders, members and families, and agency personnel in building a community culture of inclusiveness and shared responsibility for the general welfare.

Suggested Activities

This module has been focused on aspects of community important for program development and for support for individuals and families. The following exercises are ways to understand some of the module concepts, especially those dealing with understanding the community. The first exercise helps you to know more about the context in which people live and interact with others. It gives a picture of the community. The second activity focuses more on the people in the community, how they are described, and what they look like. The third activity introduces an important part of many communities, that is, those people who really make an observable difference in the community. The fourth exercise expands on the first activity so that it is not just a map but involves actually following that map and experiencing the base community. The last two activities require a beginning assessment of the base sense of community and the relative priority FSC staff give to building informal connections among members and families in the base community.

Formal networks must be careful not to take over the role of informal networks or overfunction in responding to the support needs of members and families.

Considerable untapped opportunities are present in AF communities for formal networks of social care to develop partnerships and micro-collaborations to strengthen informal networks.

The FSC's history and mission is entirely consistent with a community capacity building perspective.



Community Map. Using markers or crayons draw a map of your community, including the geographic boundaries of this community, the neighborhoods in which AF members and families live, and the location of squadrons in the base community. Identify religious institutions, schools, libraries, hospitals, human service agencies, and parks and recreational facilities on the map. Identify areas in the community you consider especially safe and unsafe for members and families. Identify residential areas or blocks in the base and civilian communities that have an especially good reputation as a place for families and children to live. Identify community locations both on and off the base where AF members and their families tend to congregate and socialize informally with one another. Identify and label other aspects of the community you believe have implications for FSC community outreach. The drawing of this map increases in difficulty as the size of the community increases and to the extent that members and their families spread into a number of adjacent local civilian towns and cities. What are the benefits of drawing a community map?

Demographic Profile. What is the demographic profile of military members and families in your community? What are some of the family life and career challenges these members and families face today? Your 1999-2000 AF Needs Assessment report provides you with a wealth of information about the situation and needs of members and civilian spouses assigned to your base. Needs assessment reports are also available for the AF overall and for each MAJCOM. You may also consult your Military Personnel Flight for demographic information about members and families assigned to your base. What are some of the implications of these demographics and the associated family life and career challenges for the FSC?

Keystone Community Members. Whom do you consider to be keystone members in your base community? (A community's keystones are the people, groups, and organizations in the community that make good things happen for members and families.) Please identify at least three community keystones and discuss how they can be mobilized through FSC outreach efforts to strengthen community capacity.

Base Tour. Get in your car and conduct a tour of the base and surrounding area comprising your community. Drive through the housing areas and, if you are so inclined, get out of your car and walk down the sidewalks. Be sure to wear your FSC nametag, and meet and talk with the people you encounter on the sidewalks, driveways, and front yards, and in the various public areas along the way. What are your feelings about the community capacity visible in these housing areas? Are people out and about? Are they friendly? If present, visit museums on base and learn about the significance of aircraft placed on static displays for public viewing. How do these planes relate to aircraft currently assigned to the base community? Visit some of the community services that support AF members and families, including the commissary, the BX, and the clubs, and attend religious services on base. What are your impressions about the vitality of the base community as a place for members and families to live, work, and play? What are the implications of your observations for the FSC? If you have time, extend your tour to include off-base locations where military members and their families live and frequent, including housing areas, local schools, and shopping areas.

Sense of Community. On a 10-point scale from 1 (very weak) to 10 (very strong), how would you rate the *sense of community* among members and families assigned to the base? What is the basis for your rating?

FSC Priorities and Informal Community Development. On a 10-point scale from 1 (very little extent) to 10 (very great extent), how would you rate the relative priority (staff time and resources) the typical FSC staff member gives to working directly with



members and families to help them connect with one another for purposes of sharing information, coming together around common interests or concerns, and providing and receiving social support? Ask other FSC staff members for their ratings. What are some strategies by which FSC staff members can more effectively engage in informal community development?



Module II Results Management

Objectives

Provide a basic understanding of the importance of focusing programs on achieving results

Introduce the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) as a context for Results Management

Present Results Management principles and concepts as a decision management and resource allocation strategy

Understand the implications of Results Management as a management strategy for designing, implementing, and evaluating community capacity building activities

Identify steps in the Results Management process for developing an action plan for building community capacity

Community capacity can be described as promoting results related to high levels of personnel performance, improved family adaptation to the demands of the Air Force mission, and a greater sense of community attachments among Air Force people.

Focus on Results

In order to build and strengthen community capacity, there has to be a greater focus on achieving results benefitting the community and its people. Agencies and leaders have to be clear on what a community with capacity can look like and what they need to do to build this capacity. As was described in Module I, community capacity can be described as promoting results related to high levels of personnel performance, improved family adaptation to the demands of the Air Force mission, and a greater sense of community attachments among Air Force people. Thus, community capacity can and should have clear results to be accomplished, and the role of the FSC is to assist in building an effective strategy that will lead to those results. All too often, agencies and communities attempt to build capacity on a set of noble activities but without clear direction as to where they are going. Peter Drucker, one of the leading gurus on effective management, says that "the best way to predict the future is to create it." In other words, if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there!

In this Module, we build a strategy for getting there—achieving desired results. It is not enough to have defined objectives or long-range goals; there must also be a clear management strategy guiding a Family Support Center to achieve its community capacity building results. Without a clear management strategy to achieve results, a host of activities might be developed and implemented with no clear focus and no way of telling whether any of the hoped-for results are actually being accomplished. All too often in human services, we interpret being very busy with making a real difference for our community. In contrast, *Results Management is all about focus*. For the FSC, resources, programs, time, and talent must be directed and managed toward accomplishing specific results that will make a real difference in achieving community capacity goals. This means decisions now have a new basis for being made. It also means that accountability is shifted from measures of activity (what is being done) to measures of results (what is being accomplished).

All too often in human services, we interpret being very busy with making a real difference for our community. In contrast, Results Management is all about focus.

The GPRA Context

One factor driving this new focus on results is the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). GPRA has had profound implications for the operation of federal



agencies. Although progress has been slow, the GPRA has played an important role in shifting the focus of agencies from activities and staffing to results. Performance goals, accountability, and monitoring of accomplishments are buzzwords in the GPRA vocabulary. The Government Accounting Office makes an important distinction between focusing on outcomes (the results or benefits of a program) as compared to inputs and outputs (program characteristics, intentions, and activities):

Today's environment is results-oriented. Congress, the executive branch, and the public are beginning to hold agencies accountable less for inputs and outputs than for outcomes, by which is meant the results of government programs as measured by the differences they make, for example, in the economy or program participants' lives. A federal employment-training program can report on the number of participants. That number is an output. Or it can report on the changes in the real wages of its graduates. That number is an outcome. The difference between the two measures is the key to understanding government performance in a results-oriented environment.¹⁹

Performance goals, accountability, and monitoring of accomplishments are buzzwords in the GPRA vocabulary.

Human service agencies in the Air Force have not been exempt from GPRA and its results-focused approach to planning and management. The following discussion presents an efficient and effective approach to focusing programs on results.

A Results Management Perspective

Results Management (RM) is a decision management and resource allocation strategy focusing on the differences intervention and prevention activities make in lives of people, organizations, and communities. Results Management is designed to assist agencies in redirecting their services toward clearly defined and anticipated results. A key assumption of Results Management is that program activities are *only useful* to the extent they can be tied to measurable results.

Results Management (RM) is a decision management and resource allocation strategy.

Even though agency programs are driven in part by regulations, the specific nature of activities and the ways in which they are implemented can vary, and Results Management helps assure the best fit between activities undertaken and results to be achieved. Results Management focuses on helping agency staff *manage results* rather than *manage activities*.

Key Point: Results Management

Program Activities are ONLY useful to the extent that they are TIED TO RESULTS!



Results Management focuses on helping agency staff manage results rather than manage activities.

The Results Management approach is a logical extension of the direction organizational effectiveness models have taken over the past several decades. Earlier management approaches, such as Management by Objectives (1960s-1970s), Total Quality Management (1980s-1990s), and Business Process Reengineering (1990s), have been helpful in identifying and measuring customer needs, directing attention toward activities and business processes that need to be delivered more efficiently, and assessing what an agency should be producing for its customers. These approaches have stressed the importance of services being rendered efficiently. They have also stressed that quality services are much more likely to be better received by customers.

¹⁹United States Government Accounting Office (1996, June). Executive Guide: Effectively Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act (GAO/GGD-96-118) (p. 7). Washington, DC: Author.



The limitation of the models developed to date has been a lack of focus on achieving measurable and desired results. These approaches have not been successful at explicitly defining short- and long-term results for customers and communities, linking their activities to customer and community results, and specifying a management strategy to achieve results and promote targeted activities that can assure results are attained.

Key Concepts

In order to understand how to build a Results Management strategy to accomplish community capacity objectives, four central concepts need to be defined: (1) community needs and resources, (2) program activities, (3) program results, and (4) community results.

Community Needs and Resources are both inputs in the RM model. Community needs are measurable, specific problems, concerns, and issues that may compromise the achievement of critical objectives if left unaddressed. Do you remember Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs? They are physiological needs, safety needs, needs for connection, achievement needs, and needs for self-actualization. According to Maslow, needs at a higher order do not become motivating until needs at a lower order are met. For example, if a person's basic needs for safety are not met, then those relating to making connections with others will not become a driving force. The same is true for community needs. It is important to understand and clearly define unmet needs limiting the community's capacity as a supportive environment for people. Another important input is to identify community resources that can be activated and mobilized to meet community needs. Community resources involve assets—including keystone members of the community and agency resources—for implementing intervention and prevention activities.

Program Activities are the measurable events or interventions employed by a program or agency to achieve specific program results for clients or customers—for example, a community orientation designed to educate new arrivals about services and programs available on base. In many human services agencies, program activities rather than program results are the central focus of attention.

Program Results are the short-term measurable benefits or outcomes achieved by individuals, families or groups who have been directly served by agencies or indirectly influenced by an agency's community-based efforts. These results are the "intermediate outcomes" for which an agency program can take direct credit and can be held accountable by its stakeholders. For example, because the FSC provides financial services and education, service members who have participated in this training program should better understand financial management strategies and make better decisions in their personal finances.

Community Results are the longer-term measurable benefits or outcomes achieved by individuals, families, communities, or organizations that can be directly or indirectly tied to meeting customer needs. These are typically broader results for which no single agency or program can take direct credit when they meet expectations or assume total blame when they fall short of expectations. These results occur for direct customers served by agencies, as well as those only indirectly touched. For example, the ability of AF families in a community to manage the pressures of frequent deployments is only partly influenced by the FSC. Many other service providers, and certainly squadron support activities, play a role in how well these families adjust.



We recommend not overplaying the distinction between program results and community results. In part, the distinction depends on the nature of the intervention, as well as the target group that is the focus of intervention and prevention activities (e.g., clients or customers, unit leaders, base agencies). The important point to understand is that some results are more complex and take more time than others to see the effects, such as satisfaction with AF life and retention decisions.

The more indirect the result from the program activity, the more likely that it is a community result. Community results are the consequences of program results—a secondary rather than a primary product of program activities. A more important distinction to understand is the difference between *program activities* and the intended or actual *results* (i.e., benefits or consequences) of those activities. For example, as a result of a Mothers Against Drunk Driving presentation at a local high school (program activity), 95% of the seniors signed a pledge not to drink and drive (program result). One measure of this activity's success was the fact that at the end of the school year, not one senior had been involved in an alcohol-related auto accident (community result). The previous year, three serious alcohol-related accidents had occurred, including one fatality, as well as a number of minor accidents where the driver was cited for alcohol use.

The more indirect the result from the program activity, the more likely that it is a community result. Community results are the consequences of program results—a secondary rather than a primary product of program activities.

Activity Oriented Management Design

Traditional designs for human services programs have tended to be "activity oriented" rather than results driven. This classical approach to human services focuses on personal, family, and community needs, and on agency responses to these needs. In this model, results are often not clearly defined. Results are expected to occur, but they are seldom measured since the focus is on the activities themselves and how these activities respond to identified needs. In this "activity oriented" approach to services, program designers will typically list results that should occur if they are successful, but program staff never actually measure results or outcomes because their attention gets overwhelmed by activities. For example, we say our programs help people move more

Activity Oriented Design



Traditional designs for human services programs have tended to be "activity oriented" rather than results driven.



successfully, or spend their money more wisely, or reduce family stress, but we rarely ever link what we do to those results at the customer or community levels.

Unfortunately, the summary reports agencies are required to submit up the chain of command are consistent with this activity model of agency accountability. They place priority on program outputs (e.g., number of people served) rather than program results. Program outputs include measures such as the number of programs and services delivered and the number of contacts or people served. Results Management gives little attention to such program outputs, which are discussed as program activity indicators. By endorsing such "activity accountability," the chain of command inadvertently helps to keep agencies focused on activities rather than results. This is not to say that these program outputs are not important to record and monitor over time; they are simply not sufficient as an accountability system for measuring program effectiveness.

Program activities an agency or agencies should implement receive attention only after results are clearly specified.

Results Oriented Management Design

The Results Management approach is quite different. The same factors are included, but in this management model, the primary focus is on results that must occur for the needs to be met. What would the community look like if the needs have been addressed? Program activities an agency or agencies should implement receive attention only after results are clearly specified. In this model, activities are directed toward results, and considerable attention is given to establishing measurable indicators to ensure that results are indeed the focus and that activities are linked to them.

Results Oriented Design



For example, if we want active duty personnel and families to PCS successfully, it is not only important to understand their needs but to measure whether their moves are being made with a minimum of disruption and cost, and that personnel down time is minimized. The Air Force is interested in results benefitting the family and the squadron and in supporting only those activities that ensure positive results will continue. For this to happen, what comprises a "good relocation" has to be defined, followed by an identification of factors, conditions, and events supporting this desired relocation result.



Results Management recognizes but focuses little attention on immediate or short-term results of intervention and prevention activities—such as the satisfaction of clients or customers with agency's services and programs—used to monitor the quality of service delivery. This should not be interpreted to imply that these short-term results are not important. One aim of RM is to reduce complexity—a comprehensive Results Management system would include measuring these short-term results as indicators of program activity success but not as measures of program results.

Steps in the Results Management Process

The process of implementing the Results Management approach to building capacity involves four steps:

1. Mapping the Terrain
2. Assessing Community and Program Results
3. Identifying Principles of Effective Agency Practice
4. Developing a Community Action Plan

The activities associated with these steps in the Results Management process are like peeling back layers of an onion to get closer and closer to the core activities and management plan the FSC must implement to achieve the results needed for AF people and communities. Part II of the manual includes separate modules on each step in this sequence.

The first step in the process, *Mapping the Terrain*, is a diagnostic step analogous to plotting the FSC's current location. If we were examining an actual map, *You Are Here* are the words that would describe the result of activities accomplished in this step of the Results Management process. FSC staff work through a series of activities in Mapping the Terrain that (a) define the FSC mission and the core set of operating principles that underlie and inform its service delivery model, (b) identify community stakeholders and the results that these stakeholders expect from the FSC, and (c) assess the internal and external functioning of the FSC in the base community, including assessment of the FSC's resource allocation model and organizational culture. A working assumption informing activities in this step is that the community results the base is presently achieving reflect the sum total of efforts from the formal and informal systems of social care. If the base wants to achieve better results or different results, then either present efforts will have to be increased or different strategies will have to be implemented.

The next step, *Assessing Community and Program Results*, involves using the findings

If the base wants to achieve better results or different results, then either present efforts will have to be increased or different strategies will have to be implemented.

Steps in the Results Management Process

1. Map the Terrain

**2. Assess Community/
Program Results**

**3. Identify Principles of
Effective Agency Practice**

**4. Develop a Community
Action Plan**



No single agency, organization, or community group owns community results—they are results shared by community stakeholders.

from the Community Assets Inventory to define a logic model of community and program results that become the target of FSC intervention and prevention activities. The Community Assets Inventory provides base-level information on 36 community asset indicators identified from a review of the 1999-2000 AF Community Needs Assessment. First, desired community result assets are identified from the inventory for improving in the areas of personnel preparedness, family adaptation, and sense of community. From this specification of targeted community results, program results are identified from the inventory in the areas of leader support, community connections, and interagency collaboration, which are assumed to provide leverage in influencing the desired community results. The matrix of community result and program result assets identified in this step are important first tasks in developing an FSC community action plan.

The third step in the Results Management process, *Identifying Principles of Effective Agency Practice*, involves working with FSC staff to review the *science* of effective agency practice with unit leaders, informal community networks, and partner community agencies. FSC staffs are not initiating community capacity building efforts at a zero-level baseline—they have a great deal of collective wisdom and a great number of collective experiences in working with formal and informal networks of social care in the base community. This step in the Results Management Process comes between the specification of community and program results and the development of a community action plan. The question framing this step asks, *What do we know about building community capacity in Air Force communities?* The aim is to build upon effective strategies and illustrative practice examples from the community practice literature.

Developing a Community Action Plan is the last step in the Results Management process. Framed by the program results to be achieved and informed by the principles of effective agency practice, the development of a community action plan includes a number of interrelated activities. These include (a) identifying intervention and prevention activities necessary to achieve program results, (b) forging partnerships with formal and informal networks of social care, (c) aligning FSC resources to support intervention and prevention activities, (d) aligning FSC organizational culture toward change management, and (e) developing procedures to monitor FSC performance in achieving desired program results. A template has been developed as an outline for recording the Community Action Plan, which is included in this workbook.

The strength of Results Management is its ability to focus FSCs and other agencies around a criterion based strategy for building community capacity.

A key focus in developing the Community Action Plan and a key principle of Results Management is *partnership*. According to John McKnight, "a genuine partnership is a relationship of equal power between two parties with distinctive interests. Each preserves its authority, distinct capacity, and integrity but gains power through the partnership."²⁰ No single agency, organization, or community group owns community results—they are results shared by community stakeholders. The FSC, in partnership with other agencies, organizations, and community groups, can and should be able to enhance the capacity of the base community to meet the needs of its people and support the mission of the AF.

Implications for Community Practice

The strength of Results Management is its ability to focus FSCs and other agencies around a criterion based strategy for building community capacity. This strategy helps to define a clear target toward which agency practices and activities can be directed.

²⁰McKnight, J. L. (1997). A 21st-Century Map for Healthy Communities and Families. *Families in Society*, 78, 117-127.



This avoids much of the misfiring and poor targeting that occurs when agencies shotgun their strategies, hoping some proportion of their activities will hit the mark. Not only is it easier to garner support from other agencies and from leadership around defined result objectives, it is also easier to get involvement and support from community members when everyone is clear about the purposes underlying what they are doing. When this approach has been used to promote employment under welfare reform or to increase the graduation rates among disadvantaged students in public schools, it has been much easier to build collaborations between families and agencies. Having a common purpose allows the normal boundaries to relax in favor of a shared agenda.

The principal challenge to using results management for community capacity building is the likely requirement that agencies will have to work together in new and creative ways to accomplish community results. Since no single agency can take full credit for community results, such as families being better able to adapt to mission related pressures, new strategies that require teaming between agencies are more likely to be necessary. In addition, strategies addressing community problems and seeking community solutions are likely to require involvement of community members and squadron and base leadership. Building solutions that address complex problems and hope to achieve complex results are more likely to require a complex strategy. This means that the traditional "divide and conquer" approaches to specialized services may have to give way to more active partnerships, community collaborations, and resource sharing than has been typically true to date. The FSC may retain many of its traditional programs and services, but how these services are rendered and how success will be measured may change considerably when community and program results are the focus of attention. In the short-term, this may mean considerable changes in the way services are rendered. In the long-term, both base agencies and communities are likely to be stronger and more capable of responding to the many challenges that will inevitably come.

The traditional "divide and conquer" approaches to specialized services may have to give way to more active partnerships, community collaborations, and resource sharing than has been typically true to date.

Suggested Activities

This module has outlined the principal components of Results Management (RM), an approach focused on results rather than program activities. All organizational cultures have ways of doing business, and these ways involve how decisions are made and how resources are accessed. The following activities represent two very different avenues for bringing the RM concepts to life. The first pushes staff to confront whether or not they are ready to enact a "results" approach; the second "takes the pulse" of where the FSC is with regard to RM behaviors. Both activities help establish a FSC baseline for operating from a Results Management perspective.

Jigsaw Puzzle. This exercise is intended to simulate actual decision-making styles in human service agencies. The exercise is intended to show participants that they are more willing to work from an "activity" orientation than from a "results-focused" approach. All you need for this exercise are 6-10 willing participants and two different 25 to 35 piece jigsaw puzzles appropriate for children ages 4 to 6.

Divide participants into two groups. Other participants may serve as observers of group process. The task is simple—groups are instructed to put the puzzle together as quickly as possible (10 minutes is the maximum time allowed). Before giving the puzzle to the two groups of participants, we recommend adding a little more complexity to make things interesting. First, we withhold one puzzle piece from each box; second, we exchange one piece from each puzzle box (use puzzles with different colors to make this more obvious). On occasion, we encourage the observers to taunt participants about the difficulty they are having in putting the puzzle together.



One group is handed the jigsaw puzzle with the box lid included—they have to remove the lid of the box to get to the puzzle pieces. Of course, a box top on a jigsaw puzzle pictures the completed puzzle. The other group is given a jigsaw puzzle with the lid missing.

What do we hope happens as a result of this exercise? *First, we hope that the group with the box top will be able to work faster and more productively than the group working the puzzle without the box top. Second, we hope that participants in the two groups will realize they may have a puzzle piece belonging to the other group; as a consequence, the two groups will have to collaborate and exchange puzzle pieces. Last, we expect that the participants will see that they do not have all the pieces to complete the task—a situation mimicking the real world of agency life.*

What usually happens? *First, the group with the puzzle that includes the box top removes the top and drops it off the table. They never consult it. The other group never requests the box top even though they can see that the other group is given a puzzle with a box top and that we have the box top for their puzzle by the podium. Both groups are completely willing to work the puzzle from an "activity" perspective, rather than from a "results" perspective. Second, even though they are performing the same task, participants in the two groups never consider that they might have a puzzle piece belonging to the other group. Third, groups seldom complete the task; consequently, they do not realize a puzzle piece is missing.*

The saying goes that art mimics life. If the puzzle exercise is art, it often reflects the management style in many public and private sector human service agencies—a management style more activity oriented than results focused. In addition, observers point out that the role participants assume in completing the puzzles are not unlike the roles they play in their agencies; if nothing else, as human beings, we are amazingly predictable across time and situations.

Results Management Baseline Questions. To what extent does the FSC: (a) identify results it wants to achieve for setting priorities and allocating agency resources; (b) monitor its progress in achieving established results; (c) monitor its internal performance to ensure congruency between plans and actions; and (d) provide on-going feedback to its stakeholders (e.g., individuals, groups, and organizations that have a vested interest in FSC results) about its results and internal performance?



