

FSC CSWP Community Work Practice Guide



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---------|
| Foreword | 3 |
| Acknowledgments | 4-6 |
| Chapter 1: Overview of Guide | |
| • Introduction to the Practice Guide | 8 |
| • Purpose and Use of the Practice Guide | 8 |
| Chapter 2: Understanding Community Work | |
| Defining Community, Community Work and Models of Community Work | |
| • Definition of Community | 10 |
| • Functions of Community | 11 |
| Defining Community Work in FSC Setting | |
| • Why Community Work in FSC Setting? | 12 |
| • How Community Work Complements Casework & Group Work | 12 |
| Defining Community, Community Work and Models of Community Work | |
| • Building a Vibrant Community | 13 |
| • Four Stages of Community | 14 |
| • Definitions of Community Work | 15 |
| Defining Community Work in FSC Setting | |
| • What is Community Work in FSC setting? | 16 |
| Defining Community, Community Work and Models of Community Work | |
| • Models & Approaches of Community work | 17 |
| Defining Community Work in FSC Setting | |
| • Key Principles of Community Work in FSC setting | 18 |
| • Community Work Process Overview | 19 |
| • Ethical Considerations in Community Work | 20 |
| Reflection Section | 21 |
| Chapter 3: Community Work Processes | |
| Discovering Community Assets, Analysing Needs, Mapping a Community Plan and Preparing to Connect the Relationships | |
| • Engaging and Understanding the Community | 23 |
| • Leveraging Identified Strengths and Assets to Address Needs/Priorities/Issues of the Community | 24 |
| • Empowering and Strengthening Interdependence in the Community | 24 - 25 |
| Documentation | 26 |
| Evaluation | |
| • The Purpose of Evaluation | 27 |
| • What Should Be Measured? | 27 |
| • How Do We Measure? | 28 |
| • Embracing Failures | 28 |
| Reflection Section | 29 |

Table of Contents

Chapter 4: SWPs in Community Work

| | |
|---|---------|
| Role of SWPs Conducting Community Work | 31 |
| Qualities of SWPs Conducting Community Work | 32 |
| Skills of SWPs Conducting Community Work | 33 |
| Challenges in Community Work | 34 |
| Risk Management in Community Work | |
| • Challenges & Potential Risks | 35 |
| • Management of Volunteers & Members of the Community | 36 |
| • Effective Risk Management | 37 - 38 |
| Supervision of Community Work | |
| • Reflective & Reflexive Practices | 39 |
| • Guiding Questions | 40 |
| • Areas to Cover in Supervision | 40 |
| Reflection Section | 41 |

Appendices

| | |
|---|---------|
| Appendix A | |
| • Sample of a Working Community Process Guide | 43 - 45 |
| • A Community Work Example from SCCFSC | 46 - 47 |
| Appendix B | |
| • References | 48 |

Foreword

Community work, alongside casework and group work, is one of the three key components of social work practice carried out by the Family Service Centres (FSCs). All three components of social work practice are important as having a strong community promotes the well-being of its members.

Community work focuses on mobilising and harnessing resources within the community to strengthen support for individuals and families and foster mutual care. Social work practitioners should have a deep understanding of the community they serve, which includes the needs, assets and resources in the locality. Effective community work involves networking, collaboration, participation and community empowerment amongst the various community members and stakeholders.

This guide on community work provides social work practitioners with a reference when planning and conducting community work. Co-developed by many social work practitioners in Singapore who have vast experience and knowledge in community work, it aims at providing practitioners, who are new to community work, the basic know-hows and principles for practice.

I am thankful for the insights of experienced practitioners in developing this guide. A workgroup, comprising FSC leaders and practitioners, MSF colleagues, representatives from Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL), and other community partners, had written this guide. They have also included the views from the clients they serve. This guide reflects the community work spirit, in that it has been developed - “by community, with community, for community”. I hope you tap on the wisdom the guide offers in supporting the communities we serve.

Ang Bee Lian
Director-General of Social Welfare

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our thanks and heartfelt appreciation to the following partners and individuals who have co-created and contributed to the development of this practice guide.

Name

Ng Bee Leng
Han Yah Yee
Chan Xian Jie
Cindy Ng-Tay
Dr Grace Chee
Dr Hana Alhadad
Elisha Paul Teo
Joyz Tan
Khairunisa Rusli
Nel Lim
Noor Izzaty Binte Ishak
Manivannan Ponnusamy
Palvindran S/O Jayram
Renjala Balachandran
Ruth Tan
Tan Jia Wei
Yet Tun Hoong
Zahara Mahmood

Community Agencies

CGH Community Care (CGH CC)
Filos Community Services (FCC)
Friendzone
GoodLife!
Sengkang General Hospital (SGH)
Silver Ribbon Singapore (SIR)
Cassia Resettlement (CRT)
Readable

Acknowledgements

Family Service Centres

1. @27 FSC
2. Ang Mo Kio FSC
3. AWWA FSC
4. Care Corner FSC (Admiralty)
5. Care Corner FSC (Queenstown)
6. Care Corner FSC (Tampines)
7. Care Corner FSC (Toa Payoh)
8. Care Corner FSC (Woodlands)
9. Cheng San FSC
10. Family Services at SSO @ Bedok
(Kembangan Chai Chee)
11. Fei Yue Family Services at SSO
@ Taman Jurong
12. Fei Yue FSC (Bukit Batok)
13. Fei Yue FSC (Champions Way)
14. Fei Yue FSC (Choa Chu Kang)
15. Fei Yue FSC (Yew Tee)
16. Foundation of Rotary Clubs
(Singapore) (FRCS) FSC
17. Hougang Sheng Hong FSC
18. Kampong Kapor FSC
19. Kreta Ayer Family Services at
SSO @ Kreta Ayer
20. Lakeside FSC (Jurong East)
21. Lakeside FSC (Jurong West)
22. Marine Parade FSC
23. MWS Covenant FSC
24. MWS FSC – Tampines
25. MWS FSC – Yishun
26. Pasir Ris FSC
27. PPIS FSC (East)
28. PPIS FSC (West)
29. Punggol FSC
30. REACH FSC
31. Sembawang FSC
32. Serangoon Moral FSC
33. Sengkang FSC
34. SINDA FSC
35. South Central Community FSC
36. The SBL Vision FSC
37. THK FSC @ Bedok North
38. THK FSC @ Bukit Panjang
39. THK FSC @ Jurong
40. THK FSC @ MacPherson
41. THK FSC @ Tanjong Pagar
42. TRANS FSC (Bedok)
43. TRANS FSC (Bedok Reservoir)
44. TRANS FSC (Bukit Timah)
45. Viriya FSC
46. Whampoa FSC
47. Whispering Hearts FSC
48. Yishun Family Services @
Children's Society

Acknowledgements

Ministry of Social and Family Development

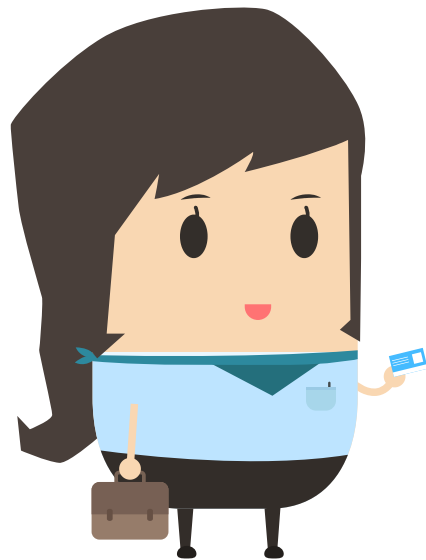
Comcare and Social Support Division (CSSD)

Social Delivery and Coordination Division (SDCD)

Social Service Office @ Ang Mo Kio
Social Service Office @ Bedok
Social Service Office @ Boon Lay
Social Service Office @ Bukit Batok
Social Service Office @ Bukit Merah
Social Service Office @ Bukit Panjang
Social Service Office @ Clementi
Social Service Office @ Chua Chu Kang
Social Service Office @ Geylang Serai
Social Service Office @ Hougang
Social Service Office @ Jalan Besar
Social Service Office @ Jurong East
Social Service Office @ Kreta Ayer
Social Service Office @ Pasir Ris
Social Service Office @ Punggol
Social Service Office @ Queenstown
Social Service Office @ Sembawang
Social Service Office @ Sengkang
Social Service Office @ Serangoon
Social Service Office @ Taman Jurong
Social Service Office @ Tampines
Social Service Office @ Toa Payoh
Social Service Office @ Woodlands
Social Service Office @ Yishun

All participants from FSCs and SSOs who attended the cluster engagements.

Chapter 1 Overview



Introduction to the Practice Guide

This FSC Code of Social Work Practice – Community Work Practice Guide (CWPG) outlines the considerations needed when FSC Social Work Practitioners (SWPs) plan for and conduct community work. Community work is part of the suite of services provided by FSCs and is an important component in building the community.

This guide starts by defining community and community work and introduces the various models of community work. It allows SWPs to understand what a community is, how a vibrant community should look like, the key principles of community work in the FSC setting and how community work complements casework and group work.

The guide also discusses the ethical considerations in community work. It details the processes of community work, ways to navigate challenges and expected practice standards of SWPs. This includes areas relating to their tasks, roles and responsibilities when conducting community work.

The guide recognises that FSCs provide a multi-prong approach of intervention to clients across a continuum of needs. This guide will equip SWPs with the skills and knowledge required to plan and conduct community work.

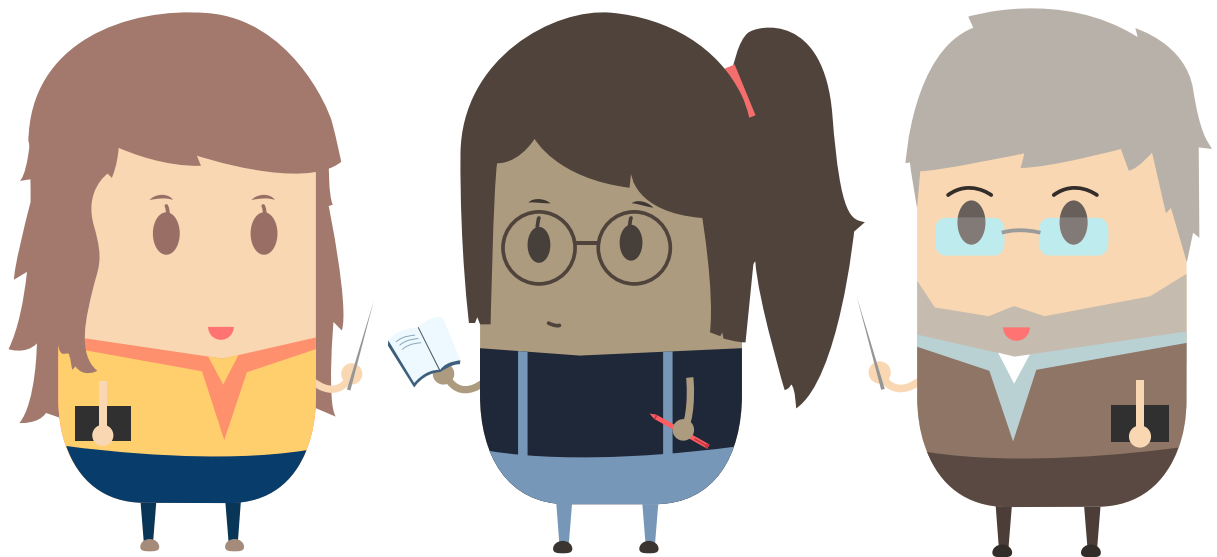
Purpose and Use of the Practice Guide

This Practice Guide provides:

- general considerations that SWPs should note when planning and conducting community work;
- the roles of SWPs and corresponding tasks required when carrying out community work; and
- the protocols required for safe and effective community work.

Chapter 2

Understanding Community Work



Definition of Community

What the literature says:

(Mini & Sathyamurthi, 2017)

Community is a term that has different **meanings** depending on **context** and **time**. (Mini & Sathyamurthi, 2017)

Based on two broad categories:

- Geographic location
- Similar social, economic, political or other similar interests

Community is described as having the following characteristics:

- Members recognise the **relationships** and **common concerns** of the group.
- Has **longevity** (i.e. it is expected to continue indefinitely).
- Rely on **voluntary participation** from members to function.
- Can have **multiple purposes** to address the **various needs** of members.
- Is often **complex**, dynamic and sufficiently large such that members predominantly form instrumental relationships, where they work towards **limited and immediate** goals.



In Singapore's context, the community usually embodies a spirit of "gotong-royong" or neighbourliness.

Characteristics about the community that social work practitioners in Singapore have identified:



Interconnectedness:

Where people come together to partake in common interests & build relationships.



Common purpose:

Shared interest, cause, or issue that people care about, which creates a sense of belonging to one another.



Members as context experts:

The belief that members of the community know what is best for themselves.