Part II

Steps In the Results Management Process

Module III

Mapping the Terrain

Objectives

Specify the FSC mission and the set of core principles informing the service delivery model and agency practices

Identify FSC stakeholders and their desired results

Assess the satisfaction of specific FSC stakeholder groups with FSC performance

Conduct self-assessment of FSC performance in support of community capacity building

Identify baseline allocation of FSC agency resources

Assess the FSC organizational culture

The Context

Over time, the United States Air Force has shifted from an informal to a formal system of social care in response to family and community support needs. One by one, agencies have appeared on the landscape of Air Force communities to address specific issues and to promote particular results associated with quality of life and mission accomplishment. Chaplains, Child and Youth Programs, Family Support Centers, Family Advocacy, Mental Health, and Health and Wellness Centers are examples of personnel and agencies now operating on every Air Force installation worldwide.

The Air Force Office of Family Matters (AFFAM) initiated the development of five prototype Family Support Centers (FSC) in the fall of 1981 after a pilot test of the concept at Lakenheath Air Base in England. Proposed as a resource to commanders, these centers were designed to enhance the delivery of effective support services to Air Force members and families and to foster a positive base community environment. FSCs had three major responsibilities: (a) provide information, referral, and follow-up services to members and families, (b) increase linkages among service providers, base organizations, and members and families, and (c) work as a catalyst and as a partner with other base agencies in developing programs and supports to better address the specific needs of members and families. Although the FSC provided core programs and services, the FSC program was tailored to each base's special requirements and unique community resources and needs.

Over the last 20 years, numerous changes in the Air Force have transformed military life and the nature of the military community.²¹ In the context of personnel reductions and base realignments and closures, the Air Force has increased its operational tempo. Training and duty requirements have grown more demanding and complex. At large and small installations alike, outsourcing and privatization have eroded the boundaries

²¹Bowen, G. L., & Martin, J. A. (1998). Community Capacity: A Core Component of the 21st Century Military Community. *Military Family Issues: The Research Digest*, 2(3), 1-4.



between military and civilian life, and a greater proportion of Air Force families live in the civilian community. While many aspects have changed, some have remained relatively constant, such as the pressing need to recruit and retain qualified and capable men and women. An important question involves how the FSC has evolved to keep pace with the changes in the Air Force.

The FSC in the Base Community

An important question involves how the FSC has evolved to keep pace with the changes in the Air Force.

Mapping the terrain is a metaphor used to chart the current status of the Family Support Center in the base community and examine how it has evolved or not evolved to remain responsive to its mission in the context of changes in the Air Force and its members and families. The first step in mapping the terrain is to specify the mission of the Family Support Center. The mission statement sets the parameters for agency functioning. It specifies the results the agency is intended to accomplish, the strategies by which these results are pursued, and the stakeholders to whom the agency has accountability for results achieved. The mission statement is a touchstone in Results Management for developing an agency action plan that includes a statement of results to be achieved and the proposed activities for achieving them.

The mission statement sets the parameters for agency functioning.

Like all organizations, the FSC has developed a set of operating principles reflecting FSC staff practice philosophies and beliefs and an organizational structure more or less consistent with its mission. The FSC has also developed a statement of intended results reflecting the interests and expectations of its stakeholders, an activity plan for accomplishing intended results in the context of community assets, and a resource allocation model that includes both personnel and non-personnel dollars for supporting agency initiatives. Over time, it has forged an organizational culture—whether intentional or unintentional—that informs and constrains the behavior of staff members in performing their jobs and meeting their responsibilities. This organizational culture, reflecting "how things are done around here," is embedded in the larger organizational cultures of the base community and the Air Force, which have multiple subcultures.²²

The process of mapping the terrain involves attempting to understand the current status of the FSC in the context of its mission.

The process of mapping the terrain involves attempting to understand the current status of the FSC in the context of its mission. A number of exercises have been developed over the past several years to help FSC staff to assess the external and internal functioning of their centers in the base community. These exercises often result in important insights essential in helping FSC staff embrace the need for community outreach.

Implications for Community Practice

This module gives you an opportunity to examine the current operation of your FSC from a variety of perspectives. It asks you to honestly consider your agency's performance both within its currently stated mission, as well as within a potentially new mission statement—one that represents a response to the changing nature of the Air Force and the corresponding changes occurring in your own community.

The metaphor of "mapping the terrain" and a variety of associated activities help you

²²One of the more comprehensive definitions of organizational culture is offered by Schein (1985): "the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." Schein, E. (1985). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 3.



chart the current status of your FSC. You have an opportunity to consider this status within your base community and examine how this status has or has not remained responsive to changes that have occurred within the Air Force. By examining the mission of your FSC, you can assess how specific activities conducted by your FSC staff actually support the specific results your agency intends to accomplish. You can also identify the various strategies by which these results are pursued, including the importance of resource allocation, and you can identify the various stakeholders to whom your agency has accountability for these results.

This module provides you with an appreciation of the importance of an organization's culture and its ability to inform and/or constrain professional functioning. You can appreciate how your agency's own organizational culture is embedded in the organizational culture of your base community and the culture of the Air Force (and its various subcultures).

By "mapping the terrain" of your agency and completing the activities recommended in this module, you can have a better understanding of where your FSC stands and where agency attention and effort are needed.

Suggested Activities

A number of key activities bring to life essential principles of mapping the terrain. The first exercise focuses on the FSC mission, and provides a way for staff to discover how their understandings of the mission may vary. The second activity provides a vivid way to understand the current status of the FSC, including *how* it runs and *how well* it runs. The motor vehicle metaphor is followed by three activities focusing directly on stakeholders: the analysis of the various stakeholder groups and the interests they might have in the FSC; an analysis of agency leader views on FSC performance; and an analysis of unit leader views on FSC performance. The next activity leads to a clearer understanding of the people resources the FSC possesses, and how these resources relate to FSC goals. This is followed by a more intensive and broader focus on resources grounded in how the FSC relates to other agencies and organizations. The final activity in this module provides an opportunity for FSC leadership and staff to take a comprehensive look at the FSC culture and to relate this culture to the results they want to achieve.

FSC Mission Statement. Write down the FSC mission statement in your own words. According to Hogue and Miller, mission statements in successful organizations are



(a) shared by staff members and integrated into their everyday operations, (b) are well-focused and clearly articulated, and (c) inform practice decisions and priorities.²³ Ask other FSC staff members to specify their definitions of the FSC mission. Discuss the perspectives of different FSC staff members about the FSC mission. Consult the FSC instruction that includes a formal statement of the FSC mission. To what extent does your definition of the FSC mission correspond with this formal definition? How much variation is there among FSC staff in how the FSC mission is perceived and understood?

A Metaphor of the FSC as a Motor Vehicle. In working with FSC staffs, we have found it helpful to have staff compare the FSC to a motor vehicle. There are many different types of motor vehicles on the road today—motorcycles, vans, sport utility vehicles, compacts, sports cars, sedans, station wagons, pickup trucks, recreational vehicles, buses, transfer trucks, and so forth. Some are fast and flashy, others are not so flashy; some are gas-guzzlers, others are more economical; some carry only one or two people, while others can transport a large number of people. From a logical perspective, agencies should use types of "motor vehicles" most responsive to achieving their respective missions.

Identify the type of motor vehicle best embodying the present structure and functioning of the FSC at your base, including its model year, and describe some of its key features and options. Please say something about its gas mileage and something about its trade-in value (present value to the AF—very low, low, moderate, high, very high).

Look at the gauges on the dashboard, which tell you about the internal functioning of the FSC. What "gauges" do you monitor to assess the internal performance of the FSC? What do these gauges suggest about the current operation and performance of the FSC? When was the last time the vehicle went in for an engine overhaul—a strategic planning session that resulted in significant changes in the operation and performance of the FSC? If this strategic planning session was conducted in the last year, what have been some of the consequences of the planning session? To what extent does this motor vehicle fit the type of terrain you are traversing as an FSC staff member in today's Air Force?

Look out the front windshield toward the horizon that reflects your view of the AF in the next five years—to what extent will the current FSC motor vehicle get you where you need to be to accomplish the FSC mission? Please describe the type of motor vehicle you may need to align the FSC with the realities of the twenty-first century, as well as some of the features and options necessary.

Stakeholder Analysis. Identify three persons, groups, or organizations with a vested interest in the FSC and its contributions to the AF and its members and families. We refer to such persons, groups, or organizations as stakeholders. If you are like other FSC staff members, they see FSC representatives at the HQ/MAJCOM levels, base and squadron leaders, the provider system of agencies and their leaders, customers and clients of the agencies, and people and associations in the community itself as key FSC stakeholders. Although the interests and expectations of these stakeholders vary, they do have opinions about the type of results associated with successful FSC performance. Identify one stakeholder group and specify at least three results this stakeholder group expects from the FSC. Results are defined as the benefits for the people, groups, and organizations that are the focus of your intervention and prevention efforts—the concept of "value added." These results can be in the form of *knowledge, attitude, or behavior*. Drawing from a Results Management framework, do these results best reflect community results or program results, or do they represent program activities?

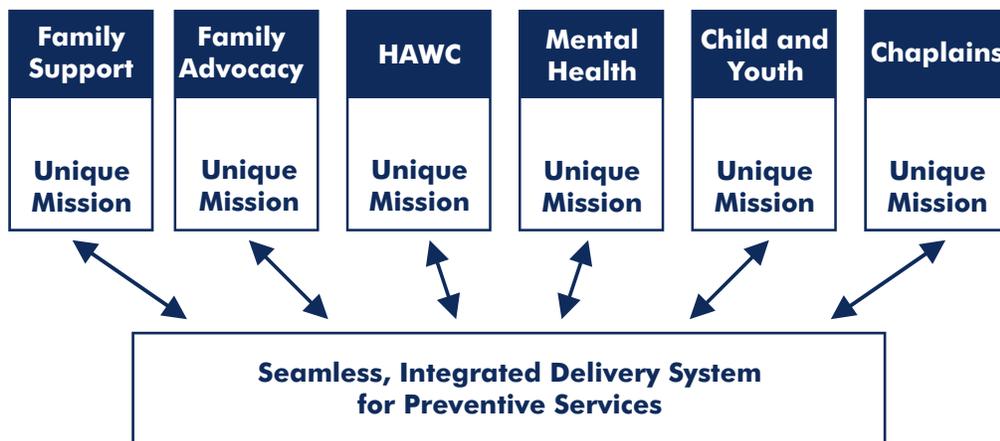
²³Hogue, T., & Miller, J. (2000). *Effective Collaboration: Strategies for Pursuing Common Goals*. Longmont, CO: Rocky Mountain Press, p. 39.



Unit Leaders' Assessment of FSC Performance. Adopt the role of a squadron commander, first sergeant, or supervisor. Complete questions one through four of the *Family Support Center Squadron Impact Survey* with your best estimate of what you believe that this group of unit leaders will say at your base (see the *Building Community Capacity Workbook* for a copy of the survey). What are the implications of your perceptions for increasing FSC outreach efforts to unit leaders? What are the implications of your perceptions for working more effectively with unit leaders in building community capacity?

Agency Partners' Assessment of FSC Performance. Adopt the role of a staff member in one of the agencies participating on the IDS. Complete questions one through eleven on the *Family Support Center Partnership Survey* with your best estimate of how such a staff member would respond (see the *Building Community Capacity Workbook* for a copy of the survey). What are the implications of your perceptions for increasing your collaboration with other base agencies in achieving community results?

IDS Member Agencies



FSC and Community "Firepower." Count the number of full-time FSC staff members who have responsibility for providing services to AF members and families. Multiply this number by 2080 (the typical number of hours in a year for a full-time employee). You will probably agree the result represents an impressive number of hours. Now, do the same math for the other agencies in your base community, including Family Advocacy, the HAWC, Mental Health, Child and Youth Programs, and Chaplains. What is the sum total of the hours your base has available to promote the quality of life for members and families? Remember that agency and community "firepower" is most effective when directed or concentrated on a limited number of targets—and this means choosing the right targets (those that will provide the initiative to get things moving and/or will have an important effect). What is the FSC's battle plan? What is the community's battle plan? A battle plan includes both statements of strategic objectives and plans of action for achieving these objectives.

FSC Standards in Support of Community Capacity Building. In the course of our discussions with AMC FSC directors and their staffs, twenty-eight activities have been identified that seem to influence programs results associated with building and sustaining community capacity (see the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*). Each activity is written as a standard of performance. These activities are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive; they are meant to be representative. Find an FSC colleague or two and work together to rate each standard as either 0 (not met) or 1 (met).



Calculate a score for the percent of standards met in each of the three program result areas. For standards not met, develop an action plan to correct the deficiency. We encourage you to share the results of your analysis with other FSC staff.

Resource Allocation Baseline Game. All organizations work to achieve results that align with their organizational mission in the context of available resources. In the FSC, resources can be divided in units of staff time and non-personnel resources supporting program operations, including travel, training, equipment, materials, communications, and so forth. An important activity in mapping the terrain is to determine the present allocation of FSC resources in the base community.

To complete this activity, you will need 50 dark colored tokens (poker chips) and 50 light colored tokens. The dark color tokens represent units of staff time with each token equal to 2% of the total time available for FSC personnel. The light tokens represent non-personnel resources with each token equal to 2% of the non-personnel budget. You will also need a game board with ten circles drawn (use a large sheet of paper). Write one of the following labels beside each circle: FSC, On-Base Agencies, Off-Base Agencies, Interagency Task Groups, Squadrons/Units, On-Base Support Groups/Organizations, Off-Base Support Groups/Organizations, On-Base Housing, Off-Base Housing, and Other.

The FSC Resource Allocation Game Board



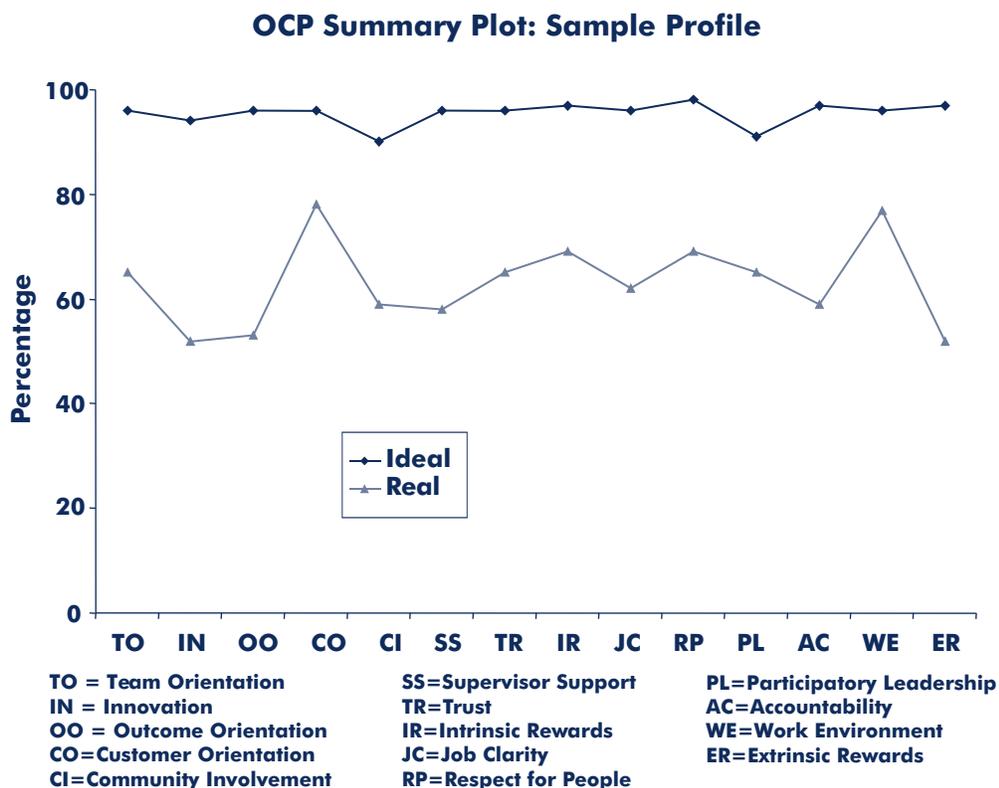
The game begins with all tokens on the FSC circle. This would mean that all FSC resources are spent within the FSC. Now, allocate the resources from the FSC circle to other areas best representing your view of the present FSC allocation model. For example, if you believe that 10% of staff time is spent providing direct consultation and support to unit leaders, place five of the dark tokens on the circle representing Squadrons/Units. (Please note that this is time spent outside the center.) If some staff



time is allocated to other base agencies, place a number of tokens on On-Base Agencies, perhaps reflecting meetings or teaming arrangements with those agencies, such as IDS meetings or activities.

The outcome of this activity should be a graphic representation of where you believe FSC resources are currently allocated. Write a summary of where you put your tokens. This exercise is particularly effective at opening up dialogue among staff members when it is conducted by a small group of staff members. The results the FSC is currently achieving in the base community reflect its current allocation of resources. Consequently, if the FSC is to achieve greater success in accomplishing results or new results, the staff will have to determine a new resource allocation plan.

Organizational Culture Profile. Readers are encouraged to complete the "Real Form" and the "Ideal Form" of the Organizational Culture Profile (OCP), which are included in the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*. The workbook also includes instructions for completing, scoring, and plotting your summary scores. The OCP includes 42 characteristics of organizational culture, which define 14 underlying dimensions associated with human service organizational effectiveness in the literature. The Real Form evaluates your perceptions about the functioning of the FSC at which you are employed. The Ideal Form assesses your values or preferences about agency functioning. In the organizational literature, the smaller the gap between the real and the ideal, the greater the job satisfaction. This activity will help you better understand your preferences for the functioning of the FSC, as well as help you identify areas of satisfaction and frustration. We encourage you to discuss the results of your analysis with your colleagues to identify areas of common concern and satisfaction. In addition, we encourage you to think about strategies through which you can take personal responsibility for changing the organizational climate and improving the functioning of the FSC.



Module IV

Assessing Community and Program Results

Objectives

Review the Community Assets Inventory as a means for assessing community and program results

Distinguish an assets-based perspective from a problem-focused strategy for community assessment

Review the community capacity model as a template for the Community Assets Inventory

Review the strengths and limitations of the 1999-2000 AF Community Needs Assessment as the source of data for the Community Assets Inventory

Describe the steps used to develop the Community Assets Inventory

Review the six tables comprising the Community Assets Inventory, including important caveats in the interpretation of data from the inventory

The Community Assets Inventory is a framework of core performance standards for AF communities to achieve.

The Community Assets Inventory provides base-level information on 36 community asset indicators identified from a review of the 1999-2000 Air Force (AF) Community Needs Assessment. A sample Community Assets Inventory is included in the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*. These community assets, when present, have been demonstrated in empirical analysis to promote results associated with AF members' and civilian spouses' positive perceptions of AF quality of life and health-supporting attitudes and behaviors. As such, the Community Assets Inventory is a framework of core performance standards for AF communities to achieve. The 1999-2000 AF Community Needs Assessment data provides a means to monitor these performance standards for AF members and civilian spouses at the base level.

Community and Program Result Dimensions

The community capacity model, developed from a comprehensive review of community practice theory and research, provides the template for grouping the assets into six dimensions. The first 17 asset indicators are associated with the three community result dimensions in the community capacity model: Personnel Preparedness, Family Adaptation, and Base Sense of Community. The next 19 assets are associated with the three program result dimensions in the community capacity model: Leader Support, Informal Community Connections, and Interagency Collaboration.

The CAI is assets-based rather than problem-focused.

An Assets-Based Perspective

The Community Assets Inventory (CAI) provides a framework for informing and monitoring the effects of community building and for sustaining intervention and prevention activities in AF communities. Unlike past assessments of AF community functioning, the CAI is assets-based rather than problem-focused. Community assets are the positive counterparts of unmet community needs and community problems. Assets increase the probability that the community will produce favorable results for members and families. Assets operate as protective factors in the face of community adversity or positive challenge, which may range from managing a natural disaster to helping a school raise funds for playground equipment. As protective factors, assets help the community to maintain, regain, or establish favorable community outcomes for members and families over time.



Standards for Community Performance

The shift from a deficit-reduction perspective to an assets-based perspective in designing community interventions is more than a shift in perspective. A community assets framework establishes a set of standards for community performance that can be evaluated and monitored by human service professionals both within their host agencies and as part of their collaborative work in support of the Integrated Delivery System (IDS). The specification of community standards is a first-order activity in designing community action initiatives for building strong and healthy communities. Standards represent a social model of community health and well-being. As *statements of what is desired*, these performance standards can be assessed and monitored with community-level data and used by human service professionals to engage community stakeholders in an open dialogue and in a process of self-reflection about community functioning and its implications for members and families. This dialogue helps promote a working consensus about community priorities, a sense of shared responsibility for the general welfare of the community and its members, greater community accountability for results, and a basis for forging and sustaining collaborative partnerships among formal and informal networks of social care.²⁴

The specification of community standards is a first-order activity in designing community action initiatives for building strong and healthy communities.

Source of Information

The Community Assets Inventory derives its data from the results of the 1999-2000 AF Community Needs Assessment. The needs assessment was coordinated through a contract with Caliber Associates, a private consulting group located in Fairfax, Virginia. The fourth comprehensive needs assessment survey since 1993, the survey instrument included items assessing the demographic and social profiles of AF members and civilian spouses, as well as their perceptions about AF life, their personal and family lives, and community programs and services. Data collection extended from October through December 1999 at every AF base worldwide, and involved a random sample of active duty members and civilian spouses. Junior enlisted active duty members (E1-E4) and all civilian spouses were over-sampled to compensate for typically low response rates from these respondent groups. Active duty members received and completed their surveys at their duty stations; surveys for civilian spouses were mailed to their home addresses and returned via business reply mail.

Sample Profile

A total of 58,732 active duty members and civilian spouses returned completed surveys, including 35,732 active duty members and 22,194 civilian spouses. About one percent of the respondents (n = 806) did not identify their status as either an active duty member or civilian spouse.

Approximately two in five (38%) of the delivered surveys were completed and returned by respondents. However, the response rate for active duty members was significantly higher than the response rate for civilian spouses (55% versus 25%). Significant variations found in response rates within Major Commands and across bases influence the confidence that can be placed in the survey results.

²⁴The topic of community asset building has received increased attention in the professional and popular press in recent years. John Kretzmann and John McKnight have greatly contributed to discussions about the value of working from an assets-based perspective. See Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. L. (1993). *Building Communities from the Inside Out*. Chicago: ACTA Publications. Also see Nelson, G. M. (2000). *Self-Governance in Communities and Families*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.



Weights were added to the data to adjust for differences in base-level response rates and to better approximate the profile of the actual base population profile.²⁵ Each base was proportionally represented in the overall sample to reflect its relative size in the AF. Whether weighted or unweighted, the needs assessment data are a snapshot of the base community at a single point in time. Although base populations turn over with time, estimates typically remain relatively stable, without significant changes in the nature of base demands or in the nature of planned community interventions.