Resources:

A community has assets, needs, strengths and interests that are continually identified, shared and tapped on.



Diversity, equity & inclusion:

Communities recognise and embrace diversity, equity and inclusion amongst members.



Narratives & stories:

These help to shape the identity of the community and its members.



Power:

The ability to make decisions, problem-solve and participate resides with members of the community.



Mutuality & reciprocity:

An engaged community consists of members with obligations towards each other and the community at large.

Note: For the purposes of this guide, "community" will not be defined solely geographically to recognise intersecting and nested communities both in physical and online spaces.

Functions of Community

What the literature says:

Warren (1978) describes the functions of a community to be for:



Social control: To set and reinforce rules within the community to promote desired behaviours and discourage unacceptable behaviours.



Socialisation: To teach values, rules, patterns of behaviour, as well as for members to learn how to use and adapt to resources available.



Production - consumption - distribution: To organise community based on availability of work, rewards for work done, and the availability of goods and services for consumption.

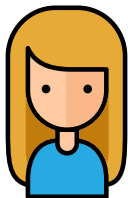


Mutual support: To provide formal and informal supports through organisations, family, friends and other contacts to meet needs of the individual.

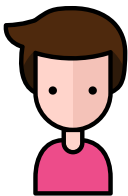


Social participation: To provide formal and informal opportunities for members to be involved in activities and develop social and interactive skills.

Functions of a community identified by social work practitioners



Ensure a sense of safety and security while looking out for one another.

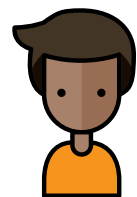


Build mutual support and action for improvement in the community and its members by developing skills and resources.



Create a safe environment for members of the community to be actively involved and advocate to speak on issues that affect them and their lives.

Collaborate on solutions for sustainability and to promote ownership.



Support the needs of the community and cultivate a "kampung" spirit - the ability to lean on one another for support.

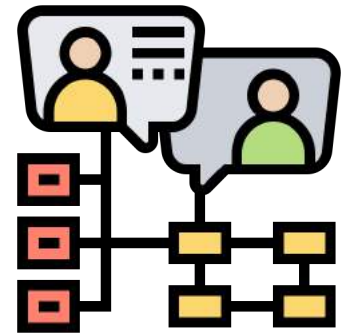


Defining Community Work in FSC Setting

Why Community Work in FSC Setting?

Community work differs from casework and group work in the following ways (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996):

- Focuses on the **community** rather than the individual;
- Places emphasis on **collective participation** of the community;
- Utilises resources **within** the community, and is asset-based;
- A more **sustainable** option that complements other professional intervention; and
- Creates opportunities for members to **influence decisions** that affect their individual and community's well-being and needs.



How Community Work Complements Casework & Group Work

Community work is **one of the three** major social work intervention methods (the other two being casework and group work) in Singapore.

Casework, group work, and community work provide **holistic** and **integrated** interventions at the micro, meso, and macro systems level.

Similar to casework and group work, community work leverages on trust and rapport to **enhance the social support systems** of beneficiaries. This can in turn be leveraged to provide support in times of need.

Community work creates opportunities for clients receiving casework and/or group work intervention to **progress** from being recipients of services to becoming contributors by mapping and leveraging on their strengths and assets.

Community work supports casework by providing vulnerable individuals with a network of caring community members, thereby **enhancing their well-being and safety**.

Active and concerned members of the community mobilised through community work **provide ground-up data** that can inform the conduct of better casework, group work, and other social interventions of community-based organisations like FSCs.

Community work builds on and enhances SWPs' **repertoire of skills**.



Building a Vibrant Community

What makes a vibrant community?

Based on discussions with social work practitioners



Everyone has a **sense of belonging and responsibility** for their community:

- Being actively involved in community initiatives.
- Demonstrating ownership over community needs.
- Being proactive in reaching out to help each other.
- Having a diversity of voices.
- Individuals not being isolated in their own homes.



Relationships and friendships:

- Members of the community know one another and are well-connected.
- Supporting each other.
- Self-advocating as well as advocating for others.
- Strong relationships between members of the community.
- A safe place where members of the community show care and concern for each other.
- Mutual trust between members of the community.
- Vibrancy in how conflicts or differences in the community are resolved amicably and sensitively.



Rich in **resources:**

- Mutual participation and reciprocity between:
 - Members of the community
 - Members of the community and agencies
- Active participation from members of the community, social service agencies, and other stakeholders.
- Opportunities and space to start ground-up initiatives.

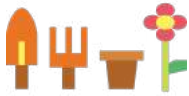


Rich in **stories:**

- Helps members to identify with their community.
- Understands the past and frames the future of the community.
- Shapes the narratives surrounding members of the community and their situations.
- Sharing of information between those who live in and those who work in the community to empower other members of the community.

Four Stages of Community

Peck (1998) outlines four distinct phases that any group of strangers coming together as a community would experience:



Adaptation from a real life community garden group

A group of residents shared their interest in starting a community garden in their estate.

PseudoCommunity

At the initial stage, members aim to avoid conflict and are pleasant to one another. Members may withhold information and feelings to avoid conflict, and individual differences are minimised or ignored.

Chaos

Eventually, individual differences appear and the group moves towards chaos. In this stage, members attempt to resolve and remove individual differences. Members may attack one another and attempt to replace the designated leader.

Emptiness

The solution to the chaos is through the community, which is the hardest but most crucial stage of community development. It requires members to overcome barriers to communication such as preconceptions, prejudices, the need to fix, and the need to control.

True Community

True community embraces both the positive and negative aspects of members. Members are open to being vulnerable and honest with each other.



As residents were not entirely familiar with one another, they started off with twice-a-week meet-ups. One session was held over tea as a means to build rapport and another session was used to concretise plans for the community garden. The FSC helped facilitate conversations in envisioning a successful community garden. At this point, the group had concerns about Ms A joining the group due to her reputation for freeloading. However, the group decided to give her a chance and did not voice any concerns.



After the community garden started, Ms A was noted to be present only at times of harvest but not at other phases of gardening. This resulted in unhappiness towards Ms A and an argument broke out between Ms A and members of the group. The FSC had to mediate and it was decided for Ms A to step away from the group and reconsider her involvement.



After Ms A stepped away from the group, the FSC facilitated conversations on the incident. New agreements were developed such as setting ground rules for respectful communication in disagreements. The group agreed to not allow unhappiness in the garden to affect their relationship with Ms A or any other members. Through the renorming process, the group was better able to resolve disagreements and conflicts that arose openly and respectfully.



As the group experienced changes and conflicts, the various stages would recur. Over time, with each renorming and resolution, the group became more open to a diversity of views and could resolve them independently. The FSC's role was reduced to a consultative role when necessary.

Note: As all communities are different, these stages serve as a guide and are not representative of every community. Depending on the dynamics, personality and type of group, the group may experience the stages differently.

Definitions of Community Work

Community work comprises of interventions situated in **macro practice** and is focused on larger, **community-level change**.



Application of practice skills to modify behavioural patterns of groups and organisations, or individuals' connections and communications with community systems. (Hardcastle, Powers and Wenocur, 2011)



Organises communities to **address issues and goals** using **resources** within the community, and fosters **participation, empowerment, and change** through **collective action**. (Universidad Complutense Madrid, 2015)

Assets & local resources that can improve the well-being of a community

Identified by social work practitioners based on McKnight & Russell (2018)



Contributions:
The talents, gifts, skills, interests, and knowledge that members contribute towards goals and issues.



Associations:
The networks, groups, and connections that members in a community form.



Local institutions:
Both formal and informal agencies can be institutional or community-oriented in nature.



Local spaces:
The main natural environment where most activities involving residents, associations, and local institutions happen.



Exchange:
Exchange of

- Intangibles (e.g. gifts, skills, knowledge, and contributions);
- Tangibles (e.g. goods and services);
- Alternative currencies (e.g. civic space and time); and/ or
- Monetary exchange.



Stories:
Where members come together to partake in common interests and build relationships.

Note: For the purposes of this guide, members of the community are people who have a stake in the community and come together to enhance the well-being of the community. Examples of members in the community include residents.

Defining Community Work in FSC Setting

What is Community Work in FSC setting?

Community work in the FSC setting typically refers to **professional social work practice** with **communities**, where the community is the **context** and **content** of social work interventions.



Key Concepts

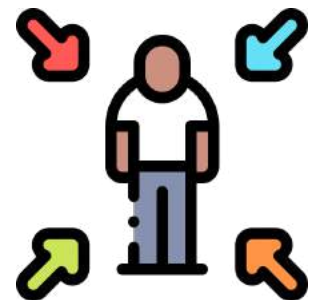
Forde and Lynch (2014) identify the key concepts of community work as - **self-help, volunteerism**, and the **facilitation of access to local services and social action** amongst individuals in the community.

The focus is on the **needs** and **resources** of the community rather than the individual. Social workers achieve this by developing **community awareness** and building **community capacity**.

There is also an emphasis on **decentralisation of power, collaboration** and **networking, community participation** and **community empowerment**.

Context

Community work takes place within the context of the community and requires social workers to have an understanding of the **different perspectives** and **dimensions of a community**. This includes **being sensitive** towards **local conventions** when developing services.



Process

The process of community work involves working out **aims** and **objectives** through a **review of the needs and resources** of the community with a wide range of people in that community.

It requires a **blend of micro, meso and macro practice skills** to work with individuals and groups to benefit the community (e.g. community organisation, social work research, social action etc).

Models & Approaches of Community Work

There are many models and approaches of community work that are present. SWPs are to ascertain which models of community work may be more applicable with the communities that they serve. The models of community work may also evolve and expand with the changing landscape and profiles of the community.

Rothman's community development model (1974, 2001)

Locality development

- A major focus is on the process of community building.
- Change objectives are achieved by enabling the community to establish consensus through common interests.



Community capacity development

- Stresses on consensus and cooperation as an organising approach.
- Building group identity and problem-solving as key goals.

Social planning

- Effort is focused primarily on task goals and resource allocation.
- Coordination of social services.
- Expertise and leadership are important elements in this approach.



Social planning and policy

- Stresses use of data and rational-empirical problem solving such as research and system analysis.
- Emphasises on participatory planning and social development

Social Action

- Use of pressure tactics to bring about changes and address power imbalances.
- Leadership and expertise may be challenged in this model.



Social Advocacy

- Stresses use of pressure tactics, including confrontation.
- The goal is to bring about concrete changes to redress power imbalances.

Note: In Singapore's context, pressure tactics and confrontation are not appropriate as they are not in line with its ideologies of social action and advocacy.

Defining Community Work in FSC Setting

Key Principles of Community Work in FSC setting

The four main types of community work are categorised as :

- Public Education / Awareness Building (e.g. Campaigns, community theatre, rallies, runs);
- Community Service (e.g. Soup kitchens, clothing donations);
- Outreach (e.g. Door knocking, community walks, learning conversations, asset mapping);
- Community Action (e.g. Ground-up initiatives).

(Russell, C. & McKnight, J. L., 2018)



Relationship-oriented

Community work should be respectful and intentional in its approach towards individuals and problems. This fosters safety, trust and builds a positive working relationship that demonstrates genuine care towards the relationship instead of being transactional.



Citizen-led

Community work involves authentic collaboration between the community and agencies, with a shift of power to the community through a citizen-led approach by exploring creative methods and solutions.



Inclusion-focused

It is important to create an environment where each person in the community is viewed with the potential and ability to contribute. Hence SWPs should work alongside members of the community to actively welcome those at the fringes or outside the boundaries of the community.



Asset-based

Members of the community should be empowered to contribute using their various strengths and assets such as talents, skills, knowledge, and passion for change. SWPs should spend time in the community with members of the community to identify members' assets, associations, and institutions in the community.



Co-creation

Communities have inherent assets and resources to solve their own problems. The role of SWPs is to identify issues with communities and work with members of the community to develop solutions. Voices of members of the community are sought as they are recognised as "experts" in their communities.