Development

The design of the survey instrument for the AF Community Needs Assessment preceded the development of the CAI. Fortunately, compared to earlier versions of the Community Needs Assessment, the 1999-2000 version included more indicators assessing community issues. This increased coverage of community issues reflects increased attention by senior AF leaders in community life, including the Air Force Surgeon General's strategic initiatives for "Building Healthy Communities" through prevention and intervention activities and the implementation of a base-level Integrated Delivery System (IDS).

The first step in the development of the CAI was to review the potential of the 1999-2000 needs assessment instrument for monitoring community and program results that are defined in the community capacity model. A needs assessment crosswalk was developed between the six conceptual dimensions in the community capacity model and items on the community needs assessment.²⁶ A panel of Family Support Center directors from AMC reviewed the crosswalk, assessing the face validity between conceptual dimensions from the community capacity model and items from the needs assessment. Second, frequency distributions and descriptive statistics were examined for all relevant items. Items with limited variability were eliminated from further consideration unless a rationale could be found for their inclusion. Third, based on psychometric assessment, many discrete items on the needs assessment were combined into scales for more efficient presentation of the data and to increase the responsiveness of the data to the community capacity model. This process resulted in 46 asset indicators for further consideration.²⁷

The discriminate validity of the 46 asset indicators was examined using two indicators of quality of AF life and two indicators of negative coping strategies. Because of their psychometric properties (4-point range), the two quality of life indicators served as primary criterion variables.

²⁵The weights were based on information provided by the Defense Manpower and Data Center (DMDC) for the population at each base in the 3rd quarter of 1999. The data were weighted using four variables: base, status (active duty member, civilian spouse), paygrade of the active duty member, and gender of the respondent. The needs assessment reports prepared and sent to the bases by Caliber Associates did not weight the data. Unfortunately, response rates across bases varied greatly and, in some cases, base sample profiles from the needs assessment deviated significantly from the base population. The use of unweighted data compromises the representativeness and accuracy of the data for community assessment and monitoring. Special appreciation is expressed to Dr. Richard Heyman, Research Associate Professor, in the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, who developed the weights for the data. Dr. Heyman is serving as co-PI with Dr. Amy M. Smith Slep on USDA-NNFR Contract (CR-4953-545735), "Development of Algorithms for Estimating Family Violence Rates in Air Force Communities," U.S. Air Force Family Advocacy Program.

²⁶See Orthner, D. K., & Bowen, G. L. (1999). *U.S. Air Force Family Support Center Results Management Implementation Strategy*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

²⁷Analyses were conducted both separately and jointly for active duty members and civilian spouses. Only active duty members had items on the personnel preparedness profile dimension.



Quality of Life Indicators

Way of Life: Community members are satisfied or very satisfied with the Air Force/military as a way of life.

Bringing Up Children: Community members are satisfied or very satisfied with the Air Force/military as a good place for bringing up children.

Negative Coping Strategies

Overengaging: Community members dealt with stress in the past month by criticizing, arguing with, or threatening others.

Disengaging: Community members dealt with stress in the past month by withdrawing from contact with others.

Based on this analysis, 10 asset indicators were eliminated from further consideration—these items failed to produce significant discriminations on the target outcomes.²⁸ Scores for the remaining 36 assets were divided into low/high categories based on graphic analysis between each asset indicator and the four target outcomes. The decision to report the community aspects in dichotomous form reflected the value of communication efficacy. From our discussions with community practitioners in the AF, many requested a format that was valid but easy to use and share with community stakeholders.

The number of assets per community asset result dimension ranged from three for Interagency Collaboration to nine for Leader Support. Relatively few items on the needs assessment instrument were targeted to assess aspects of interagency collaboration.

A summary score was created for each of the six profile dimensions by counting the number of assets with high codes.²⁹ The count of assets within each profile dimension was adjusted for those respondents who failed to respond or for whom the asset indicator was not applicable (e.g., Respondents who had not experienced a TDY in the past 12 months).

The summary score for each asset profile dimension was divided into four asset levels ranging from a low number of assets to a high number of assets: Low (0-25% assets), Moderate (26-50% of assets), High (51-75% of assets), and Very High (76-100% of assets). Active duty AF members reported more than 50% of the assets in five of six asset dimensions—high or very high (the one exception was Informal Community Connections). Civilian spouses were above the 50% mark on four of the five asset dimensions (the one exception was Leader Support).

In general, within each of the six asset profile dimensions, active duty AF members and civilian spouses in the enlisted ranks, especially those in the junior and mid-enlisted

²⁸Several additional items produced fairly marginal discriminations in the outcomes of interest but were left on the asset inventory either because of their relevancy for current policy and program initiatives or because of the interest for particular stakeholder groups.

²⁹The internal consistency of items within each community profile dimension was examined using factor analysis and reliability analysis. These results were generally supportive of the internal consistency of asset indicators within each community profile dimension.



ranks (E1–E6) reported fewer assets than officers and their civilian spouses. Not surprisingly, active duty AF members and civilian spouses who lived off base reported fewer assets associated with a base sense of community than their on-base counterparts. In addition, civilian spouses who lived off base reported fewer assets associated with informal community connections than spouses who lived on base. Living in the base community appears to offer some advantages in establishing connections and developing a personal identity as a member of the AF community.

**Data are not "truth."
The individual or
small group constructs
the meaning of the
data in the context of
their experiences and
observations.**

Sample Base Profile: Interpretation

The Community Assets Inventory consists of six tables (see the *Building Community Capacity Workbook* for a sample base inventory). In reviewing the results, we recommend that you keep in mind several important points. First, data are best understood in the context of a small working group, such as Family Support Center staff members or members of the Integrated Delivery System (IDS), who bring diverse perspectives to the table. Data are not "truth." The individual or small group constructs the meaning of the data in the context of their experiences and observations. This is not a limitation—it merely acknowledges human nature and the drawbacks of survey data.

Second, you may not give equal weight to the importance of each descriptor or asset indicator. Some results may have greater significance for you than others in assessing the status of the base community. For example, six asset indicators are associated with base sense of community. You may place greater weight on the importance of some of these asset indicators than others. As presented in the Community Assets Inventory, the asset indicators assume equal weight.

Third, you will have to arrive at some decision criteria for determining whether the findings for a community or program result asset indicator are positive or negative. In all cases, the results are between 0% and 100% of the base population. One method for making this determination is to use the findings for the MAJCOM or the AF as a comparison point. However, remember that findings for the MAJCOM and the AF are just comparison points—they are not necessarily benchmarks, or desired end states. In the end, you will have to determine the "desired finding" for each result indicator—the proportion of the base population that would need to affirm the asset indicator for you to feel satisfied with the status quo.

Fourth, the status of a community or program result indicator or whether it has positive or negative consequences may vary across demographic groups. You will need to bring your knowledge of the base community to the table to identify subgroups for which the results are more or less positive. Again, this is best done with a small group of colleagues who have multiple perspectives on the base community.

Before you begin your review of the Community Assets Inventory, we recommend reviewing a copy of the 1999-2000 Community Needs Assessment survey instrument (see the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*). Different formats are used in the construction of items for the survey. In some cases, items are evaluated on scales with multiple response choices. In other cases, items are specified in long lists with respondents instructed to mark only those that apply. Results reflect the content and structure of the actual survey item or items, as well as the response formats. As with most surveys, some questions are clearer than others; some response formats are better than others for capturing variation in responses. The Community Assets Inventory mirrors the strengths and limitations of the survey instrument.



We recommend that you view the Community Assets Inventory as a jigsaw puzzle—pieces of information from members and spouses that, when put together, form an image of the community and its residents. Is it a perfect representation of community assets? Of course not; it is a sample survey focusing on an important but restricted set of items from the needs assessment survey. Other sources of information supplement the results and sharpen the resolution of the projected image. Administrative data, interviews with base and unit leaders, information from other community assessments, and your own professional observations and personal experiences provide valuable tools for understanding your community and informing and monitoring agency practice.

Many Ways of Knowing



We recommend that you view the Community Assets Inventory as a jigsaw puzzle—pieces of information from members and spouses that, when put together, form an image of the community and its residents.

Table 1

Table 1 describes a demographic profile of respondents, including profiles for active duty AF members and civilian spouses. Comparative information is provided for the Major Command in which the base is located and for the AF sample overall. The sample base in the present analysis is located in the Air Mobility Command (AMC), which included a combined unweighted sample of 8,940 active duty AF members and civilian spouses. Survey responses rates are provided for the base, Major Command, and AF samples. Compared to the response rates for the Major Command and the AF overall, a lower proportion of active AF members at the sample base responded to the survey. The proportion of civilian spouses who responded to the survey was similar across the sample base, Major Command, and the AF. In general, the higher the response rate, the more likely the sample represents the actual base population. In other words, greater confidence can be placed in the survey findings as response rates increase.

Table 2

Table 2 provides base-level findings for the 17 community result asset indicators. The findings are reported separately for active duty AF members and civilian spouses. An introductory statement sets the tone for the table: "When AF bases have high community adaptation, they evidence the following 17 assets that are identified within three broad community result dimensions: personnel preparedness, family adaptation, and base sense of community." High community adaptation refers to the two quality of life indicators used as primary criteria in identifying and testing the importance of assets for inclusion on the Community Assets Inventory.



Working definitions are offered for three community result asset dimensions: personnel preparedness, family adaptation, and base sense of community. The percentages in the table represent the proportion of the sample population for active duty AF members and civilian spouses who gave an affirmative response to the asset indicators. For example, 55% of the active duty AF members at the sample base reported that they intend to stay in the Air Force beyond their present obligation or until retirement. Only active duty AF members responded to the six asset indicators associated with personnel preparedness.

Table 3

Table 3 follows the same format as Table 2 but summarizes findings for the 19 program result asset indicators for both active duty AF members and civilian spouses. An introductory paragraph introduces the results: "When Air Force bases have high community capacity, they evidence the following 19 assets that are identified within the three broad program result dimensions: leader support, informal community connections, and interagency collaboration." In AF communities with high capacity, unit leaders, community members, and base agencies assume a sense of shared responsibility for the general welfare of the community and its members, and evidence collective competence in supporting members and families in meeting personal, family, and organizational needs and requirements.

Working definitions are provided for the three program result asset dimensions: leader support, informal community connections, and interagency collaboration. The percentages in the table are interpreted in the same way as those in Table 2. In support of the community capacity model, each of these program result asset dimensions has shown strong and significant associations with the three community result asset dimensions in analyses designed to test the community capacity model. When program results are positive (high asset levels), community results are positive as well (high asset levels). Of the three program result dimensions, the influence of leader support on community results is particularly strong and positive for both active duty AF members and civilian spouses.

Tables 4 and 5

Tables 4 and 5 provide a comparative perspective of base data across the 17 community result assets (Table 4) and the 19 program result assets (Table 5). The responses of active duty AF members and civilian spouses are combined in this analysis, and data are reported for the sample base, the Major Command, and the AF overall. The results for the Air Mobility Command (AMC) are included in the present comparison. As mentioned earlier, the results for the Major Command and for the AF overall provide only a point of comparison in evaluating the results at the base level; they do not represent benchmarks. The desired standards for performance at the base level are likely to be higher than the results for either the Major Command or for the AF overall. In most cases, base-level findings do not differ remarkably from those for the Major Command or for the AF overall. In making comparisons, please remember that sample profile differences may account for some of the variations in the percentages.

Table 6

The last table in the Community Assets Inventory includes data on the four items from the needs assessment survey that inquired about the Family Support Center. Results are



provided for active duty AF members and civilian spouses, and comparative data are provided for the Major Command (AMC in the present example) and for the AF overall.

Please note that the results about FSC Experience and FSC Informs may be lower than what you would expect. In part, this reflects the structure of the items on the survey. In assessing experience with FSC, the item on the needs assessment inquired about the supportiveness of various groups and programs in the daily lives of respondents and their families. Response choices included "not at all supportive," "somewhat supportive," "very supportive," and "no experience." Experience with the FSC reflects the proportion of respondents who answered "no experience." The needs assessment item used to estimate the extent to which the FSC informs respondents and their families about community programs and services was one question in a list of 28 items respondents could mark. The structure of this question is likely to *underestimate* the role the FSC plays in providing information about community programs or services in the base community. This does not mean the information is invalid; it does mean caution is warranted in interpreting and sharing this finding with community stakeholders.

Implications for Community Practice

The Community Assets Inventory provides the centerpiece for working with Family Support Center staff as they develop an action plan for promoting capacity in their communities. Reviewers should examine the 36 asset indicators on the inventory in the context of their expectations for community performance. We recommend working with colleagues to highlight or mark asset indicators for which the proportion of affirmative responses from either active duty AF members or civilian spouses are below expectations. We also recommend identifying other sources of information about how results may vary within active duty member and civilian spouse subgroups, such as by pay grade and location of housing.

Using the Community Capacity Model and Results Management principles and concepts as reference frameworks, identify program results considered to most greatly influence community result assets evaluated as below acceptable standards of performance. From this process, a community action plan is developed for influencing program result assets linked to the community result assets that have been identified for community intervention.

As discussed earlier in Module II, the development of a community action plan involves the identification of strategies for forging and sustaining partnerships with community stakeholders to support the proposed intervention and prevention activities. It requires realigning the resource allocation model to ensure that sufficient personnel and other direct costs associated with the proposed activities are available, aligning the organizational culture toward change management, and monitoring agency performance in support of program activities and the community and program results that are the foci of intervention and prevention activities.³⁰

Base Results

The Community Assets Inventory for your base is available from AMC/DPFF. The presentation of results follows the same structure and format as for the sample base profile.

³⁰For additional details, see Bowen, G. L., & Orthner, D. K. (2000). *Air Force Community Needs Assessment Resource and Training Manual: A Results Management Approach*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.



Suggested Activities

Data reflecting important base situations and program initiatives can come from several sources. In this module you have focused on the 1999-2000 Air Force Community Needs Assessment. The first activity brings administrative information into the process of assessing community results. Administrative data include normative information agencies and organizations collect as part of demonstrating their accountability. The second activity uses the 36 asset indicators on the Community Assets Inventory to address the issue of minimal acceptable standards of community performance. These standards provide a context for reviewing actual base-level data. The final suggested activity provides an opportunity to develop a logic model for intervention planning using sample data from the Community Assets Inventory.

Administrative Data to Monitor Community Results. Community result assessment anchors the community capacity building process. Identify sources of administration data available at the base level to monitor personnel preparedness, family adaptation, and base sense of community. These data augment information provided from the Community Assets Inventory. For example, we recommend you visit the Military Personnel Flight to secure information about base retention rates. In addition, the Health and Wellness Center (HAWC) administers the HEAR survey resulting in useful information about the health and well-being of active duty members (e.g., days missed from work due to illness or injury), including data about the family relationships of married and single parent members (e.g., percent reporting serious relationship problems).

Minimal Acceptable Standards of Community Performance. The Community Assets Inventory includes 36 community asset indicators. The first 17 of these indicators are associated with the three community result dimensions in the community capacity model: Personnel Preparedness, Family Adaptation, and Base Sense of Community. The next 19 of these assets are associated with the three program result dimensions in the community capacity model: Leader Support, Informal Community Connections, and Interagency Collaboration. The percentages for each asset indicator are those for AF members and civilian spouses across the AF. Remember that the asset indicators for Personnel Preparedness are for AF members only. For each asset indicator, please indicate what you consider to be the minimal acceptable level of community functioning. This minimal acceptable level of functioning is different from performance benchmarks, or desired levels of community functioning. From your knowledge and experience, how would the results for your base compare to the results for the AF overall and to your minimal acceptable standards of performance?

Sample Profile Assessment. Review the sample Community Assets Inventory included in the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*. First, look at the demographic profile of respondents. Do you see any demographic profile findings that might influence your interpretation of results? For example, only 20% of active duty respondents and 25% of civilian spouse respondents live on base—these findings are actually consistent with the housing distribution of the base population at the sample base. How will this finding potentially influence findings about community result assets and program result assets? You may expect members and spouses at bases where a lower proportion of residents live on base to experience a lower base sense of community. In addition, informal community connection assets may be lower at these bases.

Next, look at the summary findings for the 17 community result assets. Highlight or mark assets for both active duty members and civilian spouses that are below acceptable standards of performance from your point of view. You may find it helpful to consult



Table 4, which provides a comparative perspective for AMC and the AF overall. Identify one below-standard finding for active duty members and one for civilian spouses from your analysis to target for improvement during the next 12 months. Are any subgroups of active duty members or civilian spouses especially challenged in respect to achieving these assets? (To answer this question, you will need to draw upon other sources of information you have about the base population, including administrative data and your own personal observations.) If so, these subgroups become targets for prioritizing intervention and prevention efforts. Record your plans in goal format on the sample Action Plan Template in the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*, and state your rationale for prioritizing these goals. Goals are stated with the target group or groups as the subject of the statement (e.g., junior and mid enlisted active duty members will experience fewer family conflicts with family members). Please note that the wording of the goal statement follows the wording of the result asset. Check one of these two goals for intervention planning on the sample Action Plan Template.

Now, turn to Table 3, which summarizes the findings for the 19 program result assets. At this point, it is not necessary to be concerned with the findings—just consider the program result asset statements. Highlight or mark one or two program result assets in each area (Leader Support, Informal Community Connections, and Interagency Collaboration) that you consider to offer the most potential leverage in helping to achieve the community result goal you prioritized for intervention and prevention planning. Which program result asset do you consider most influential? Highlight or mark the program result dimension (Leader Support, Informal Community Connections, and Interagency Collaboration) that you consider to offer the most overall leverage in helping to achieve the community result goal.

At this point, review the base findings in Table 3. Focus your attention on the program result assets/program result dimension that you highlighted or marked above. How satisfied are you with these findings? Which of these findings do you consider above standard (+), below standard (-), or within an acceptable boundary of performance? As we mentioned above, you may find it helpful to consult Table 5, which provides a comparative perspective for AMC and the AF overall. Identify two program result assets from your analysis for intervention planning during the next 12 months, and indicate your rationale for selecting these program result assets. Of course, one of the most important reasons for prioritizing these program result assets is their proposed link to achieving the community result goal. Record these program result assets as goal statements on the Action Plan Template. From a Results Management perspective, you have created a logic model for intervention planning—important first steps in developing and implementing a community action plan. We will complete the remaining sections of the Action Plan Template in Module VI.



Module V

Identifying Principles of Effective Agency Practice

Objectives

Understand the importance of unit leader support, informal community networks, and interagency collaborations in building and sustaining community capacity and contributing to the achievement of community results

Identify key performance indicators of unit leader support, informal community networks, and interagency collaborations

Identify principles of effective practice to promote unit leader support, informal community networks, and interagency collaborations

The overall goal of this module is to prepare FSC leadership and staff to intentionally address program results involving military leadership, community members, and agency leadership.

Building Community Capacity

We have already said that in communities with high capacity, unit leaders, base agencies, and community members themselves *share responsibility* for the general welfare of the community and demonstrate *collective competence* in addressing community needs. High capacity communities have the will to act and then actually act. We have also discussed three key areas of community capacity program results. They relate to leadership, the informal community, and community agencies.

This section of the manual provides the core content for building community capacity as it involves roles and responsibilities of Family Support Centers. We discuss principles and practices for *supporting unit leader community networks*, for *mobilizing informal community networks*, and for *strengthening interagency community networks*. Each of these areas is an important program result. Illustrative case material is presented for each program result as a way of promoting discussion about significant community issues. This is followed by a review of the professional literature addressing the significance of the program result. We then present a set of key performance indicators, those factors reflecting knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that can be influenced by Family Support Centers. These are followed by specific practices FSCs can employ in order to meet those performance indicators.

Several examples of programs addressing important aspects of building community capacity are presented at the conclusion of each program result area. We have also included a set of suggested activities illuminating how agency activities relate to building community capacity. The overall goal of this module is to prepare FSC leadership and staff to intentionally address program results involving military leadership, community members, and agency leadership.

Supporting Unit Leader Contributions to Community Networks

Technical Sergeant Ed Jones sought out First Sergeant Jason Smith to discuss a problem that occurred at home on the previous evening. Considered one of the most competent NCOs in his unit, an obviously upset Sergeant Jones told his First Sergeant he needed to be relieved of his responsibilities as a section chief for a week or so. His voice broke a number of times as he talked about the "terrible fight" he had the night before with his wife, Becky. Sergeant Jones went on to describe how their seven-year-old son Jason was suspended from school for fighting. During their meeting with the school principle, he and Becky were told that their son "obviously needed to see a counselor because of



his uncontrollable temper." His wife was very upset by the principal's remarks and announced she was "moving back home with her parents so that Jason can go to a better school—a school where teachers know how to keep discipline in the classroom." Sergeant Jones said that the "big fight" was over this decision and added, "I didn't know what to do. I need next week off to drive my wife and son to her parents' home so that we can get Jason in a good school." First Sergeant Jason Smith's immediate reaction was to grant Sergeant Jones the time off to take care of this family problem. Later in the day, he began to wonder if this really was the right decision and whether there was something else he could do to help Sergeant Jones.

Please address the following questions: (a) *How likely is this situation?* (b) *How typical is this response from a First Sergeant?* (c) *What are some of the other ways First Sergeant Smith might have responded?* (d) *What are some of the ways First Sergeant Smith might have partnered with community agencies and representatives to better assist Sergeant Jones and his family?*

Role and Consequences of Unit Leader Support

Military leaders have a fundamental responsibility for building and maintaining healthy informal relationships among unit members and their families. These informal unit-based relationships represent a primary ingredient for creating and sustaining military unit cohesion. From the moment a military member joins his or her unit, this "extended family" provides a basis for their military identity and forms the core social fabric supporting their duty performance and important aspects of their personal life. Leaders have tremendous control and influence over numerous aspects of a unit member's (and their family members') life. They also assume, by virtue of their command authority, an inherently unparalleled responsibility for the well-being of unit members and their families.

In the context of their institutional responsibility for active duty members and their families, it is not surprising that unit leaders have been identified in a number of research studies across military service branches as important sources of social support for members and families.³¹ In many cases, unit leaders function as the first line of support for active duty members and families, and as a link between formal services (making referrals to base agencies) and informal sources of social care (sponsoring unit activities and functions for families). In a recent review of research about the role of military community in the lives of active duty members and families, Bowen and McClure drew the following conclusion about the role of unit leaders as a support system for military families:³²

Research suggests that military families perceive less negative spillover from work to family, report better adaptation to military life, and experience greater success in coping with military demands, such as relocations and deployments, when they perceive their small unit leaders as (a) expressing interest in the welfare of families; (b) being responsive to family needs and situations that sometimes confront families in the context of military life; (c) involving families in unit activities and sponsored events; (d) maintaining a two-way line of communication with families and setting clear expectations for behavior; (e) knowing about community and family support programs and services; and (f) working in partnership with formal service providers on the installation to provide training and support to families in the unit.

Unit leaders have been identified in a number of research studies across military service branches as important sources of social support for members and families.



Bowen and McClure identified first sergeants as particularly viable sources of support for active duty members and their families.