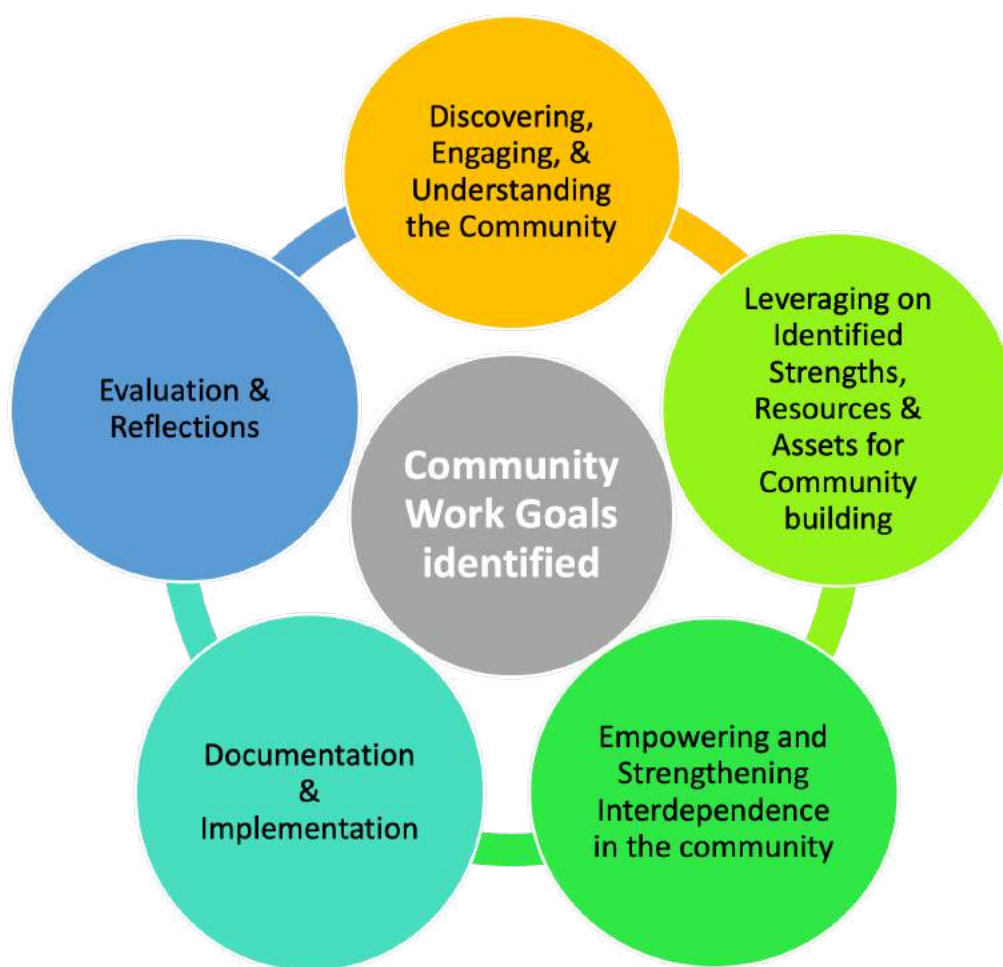


Place-based

A space (physical or online) where people naturally congregate and have a sense of belonging. Such a space will have a likelihood to be sustained and grow. Members of the community within a particular space will have a stake in its improvement.

Community Work Process Overview

The diagram below illustrates an overview of the community work process. The process is dynamic and SWPs may find themselves engaged in the different aspects concurrently in a community work project.



Ethical Considerations in Community Work

Consent:

Make sure that members of the community have **adequate information** and **understanding** of outcomes, are participating **willingly**, and have not been coerced or manipulated into participating.

Privacy and confidentiality:

Be mindful of the confidentiality of information collected or shared and how it is used or disseminated to others.

Other unethical behaviours:

Denying or discrimination against individuals based on race, religion, gender, etc.

Power differences:

Be mindful of **differences in power and influence** between professionals and members of the community.

Accountability and transparency:

Be accountable and transparent about **decisions** made in relation to members of the community, and **act in accordance** with professional and agency/organisation guidelines.

Conflict of interest:

Avoid situations where the worker or agency/organisation is in a position to take advantage of, influence, or benefit personally from members of the community.

Harm avoidance:

Mitigate members' **exposure to various forms of harm** when participating in community events/activities.



Reflection Section

Community is much more than belonging to something; it's about doing something together that makes belonging matter

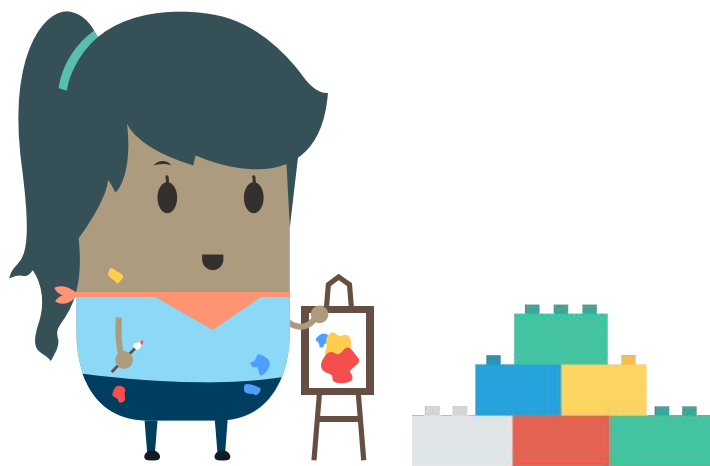
- Bryan Solis

Points for reflection:

- What is community work to you?
- How would you like your community to be?
- Which models of community work do you tend to adopt?

Chapter 3

Community Work Processes



Engaging and Understanding the Community



Identify **community priorities**:

- Identify the profile, main problems, and needs of the community.
- Formal methods: Surveys, focus group discussions, etc.
- Informal methods: Learning conversations with members, door-knocking outreach, etc.
- Pick up key trends from casework and group work discussions with clients.



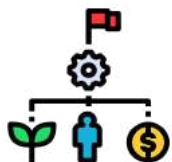
Analyse the **context** of the community:

- Reflect on the nature of:
 - The organisation you work for.
 - The community that the organisation works in.
 - How the community perceives the organisation.



Analyse **social problems** and **barriers**:

- Identify and define existing & potential barriers to service.



Discover **resources** and **assets** present:

- Gain an understanding of untapped and potential resources within the community.
- Identify strengths present in the community and existing services.
- Identify and work with formal and informal partners in the community (e.g. resident committees, places of worship, etc.).

Community Example:



Kampong Kapor FSC (KKFSC) gathered information through several rounds of learning conversations with members of the community to understand their concerns about the prevalence of drug issues in the community. This was helpful for the SWPs, given the complex nature of drug usage in the community. Lived experiences of community members also debunked stereotypes and commonly held beliefs of drug users and their drug use.

Leveraging Identified Strengths and Assets to Address Needs/ Priorities/ Issues of the Community



Set clear **aims and objectives** for the community work project:

- Work with stakeholders to set aims and objectives.
- Stakeholders include members of the community, other community partners, relevant government and non-government bodies.
- Focus on how current community assets can be mobilised to address community priorities/needs.



Design and implement the community work plan:

- The design should reflect key aspects of community work in the FSC setting (see Chapter 2).
- Allocation of responsibilities should be decided collectively to reflect key values in community work.
- Responsibilities include coordination and management of resources, planning of events, and promotion of events to the wider community.



Set clear **outcomes** and community work **milestones**:

- Importance should be placed on outcomes that are valued by the community and/or stakeholders.

Community Examples:



KKFSC collaborated with a community agency, who had expertise in process theatre for Youth Stories. The use of Youth Stories was meant to create a safe space for the youths to share their stories. The knowledge and skills in conducting theatre works were shared with KKFSC staff to build their competencies in working with youth.



Fei Yue FSC (FYFSC) collaborated with local stall-owners in organising their Food Fiesta to provide fresh food rations to beneficiaries.



AMKFSC Community Services mobilised and planned alongside residents to ensure that the COVID-19 restrictions did not dampen the Hari Raya spirit. Home bakers baked 300 bottles of cookies, financially sponsored by generous residents, while delivery riders ensured contactless delivery to residents' homes.

Empowering and Strengthening Interdependence in the Community

Moving from **passivity** to **action**:

- Community work aims to encourage members of the community to become active contributors within their community.
- Creates **platforms** that enable members of the community to contribute.
- Increases community members' self esteem and **sense of belonging** within the community.

Empowering **relationships** in the community:

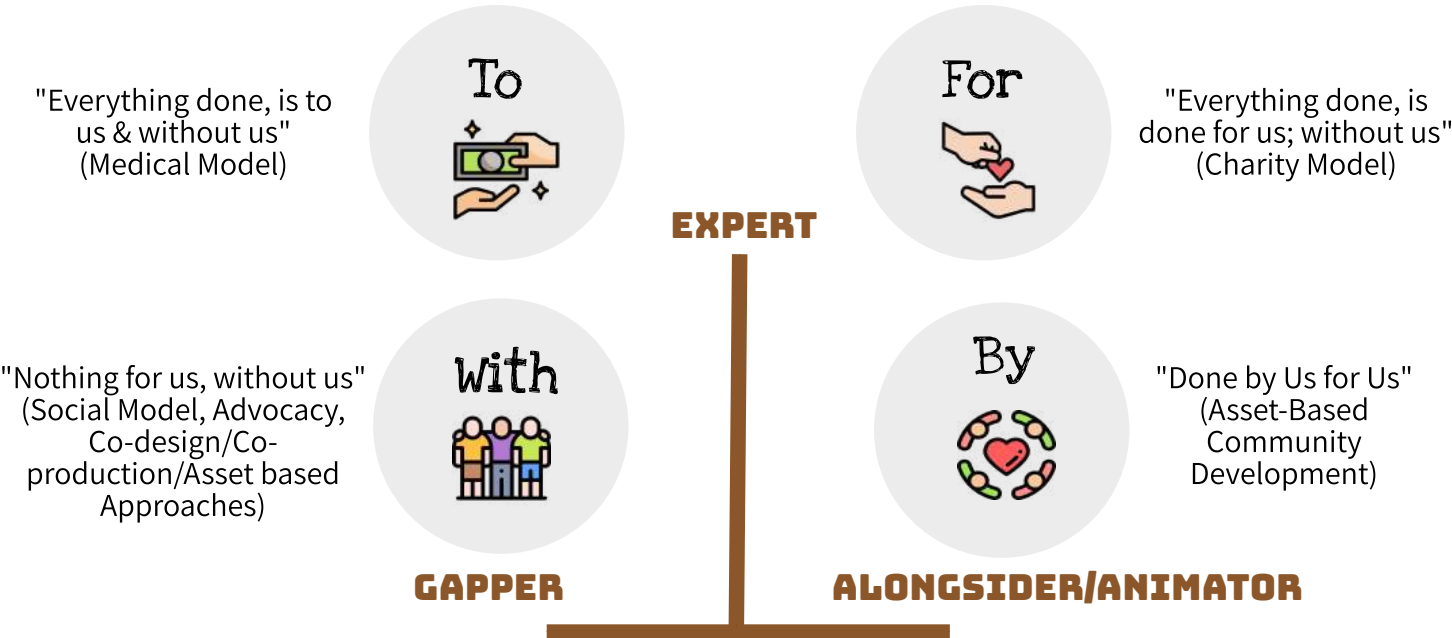
- The Asset-Based Community Development¹ (ABCD) approach requires SWPs to engage community members to **participate actively** and **take ownership** of the needs and challenges in their community.
- **Engaging** and **empowering** communities are positive processes.
- Spirit of **co-creation and interdependence** - decentralisation of power between stakeholders and members of the community.

¹ ABCD builds on the assets that are found in the community and mobilises individuals, associations, and institutions to come together to realise and develop their strengths.

Discovering Community Assets, Analysing Needs, Mapping a Community Plan and Preparing to Connect the Relationships

Social service agencies frequently encounter social issues in the community. When there is a social issue in the community, **who is responsible to address it?** Does the responsibility lie with the community or the social service agencies? How do we determine and navigate? To guide us in our thinking, here are **4 positions to consider:**

Community Ownership Quadrant



Some guiding questions to remain focused on enlarging the **WITH** and **BY** positions (in this order):

1. What can the community do by themselves?
2. What does the community need help with?
3. What does the community need external agencies to do for them?

These questions guide us to focus on the strengths and assets **within** the community to address their needs and challenges before exploring **outside** of the community. SWPs will need to consider the context of issues as there may be times where "FOR" and "WITH" are required to support the community. Eventually, communities will move towards an ideal state of "BY".

Community Examples:

FYFSC's Care-Angels project empowered the residents through various discussions to set up a food ration collection space. FYFSC reported that many participants saw themselves as active contributors in the community rather than just passive recipients of the food rations.



SCCFSC's annual movement "I Wish U Enough" and their CNY Community Reunion platform focused on enlarging the WITH & BY positions in the early planning stages. Community workers achieved this by asking community members guiding questions to identify their strengths, and tasks that could be done by workers and those that could be done together. These questions were critical to relocate power and ownership back to the community members.

Documentation

Documentation is an important part of effective community work. Comprehensive records are necessary to:

- Assess clients' circumstances;
- Plan and deliver services;
- Facilitate supervision;
- Provide proper accountability to clients, other service providers, funding agencies, insurers, and the Courts;
- Evaluate performances of staff;
- Evaluate services provided; and
- Ensure continuity of future services.

(Reamer, 2001)

Documentation should be **done at every stage** of community work and stored carefully according to the FSC's standard operating procedures.

Community work documentation should consist of, but is not limited to the following:



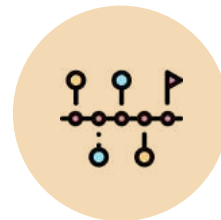
Aims and objectives



Design of community initiative



Implementation plans



Milestones and outcomes



Voices of community members and stakeholders



Learning points

A reference documentation template can be found in Appendix A.