A consistent theme in the *Communities in Blue* study was the importance of unit leaders as community builders. The unit is the primary basis for one's sense of community in the AF—an important conduit by which members and families establish connections with one another and gain access to agency-based services and programs. These social and psychological ties to the unit have never been more important for supporting and sustaining service members and their families. In the last decade a series of fundamental institutional changes have seriously challenged the well-being of members and their families. These changes include the increased frequency and, in many cases, the longer duration of deployments, as well as attempts to do more with less when increased mission demands are performed in the context of downsizing, privatization, and outsourcing. Unit identification and associated unit-based social support continues to provide a critical connection between the service member (and family) and the larger institution—a connection that provides a buffer against modern military life challenges.

A consistent theme in the *Communities in Blue* study was the importance of unit leaders as community builders.

Key Performance Indicators

These performance indicators reflect the nature of unit leadership knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors when there is high community capacity. With regard to knowledge, unit leaders must exhibit an awareness of their unit, its mission and its people, within the context of an appreciation for the larger community. Leaders must recognize the strengths and vulnerabilities of unit members and their families and identify the benefits members and families can contribute and derive from being imbedded in a strong community where members feel common bonds and a shared identity—especially identification with the military community. Unit leaders must regularly exhibit behaviors and undertake actions demonstrating their personal commitment and support for strong bonds among unit members and positive relationships between unit members, families, and other community residents. It is assumed that the following unit leader performance indicators can be influenced by the Family Support Center, and other agencies and organizations in the Air Force community.

Unit identification and associated unit-based social support continues to provide a critical connection between the service member (and family) and the larger institution.

Knowledge

Unit leaders understand the relationship between family well-being and mission success, and they accept that they have a direct responsibility for promoting the well-being of both unit members and unit family members as a function of their leadership role and responsibility.

Unit leaders understand the support needs of their families, and they are aware of and know how to use local programs and services to enhance and sustain member and family well-being, while the unit is operating at home as well as during training and operational deployments.

Attitudes

Unit leaders demonstrate an attitude reflecting a real interest in the general well-being of members and member families and promote this same attitude among their

³¹Bowen, G. L. (1998). Effects of Leader Support in the Work Unit on the Relationship between Work Spillover and Family Adaptation. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues, 19*, 25-52.

³²Bowen, G. L., & McClure, P. (1999). Military Communities. In P. McClure (Ed.), *Pathways to the Future: A Review of Military Family Research* (pp. 11-34). Scranton, PA: Military Family Institute, Marywood College, p. 15.



subordinate leaders. This caring attitude is reflected in their willingness to address important personal and family life issues before they reach a crisis state and their insistence that subordinate leaders also demonstrate a proactive leadership approach. These leaders also model this attitude by promoting unit sponsorship of base events and by their personal participation in community support functions.

Unit leaders are open to and enthusiastically seek out new ideas and opportunities for strengthening and sustaining member and families. They also encourage and support their subordinate leaders' creativity in developing and delivering new approaches for promoting personal and family well-being.

Behaviors

Unit leaders sponsor formal classes and programs directed at the educational and support needs of members and families, as well as social events and informal activities for unit members and their families designed to enhance member and family member coping skills, to promote morale, cohesion, and esprit de corps, and to encourage the development of informal social support among unit members and their families. These activities are carried out in ways that encourage members and family members to assume appropriate responsibility for their own well-being, as well as a recognition of their responsibilities for the well-being of others.

Unit leaders ensure the successful operation of unit sponsorship and welcoming programs for newly arriving individuals and families, as well as the welcoming and integration of newly married unit members. Helping members and their families get settled in the community and ensuring that these individuals get connected to formal and informal resources in the unit and community is seen as a primary leadership responsibility.

Unit leaders prepare families for deployments by promoting member and family readiness and unit-family bonds. Leaders work, in cooperation with unit family support groups, to maintain effective communication patterns with spouses and partners during training and operational deployments.

Unit leaders work cooperatively with human service providers to promote family support policies and programs in their unit and on their installation. In cooperation with human service providers, unit leaders co-sponsor unit and installation family support activities.

Unit leaders share family support knowledge gained from their experiences with other unit leaders in their command and/or on their installation, and they work together with leaders from other units to encourage the development of installation-wide family support initiatives.

Unit leaders recognize and directly address specific family problems with sensitivity and support. They are willing to confront difficult issues. They attempt to intervene early, before situations and circumstances eliminate useful options. They are willing to become personally involved when required and appropriate, and they seek responsible, caring, and compassionate responses that empower members and their families and enhance their future abilities.



Principles of Effective Agency Practice

Agency leaders represent an important asset for unit leaders. Agency leaders are in a powerful position to help resource and facilitate a unit leader's execution of his or her command responsibilities. Agency leaders who effectively partner with unit leaders in the delivery of unit-based and unit-sponsored human services act as true catalysts for promoting and sustaining the social fabric of the military unit. These actions also enrich the kind of unit-based social relationships required to promote the global relationships that mark a healthy and resilient military community. Below are some of the fundamental aspects of this unit leader-agency leader relationship.

Agency leaders seek out and develop professional relationships with key unit leaders, including family support leaders. Building and sustaining relationships with unit leaders represents a necessary and critically important task for agency leaders. Agency leaders cannot wait for invitations; they must be proactive in initiating and building relationships with unit leaders.

Agency leaders and staff interact with unit leaders through participation in important official and social events. Unit events (promotion and award ceremonies, sports events, and various family gatherings) provide important opportunities to learn about and identify with the unique personality and character of a unit. The direct contact that occurs with unit leaders during these positive times in a unit's life represents a powerful opportunity to build and sustain constructive unit-agency relationships.

Unit leaders are encouraged to use agency facilities for informal unit functions. Often, agencies have unique facilities and equipment that can be used to support unit activities and functions. Hosting a unit activity or social function provides an opportunity for unit leaders and members to become familiar (and positively identified with) the agency and its personnel.

Agency services are regularly offered through unit-sponsored events and activities and held whenever possible in unit facilities rather than in agency facilities. Units are more likely to use agency services when these services are delivered in the unit area and are integrated into (rather than forced upon) the unit schedule. Time is precious for unit leaders and whenever agencies can seamlessly integrate classes, briefings, or other agency services into the unit's schedule, unit leaders will be most appreciative. Being in the unit provides opportunities for agency leaders and personnel to learn about and identify with the unique nature of the units they are supporting, and it often provides opportunities to identify other unit needs.

Agencies partner with each other to provide unit-based support, especially during times of adversity. The burden of sorting out who offers what to whom in the area of broadly defined human services needs to rest with agency leaders. Commanders need the intended and required outcome (or what is referred to here as the "result"). Agency leaders need to determine how their services, across and between agencies, can be integrated and delivered in a way that produces the intended result for the customer. This is especially critical at crisis moments in a unit's (or a community's) life. In most cases, some one person or agency needs to take the lead role and the others participate as partners.

Agencies encourage and support unit-based efforts to link members to formal services. One key to success in delivering human services is to keep unit leaders involved in the service delivery process. Unit leaders represent important allies. One of the best ways to insure this involvement is to build it into the service delivery relationship from the start.



Agencies make use of unit-based information chains to inform unit members and families about key programs and services. By making use of unit-based information chains, agencies provide and reinforce the important role and functions these information chains provide. It also insures that key unit leaders always remain in the information loop.

Illustrative Programs to Support Unit Leader Contributions to Community Networks

An excellent way to explore new program options is to become aware of what others are doing in relevant areas. Many organizations now are interested in best practices and successful programs. In this section on supporting unit leader community networks, we identify two illustrative programs. It appears to us that these programs are relevant to building community capacity because of the spirit in which they have been developed and because of their primary missions and desired results. We first describe the Army ACS Unit Services Strategy. We also briefly describe an Air Force base-level initiative designed to support units. Both programs should provide useful models of building community capacity through the involvement of units.

Becoming Partners in Readiness: The Army Community Service (ACS) Unit Services Strategy. "I have noticed a significant improvement in services offered by ACS since they switched to having Unit Services Coordinators. I like having a single, knowledgeable source who is familiar with my unit and who can handle problems from cradle to grave." These were the comments of an Army Company Commander when asked about his observations on the ACS Unit Services Strategy.

In the mid to late 1990s, ACS embarked on an approach to service delivery that intentionally linked ACS staff with particular Army units. Among the goals of this strategy were to connect each military unit with ACS services, to provide a visible ACS staff member who was identified with the unit and well known to its chain of command. The primary objectives were to improve the skills of the unit leaders to support soldiers and their families and to more effectively promote prevention-oriented problem solving in units.

A number of key principles were part of the Unit Services Strategy (USS). First, since soldiers and their families are most closely linked to the unit community, the most effective way to bring services to them is to also be linked with that same unit community. Second, units and their leaders are defined as the key customers for ACS services. Third, the USS is a proactive approach to the issues and concerns people face. An effective USS is based on a partnership between ACS staff (Unit Services Coordinator) and unit leaders. Other installation agencies and community agencies are included as partners as needed. The USS assumes these unit-agency partnerships can accomplish goals that otherwise could not be as effectively attained.

The USS is grounded in six program components: development of a vision and an implementation plan; ACS staff cross-training and orientation to the USS philosophy; assignment of staff to units; briefing leadership on the USS at the unit and installation levels; assessment of unit needs and assets; and provision of ongoing support to the units. Starting with a clear vision and a well-stated and mutually agreeable plan are important, since it is at this point program professionals think about what they hope to accomplish (what results they expect to see). As with any program, understanding what the program is all about is critical.



In the case of the USS, the Unit Services Coordinator (USC) was not intended to be a caseworker with a physical space in the unit. Rather, the USC was to broker preventive services and to link personnel and families with services they might need. Because the USC had to be knowledgeable about the range of Army Community Service programs and services, cross-training was very important. While the USC was not intended to be an expert in all ACS areas, the USC was expected to be conversant in all ACS activities. Because leadership at various command levels was key to the success of the program, commanders at various levels had to be briefed in the strategy—with special attention to the benefits that could be had at all levels. Once ACS staff were connected with military units, a process of assessing the unit's current needs and strengths took place. Once assessments were complete, ACS services could begin in an informed, timely, and appropriate way.

A range of benefits come from implementation of the USS, including benefits for unit leaders, for soldiers and their families, and for Army Community Service as an organization. Benefits for unit leaders include: greater accessibility to ACS; time savings for leaders dealing with unit members' personnel and family problems; more effective leadership; better awareness of family support programs; and more positive perceptions of and confidence in ACS as a community service organization. For soldiers and families benefits include: increased awareness of and access to family support programs, and earlier identification of soldier needs that could develop into problems possibly compromising personal well-being and/or individual and even unit readiness. Benefits for Army Community Service include: increased knowledge of all ACS programs by staff, unit leaders, soldiers, and families; increased use of ACS programs; ability of staff to support each other; increased access to units; better knowledge of unit needs and demands; open communication with units; closer tie between ACS and Army mission; improved standing in Army community; units' support for ACS; and more responsiveness by ACS to unit issues and to soldier and family needs. Many of these benefits are mutually beneficial for unit leaders, for soldiers and families, and for ACS.

For further information, contact the Army Community Service, Community and Family Support Center, 4700 King Street, Alexandria, VA, 22302-4418.

Natural Helpers Training at Eielson AFB, Alaska. In September 2000, the IDS at Eielson AFB sponsored a week-long training program for squadron-level representatives interested in becoming "natural helpers" in a squadron-based project designed to promote family wellness. The training being offered through the IDS initiative focused on skill development in a variety of human service areas with the goal of building a cadre of squadron-level natural helpers who would be willing and able to undertake at least one grassroots-level family wellness project in their own squadron.

Each squadron was asked to choose approximately five individuals to attend the training. Participants were selected based on their good communication skills, a willingness to reach out to others, and the motivation to work on an on-going project designed to benefit the squadron, its members, and associated squadron family members. Suggestions for participants included mid-level unit supervisors, squadron members seeking a degree in the social sciences or a related field, and key squadron spouses. The program recommended that units try to send a combination of active duty members and spouses. Participants were asked to commit both to a week of training as well as the time necessary to complete their intended project. Participating squadrons were asked for a commitment to assist their Natural Helper Team with the support required to successfully achieve the unit project goal. Squadron leaders were asked to attend the last day of the training, when the unit projects were selected for implementation.



The training covered a variety of topics including family and parenting issues, personal stress issues, and work environment issues. During the last two days of the training, participants worked within their own squadron group to develop a program designed to meet the unique needs and challenges of their own unit. The rationale for this approach was based on a belief that unit members know best what will help their own families achieve success—defined as being able to successfully meet current military life challenges. The training also included a list and some discussion of project ideas that might help individual squadron groups get started.

This initiative also included some very unique actions designed to motivate and sustain participant efforts. For example, disposable cameras and a photo album were given to each participating squadron to document their program efforts and achievements. Units were also told that they would be given an opportunity in the future to "share their story." In fact, a selection team was established in order to judge the eventual success of the individual projects and the associated teamwork demonstrated by squadron teams. A series of prizes (such as a paid squadron picnic to a local lakeside lodge) were offered based on factors including the number of people reached by the program, the success at marketing the program, success at meeting a set of selected outcome measures, and the ability of the squadron to work effectively as a team.

This base-level IDS initiative represents the kinds of opportunities military communities can promote using assets already existent in the military community. It requires developing partnerships among and across agencies to bring together the requisite skills and resources required to offer interesting and challenging opportunities for units to develop and make use of their own inherent capabilities. In this case, the initiative had a clear focus—tap into the talent and energy of potential natural helpers and provide the training, encouragement, and unit sponsorship required to carry out a meaningful unit-based wellness program. Finally, sustain and reward the effort of participants by allowing them to showcase their achievements in a way that brings honor to their unit and results in a positive experience for all.

Suggested Activities

The partnership developed between FSCs and units is pivotal for building community capacity. The first activity literally provides a picture of how the FSC and units relate. This picture provides a visual roadmap for how the FSC might go about changing this partnership. The second activity represents a way to elaborate this picture in that it produces a set of guidelines for changing the partnership that comes from FSC leadership and staff.

Unit Leader/FSC Relationship Collage. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words, and this activity is a vivid way of showing the status of FSC/unit working relationships. The objective of this activity is to better understand the FSC's present practice model in working with unit leaders (squadron and flight commanders, first sergeants, and supervisors). You may work alone in completing this exercise or ask some of your FSC colleagues to join you. You will need five to ten magazines, a piece of construction paper, a pair of scissors, and some tape or paper glue. Your task is to go through the magazines and identify pictures and words that best depict the present working relationship between unit leaders at your base and the FSC. Remove these pictures and words from the magazines and tape or glue them to the construction paper to create a visual collage of how you presently see this relationship. Write down the words that come to mind as you review the product of your activity. This collage represents the status quo—how happy are you with this current model in the context of the principles of



effective agency practice specified above? If you are not happy with what you see, go back through the magazines and identify pictures and words symbolizing how this relationship would look if the FSC and unit leaders were working as full partners in the achievement of community results. Identify two actions you can perform and take full responsibility for in closing the gap between the current model and the partnership you envision. Share your plan with an FSC colleague to create an accountability link. Display the two collages in your office, along with your personal plan of action. Be prepared to explain and discuss your "artwork" with your FSC colleagues.

Facilitators and Barriers to Promoting FSC/Unit Leader Partners. Take an 8 ½ x 11-inch sheet of paper and draw a vertical line down the center of it. On the left side of the paper, write down at least three assets or liberating forces that support or would build a stronger partnership between the FSC and unit leaders. On the right side of the paper, write down at least three barriers or restrictive forces that prevent or constrain a stronger partnership between the FSC and unit leaders. Develop a plan of action for mobilizing the assets and overcoming/lowering the barriers in developing a more effective partnership between the FSC and unit leaders. What support is needed beyond the FSC? Share the results with an FSC colleague.

Mobilizing Informal Community Networks

In an off-base neighborhood, about 70% of the residents are connected with the military, including DOD civilian employees, retirees, and active duty (enlisted and officer) single and married members. By most definitions this neighborhood is diverse. Some families have very young children while other families have children who are in their twenties and older. Some families are concerned with childcare issues, while other families are dealing with elder-care issues. This neighborhood is about 17 miles from the base, and the average commute time to the base is about 45 minutes.

If we were to take a snapshot of this neighborhood during an average week, one or more of the following might be happening: a civilian spouse with two preschool children has just learned her active duty spouse is scheduled to be deployed next month; a Major has learned that his elderly mother and father who live in another state are beginning to have difficulty maintaining their home; a house at one end of the neighborhood caught fire several days ago and sustained about \$15,000 worth of damage; a couple in their early twenties has just brought their first child home from the hospital; three teenagers in the neighborhood have been seen walking through the neighborhood between two and three in the morning on a regular basis; a single parent airman has been seeking child care for her four-year-old daughter but is very frustrated by the process and the available choices; a retired Chief Master Sergeant and his wife have an adult daughter with a substance abuse problem, and they now have most of the care responsibilities of their two grandchildren; public transportation to the neighborhood has been curtailed; several streets in the neighborhood have become major thoroughfares because of a recently opened shopping center; and of the 37 families in the neighborhood, 15 of them have been in the neighborhood for less than one year. As of today, six homes in the neighborhood are empty and for sale or rent.

Neighborhood residents see one another come and go. Some of them occasionally discuss what to do about the teenager problem. Others notice that certain residents are gone for long periods of time and wonder why but have not actually talked to those neighbors. Several neighbors who are home most of the time have suspicions about what goes on at certain houses and just hope the neighborhood doesn't have any big problems. Some residents feel that the days are gone when neighbors really knew each other.



Several residents make a point to get to know everybody and try to get neighbors together whenever they can.

Please answer the following questions: (a) *How likely are the situations described above to occur? Are there other key items that should be added to such a scenario?* (b) *How typical is the response from the informal community network to what is going on in their neighborhood? What other responses might they have?* (c) *What are the consequences of different responses informal community members might have about what they see and experience in their neighborhood?* (d) *What would you say about the capacity of this neighborhood to respond to issues individuals, families, or the neighborhood as a whole might face? What is the FSC's role in helping this informal community network to understand alternative responses and their potential consequences? How might they involve unit leaders in making a positive difference in this neighborhood? What other collaborators should be involved in working with this neighborhood?*

Role and Consequences of Informal Community Networks

Informal community networks are those associations, interactions, exchanges, and connections that people and families make throughout everyday life. They include group associations, such as unit-based support groups, as well as less-organized networks of personal and collective relationships maintained voluntarily, such as relationships with work associates, neighbors, and friends.³³ The strength of informal networks may well be the linchpin in the quality of community life. For many people "community" exists to the extent that the informal network is alive and well.

The informal network is an important vehicle that supports the accomplishment of community goals. Informal network support has consistently been identified with a number of positive outcomes for individuals and families, including physical and psychological well-being. Informal networks and the support they provide influence how positively people experience their neighborhood, how safe they feel in their community, how protected they are from preventable health-related illnesses (including addictions), how well they relate to their own family members, and how prepared they are to be competent as adults with regard to work productivity and citizenship.

At least two key questions arise in discussing the informal community network. First, what is expected of this network, and how does it act in the military community? Second, how does the operation of the informal network benefit the community?

The military, its members, and its families have high expectations when it comes to community and to how people should provide support to one another. While the term *esprit de corps* is typically applied to the military work unit, the personal ties and mutual support this concept implies is expected of all people connected with the military. This includes spouses and children who are expected to be active participants in the military community by joining together and by working to support both each other and the military mission. Individuals and families assume that people in the military community will support one another in crisis and non-crisis situations.

The functioning of the informal network actually varies widely across the military community. The recent *Communities in Blue* study examined community connections among Air Force active duty members and their families.³⁴ The results indicate that

³³Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., Mancini, J. A., & Nelson, J. P. (2000). Community Capacity: Antecedents and Consequences. *Journal of Community Practice*, 8(2), 1-21.

³⁴Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., & Mancini, J. A. (1999). *Communities in Blue for the 21st Century*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.

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Making connections is a key issue because having a sense of being supported does not occur without interacting with others.

those living off base, those families where both spouses work and where time is scarce, those assigned to incohesive military units, and those not committed to an AF career have the most difficulty in making connections with other individuals and families. About two in three study respondents felt it was easy to make connections with other service members and families; one-fourth were unsure whether it was generally easy or generally difficult to make connections. About one in ten active duty members and spouses rated the experience of making connections as difficult; junior enlisted and junior officer active duty members were more likely to report difficulty in making connections as compared to those senior in their ranks.

Making connections is a key issue because having a sense of being supported does not occur without interacting with others. Clearly the results from *Communities in Blue* suggest that a strong informal community network is not a constant in the lives of all members and families.

Findings from the 1999-2000 Air Force Community Needs Assessment address informal associations in the lives of members and families.³⁵ Among the domains covered by this survey were sources of support in the context of personal and family problems. When asked to indicate what sources of support they used if they had a personal problem, the most common sources among active duty personnel were friends, spouse, other family members, coworkers, and supervisors. Among civilian spouses most common sources were spouses, friends, and other family members. One in five active duty personnel reported they had no one as a source of support when there was a personal problem; one in ten spouses also said they had no one to turn to with a personal problem. Respondents were also asked what sources of support they used if there was a family problem, and the most common sources for members and for spouses were spouses, friends, and other family members.

Results from the survey compared people who mainly identified with the base community with those who mainly identified with the civilian community with regard to having resources in times of need. Both active duty members and civilian spouses indicated a slightly higher tendency for those who identified with the base community (as compared with those who identified with the civilian community) to agree that "people can depend on each other in this community." When asked to indicate their satisfaction with the Air Force community, at least two-thirds of active duty members and spouses were satisfied with the supportiveness of the base community; the satisfaction levels of active duty officers were higher than those of active duty enlisted members and of civilian spouses.

One in five active duty personnel reported they had no one as a source of support when there was a personal problem; one in ten spouses also said they had no one to turn to with a personal problem.

Support during the course of daily living is also important for well-being. When asked to indicate how supportive various individuals and groups were in their daily life, the top sources of support among active duty personnel were supervisors, unit leadership, and neighbors. Among civilian spouses, the top sources of support for daily living were neighbors and supervisors. When a similar question was asked with regard to support during deployment or TDY, the top support sources among active duty and civilian spouses were neighbors and unit leadership. Because the informal network can be a significant source of information, a question was asked about where people received information about programs and services. Almost half of civilian spouses and four of ten active duty members reported friends or neighbors as important information sources. Overall, findings from the 1999 Air Force Community Needs Assessment also show variability in how community is experienced.

³⁵Caliber Associates. (2000). *U.S. Air Force Community Needs Assessment*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.



While independence and self-sufficiency are positive approaches to life's problems, the informal network can be a major resource in solving problems. Other research reports show how important community connections are for more positive family adaptation to the military lifestyle, for higher levels of spouse support for the service member's career, for more productive coping with overseas assignments, for better adjustment to deployment separations, and for being more satisfied with military life.³⁶ While the research is by no means complete, evidence supports the significance of the informal network for members and their families.