Evaluation

The Purpose of Evaluation

Evaluation can assist in determining whether an initiative is meeting its **objectives** and/or addressing the **needs** of the community.



What the literature says

Posavac and Carey (1997) state that evaluation is needed for:

- Saving **time, money, and resources** on initiatives that do not work or do not work well;
- **Assurances** that implemented initiatives are providing the intended services;
- **Identification** of gaps and services;
- **Continuity** in building effective initiatives;
- Identification of **strengths and weaknesses** in initiatives and allows SWPs to make adjustments/changes earlier into the programmes and/or in the future;
- Identification of services that are capable of producing **more favourable** outcomes; and
- Highlighting any **unintended** or **unplanned** "side effects" of initiatives.

What Should Be Measured?

Outcomes/goals of the community:

- Outcomes and goals that need to be **measured by the FSC**, should be **co-created** with members of the community.
- Importance should be placed on outcomes that are **valued/highlighted** by community members.
- Review goals and outcomes and **adjust accordingly**.

Recommendations:

- Findings should be shared with members of the community to guide discussions and decisions on **how and when** to proceed with future initiatives.

Progress:

- SWPs and members of the community should measure and monitor progress, goals, and outcomes from the **start to the end** by having frequent **dialogues and debriefs** with members of the community. This helps to promote a culture of co-creation and interdependence.

Process:

- As key principles of community work are process-driven, there should be **indicators to evaluate processes**.
- These indicators should involve and focus on the needs of members of the community and stakeholders (e.g. whether objectives planned out in planning stage have been met).

Evaluation

How Do We Measure?

Design:

- Choose an appropriate design for evaluation based on the purpose of evaluation and intended outcomes:
 - What kind of information are you interested in?
 - What are your expectations for the results?
 - What are your expectations in term of the outcome?

Number of community responses:

- Determine whether data would be collected from all participants or a representative sample of the population.

Gather information:

- Qualitative (Interviews).
- Quantitative (Written Surveys or based on numbers of items/persons).

Synthesise Data:

- Determine if significant results are noted.
- Identify future steps (e.g. areas for improvement/follow-up actions).



Including the voice of the community

An important part of evaluating success in community work is whether the outcomes set out by community members were met. Hence, it is equally important to consider the programme's success/failure from the perspective of members of the community.

Community Examples:

AMKFSC's community members identified outcomes that were important to them such as:

- Neighbours greeted one another when they meet.
- Neighbours shared food with each other more frequently.
- Neighbours helped one another with grocery shopping during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Neighbours bonded together to do something special for their friends on festive seasons during the COVID-19 Pandemic.



SCCFSC's community workers measured the following in their community work programmes:

- Level of community ownership: "How much of the initiative was community-led versus agency-led?", "What percentage of decisions was made by the community versus FSC staff?"
- Number of neighbours the community members knew by name.
- Level of participation and contributions in the initiatives by the community and if there were any shifts in roles.
- Strengths of the community members.
- Did the circles of participation widen for community members?
- Collected stories to document the process.



Embracing Failures

Failure in community work can be as important as success, as it can lead to further innovations that can better serve the community.

It is important for community workers to be comfortable with embracing failures as these serve as **learning experiences** on:

- Mistakes to avoid.
- Areas of learning.
- Enhancements to future community work projects.

Reflection Section

The finished product is often of less importance than the skills and confidence gained through the process and the way in which the community is strengthened through people in its work and are brought together

- Ben Edwards



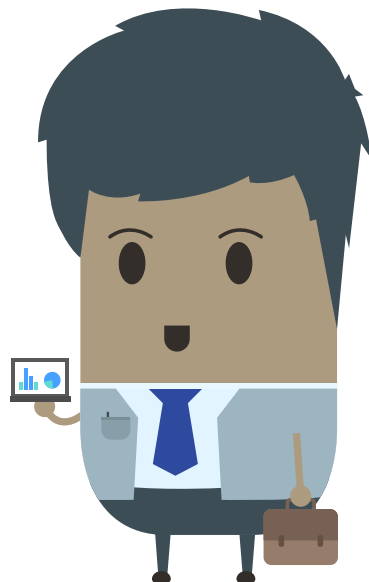
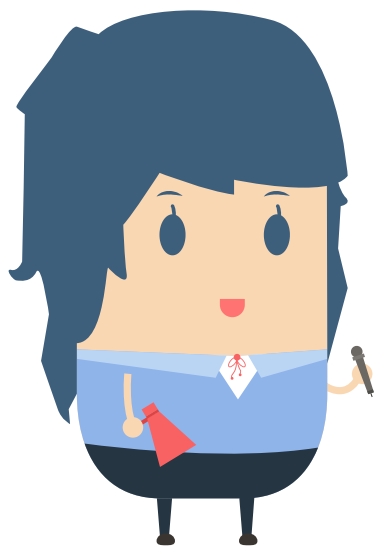
Reflection Question

Which aspects of these community work processes are you strongest in?

Which aspects of these community work processes wil you like to grow in?

Chapter 4

SWPS in Community Work



Role of SWPs Conducting Community Work

Community work is about collaboration with the community. Hence, SWPs in conducting community work take on **multiple diverse roles** depending on the stage of community work and the needs of the community. SWPs should be able to step back gradually so that the community can step forward and create their own solutions to the problems they have identified.



Alongsider:

Support rather than lead. To take a supportive stance to guide and work alongside the community, only stepping forward when needed.

Documenter:

Document important characteristics, functions, and happenings in the community and communicate these with the community to ensure local stories are being shared and the process of community work is properly documented. It may also involve liaising with members of the community and partners regarding evaluation and research.

Animator/Catalyst/Broker:

Identify "Connectors" or "Community Leaders" across the community and provide them with the opportunity to connect regularly to strengthen relationships, exchange learning and map community assets, needs etc. To take on an approach and posture of curiosity, asking to be invited and being open rather than self-imposing and directive.

Multiplier:

Continuously grow by ensuring that the work has a multiplier effect such that it does not end with the presence and engagement of SWPs but is continued by members of the community as part of sustainability efforts.

Facilitator:

Provides space and facilitate conversations between members of the community and groups about things that matter to them.

Community builder:

Identify the capacity of members of the community or develop it (e.g. facilitation skills, training) such that they are better equipped to do things by themselves for the benefit of their community. Members of the community should be involved in identifying areas that they would like to develop in.