The assumption is that strong informal network support is widespread in the Air Force community, and that it always makes a difference in the quality of life for personnel and their family members. This assumption has merit, but it must be noted that the strength of the informal network can vary substantially from base to base and from community to community. The strength of the informal network can also vary over time, as it generally has done in the United States civilian community.³⁷ Nevertheless, the informal network has an enormous capacity to set the tone for how well a community is doing, and to be that force setting a community apart as a vibrant and supportive place.

While independence and self-sufficiency are positive approaches to life's problems, the informal network can be a major resource in solving problems.

Key Performance Indicators

The performance indicators listed and discussed below reflect the nature of the informal community when there is high community capacity. With regard to *knowledge* (K), community members must exhibit an awareness of the community and its needs and know what benefits can be derived from strong community connections; with regard to *attitudes* (A), community members must possess a set of values that includes the significance of others around them, as well as the merits of connecting with those others; with regard to *behaviors* (B), community members must exhibit action in their daily lives with others that includes demonstrating support for their friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. It is assumed that the following performance indicators can be influenced by the Family Support Center, and other agencies and organizations in the Air Force community.

Knowledge

Community members are aware of their own needs for community connections.

Community members understand the benefits of informal community connections for themselves and for others.

Community members understand the role and responsibility they have in building community connections.

Community members recognize specific actions they might take that would have a positive effect on others in their community.

Attitudes

Community members value the skills, backgrounds, and experiences of other community members.

The informal network has an enormous capacity to set the tone for how well a community is doing, and to be that force setting a community apart as a vibrant and supportive place.

³⁶Bowen, G. L., & McClure, P. (1999). Military Communities. In P. McClure (Ed.), *Pathways to the Future: A Review of Military Family Research* (pp. 11-34). Scranton, PA: Military Family Institute.

³⁷Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.



Community members feel it is important to interact with other community members around everyday life issues and concerns.

Community members feel a sense of responsibility to reach out and connect with other community members.

Behaviors

Community members participate in community sponsored events.

Community members interact informally with neighbors and unit members and their families.

Community members participate in helping newcomers learn about the base and civilian communities.

Community members are active in the social life of the community.

Community members cooperate with others to address community-threatening issues.

Community members provide support for other community members on a regular, non-crisis oriented basis.

Community members exchange resources with other community members, including knowledge and information.

Community members help other community members get the support they need from formal AF and civilian agencies.

Principles of Effective Agency Practice

Agencies can dramatically affect the strength of the informal community network because they can be in touch with all sectors of the community through their outreach activities, whether these activities are in the form of collecting information on members and families, in the form of sponsoring events, or in the form of embracing the community as a partner in program delivery. The 14 principles of effective agency practice discussed below are wide-ranging, even as successful agencies have multiple avenues of input into the community. Many of these practices represent the potentially unique place agencies have in the base community; agencies are uniquely placed and resourced to accomplish what community members may not be able to do on their own.

Concerns members and families have about community issues are assessed on a regular basis. Because any community is really comprised of many communities, it is important to intentionally assess what the important issues and concerns are across them. Assessments have greater validity when they are enacted on a regular basis and when the periods between assessments are not lengthy.

Air Force needs assessment survey data are clarified at the local base level through interaction with members and their families. The needs assessment data provide an overall roadmap about issues and concerns, but these data do not provide a great deal of detail. The meaning of these data is improved as agency staff interacts with people and hears them describe situations and circumstances in their own words.

The residential location of members and families both on and off base is charted and mapped. Knowing where "customers" live and work is important for providing support that makes a difference. For example, knowing that 70% of younger members who live off base are located in a particular quadrant of the city is important information for fielding community-based programs for young families.



Profiles of members and families who use AF agencies are developed. Another significant piece of information involves those who actually use services. An important statement of program success is when an agency reaches people it has targeted to reach for service delivery.

Staff interacts with members and families through participation in both on and off base community events. Informal interaction is not only significant for families connecting with each other but is equally significant for establishing productive connections between agency staff and families. These natural settings provide people with opportunities to gain insight into the lives of those around them.

Activities and events are designed to foster connections among members and families. While it is traditional to think of agency goals with regard to providing a direct service to meet a particular need (e.g., educating new parents about nutrition), an equally important goal is to bring members of the community together for the purpose of forming supportive relationships.

Agency-sponsored events are often held in other community facilities, in unit locations, and in housing areas rather than in agency facilities. Part of engaging diverse groups of members and families is to have a clear outreach mission, as opposed to a traditional "center" mission. In the latter case, people are expected to come to service providers, but in the former case, programs and services are taken to people where they live and work and where they may feel more at ease.

Community members are utilized to deliver programs and services to members and families. Connections among community members can be promoted by enlisting volunteers to deliver important services and programs to their friends and neighbors. Oftentimes it is assumed that only "official" service providers are certified to speak to certain issues. However, people respond to the real experiences others like them have. As one example of utilizing a community member, consider the instance of an educational group for new parents. It is one matter to list for these new parents the key issues they will face, but quite another to have a community member talk about his or her own experience as it relates to those key issues.

Informal community networks are encouraged to use agency facilities for informal functions. The space agencies own can be seen either as only for professionals to use in the course of doing their work, or as equally appropriate for informal community networks to use for various activities. Designating space as belonging to the community rather than to counselors and caseworkers provides a very different and positive definition of those spaces.

Specific support is provided to enhance the strength of the informal community network during times of adversity. Agencies can have a powerful and positive influence on the ability of the informal community to make connections and to take care of itself during adversity. Formal support is rarely sufficient to handle adverse situations and events. People would rather find support from the informal network if given the choice. However, they often feel isolated from other military members and families.

The informal community network is aware of and linked to key formal services and programs. There are times when a person's neighbors cannot overcome an adverse situation without the help of a formal support agency. In these instances, the informal community network needs to be knowledgeable about formal support services and the easiest way to access them.

Opportunities are provided for members and families to participate in voluntary associations, groups, and activities in the base community. Many people lack connections with others because they are unaware of opportunities or because the



opportunities just do not exist. Others are not accustomed to volunteering. These kinds of activities can often become the forces that initially bring people together and provide an opportunity for them to connect with others.

Agencies facilitate the abilities of members and families to provide informal support to their friends and neighbors, as well as to members of their own families. Community members sometimes do not know what to do when they think a friend or neighbor needs support. Consequently they may talk with others about that friend or neighbor or simply wonder "what's going on across the street" rather than take positive action.

Agencies partner with work units to promote informal network interaction. There is consensus about the pivotal role work units have in military family life. Agencies can play an important role in facilitating what the work unit does to support the informal community network. Collaboration between formal support agencies and military units can be instrumental in encouraging members and families to form a strong informal community network.

Illustrative Programs to Mobilize Informal Community Networks

The following programs are intended to build community capacity via informal networks. The first is a local Air Force program, whereas the second was developed in the civilian community and is nationwide. Although the first program, "Neighbor to Neighbor," is no longer in operation, both programs provide helpful examples of initiatives supporting connections between neighbors, coworkers, and families.

Neighbor to Neighbor: Rebuilding a Sense of Community. Piloted at Wright-Patterson AFB (WPAFB), this project was designed to foster connections between neighbors, coworkers, and families so that social isolation and its adverse effects, such as depression, suicide, and family violence were minimized. "Neighbor to Neighbor" was the result of the efforts of the Innovation Model Prevention Team (IMPT) at WPAFB. This initiative included a number of activities designed to encourage a sense of community. These activities brought people together around important community tasks and events. On-base block parties were held in housing areas. A focus group was formed to plan future community projects, and this group discussed plans for a neighborhood watch program, a beautification project, and a skills bank that would encourage members of the Air Force community to share their competencies and talents with others. "Neighbor to Neighbor" reflected an attempt to connect people with one another, to network, to develop positive relationships, and to share common concerns and interests. Unfortunately, the program innovation lost its momentum when the model prevention process ended, indicating the importance of the formal community working closely with the informal community to accept long-term responsibility for such opportunities. A brief description of the project can be found at this Web site:
http://www.afmc-mil.wpafb.af.mil/HQ-AFMC/PA/leading_edge/feb99/page7.htm.

Front Porch. The American Humane Association has developed The Front Porch Project, an initiative aimed to reduce child abuse and neglect. This association seeks to involve citizens in making a difference in their communities, rather than leaving it up solely to agencies. The project encourages people to become involved in each other's lives and advocates that one person has the power to make a significant difference in the life of a child. According to this project's mission statement, everyone in the community can and should become more aware of how to protect and support children. The Front Porch Project initiative provides two types of training. During the first, participants receive intervention skills including problem-solving strategies, positive parenting



strategies, understanding the dynamics of child abuse and neglect, how to foster resiliency, and methods of discipline and child care practice. They also learn about agency interventions including public welfare and court systems. This training also includes role-play opportunities, and each participant develops a personal action plan. The second type of training is a "training the trainer" program, which provides skills in delivering training; this second training can only be taken by those who have already had the first-level training. The Front Porch Project requires a partnership between a local agency and American Humane Association, so that project outcomes will be more successful.

This initiative is designed to encourage the community to be more responsible when it comes to the well-being of children. Involvement of many citizens in the community is a core value in this approach, as is connecting citizens with each other to act on behalf of children. For further information, contact The American Humane Association at 1-800-227-4645, or <http://www.americanhumane.org/frontporch/>.

Suggested Activities

These activities are the same as those used for the previous section on supporting unit leader community networks. The first is a literal picture of how the FSC relates to the informal community network, and the second is an accounting of present-day barriers and facilitators that affect this relationship. Both of these activities lead toward developing an action plan for building an important link between the FSC and the informal community, thus building community capacity.

Informal Community/FSC Relationship Collage. The saying goes that a picture is worth a thousand words. This activity is a graphic way of showing the status of FSC/informal community network working relationships. The objective of this activity is to better understand the FSC's present practice model in working with informal community networks (members and families as community assets). You may work alone in completing this exercise or ask some of your FSC colleagues to join you. You will need five to ten magazines, a piece of construction paper, a pair of scissors, and some tape or paper glue. Your task is to go through the magazines and identify pictures and words that best depict the present working relationship between community members and the FSC. Remove these pictures and words from the magazines and tape or glue them to the construction paper to create a visual collage of how you presently see this relationship. Write down the words that come to your mind as your review the product of your activity. This collage represents the status quo—how happy are you with this current model in the context of the principles of effective agency practice specified above? If you are not happy with what you see, go back through the magazines and identify pictures and words symbolizing how this relationship would look if the FSC and community members were working as full partners in the achievement of community results. Identify two actions you can perform and take full responsibility for in closing the gap between the current model and the partnership you envision. Share your plan with an FSC colleague to create an accountability link. Display the two collages in your office, along with your personal plan of action. Be prepared to explain and discuss your "artwork" with your FSC colleagues.

Facilitators and Barriers to Promoting FSC/Community Partnerships. Take an 8 ½ x 11-inch sheet of paper and draw a vertical line down the center of it. On the left side of the paper, write down at least three assets or liberating forces that support or would build a stronger partnership between the FSC and community members. On the right side of the paper, write down at least three barriers or restrictive forces preventing or constraining a



stronger partnership between the FSC and community members. Develop a plan of action for mobilizing the assets and overcoming/lowering the barriers in developing a more effective partnership between the FSC and community members. What support is needed beyond the FSC? Share the results with an FSC colleague.

Strengthening Interagency Community Networks

A network of agencies is typically built to provide complementary services that together are able to fill in the gaps for one another and more fully meet the needs of community members.

At a recent meeting of the Community Action Information Board (CAIB), the mission support commander noted that squadron first sergeants had recently brought a matter of concern to his attention. The issue is that families who have recently PCSed to the base are often very stressed over the move, especially if they have young children. Coupled with the high work demands from the OPSTEMPO at the base, these new families often have financial issues related to the move, need help finding good child care and recreational outlets for their children, want to get connected with other families, but often do not know where to start. Further, some of the families most likely to be stressed are the ones least skilled in making these early adjustments. The CAIB recommended that the IDS at its next meeting address the matter with recommendations for a plan of action to be brought back to the CAIB.

At the following meeting of the IDS, the newcomer issue was raised and discussed. Several representatives questioned whether newcomers were really having these problems, given the in-briefings being provided and open door policies of the agencies. The FSC representative suggested that she would like to see all incoming families receive a welcome visit. This visit would inform them about the base and its services, determine their support needs, and help get them connected to neighborhood, community, or other available support systems. The problem is that the FSC doesn't have the resources to marshal this kind of one-on-one effort. In the following discussion, other agencies complained that they are already working at maximum capacity, and several worried that if they admitted this is indeed a problem on the base, one of them would be given operational responsibility, since this is what usually happened. One agency representative suggested that if they could work together, sharing the tasks and combining resources, perhaps they could make this program successful in getting every family started off on the right foot in their new community.

Please answer the following questions: (a) *How likely is the situation described above to occur?* (B) *How effective are base agencies in working together to address such a need?* (c) *How typical is the feeling from some agency representatives that they can't do any more?* (d) *How can this response be carefully addressed and shaped to benefit the community?* (d) *What is the FSC role in helping all the potential agency partners understand alternative responses and their potential consequences?* (f) *How could community volunteers be engaged in this helping process?* (g) *What would a plan of action look like that could successfully go back to the CAIB?* (h) *How might units be engaged in addressing these concerns?* (i) *How might the informal community networks be included in addressing these concerns?*

Role and Consequences of Interagency Collaboration

Interagency community networks represent the web of connections between the formal agencies and services designed to address the needs and challenges faced by individuals and families in a community. Individual agencies are typically established to address specific needs, and they are funded and staffed to accomplish their restricted set of objectives. A network of agencies is typically built to provide complementary services



that together are able to fill in the gaps for one another and more fully meet the needs of community members. In most cases these agencies represent both government and private-sector programs (inside and outside the military) designed to foster health, mental health, education, social services, child and youth development, spiritual support, crisis management, and so on.

A common challenge for interagency networks is the lack of active collaboration between agencies and services. When this happens, the service delivery system becomes highly fragmented, and each agency operates autonomously, failing to take into account the available resources in other agencies or the complex needs of people seeking assistance. The capacity of the community to address critical or chronic needs is substantially reduced and agencies operate as islands unto themselves with little coordination. Community participants often find this kind of service delivery system very frustrating and confusing, and sometimes even dehumanizing.³⁸

In contrast to a fragmented pattern of agencies and programs, a service delivery system characterized by high levels of communication, coordination, and collaboration has the advantage of agency staffs and community members more fully understanding the overall capacity of the system to address individual, family and community issues. Active collaboration opens the door to: 1) agencies knowing and understanding each other's programs and services, 2) improved ability to more comprehensively assist in resolving problems, 3) increased coordination around strategies to attack broader community issues, 4) more effective patterns in making and following up referrals for services, and 5) filling key gaps in needed programs and services for which no one agency can take full responsibility.

The need for interagency collaboration is easy to recognize, but making it happen successfully has proven to be quite challenging. Studies of interagency collaboration inside and outside the military have demonstrated the positive consequences that come from agencies working more closely together. One preliminary effort to understand the partnership relationship between Family Support Centers and other base agencies was conducted at several Air Force bases as part of a training exercise. FSC staff and staffs from other agencies were given a partnership survey to determine the strength of their communication and coordination.³⁹ A consistent finding was that FSC staff considered their own program much more collaborative than other agencies experienced them to be. Collaboration is not just in the eye of the beholder but must be monitored on the part of all agency participants to get a better picture of what is occurring.

Research on interagency community networks in civilian settings is also helpful for planning effective collaborations. In one large study of community-based agencies serving young children and their families, it was found that the presence of a local interagency planning group significantly increased the overall amount of communication between agencies in local communities.⁴⁰ The more active the participation of agencies in the planning and coordination functions, the greater the number of interagency referrals and the number of agencies who reported participation in services to the targeted families. In another study of collaboration around issues of community safety, communities with active collaboration partners working together to serve neighborhood youth had markedly lower rates of vandalism, drug use, and other

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The need for interagency collaboration is easy to recognize, but making it happen successfully has proven to be quite challenging.

³⁸Bell, M. (1999). Building Neighborhood Place: Lessons Learned through Developing a New Human Service Delivery System. *Prevention Report 1*. Iowa City: National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice.

³⁹Orthner, D. K., & Bowen, G. L. (1999). *Air Mobility Command Results Management: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force*. Scott AFB: HQ AMC/DPFF.

⁴⁰Orthner, D. K., Cole, G., & Ehrlich, R. (1998). *Smart Start and Local Inter-Organizational Collaboration*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Center.



forms of crime compared to communities without active interagency collaboration.⁴¹

One of the challenges to collaboration is sustaining the commitment and participation of agency members and leaders. Several organizations have monitored agency partnerships over time and found several key predictors of success in sustaining collaborations.⁴² One key factor is the presence of a clear and unified vision on the part of community leadership. Someone has to believe in the value of partnership and be willing to commit resources, including time and funding, to assure that agencies participate and build together a collective vision. Regular meetings of agency participants and low turnover among those who attend and represent their organizations is also critical. Community input must also be sought on a regular basis in order to infuse new ideas and keep evolving challenges foremost in the minds of those building the partnership agenda. The partnership also needs a focus narrow enough to be actively monitored but open to new directions and initiatives as community feedback suggests these are necessary.

One of the challenges to collaboration is sustaining the commitment and participation of agency members and leaders.

Given the complexity of many communities and agencies, one successful strategy appears to be the development of specialized or "micro-collaborations" around targeted issues and concerns.⁴³ Building community capacity in the broadest sense can be difficult for independent agencies—each with a narrow focus—to tackle. What can be done is to gather agencies and citizens around more specific issues, focusing on problem solving and innovative strategies toward clearly defined results. For example, building collaborations around helping new parents adjust to their emerging responsibilities or providing assistance to families during and after deployments is easier than building strong families in the more general sense. The latter may be very desirable, but the former allows agencies with different talents and responsibilities to target their efforts more precisely. Over time these "micro-collaborations" contribute to building stronger families.

Collaboration requires ongoing effort to be sustained, or the forces of inertia toward agency independence and competition will restore the disaggregated collection of highly independent agencies that preceded the collaboration process. Balancing what is good for the agency and what is good for the community is an ongoing tension. But the evidence is increasingly clear: when agencies and their staffs actively partner together to accomplish good things for their community, the process and the results energize both the agencies who participate and the people they serve.

Collaboration requires ongoing effort to be sustained, or the forces of inertia toward agency independence and competition will restore the disaggregated collection of highly independent agencies that preceded the collaboration process.

Key Performance Indicators

These performance indicators reflect the nature of interagency collaboration when high community capacity is exhibited. The indicators provide evidence of agency knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that must exist if interagency coordination and cooperation can easily occur within a base community environment. With regard to *knowledge (K)*, it is assumed that agency staffs must have baseline information about the needs of people in their community and their own agency operations and programs, as well as those of potential collaborators, for successful partnerships and even for active cross-agency referrals to occur. Agency staffs must also demonstrate that their *attitudes*

⁴¹Cronin, R. C. (1996). *Innovative Community Partnerships: Working Together for Change*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

⁴²Rouk, U. (1999). *Collaborating to Learn*. Miami: Knight Foundation. See also Mancini, J. A., & Marek, L. I. (1998). *Patterns of Project Survival & Organizational Support: The National Youth At Risk Program Sustainability Study*. Blacksburg: Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.

⁴³Orthner, D. K., Cole, G., & Ehrlich, R. (2000). *Smart Start Collaboration Network Analysis Report*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Center.



(A) and beliefs foster collaboration as a realistic solution to solving complex community problems, instead of trying to compete to solve these problems or ignore serious problems requiring multiple agencies to work on together. Finally, these indicators reflect desirable *behaviors (B)* among agency staffs involving collaborative program planning, making referrals to other agencies, and jointly developing and cosponsoring programs. It is assumed that the following performance indicators can be influenced by the Family Support Center, and other agencies and organizations in the Air Force community.

Knowledge

Agency staffs have a working knowledge of the major program areas of their own agencies.

Agency staffs have a working knowledge of the major program areas of other Air Force and related civilian support programs.

Agency staffs know and understand high priority needs of active duty and family members in the base community. Staff meetings are regularly held to review the results of community assessments.

Attitudes

Agency staffs believe that actively working together with other agencies will improve their ability to support active duty members and families.

Agency staffs understand that referring clients and coordinating services will improve member and family problem solving.

Agency leaders and staffs desire to participate in or support the planning process for service coordination and planning.

Behaviors

Agency staffs regularly make client referrals to collaborative agencies.

Agency staffs provide information to collaborating agencies on the progress being made by referred clients.

Agency staffs regularly cosponsor programs and services with other base agencies.

Agency leaders regularly call meetings with other agencies to discuss internal program developments and interagency collaboration issues.

Agency leaders and staffs conduct periodic reviews of their time and resource allocations to assure that opportunities for collaboration are given priority.

Principles of Effective Agency Practice

Based on an examination of effective interagency collaborations and research on collaboration outcomes, it appears that common patterns promote the development of productive collaborations. The following principles apply in both military and civilian community contexts; they should serve as a helpful guide to building or strengthening interagency agreements and working relationships.



Agency staffs have a shared vision for collaboration built on enlightened self-interest. A recent Knight Foundation report on community partnerships concludes, "Successful collaborations are motivated by a clear and compelling need on the part of everyone involved. Some call this 'enlightened self-interest.'"⁴⁴ This means each partner in the collaboration shares a common vision for what is to be collectively accomplished for their community and how their community will be better as a result of working together to accomplish specific community goals. But in addition to this, each partner must also be clear on what their organization hopes to gain from involvement in this collaborative effort as well as understanding the special interests of each collaborating partner. By clearly understanding and periodically reviewing the benefits each partner hopes to achieve, the collaboration can acknowledge and assure that the underlying motives for collaboration are being addressed.

Partner agencies recognize that collaborations should be built around results or outcomes to be achieved. It is always easier to coordinate efforts when a specific focus is on results to be achieved. When the anticipated outcomes of collaboration are not clear, meetings drift into loose discussions and enthusiasm for future work together quickly wanes. Specific results to be achieved can be changed or updated over time, but a set of specific results should receive the focus of attention at any one time. Ideally, these targeted results can be measurable, with specific indicators that can be tracked and monitored over time. One way to assure that a results-based approach is used is to create micro-collaborations between specific agencies that need to work together to accomplish a narrow range of results in a specific area of service. This promotes efficiency in collaboration and allows other agencies to serve as consultants to that particular process, rather than opening all results to every agency's participation.

Agency leaders are clear about the specific roles and responsibilities of the collaboration. One of the key ingredients of a successful collaboration is clarity over what is and is not within the partnership's boundary of attention. In other words, the boundaries around the roles of the collaboration should be clear to those within and outside the partnership. Without a clearly defined role and scope, the responsibilities of the partnership will blur with those of its member agencies, and there will be no rules for what can be added to the collaborative's attention. This can lead to conflict between agencies and confusion over what is expected from the collaboration. Each agency must be clear about its own mission and function in the community, and the partnership needs to have an independent function that equals more than the sum of its parts.

Leadership for the partnership must be stable and effective. Consistent leadership has been repeatedly linked to successful partnerships. The interpersonal dynamics of collaborations require the ongoing management of distributed people and organizations, each with different histories, personalities, and cultures. Representatives from partner organizations also turn over, often quickly, and a leader can help their replacements understand their new collaborative roles and responsibilities. Stable leadership also can undertake longer-term projects, help to coordinate the tasks required, and see the work through to completion. In a military environment with frequent leadership transitions, consistent leadership can mean the difference in building stronger community ties, something that may take many years to accomplish.

Leaders of the partnership garner and maintain high levels of commitment to the partnership. One of the key tasks of leadership in a multi-agency partnership is internal marketing. This means the value of the collaboration to the community

⁴⁴Rouk, U. (1999). *Collaborating to Learn*. Miami: Knight Foundation, p. 14.



must be continually encouraged and reinforced. Leaders must promote the collaborative's potential contribution in responding to community needs and issues and recognize the contributions of member agencies. Defining and encouraging the partnership as a task oriented organization, both within member agencies and to outside leaders and organizations, is required in order for commitment and participation to be sustained.

Partners must understand each other's cultures and business operations. Each organization in a partnership has a different pattern and style of managing its business. Some organizations allow people to take their own phone calls, while others use an intermediary. Some have a more casual dress style; others do not. Some are more personal in the use of names; others are more formal. Some have open budgets and salaries, while others keep that information very restricted. Some distribute authority easily; others do not. When organizations meet regularly, attempting to plan and share resources to accomplish community goals, these patterns of organizational culture can clash. This can lead to perceptions of being uncooperative when it is more a matter of operational style. Successful collaborations acknowledge from the beginning that these differences may occur and look for strengths in one another's organizations rather than treating differences as signs of poor cooperation.

Leaders in the partnership assure that time devoted to meetings is productive and not routine. A good sign of a weak and dying partnership is a meeting agenda that looks the same month after month. Primary attention is given to updates from partner organizations that could be better handled by e-mail, and organization leaders usually send subordinates to represent them, if anyone comes at all. Productive meetings usually have an action focus. Primary attention is given to identifying and monitoring strategies to solve problems or resolve issues. Resource allocation decisions are put on the table to assure the appropriate agencies are involved and participating. Clear steps toward resolution of issues are the focus of the meeting, including budget and resource issues that need to be addressed. Meetings end with a clear delegation of responsibilities to agency representatives, and strategies are defined for monitoring performance and anticipated results.

Collaboration partners provide regular communication and team building to sustain momentum. Communication between partner organizations and staffs is the oil that lubricates the wheels of the collaborative process. Good communication should include updates on progress toward objectives between meetings as well as the offering and acceptance of comments and concerns along the way. Good communication should also include information and idea sharing with staffs of partner organizations to facilitate broader involvement of the people who often have to carry out collaboration objectives. In addition to functional communication, it is also important for time to be set aside for personal discussions and updates. This informal communication builds trust and helps to sustain the sense of being a team working together as people, not just representatives of organizations. Periodic time set aside for enjoying one another's company adds real value to interagency collaborations.

Collaboration partners regularly consider innovations and new directions for the partnership. The value of collaboration comes from ideas, energy, and interagency programs that are more than the sum of what could be accomplished independently. Collaborations that only review and support activities of member agencies soon lose their own energy and capacity for innovation. All too often, tackling community issues and problems requires the talents and skills of multiple agencies, each of whom may have a part in the solution, and that together may build the capacity to respond seriously to the concerns being raised. But no collaborative can rest on a



particular innovation or strategy. Intentional planning is necessary to look beyond current strategies to other problems that need similar attention. Similarly, new and evolving issues in the community may also need collaborative energy, and successes on one front can provide the confidence and skill to tackle other related issues.

The partnership conducts on-going evaluation and monitoring of its efforts. A successful partnership needs to be able to demonstrate that it has added value to the community and its people. It is not enough to just have meetings and even offer new services—these efforts should show a difference in the people being served and the community at large. Partnerships should expect some records of what activities have been undertaken and how well these activities have been used and perceived. In addition, some evidence should be collected on whether the problems or issues being attended are really addressed to the satisfaction of those being served. Perhaps some of those served are benefitting more than others; this should be detected and monitored. Collaborators should maintain this evaluative mindset, more than a set of techniques, so that a "continuous improvement" approach to solving community problems is always a focus of collaboration meetings and efforts.

Illustrative Interagency Collaboration Programs

Our final set of illustrative programs focuses on supporting interagency collaboration. Collaboration can take many forms and these program examples reflect this variation. Effective interagency collaborations require the respective partners to commit time, personnel, and other resources to the initiative. Each of these three examples demonstrate how partnerships can accomplish goals that otherwise could not be accomplished by a single agency.

Time for Us. Travis Air Force Base has implemented and managed a successful interagency program targeted at improving services to young families with preschool aged children. The program is called "Time for Us." It consists of a morning weekday event, held every week on base, where parents and children are invited to come together for a time of fellowship, play, information sharing, and consultation with professionals from the community. The format is open; free play for children and conversation among parents is encouraged; parents have input from people on- and off-base who can help them; nurses and doctors are often available to answer current questions; and active duty parents can even come to participate as their schedules permit.

The Family Advocacy Program initially recognized the need for the program. Their staff noticed the large number of young families in the base community and the social isolation many of these families were feeling. Family Support Center staff noted similar problems and this led to joint planning, seeking suggestions from parents, and decisions about what might be done. The HAWC had an easily accessed facility and offered a large room that could be used for the meetings. The FSC provided resources for equipment, toys and other needed materials. The hospital provided physicians and nurses who could answer questions from parents, and the FAP provided overall scheduling and oversight for the program. The program quickly grew to include hundreds of parents and children, many of whom used this opportunity to connect with other parents and community agencies. It also helped parents new to the community get connected with other families in similar life circumstances. If the best form of flattery is replication, "Time For Us" spun off several new clones on base for other parent groups. These included "Rattles to Raspberries" for parents with infants, "Toddlers to the Max" for parents with two- and three-year-olds, and "Parents on a Fitness Kick" for parents who want to exercise while their children play.



The Squadron Community Outreach Prevention Education (S COPE).⁴⁵ The S COPE program is currently being implemented at the 48th Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath. S COPE is marketed as and perceived by participants to be a squadron or group First Sergeant's program, as is indicated by the diamond in the title. The aim of the program is to deliver classes in the workplace during duty hours to assist active duty and family members in developing skills to cope with common stressors. Classes provided are identified based on a squadron needs assessments and have included relationship skills for married and singles, stress management, assertiveness training, parenting skills, time management/priority setting, money management, and dorm living. Class delivery takes place during a one-day conference-type event, entitled S COPE Day.

Outcome results indicate a high degree of customer satisfaction with one active duty member stating, "It is nice to see a squadron doing something for family and quality of life rather than just talking about it." S COPE validates the hypothesis that people respond to human services offered in their environment with Command and supervisor support. Of participants sampled (n=129) 60% stated that they have never taken advantage of a similar class in the community. Eighty-seven percent stated that they would like to take more classes in the workplace. Positive response to the program has resulted in both RAF Lakenheath's and RAF Mildenhall's Command commitment to expanding the model and supporting S COPE as a duty-hours intervention.

S COPE's organization is an example of the power of partnerships between social services, the Family Advocacy Outreach Manager and Family Support Life Skills Manager, and the Squadron First Sergeant, key spouses, and workplace supervisors. Partners interact and report back within the IDS framework, specifically on the S COPE Team. With program expansion from the squadron to group level and request for wing-wide delivery, collaborative partnership has grown and strengthened with the successes and demands. The partnership between social services, the Command, key spouses, and workplace supervisors is essential in attracting those active duty and family members who are otherwise hard to reach.

For further information, contact Karen M. Smith, The University of North Carolina School of Social Work at (919) 918-2093; Virginia Worley, RAF Lakenheath and Mildenhall Family Advocacy Outreach Manager at DSN 226-8070; Chris Lawson, RAF Lakenheath Family Life Skills Manager at DSN 226-3847; or Captain John Buchanan, RAF Lakenheath Component Repair Squadron Section Commander at DSN 226-2653 or -4780.

Smart Start. The state of North Carolina has implemented in all 100 of its counties an interagency collaboration targeted toward helping children arrive at school "healthy and ready to succeed." This collaboration system has resulted in numerous awards for innovation in government services. Each community has a Partnership for Children with key public and private child and family serving agencies on its board and the ability to select other agencies to serve as well. The board also has mandated participation from parents, the faith community, and businesses. Each Partnership meets monthly to review specific goals and assess progress toward achieving them. The Partnership has a paid executive director and administrative assistant, but other roles are voluntary. Funds are available from the state and from participating agencies to accomplish locally defined priorities. Common priorities across partnerships include health and developmental screening for all children, access to quality day care, family strengthening and parent involvement, and readiness for kindergarten. For further information, contact Dr. Dennis K. Orthner, School of Social Work, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 27599-3550, (919) 962-6512.

⁴⁵Grateful appreciation is expressed to Ms. Karen Smith for this program description.



Suggested Activities

Mapping often makes a powerful statement about how individuals and organizations relate. The first activity diagrams how agencies currently interact with one another, and provides a way of seeing where change should occur. The second activity parallels those in earlier sections of this module, in that it produces a parallel list of barriers and facilitators that affect interagency collaboration. Both activities provide excellent vehicles for developing an action plan to strengthen interagency community networks.

Agency Collaboration Map. The objective of the activity is to identify potential links and barriers between organizations and services for active duty and families in an Air Force community. The activity involves participants from multiple organizations working together to describe how they are currently organized to meet community needs and how they need to change to more effectively respond to current needs. A poster-sized sheet of paper offers a template for placing organizations into hypothetical relationships with each other and provides places to put tokens (e.g., poker chips or Post-It Notes) reflecting formal and informal support organizations. It also provides room to creatively design family support services. The tokens represent organizations providing support to active duty members and families. Initially, these are to include all members of the Integrated Delivery System (IDS), but other agencies and even other support base and off-base organizations can be added. Labels can be written on the game sheet to represent the following:

Organizations: Write the name of the organization next to or on its token.

Direction of Interaction: Draw one- or two-headed arrows on lines to reflect interaction.

Barriers: Draw lines around organizations to reflect barriers to collaboration.

Starting the activity: (1) Each team must first decide on the organizations to be represented in the network. (2) Tokens for each organization are placed in comparative distance to each other, representing the amount of interaction or isolation each has with the others (agencies working together daily should be placed close to each other and those that work more independently far apart from the others). (3) Label the organizations on the game board. (4) To reflect the relative power of different organizations in the network, additional tokens can be placed on those organizations with more power or influence.

The key task of the activity is to discuss among participants the frequency of collaborative partnerships and strength of barriers to partnership among the organizations represented. (5) To do this, first draw lines between organizations that work together regularly (the lines can be made broken, thin, or thick to represent collaboration strength). (6) Then draw arrows to represent how contacts are usually initiated from one or both organizations (one- or two-headed arrows). (7) Finally, draw dotted or thick lines around organizations to represent barriers limiting collaboration between specific organizations or groups of organizations. After the model of interagency collaboration has been built, each team must explain their diagram of current interagency collaboration to the other teams in the room.

To complete the activity, participating teams must (8) redesign the services network model by creating an improved design for the base and community and (9) propose a plan for strengthening interagency collaboration.

Facilitators and Barriers to Promoting Collaborative Interagency Partnerships. Take an 8 ½ x 11-inch sheet of paper and draw a vertical line down the center of it. On the left side of the paper, write down at least three assets or liberating forces that support or



would build a stronger partnership between the FSC and other community agencies. On the right side of the paper, write down at least three barriers or restrictive forces that prevent or constrain a stronger partnership between the FSC and other community agencies. Develop a plan of action for mobilizing the assets and overcoming/lowering the barriers through a more effective partnership between the FSC and other community agencies. What support is needed beyond the FSC? Share the results with an FSC colleague.

Implications for Community Practice

As stated earlier, the overall goal of Module V is to prepare FSC leadership and staff to intentionally address program results involving military leadership, community members, and agency leadership. The key phrase here is "to intentionally address program results." Historically, human service agencies seeking to create change have typically focused their valuable energies on trying to achieve an increased number of program activities and/or seeking to provide services to a greater number of recipients. In the Results Management model presented here, FSC staffs assume a very different approach, one involving roles and responsibilities directly related to producing outcomes designed to build community capacity. These roles and responsibilities are linked in this module to actual practices that FSCs can employ in order to meet specified performance indicators.

By discussing FSC-focused principles and practices for *supporting unit leader community networks*; for *mobilizing informal community networks*; and for *strengthening interagency community networks*, this module provides FSC staffs with the core content for building community capacity. FSC leaders and staff need to have a clear understanding of these concepts and their interrelationships. This is especially true concerning the key performance indicators; those factors reflecting knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that can be influenced by Family Support Centers. With this in mind, users of this manual will be well served by revisiting these indicators and the associated knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors listed for each of the three domains described earlier (for *supporting unit leader community networks*; for *mobilizing informal community networks*; and for *strengthening interagency community networks*).

One of the most important objectives for the use of this manual, and especially this module, is for you to make these concepts and principles your own. To achieve this kind of "ownership," we recommend you go beyond the examples we have provided from the professional literature or those highlighted from various initiatives at other AF bases. What would these actions look like at your base? The more you are able to visualize how these core concepts would work at your base, and as part of your center's initiatives, the better able you will be to integrate the concepts and ideas into your own practice.

Remember that there will always be factors operating as barriers to effective community practice. These represent cultural, institutional, situational, and personality factors both common across the AF and, at the same time, often unique to individual base communities. To be successful, such barriers need to be restated as challenges and FSC leadership and staff must develop a commitment to the concept of "partnership." The most important principle in this regard is that unit leaders, agency representatives, and community members are partners, and they represent the primary sources of energy for building community capacity. The potential for these groups to come together to promote and sustain collaborative efforts designed to encourage *community* represents one of the truly distinct and wonderful aspects of the military and military life.



Module VI

Developing and Implementing a Community Action Plan

Objectives

- Identify activities to achieve program results
- Forge community partnerships to support implementation of program activities
- Align agency resources to support implementation of program activities
- Align the organizational culture toward change management
- Monitor FSC performance

The majority of FSC staffs feel they focus more on managing activities than on achieving results.

Prior Steps in the Results Management Process

The process of developing a community action plan builds on prior steps in the Results Management process: Mapping the Terrain (Module III), Assessing Community and Program Results (Module IV), and Identifying Principles of Effective Agency Practice (Module V). Mapping the Terrain is an important diagnostic step in the process. Activities are designed to assess staff perceptions toward the current functioning of the FSC in the base community, as well as its internal functioning as a human service organization.

FSC staff members typically draw several conclusions from their work on Mapping the Terrain. First, staff members do not always share working consensus about the FSC mission and the core principles informing the service delivery model and agency practices. They perceive this lack of consensus as limiting their ability to function as an integrated and results-oriented team. Second, staff members do not always feel that the structure and functioning of the FSC have kept pace with changes in the larger AF—the FSC is often described in training as highly reactive and crisis oriented. Many FSC staff members describe agency functioning as a "search and rescue" type mission.

The majority of FSC staffs feel they focus more on managing activities than on achieving results. In identifying the FSC results expected by stakeholders, the list typically generated by FSC staffs includes over twice as many activities as results. After completing the Family Support Center Squadron Impact Survey, the Partnership Survey, and the FSC Standards in Support of Community Capacity Building, staff members often mention a need for more outreach and a closer working relationship with the unit chain of command, community members, and other base agencies. They come to realize this is needed as a means to increase their visibility and effectiveness in the base community.

Last, the resource allocation model the FSC has in place and the nature of its organizational culture supports a more remedial, agency based response to the needs of active duty members and families. Although exact proportions vary, in most of the FSCs reviewed, 80-95% of staff time is spent within the FSC. Although FSC staff members value teamwork (e.g., encourages staff cooperation), agency innovation (e.g., open to change), an outcome orientation (e.g., high expectations for job performance), and community involvement (e.g., involves community in planning efforts), these dimensions on the organizational culture profile often receive the lowest evaluation as descriptions of FSC internal functioning. In combination, these insights begin to generate dissatisfaction among staff with the FSC status quo.

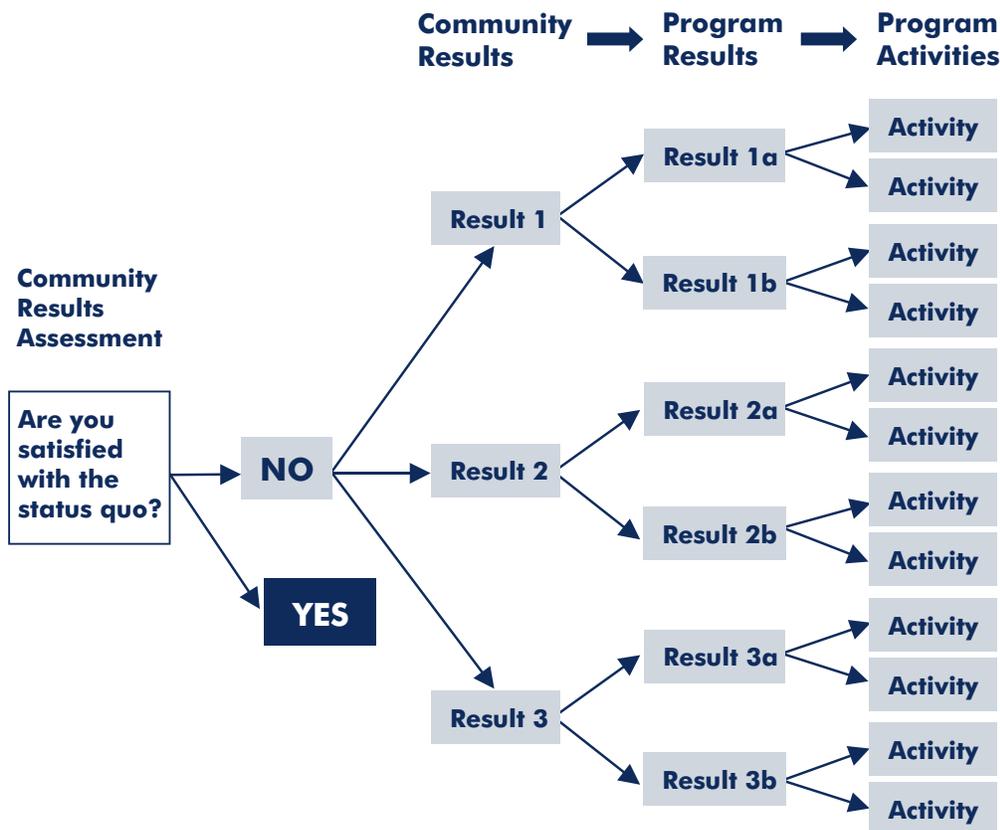
The resource allocation model the FSC has in place and the nature of its organizational culture supports a more remedial, agency based response to the needs of active duty members and families.



The next step in the Results Management process, Assessing Community and Program Results, fuels dissatisfaction of FSC staff members with the *community* status quo. In examining the 36 community assets indicators on the Community Assessment Profile, the comments of many FSC staff members reflect the sentiment that "this community can do better."⁴⁶ Some staff members have never thought about "minimal acceptable standards of community performance," and staff members appreciate the perspective of working with the data as a community development process and the importance of bringing diverse perspectives from the community to the table. Staff members tend to gravitate to the goals of using data as a means to foster greater civic engagement and community self-governance, although these ideas are rather new for most staff members, and many FSC staff members have little training in community and organizational development.

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Results Management: The Implementation Process



An increase in community performance is accomplished by agencies, unit leaders, and community members working in partnership to develop and implement a coordinated battle plan.

In reviewing the findings on the 36 community assets, FSC staff members are often most concerned about the relatively low base sense of community and weak informal community networks in the reports by members and spouses. They see a strong base sense of community as supporting high family adaptation and personnel preparedness. During this step in the Results Management process, FSC staff members begin to fully appreciate the RM principle that no one single agency, organization, or group owns community results. An increase in community performance is accomplished by agencies, unit leaders, and community members working in partnership to develop and implement a coordinated battle plan—the concept of *bridging* community resources and

⁴⁶Dr. Gary N. Nelson, a colleague of the authors in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is fond of saying, "People know better than they do."



assets. The community and program result assets identified as priorities in this step of the Results Management process are recorded as goal statements on the Action Plan Template.

In the context of identifying principles of effective agency practice that inform the identification of effective community capacity building strategies (the third step in the Results Management process), five activities remain in the developing a community action plan: (a) identifying activities to achieve program results, (b) forging community partnerships to support program activities, (c) allocating resources to critical activities, (e) aligning the organizational culture toward change management, and (f) monitoring and evaluating agency performance. These activities are discussed below.

The first task in developing an action plan for intervention planning is to identify community and program result goals in the form of a logic model.

The Community Action Plan

Each Air Force community is expected to build a Community Action Plan. Many of these plans appear to function primarily as scheduling tools. The action plan described here, which builds on the sample Community Assets Inventory in the workbook, is designed as a tool for community and interagency planning and coordination.

Community Action Plan Template

Community Results

Rationale

Program Results

Rationale

Program Activities

Partnership Requirements

Agency Resource Implications

Aligning the Organizational Culture

Monitoring Agency Performance

The first task in developing an action plan for intervention planning is to identify community and program result goals in the form of a logic model. These goals are identified and recorded on the Action Plan Template as discussed in Module IV. Community results are stated from the perspective of either active duty members or civilian spouses; program results are stated from the perspective of the agency, organization, or group responsible for performing the action.

Although space constraints in the design of the Action Plan Template limit attention to only one community result goal, in actuality, the number of targeted goals is not limited. Yet, as the logic model moves from top (community results) to bottom (program activities), the logic model increases in complexity. A sample statement of desired community results and targeted program results is included below.

Desired Community Result

Married and single parent active duty members will increase their ability to successfully manage their family responsibilities.

Rationale: *The high frequency of deployments and TDYs during the past year have placed considerable strain on the resources of families. This is particularly true for personnel in*



two squadrons. Many civilian spouses are functioning virtually as single parents. Overall, only about two-thirds of married and single parent AF Members report that they are successfully managing their family responsibilities (66%). Based on FSC administrative data, information from unit leaders, and personal observations, parents with preschool age children appear to be facing the most difficulty. Strain is believed to be a major factor in the high proportion of community members with family responsibilities who reported experiencing conflicts with family members in the past month on the Community Assets Inventory.

Targeted Program Results

Unit leaders will increase their support of married and single parent active duty members and their families when the member is deployed or TDY.

Rationale: Findings from the Communities in Blue study identify the unit as the primary basis for one's sense of community and support in the AF—a conduit by which members and families establish connections with one another and gain access to agency-based services and programs.⁴⁷ Unit leaders play a key role in the early identification of active duty members who are facing challenges in successfully balancing their work and family lives. Although results from the Community Assets Inventory depict unit leaders as generally supportive to active duty members during deployments and TDYs, the results suggest a reluctance on the part of active duty members to turn to unit leaders when faced with personal problems. The results also suggest that unit leaders can do a better job informing active duty members about community programs and services.

Neighbors will increase their support to married and single parent active duty members and their families when the member is deployed or TDY.

Rationale: Neighborhoods are more than places to live—they offer opportunities for active duty members and families to develop relationships with one another to exchange information, resources, and support. Information from the Community Assets Inventory suggests that a high proportion of active duty members and civilian receive support from neighbors during deployments and TDYs, and that informal network members, which includes neighbors, are viable sources of information about community programs and services. These data suggest that the operation of neighborhoods is a community strength that can be exploited in developing an informal social system for active duty members and their families.

⁴⁷Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., & Mancini, J. A. (1999). *Communities in Blue for the 21st Century*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.



Unit spouses will increase their support to married and single parent active duty members and their families when the member is deployed or TDY.

Rationale: *Active duty members and their families are more likely to turn to informal resources within their unit than to either unit leaders or to community agencies when they need help and support. Unit spouses have historically played an important role in AF communities as a support system for active duty members and their families, especially for civilian spouses. Unfortunately, there is significant variation across units in the role unit spouses play in support of unit families. Although information from the Community Assets Inventory suggests that unit spouses play a supportive role to active duty members and their families during deployments and TDYs, these connections are not as strong on a day-to-day basis.*

We recommend that staff focus on relatively few community results and maximize their community firepower to achieve program results associated with achieving these community results.

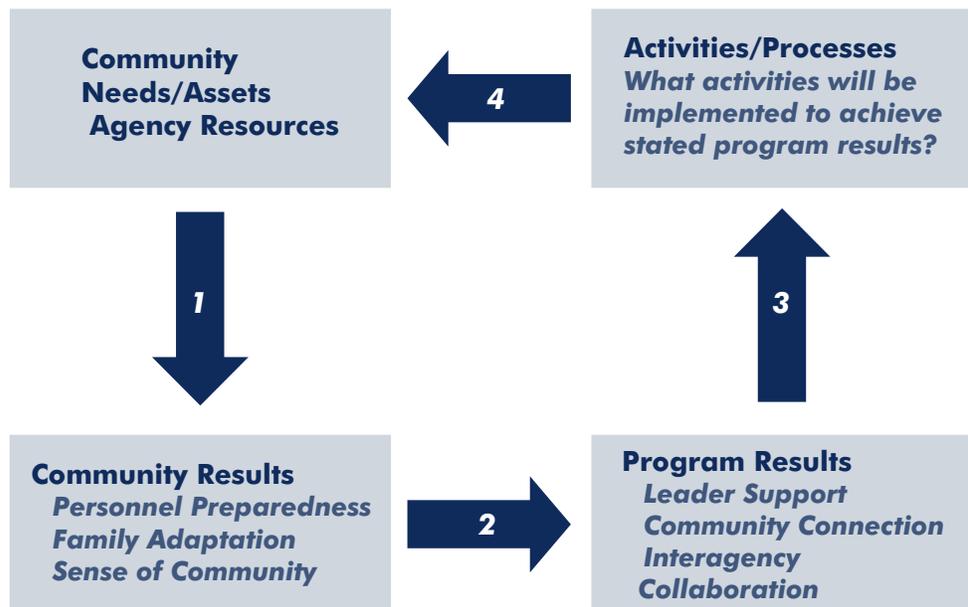
We recommend that staff focus on relatively few community results and maximize their community firepower to achieve program results associated with achieving these community results.

Identify Activities to Achieve Program Results

After identifying desired community results and the program results believed to increase the probability that these results will be achieved, the next task is to link program activities with the targeted program results. Program activities are worded from the perspective of the intervention agent who is assuming responsibility for the action. In the present case, the FSC staff is assuming leadership in performing these activities. The following four program activities are proposed as positively influencing the targeted program results. FSC staffs are encouraged to identify timelines for the performance of identified activities, which have implications for resource allocation planning.

Program activities are worded from the perspective of the intervention agent who is assuming responsibility for the action.

Results Management Sequence



Program Activities

FSC staff will request time on the next IDS agenda to brief agency representatives on the nature of findings from the Community Assets Inventory and to suggest development of a coordinated agency response plan for strengthening community supports for married and single parent active duty members and families when the member is deployed or TDY.

FSC staff will visit unit leaders in the squadrons and encourage them to advise active duty members about the importance of early problem solving and using community resources in preparing for and coping with the demands from deployments and TDYs, as well as consult with unit leaders about ways to strengthen the operation and performance of unit spouse groups.

FSC staff will coordinate with the FAP outreach manager about the feasibility of implementing a "Neighbor to Neighbor" program in communities with high concentrations of junior enlisted families.

FSC staff will secure the Family Support Group (FSG) Leaders' Handbook from the U.S. Army Research Institute for ideas about how to strengthen the performance of unit spouse groups.

These activities exemplify the multiple roles FSC staff members play in the base community, including roles as advocates, consultants, coordinators, and doers.

Forging Community Partnerships

The FSC is not a Lone Ranger in the base community. Many resources and assets exist in the base community for problem solving and confronting situations and events that challenge community functioning. An important task in developing a Community Action Plan is harnessing the power of community partnerships to build community capacity to achieve targeted results.

FSC staffs have an important resource in the IDS as an agency network in the base community for forging community partnerships. This network has the capacity to plan and implement a coordinated community approach for responding to identified needs and issues, mobilize other community stakeholders as community resources and assets, and monitor implementation activities and community results. This aim is to build a seamless, integrated human service delivery system for preventive services.

The Action Plan Template includes a section for specifying partnership requirements. In looking at the program activities defined above, the role of partnerships is evident. FSC staff will make a presentation to the IDS to encourage the development of a coordinated agency response plan, consult with unit leaders, meet with the FAP outreach manager, and request materials from the U.S. Army Research Institute.

An important task in developing a Community Action Plan is harnessing the power of community partnerships to build community capacity to achieve targeted results.

This aim is to build a seamless, integrated human service delivery system for preventive services.



Allocating Resources to Critical Activities

The process of turning plans into action requires FSC staff members to give attention to the allocation of staff time and other agency resources to FSC activities in the base community. Current results, in part, reflect current resource allocation decisions. Agency resources may need to be allocated differently in order to assure links between agency and partnership activities and desired results. Each of the four program activities identified above will require allocation of staff time and other resources. Failure to give adequate staff attention to this task can sabotage the best designed plans.

Agency resources may need to be allocated differently in order to assure links between agency and partnership activities and desired results.

In Mapping the Terrain, FSC staff members conduct a baseline assessment of their current resource allocation strategy. Using the Resource Allocation Game Board, staff members use poker chips to allocate proportions of FSC staff time and non-personnel resources (e.g., equipment, support materials, and training and travel dollars) to activities that are center and non-center based. Although the allocations are graphically represented on the game board, many FSC staffs use a worksheet summarizing their current resource allocation priorities. A copy of this summary worksheet is included in the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*.

Staff members now revisit the game board or summary worksheet depicting their current resource allocation model. In the context of program activities that have been identified, staff members reallocate proportions of staff time and other resources to support performance of these activities. For example, how many staff hours will it take to pull together a briefing for the IDS? How many staff hours will be required within what time frame to visit and provide consultation to unit leaders? Answering such questions requires a significant level of give-and-take dialogue on the part of FSC staff members. Although only four activities are listed above, when the Community Action Plan includes several desired community results, the number of program activities can increase exponentially, and the implications for the resource allocation model can be significant. The results of this process are recorded on the summary worksheet, which is attached to the Community Action Plan.

In the context of realigning the resource allocation strategy, FSC staff members are also encouraged to identify activities they are currently doing that may not be good investments of time and energy—the resource allocation process is viewed as a zero-sum game. In working with FSC staff members at one base, the staff was able to eliminate activities that resulted in saving appropriately 1,200 hours annually, which is equivalent to a half-time staff position. Consequently, the alignment of the resource allocation strategy requires both a deployment of resources to support new priorities and a potential withdrawal of resources from areas that have lower priority and less established links to desired community and program results.

Results Management addresses the issue of organizational culture from a result perspective rather than activity perspective.

Aligning the Organizational Culture toward Change Management

In an earlier part of the manual, we discussed the importance of organizational culture. It is likely that old ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving (e.g., how things are done around here) are going to be somewhat out of alignment with perspectives and actions associated with building community capacity. Results Management addresses the issue of organizational culture from a result perspective rather than activity perspective. It is assumed that if FSC staff members are involved in the process of building a community action plan and become invested in the results targeted for intervention, they will drop ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that operate as barriers to the change process and embrace those that are supportive to the change process. The belief that supports this assumption is that individuals are rationale and strategic in their actions.



Our work suggests that staff members are willing to develop a plan for aligning the organizational culture to support new objectives and priorities. This work is informed by the concept of *organizational renewal* as defined by Gordon Lippitt:

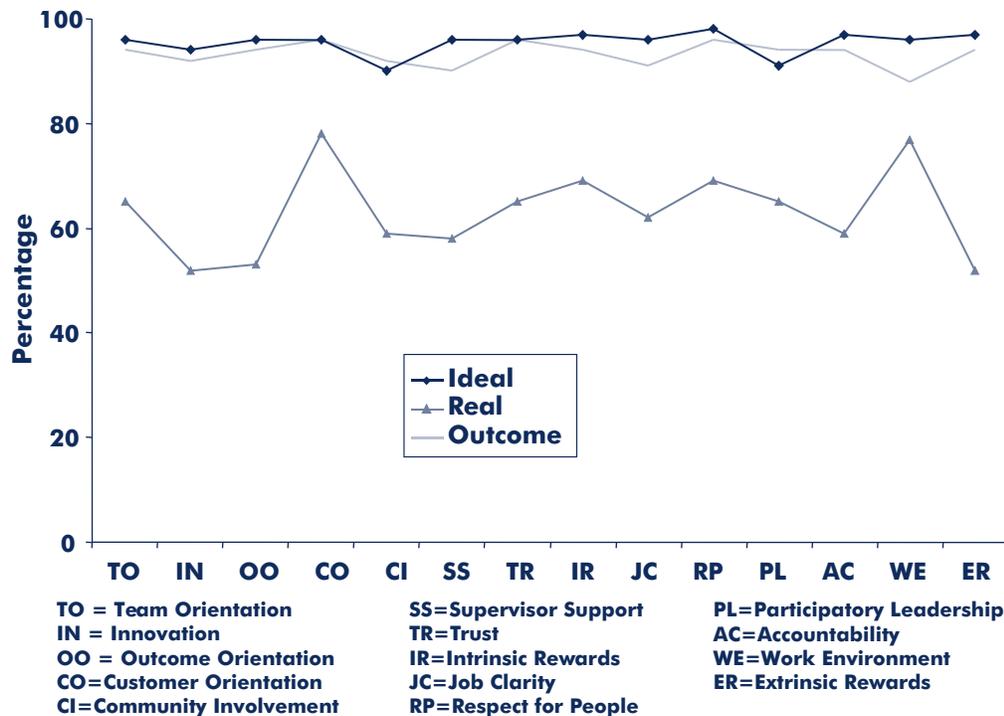
The process of initiating, creating, and confronting needed changes so as to make it possible for organizations to become or remain viable, to adapt to new conditions, to solve problems, to learn from experiences.⁴⁸

The willingness of staff to embrace potential new ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving is supported by results from the Organizational Culture Profile (OCP), which assesses 14 underlying dimensions of organizational culture. In Mapping the Terrain, FSC staff members complete the Real Form and the Ideal Form of the OCP. As defined earlier, the Real Form evaluates their perceptions about the functioning of the FSC at which they are employed. The Ideal Form assesses their values and preferences about agency functioning. In developing the Community Action Plan, FSC staff members complete the Outcome Form, which evaluates their perceptions about how the FSC would need to function to support the achievement of community capacity results in the context of the activity plan and the reallocation model that have been developed.

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When the summary results from the three forms are plotted on a common graph, several important findings emerge. First, as discussed above, profile dimensions associated with working from a building community capacity and Results Management perspective (e.g., outcome orientation, community involvement, trust) are typically evaluated lower in comparison to the values and preferences of staff members

OCP Summary Plot: Sample Profile



⁴⁸Lippitt, G. L. (1982). *Organizational Renewal: A Holistic Approach to Organizational Development* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, p. xiv.



(A comparison of the results from the Ideal Form and the Real Form). Second, the values and preferences of staff members typically align with the importance they assign to dimensions supporting a community capacity and Results Management perspective (a comparison of the results from the Ideal Form and the Outcome Form). In summary, this means change requires only a behavior transformation—the organizational culture values of staff members already support a community- and results-oriented perspective.

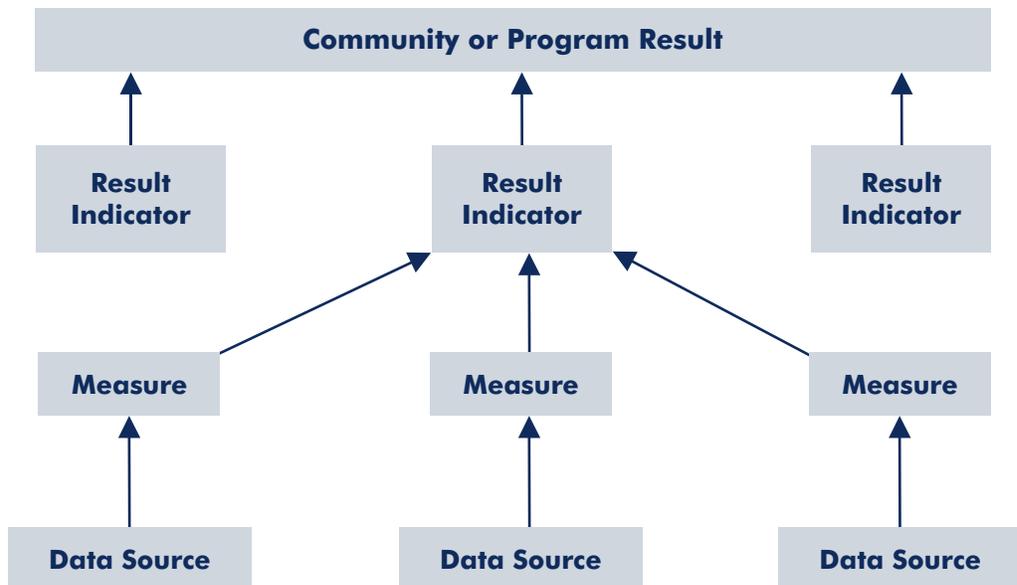
The task for FSC staff members is to develop a behavior plan aligning the organizational culture of the FSC with the requirements of the Community Action Plan.

The task for FSC staff members is to develop a behavior plan aligning the organizational culture of the FSC with the requirements of the Community Action Plan. This plan should be attached to the Community Action Plan as a separate document. For example, in one FSC, staff discussion centered on changing the focus of staff meetings from reviews and updates of program activities to solution-focused and problem-solving discussions around targeted results. In another situation, staff members recognized it was possible to have a friendly and supportive work environment, as well as put emphasis on results and staff accountability. An important insight from staff members in discussing findings from the OCP is that their attitudes and behavior in the larger community are likely to mirror their attitudes and behavior within the center. It is important to emphasize to staff members the importance of personal responsibility and personal change in supporting an organizational culture toward change management.

Monitoring and Evaluating Agency Performance

In order to demonstrate to key stakeholders that progress is being made toward achieving results, indicators and measures of FSC results and activities must be developed and assessed. Of course, FSC stakeholders include FSC staff members. In addition to using administrative data to monitor results and activities, a number of assessment tools have been introduced in prior modules that assist staff in monitoring and evaluating the FSC's internal and external performance.⁴⁹ These include the FSC Squadron Impact Survey, the FSC Partnership Survey, the FSC Standards in Support of

Result Indicators and Measures



⁴⁹For a sample administrative data collection form, see Orthner, D. K., & Bowen, G. L. (1999, December). *U.S. Air Force Family Support Center Results Management Implementation Strategy*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Community Capacity Building, and the Organizational Culture Profile (Real Form). These assessment tools are included in the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*. The figure above depicts the relationship between indicators, measures, and data sources for community and program results.

In addition to these tools, a one-page FSC Community Assets Profile has been developed for community members assessing selected dimensions on the Community Assets Inventory (see the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*). These dimensions include perceptions toward base sense of community, leader support, informal community connections, and interagency collaboration. The Assets Profile consists of 27 community-related items, and respondents are asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each item (e.g., "I am satisfied with the sense of community at this base"). Respondents are also asked to provide some descriptive information (e.g., gender, pay grade, marital status). Similar to the FSC Squadron Impact Survey and the FSC Partnership Survey, the Assets Profile is available in an optical scan format.

The Assets Profile is designed for use between administrations of the more detailed Air Force Community Needs Assessments, which historically are administered every two years to a random sample of active duty members and civilian spouses at AF bases worldwide.⁵⁰ The Assets Profile may be particularly useful to administer within a squadron or neighborhood that is targeted for FSC intervention and prevention activities. It is also possible to administer the Assets Profile on multiple occasions with the same respondent group to monitor the effects of intervention and prevention activities.

Although the Action Plan Template does not include space to identify a plan for monitoring and evaluating agency performance, FSC staff members are strongly encouraged to develop such a plan and attach it to the Community Action Plan.

Implications for Community Practice

The overall goal of Module VI is to restructure and reorganize services to make them more effective, to achieve clear and intended results for your community, and to address more precisely the needs of your community, as revealed in your Mapping the Terrain analysis. Ultimately, the test of any successful program or intervention is in the healthy results for the people in the community who are now served in a new and more effective way. When personnel are able to perform their jobs knowing that their families and communities are behind them, when families are able to adapt to the many pressures they experience in a demanding culture, and when communities are enjoyable and secure places within which individuals and families can develop, then services are being rendered well and are responsive to the community and its needs.

Content in this module challenges us to recognize that minor adjustments in services are usually insufficient to realize substantial improvements in community capacity. The Community Action Plan, which is results driven, will require careful identification of specific results to be achieved and sensibly crafted action steps that are logically linked to intended results. But as you have learned, the accomplishment of many results depends on the forging of community partnerships. It is also very likely that your own agency's resources, your time, and other budget items will need to be reprogrammed in order to align your new critical activities with the results you hope to achieve. This

⁵⁰It is assumed that the AF will continue to see the value of this larger community needs assessment process, which is the source of data for the Community Assets Inventory.

Ultimately, the test of any successful program or intervention is in the healthy results for the people in the community who are now served in a new and more effective way.

The Community Action Plan, which is results driven, will require careful identification of specific results to be achieved and sensibly crafted action steps that are logically linked to intended results.



probably means some changes in your organizational culture and the way you do business. It also means you will need to more aggressively monitor the way you are spending your time, the activities of the agency, and the short- and longer-term results you are accomplishing. Without measurement, it is all too easy to fall back into the patterns of the past. The results you intend to achieve through your Community Action Plan are unlikely to occur if you do not measure your progress.

It is far easier to build and sustain energy that has a definitive focus than when the results we hope to achieve are fuzzy or unduly complicated.

The steps outlined in this module are very practical. This is no longer just a theory of change and an approach for strengthening the Family Support Center. Taking the steps outlined here should give you a practical guide to action. Each step has been tested and implemented in Family Support Centers, in agency partnerships on local bases, and with staff members just like you. In fact, agency staff and interagency partnerships often find it easier to work together around clear results they are trying to accomplish than simply meeting to keep each other up-to-date on current activities. It is far easier to build and sustain energy that has a definitive focus than when the results we hope to achieve are fuzzy or unduly complicated. We know this is true because in times of disaster, a clear focus is provided and priorities are easy to establish. It is now time to build this same capacity for constructive change when the crisis is not yet upon us.

One obstacle to change is the fear of change itself. This manual has advocated an approach to change owned by the staff rather than being imposed from outside. This is a time of real opportunity to take control of the change process, to identify the priority results desperately needed in your community, and to build a set of truly workable action steps. You will encounter some resistance to change—in yourself and others around you—but you will succeed if the objective is clear, your culture is supportive, your partners are with you, and your resources are restructured to support your plan of action.

A real key to success in this venture is a passion for an inclusive and self-governing military community. Such a community sees its success as dependent on building bridges between formal and informal networks, viewing individual and families as assets, and fostering a strong sense of shared responsibility and collective competence among community stakeholders. Very few meaningful changes in organizations come without some passion and commitment. This project and manual began because some key leaders in the Air Force recognized a noticeable loss in sense of community and the need to restore the capacity of military communities to sustain themselves and strengthen their people. This need for building community capacity has to become personal. Building and strengthening a community is more than a job; it needs to be a daily action plan worth the commitment of your own time and energy, as well as that of your agency and others with whom you work.

A real key to success in this venture is a passion for an inclusive and self-governing military community.

Suggested Activities

Developing and implementing a community action plan is an active process. Consequently, the activities described below are designed to engage FSC staff in the change process. Two of the activities, the resource reallocation game and the organizational culture profile, build upon suggested activities described in Module III, Mapping the Terrain. The other two activities draw upon recent management books that challenge readers about ways to increase organizational effectiveness, build a winning organizational climate for employees, and embrace change as ubiquitous and as an opportunity.

Gung Ho! Read this excellent book by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles, and use the concepts the authors provide for insights into how best to organize the FSC to achieve



the results you want.⁵¹ This short book is chock-full of useful ideas that have been widely used to improve the effectiveness of private and public organizations. The ideas are simple and built around concepts that work in nature (like the "Spirit of the Squirrel" and the "Way of the Beaver"), but they open for our understanding universal truths about how people want to be treated and how to motivate ourselves and others to change. See if you can answer the following questions: How do FSC staff view their work and what would "worthwhile work" look like from a Results Management perspective? How can you balance both the need to support people in their work and the goals you want to achieve from the FSC? How can you construct a "scorecard" that truly measures effort as well as the results that should come from the effort?

Resource Reallocation Game-Phase II. Phase 1 of the resource allocation exercise occurred in Module III during Mapping the Terrain. At that time, tokens representing staff time and non-personnel resources were allocated to represent how FSC resources are currently being used to serve the base community. At this time, you should have a summary sheet partially completed with your current allocations indicated. Now it is time to see what changes will be needed to accomplish the results you hope to achieve after redesigning your service mix and developing a new Community Action Plan.

To complete this activity, you will need the same 50 dark colored tokens (poker chips) and 50 light colored tokens you used earlier. The dark color tokens represent units of staff time with each token equal to 2% of the total time available for FSC personnel. The light tokens represent non-personnel resources with each token equal to 2% of the non-personnel budget. You will also need the same game board with ten circles drawn (use a large sheet of paper). Write one of the following labels beside each circle: FSC, On-Base Agencies, Off-Base Agencies, Interagency Task Groups, Squadrons/Units, On-Base Support Groups/Organizations, Off-Base Support Groups/Organizations, On-Base Housing, Off-Base Housing, and Other.

The Resource Reallocation Game begins by placing all of the tokens in the circles where they were at the end of the first exercise. Now, through group discussion or personal review (if done alone), allocate the resources from their current locations to other areas best representing your view how these resources need to be allocated to accomplish the program and community results you want to achieve. For example, if you believe that 6% of staff time is currently spent providing direct consultation and support to unit leaders but that this will have to be increased to 24%, move more of your dark tokens into the circle representing Squadrons/Units. Please note that this is time spent outside the center. If more staff time should be allocated to other base agencies, move tokens to On-Base Agencies, reflecting meetings or teaming arrangements with those agencies, such as IDS meetings or jointly sponsored activities.

The outcome of this activity should be a graphic representation of where you believe FSC resources need to be reallocated. Write a summary of where you put your tokens on the worksheet provided in the *Building Community Capacity Workbook*. This exercise is particularly effective at opening up dialogue among staff members when it is conducted by a small group of staff members. As noted earlier, the results the FSC is currently achieving in the base community reflect its current allocation of resources. Consequently, if the FSC is to achieve greater success in accomplishing results or new results, the staff will have to determine a new resource allocation plan.

Organizational Culture Profile. Readers are encouraged to complete the Outcome Form of the Organizational Culture Profile (OCP), which is included in the workbook. The OCP includes 42 characteristics of organizational culture that define 14 underlying

⁵¹Blanchard, K., & Bowles, S. (1998). *Gung Ho!* New York: William Morrow and Company.



dimensions associated with human service organizational effectiveness in the literature. Instructions for completing, scoring, and plotting your summary scores are included in the appendix. The Outcome Form evaluates your perceptions about the kind of FSC functioning you need to achieve community capacity results in the context of the activity plan and the reallocation plan you have developed. Your summary results should be plotted on the same form you plotted your results for the Ideal and Real forms. This activity will help you better understand the types of changes required to align the organizational functioning of the FSC with your community capacity building action plan. We encourage you to discuss the results of your analysis with your colleagues. In addition, we encourage you to think about strategies by which you can take personal responsibility for improving the organizational climate and functioning of the FSC.

“Who Moved My Cheese?” Either read the best-selling book by Spencer Johnson, M.D., or review the videocassette about dealing with change in work and personal life.⁵² Which character in the book do you most resemble in dealing with change: Sniff, Scurry, Hem, or Haw? Which character best depicts how the Family Support Center deals with change? What are the implications of your analysis for increasing FSC efforts in community outreach?

⁵²Johnson, S. (1998). *Who Moved My Cheese?* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.



Conclusion:

The Family Support Center as a Community Capacity Builder

The word "connections" has appeared often throughout this manual. Community capacity cannot be built if connections are weak. Communities can become high quality places when connections exist at multiple levels, are frequent, and are meaningful and purposeful.

In this manual we have discussed the core ideas related to building community capacity. A primary idea involves connections. Sense of community does not occur if connections are absent or frayed. Feeling responsible for the welfare of others in the community does not occur if connections are few and far between. What we have described as collective competence is difficult to achieve if people are not connected with one another. Connections provide a foundation for forging a sense of shared responsibility for the community and its members. The interrelationships between community members, units, and agencies are all about these connections.

A premise of this manual is that a Family Support Center (FSC) can be a prime catalyst in building connections and can do so in partnership with units, community members, and other community agencies. Underlying the work of the FSC is the assumption that unit leaders, community members, and community agencies want to be involved in building community capacity. Yet, results from the *Communities in Blue* study indicated great variation from base to base, and even within bases, in the partnerships and micro-collaborations among community stakeholders in strengthening community connections and fostering a greater sense of community.⁵³ As both a single agency and as an integral member of the Integrated Delivery Team (IDS), the FSC can play a critical role in strengthening this nexus. Four key activities, which are consistent with the principles of effective agency practice identified in an earlier module, might be associated with this role:

Creating opportunities for community partnerships by modeling collaborative behavior and by building bridges within and between community stakeholder groups

Activating interest in community building by engaging community stakeholders in small group discussions and community forums about community health and well-being, and by encouraging the development of a community culture based on the principles of shared responsibility and accountability

Removing barriers to community participation and involvement by identifying personal, relational, and systemic challenges to greater involvement and participation through community dialogue, and by engaging community stakeholders in finding creative solutions to overcoming these barriers

Enabling community connections by personal and agency example, and by sharing ideas, information, and strategies for strengthening formal and informal networks with unit leaders, community members, and agencies

The acronym CARE epitomizes the attention, commitment, and shepherding associated with building community capacity.⁵⁴ Results Management is a powerful tool for organizing and supporting FSC initiatives consistent with these activities, which, like community capacity, is built on the concept of connections—successful programs are

⁵³Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., & Mancini, J. A. (1999). *Communities in Blue for the 21st Century*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.

⁵⁴Credit for the CARE acronym goes to Ms. Bettye Williams who is the Outreach Program Manager, Family Advocacy Division, AFMOA, Brooks AFB, Texas.

Communities can become high quality places when connections exist at multiple levels, are frequent, and are meaningful and purposeful.

Connections provide a foundation for forging a sense of shared responsibility for the community and its members.

The acronym CARE epitomizes the attention, commitment, and shepherding associated with building community capacity.



built by connecting program and community results, connecting program activities with desired results, and connecting resources with program strategies and desired results.

A community capacity building FSC is a proactive, bold, and resourceful organization. It is directed by a valid, factual understanding of the needs and assets of the Air Force community and by a focus on results. It examines the way it does business by periodically reviewing its mission, its desired results, and the difference it is making in the lives of active duty members and their families. The community capacity building FSC places a high value on program improvement, on responsiveness to contemporary issues, and on the significance of community in the Air Force.

A community capacity building FSC is a proactive, bold, and resourceful organization.

The many ideas, concepts, suggestions, and activities presented in this manual represent the characteristics of a learning organization, that is, a collection of connected and committed professionals who are active in building quality community life. A FSC that operates from a community capacity and Results Management perspective:

Is a part of the community rather than apart from the community

Knows the various communities within the greater Air Force community

Understands and values the importance of connections

Is not satisfied with the status quo

Is committed to intentionally addressing community issues

Is guided by desired program and community results

Places more emphasis on *outreach* than on *marketing*

Works with units to develop active, ongoing partnerships

Works with other military and civilian agencies to achieve desired results

Sees community members as *partners* and *community assets* rather than as *clients* and *beneficiaries* of agency services

Places building community capacity at the top of its agenda

Engages all staff in community capacity building initiatives

Uses surveys, administrative data, and other ways of knowing to monitor desired results

Building Community Capacity: A Manual for U.S. Air Force Family Support Centers has been crafted to provide FSCs with a roadmap for making a difference in the Air Force community. This roadmap provides many guides on how to enhance community capacity. Yet this manual is not a simple "cookbook" for building community capacity. Each Air Force community has unique characteristics, its own unique personality, and its unique challenges. Moreover, each community contains many sub-communities within it, and each of these has particular qualities and concerns. We have provided specific and clear guidelines that will move FSCs along a path leading toward more vibrant programs that support more vibrant communities.

The building of community capacity will occur as committed agency professionals, dedicated unit leaders and members, and concerned community members connect with one another around shared concerns and interests. In the end, community capacity rests on the foundation of these connections.

The community capacity building FSC places a high value on program improvement, on responsiveness to contemporary issues, and on the significance of community in the Air Force.



Appendix A

Community Building Annotated Bibliography

Unit Leader Support

Levin, D., & Mancini, J. A. (1998). *Becoming Partners in Readiness: ACS Guide on the Unit Services Strategy*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.
(http://trol.redstone.army.mil/acslink/library/acs_other_resources.html)

This guide documents all of the USS implementation steps and includes many practical suggestions for working with units and for enhancing services. Included are sections on key principles of the Unit Services Strategy; the role of the Unit Services Coordinator; benefits of this strategy for units, agencies, and soldiers and their families; and the six key implementation steps (developing a vision and implementation plan, providing orientation and cross-training to staff, assigning staff to units, briefing leadership and units, accessing unit needs, and providing ongoing services and support to units).

Orthner, D. K., Bowen, G. L., Mancini, J. A., Pond, S., & Levin, D. (1998). *ACS Unit Services Strategy Progress Report: Final Assessment*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates.
(<http://trol.redstone.army.mil/acslink/library/acsppt.html>)

This report documents the multiyear research conducted on the ACS Unit Services Strategy. Included are data from ACS staff and leadership, from unit leaders, and from personnel and families. The findings include: those Unit Services Coordinators who successfully reach out to their units report that unit leaders seek them out for consultation and include them as part of the unit; as a result of having established a positive collaborative relationship, unit leaders acknowledge ACS as providing better unit support; the unit-ACS partnership has enabled unit leaders to provide better support to soldiers and their families.

Schumm, W. R., Bell, D. B., Milan, L. M., & Segal, M. W. (2000). *The Family Support Group (FSG) Leaders' Handbook*. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute.

This handbook addresses core questions FSG leaders typically face: What is an FSG? How is the FSG connected to the military unit? What should an FSG attempt to accomplish? What are the key elements in implementing a FSG? How does the FSG relate to Army regulations? What resources are available to FSG leaders and members? The handbook contains a step-by-step set of instructions for establishing an effective FSG. It includes suggestions for promoting communications among FSG members, for working with families who are in crisis, for recruiting and retaining volunteers, and for making the most of family support programs (such as Army Community Service and its array of programs, the Chaplains, Army Emergency Relief, Child Development Services, and so on). Among the ready-to-use tips for the FSG program is a set of suggestions for recognizing volunteers, which are the backbone of the Family Support Group.

Informal Community Networks

Family Resource Coalition. (1996). *Guidelines for Family Support Practice*. Chicago: Family Resource Coalition.



The Family Resource Coalition has assembled a user-friendly guide for building programs that enhance family life. This book is very practice oriented and provides a number of practical suggestions for program development. One focus in this book pertains to programs in communities. Among the guidelines for practice is the role of agencies in facilitating community involvement. Programs facilitate a sense of belonging and a connection to the community among program participants. Following this general guideline are several key practices, including: Emphasize the positive aspects and achievements of the community; Encourage participants' sense of responsibility for the community's well-being; Encourage participants to take part in community activities and to avail themselves of community resources; Promote positive relations among different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups in the community; and Ensure that the program's location is easily accessible for families.

Gladwell, M. (2000). *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.

Program professionals have a keen interest in knowing how to deliver programs and services efficiently and with greater success. *The Tipping Point* is about the process of change and how substantial differences in important issues and concerns can accrue from seemingly small events. The author takes an engaging approach in demonstrating his key points and punctuates those points with real-life events including fashion trends, smoking, and children's television. He discusses the three agents of change: the Law of the Few (it may take just a few of the right people to make a difference), the Stickiness Factor (there are specific ways to make a message memorable), and the Power of Context (people are much more sensitive to their environment than they may seem). Also discussed are particular types of people who make things happen, such as Connectors (people with an extraordinary ability to make friends and acquaintances), Mavens (people who are excellent at collecting information and taking action as a result), and Salesman (those who can persuade). *The Tipping Point* is about starting positive social epidemics, and though its examples focus on societal-level matters, the basic ideas are appropriate for understanding how to promote change at a local level as well. The ideas in this book suggest that people reframe the way they think about the world, even as program professionals must challenge old ways of doing business in order to meet community needs and to promote community well-being.

Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. L. (1993). *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Chicago: ACTA Publications.

Perhaps the best and most lucid discussion of the need to think differently about people and their communities is found in *Building Communities from the Inside Out*. The framework presented by these authors contends that communities cannot be rebuilt by focusing on needs, problems, and deficiencies. Rather, Kretzmann and McKnight argue that community building begins with the process of locating the assets, skills, and capacities of people in the community, citizen associations, and formal institutions. This applied manual is action-oriented. It not only speaks of core concepts needed for thinking differently but also provides examples of how to put new thinking into observable action. In the section on releasing individual capacities, there are discussions on youth, older adults, people with disabilities, welfare recipients, and local artists. The section on releasing the power of local associations and organizations includes discussions on religious institutions, cultural organizations, and associations. And in the section on capturing local institutions for community building, parks, libraries,



schools, community colleges, the police, and area hospitals are the focus. This book also contains a discussion of five steps needed for mobilizing the whole community: mapping assets, building relationships, mobilizing for economic development and information sharing, convening the community to develop a vision and a plan, and leveraging outside resources to support locally driven development.

Mattessich, P., Monsey, B., & Roy, C. (1997). *Community Building: What Makes It Work*. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

As the title suggests, this book focuses on factors found to contribute to success in community building. These success factors are grouped into three categories: characteristics of the community, characteristics of the community building process, and characteristics of community building organizers. For example, among the community characteristics are awareness of the issue, motivation within the community, small geographic area, flexibility and adaptability, and preexisting social cohesion. Each of these factors is explained, and many community examples are provided to aid that explanation. Throughout this book, practical questions are posed for community builders, effectually developing a checklist a community can use to assess their status with regard to the success factors. *Community Building* is an applied discussion of the process and the people who make that process successful; the principles are grounded in research and in experience from practice. It can easily and successfully be used in workshops at the community level.

Mancini, J. A., & Marek, L. I. (1998). *Patterns of Project Survival and Organizational Support: The National Youth At-Risk Program Sustainability Study* (Publication #350-800). Blacksburg: Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.
(<http://www.ext.vt.edu/vce/specialty/famhumdev/350-800.html>)

The publication summarizes results from a study of 94 community-based sites spread across the U.S. and its territories. It focuses on levels of sustainability once projects completed their federal funding support. Of particular note is the presentation of an emergent program sustainability conceptual framework, which includes 24 factors clustered under six areas: vision and leadership; staffing; funding; demonstrated program impact; collaboration and partnerships; and community awareness/involvement/needs.

Marek, L. I., Mancini, J. A., & Brock, D. (1999). *Continuity, Success, and Survival of Community-Based Projects: The National Youth At-Risk Program Sustainability Study* (Publication #350-801). Blacksburg: Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.
(<http://www.ext.vt.edu/vce/specialty/famhumdev/350-801.html>)

This publication is a follow-up to the 1998 study and expands the data set. Of particular note are analyses of programs that failed, of the life cycles (peak years) of projects, and a discussion of mechanisms that support project continuity in the face of change.

Nelson, G. M. (2000). *Self-Governance in Communities and Families*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

This book outlines a two-day process where community stakeholders come together to develop a shared vision of their community and to identify specific actions for achieving



goals associated with this vision. Emphasis is placed on involvement from all sectors of the community, honest assessment of community strengths and liabilities, and personal and organizational commitments to the change process. Dr. Gary Nelson is professor at the School of Social Work, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Bowling Alone is about social change. Putnam draws upon an enormous amount of information to make the case for the retreat and the advancement of community. He discusses societal and cultural trends including civic, religious, and political participation; connections in the workplace; informal social connections; and altruism and trust. Also discussed are some explanations for these changes, including pressures of time and money, mobility of the population, and technology. Throughout the book social capital is discussed and interwoven with the contemporary issues, whether they be children's development or safe neighborhoods. Of particular note are Putnam's chapters on informal social connections and on formal social connections. He notes that both formal social connections (political, civic, and religious involvement) and informal connections (*schmoozing*, for example) have waxed and waned over our history. *Bowling Alone* concludes with Putnam's social capitalist agenda. He talks about the importance of "naming the problem"—that people have trouble making connections. He adds that there needs to be new social structures and policies supporting civic engagement and building a sense of community. He then sets goals for building social capital requiring participation by people as individuals and as a collective.

Van Laar, C. (1999). *Increasing a Sense of Community in the Military: The Role of Personnel Support Programs*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

This report focuses on the role formal programs and services can have in building and maintaining a sense of community. It is grounded in this definition of sense of community: an emotional connection among members and a sense of belonging to a group. Nine principles of building and maintaining a sense of community in the military are discussed. They include: group symbols such as ceremonies and uniforms; rewards and honors for military personnel and for their families; recognition of a common external threat; the attractiveness of the military career and lifestyle; achieving individuality within the group context; having a voice in the organization; personal investment in group activities and welfare of the group; having contact with and being in proximity to other military members and their families; and group participation activities. The report also includes specific discussions on subgroups that may require more intensive social support: members living off-post; recently relocated members; members living abroad or in isolated areas; and deployed personnel.

Interagency Collaboration

Hogue, T., & Miller, J. (2000). *Effective Collaboration: Strategies for Pursuing Common Goals*. Longmont, CO: Rocky Mountain Press.

This manual provides practical guidance about how to initiate and sustain community-based collaborative efforts. A number of exercises and worksheets are included guiding the reader in the process of building a collaborative framework. The authors describe collaboration as more than an activity; it is an attitude permeating the community as an



approach to solving problems and achieving results. Copies may be ordered from Rocky Mountain Press, 524 Emery Street, Longmont, Colorado 80501 (1-888-709-0088).

Cronin, R. C. (1996). *Innovative Community Partnerships: Working Together for Change*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

This government report provides useful examples of successful community partnerships directed toward reducing youth violence and risks for crime and delinquency. Most importantly, it offers evidence of how successful collaborations can produce meaningful results for a community. The report notes that "the ultimate achievement and hope for enhanced program effectiveness is when collaboration becomes the rule, not the exception."

Orthner, D. K., Cole, G., & Ehrlich, R. (1998). *Smart Start and Local Inter-Organizational Collaboration*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Center.

This report offers evidence that interagency collaborations can make a difference in the lives of children and families. The Smart Start strategy is a nationally recognized community-based approach targeted toward improving the lives of young children and their families. A model for evaluating and monitoring collaborations is offered that can be applied to any system, including military support systems. Copies of the report can be ordered from The Frank Porter Graham Center, The University of North Carolina, 105 Smith Level Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8180.

Rouk, U. (1999). *Collaborating to Learn*. Miami: Knight Foundation.

This report summarizes critical lessons from successful interagency school related partnerships in communities across the United States. It offers key lessons on how to form effective partnerships, how partners can learn to work together, and how to keep a collaboration going. A checklist is provided to guide agencies in identifying characteristics of effective partnerships. Good examples are also offered from local communities that have built partnerships that have worked. Copies of the report can be ordered from The Knight Foundation, 2 S. Biscayne Blvd., Suite 3800, Miami, FL 33131-1803.



Appendix B

Community Building Internet Sites

Unit Leader Support

Ira C. Eaker College for Professional Development at the Air University

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/cpd/cpdgate/cpd-fam.htm>

Ira C. Eaker College for Professional Development (CPD) sponsors a valuable Air Force Website with links to important family support information for unit leaders and others interested in Air Force families. This site is also a gateway to AF News Online & AF News, numerous military journals, GAO Reports, and a portal to other government sites.

The Center for Army Lessons Learned (Virtual Library)

<http://call.army.mil/call.htm>

The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) exists to collect and analyze data from a variety of current and historical sources, including Army operations and training events, and to produce information serving as lessons for military commanders, staff, and students. CALL disseminates these lessons and other related research materials via a variety of print and electronic media. Over the last 10 years, CALL has collected numerous articles and reports on family related issues, including unit leadership and various aspects of unit-based family support. This site also has one of the best collections of government and commercial search engines available.

LifeLines

<http://www.lifelines2000.org>

LifeLines is the Navy's groundbreaking Internet site loaded with information and links to a wide variety of very useful subjects. Military leaders will find that the Leadership page highlights useful information regardless of branch of service. In addition, the Family page links to numerous government and nongovernment resources for military families. This is one of the truly outstanding DOD Web initiatives.

The Forces and Resources Policy Center

<http://www.rand.org/natsec/nsrd/frp.html>

The Forces and Resources Policy Center (FRP) is the division of RAND's National Defense Research Institute that investigates policies to preserve the quality of U.S. forces and to make optimum use of personnel and defense resources. FRP's history dates to the beginning of the all-volunteer force 25 years ago. The center has been a major source of analysis on issues relating to the creation and sustainability of an all-volunteer military. Inquiries about the Forces and Resource Policy Center or its activities can be directed to:

Director, Forces and Resources Policy Center, RAND, 1700 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138, (310) 393-0411 x7276.



1st Senior Enlisted Advisors Forum

<http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/1stseforum/index.html>

The 1st Senior Enlisted Advisors Forum was held in June 2000 at the Pentagon. Senior enlisted advisors with a combined 2,000 years of NCO experience and their spouses attended the Secretary of Defense's First Annual Senior Enlisted Advisors Forum. These trusted advisors gathered to converse with senior DOD leadership about the challenges faced by today's enlisted personnel, and to discuss DOD's efforts to address the key issues affecting the quality of life and readiness of the force. Seventy-nine E-9's and 60 spouses took part in the day-long session of information sharing and cooperative problem-solving. This report gives an overview of the Forum, summarizes key issues identified by the participants, and reviews the Department's responses and follow-up actions now being taken. Additional information on similar leadership discussions can be found on DefenseLINK (<http://www.defenselink.mil/index.html>), a Department of Defense sponsored Web site with a useful search capacity containing numerous publications and references for leaders interested in the human dimensions of leadership, including family support issues.

Informal Community Networks

Better Together

www.bettertogether.org

BetterTogether.org is sponsored by the Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America. The goal is to provide interaction opportunities to celebrate new and better ways that Americans are connecting and also to provide tools that help people connect. One particularly interesting part of this Website is the section called "story collector," a compilation of accounts of community connections across the United States. These accounts provide numerous examples of how informal community networks are being mobilized. These stories include descriptions of volunteers who provide friendship to mentally ill people, the establishment of a social group for transplanted professionals, parents being trained to be child advocates, skill development among community rebuilders, and cross-generational partnering among older adults and teenagers. BetterTogether.org and the Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement are units of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and are connected with Harvard faculty member Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*.

Communities that Care about Parents

<http://www.ksu.edu/wwparent/programs/care/pub1.htm>

This site is part of the Caring about Parents community based program developed by Kansas State University. This part of the site contains a 17-page publication focusing on the challenges facing parents and on the importance of informal support (the informal community network). At the conclusion of this article are 16 actions that can make the community a place that cares about parents.



Community: Introduction and Model for Community Programming and Evaluation

http://ag.arizona.edu/fcr/fs/nowg/comm_index.html

This site is part of the USDA's initiatives on families and communities and includes discussion on evaluating community issues.

Do Something

<http://www.dosomething.org>

Do Something is a nationwide network of young people who are trying to make a difference in their communities. With support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, Do Something has developed the Do Something Community Connections Campaign. This initiative provides support to community organizations as they engage youth to become community leaders. Do Something provides resources for youth, educators, organizations, and communities that revolve around making connections and building community.

Interagency Collaboration

Collaboration Framework Addressing Community Capacity

<http://crs.uvm.edu/ncco/collab/framework.html>

Posted in 1995, this site provides a general overview of collaboration, including levels of collaboration.

Journal of Extension

<http://joe.org>

This site provides articles and research on community initiatives, including interagency collaboration efforts. As an example, there is an April, 1999 article by Borden and Perkins on "Assessing Your Collaboration: A Self-Evaluation Tool" at <http://joe.org/joe/1999april/tt1.html>.

National Network for Collaboration

<http://www.cyfernet.org>

This is a link to a variety of resources for community based services, especially targeting families and children. This is the home site for the National Network for Collaboration, provided by the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