Mobiliser:

Identify local organisations and members of the community who want to adopt a strengths-based approach to build hospitable and inclusive communities. Use these connections to build local partnerships that encourage collaboration between organisations and members of the community.

Peacebuilder:

Facilitate conversations that help conflictual communities and individuals listen to each other, respect and value differences while converging on what matters collectively.

Note: The above-mentioned roles are **not mutually exclusive**. These roles will vary according to the **context** and the work that are required within the FSC & the community.

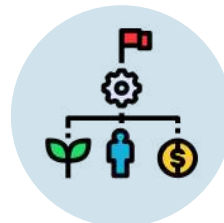
Qualities of SWPs Conducting Community Work

It is vital that SWPs conducting community work have the right set of qualities and skills in conducting effective community work. Members of the community who interact with SWPs can learn and model these positive qualities, in turn developing the community further.



Organised:

Able to set objectives, design, manage resources, monitor, evaluate, and manage finances.



Resourceful:

Able to identify and utilise strengths and resources in individuals and the community, foster strong bonds and a sense of ownership within the community.



Sensitive and embracing:

Sensitive to the cultural and religious considerations, norms, the context in which community work is conducted in, and embrace the diversity of the community.



Adaptable:

Flexible in dealing with the complex needs and circumstances of the community whilst supporting members of the community where necessary, and recognising the need to shift the principles of power to the situation.



Inclusive:

Strive to include voices of those who are marginalised or should be more socially included within the community.



Enabling/catalysing:

Able to mobilise and facilitate communities to make decisions that improve the community.



Collaborative:

Able to build relationships with various stakeholders and negotiate/balance different objectives. SWPs should also be willing to engage various community groups and organisations.



Being aware/responsive to crisis:

Have a keen awareness of risks and safety issues, especially when working in neighbourhoods where vice activities are prevalent. This enables SWPs to look out for their own safety and that of members of the community.

Skills of SWPs Conducting Community Work

Skills refer to the technical knowledge and competencies that SWPs would need, to effectively conduct community work.



Relationship-building/interpersonal skills:

SWPs should be able to build positive and meaningful relationships with members of the community and stakeholders as part of the collaborative efforts to leverage resources to create greater interdependency in the community.



Engagement and outreach:

SWPs should be able to reach out and connect with members of the community and relevant stakeholders. SWPs should also be able to identify appropriate stakeholders that would be beneficial for the community.



Critical thinking and problem-solving skills:

The ability to think critically and problem-solve is crucial in managing challenges and potential crises during the community work process (e.g. resolving disagreements between members of the community, last-minute changes in manpower, etc.)



Professional use of self:

SWPs should be able to set appropriate professional boundaries with members of the community. This would allow them to approach community work with sincerity, while also acknowledging their position and responsibilities within the community.



Evaluation and research skills:

SWPs should be competent in collecting, analysing, documenting, and evaluating data. This would enable SWPs to adapt community work programmes to better address the evolving needs of the community.



Bridging and advocacy:

SWPs should be able to bridge resources and advocate for members of the community. This includes utilising their attributes and skills to obtain useful resources for the community (e.g. physical spaces for events, food rations, fundings, etc.)



Mediation skills:

SWPs should possess conflict resolution skills so as to hold space and facilitate conversations when disagreements arise amongst members of the community and stakeholders.



Facilitation:

Facilitation skills enable SWPs to consult with members of the community and other stakeholders as they plan, execute, and evaluate the work that they do.

Challenges in Community Work

Common Challenges & Tips

Arriving at a **consensus** with members of the community on a common purpose and project to work on together.

- Appreciate that all communities are not homogenous, and it is important to acknowledge diverse views.
- Discuss group decision-making processes prior to making decisions.
- Look out for commonalities that can bring people together and what may be most feasible for the context and stage of the initiative.

Coping with **membership changes** due to exits, evolving commitments, and inclusion of new members.

- While it is important to work with who is present and committed, continually plan for succession and renewal by building capacities across all members.
- Be open to adapt to different members and work with their strengths and assets, which may lead to positive growth.

Managing SWPs' anxiety and uncertainty when **decision-making is shared** with members of the community.

- SWPs can focus on how shared decision-making contributes towards community ownership.
- Seek supervision to:
 - Expand skillset on facilitating decision-making.
 - Process emotions to reduce anxiety.

Members of the community **expect or depend on SWPs** to address the identified problems, and challenges, rather than taking ownership in addressing the concern.

- It is common that many members of the community are used to receiving professional services. Remind them of the purpose of meeting together, and how working together on a solution may be more meaningful.
- Reflect on the problem-identification process and consider if the process had provided space for members of the community to take ownership and accountability.
- Adjust the process and members' experiences where possible.

The community's **proposed agenda**, identified problems and solutions **do not fit** with the organisation or state's beliefs.

- Explore commonalities and evaluate all ideas within the context of the community.
- Seek supervision to critically reflect on the tensions and dilemmas existing in the community engagement.
- Review and realign practice values and principles to guide future direction.
- Seek to influence others and create buy-in where possible.

Working with a community that may be **apathetic, disorganised or lack trust** to begin organising themselves to promote collective action.

- One of the roles of SWPs is to mobilise and galvanise people to come together, which may require the worker to take the lead in the beginning phases.
- Once the community has been organised and ready, SWPs can then shift towards adopting a supportive role.

Risk Management in Community Work

Effective management of risks requires SWPs and communities to work together and develop "cross-organisational trust and management craftsmanship of a high order" (Bardach, 1999 cited by Hood and Rothstein, 2000).

Sharing risks amongst the community partners or stakeholders can be an **unfamiliar** concept since risks are generally framed within the individual operations of each organisation. However, risk-sharing can develop a **greater sense of ownership** of the community work project.

Collaboration and partnership in the community come with their own set of **challenges**. It is not a low-cost, quick fix or risk-free option because of the time needed to explore, establish, and manage the partner relationships.

Challenges & Potential Risks



Loss of autonomy:

Having a **shared decision-making process** requires SWPs to build consensus with partners before projects can be implemented, placing a **wider accountability** on others.

Conflict of interests:

There may be decisions or actions that may be right for the interests of the partnership but **at odds with the agency or members of the community's** interests/plans.

Damage to reputation:

Break down in partnerships or miscommunications can damage individual partners' track record or reputation.

Fast versus sustainable results:

Although problem-solving on behalf of the community may produce quick-fix results, sustainable results often require working with the community to build trust and motivation towards collective action. SWPs should be aware of both the agency's priorities and the opportunities presented when members of the community are motivated to contribute.

Managing complexities and conflicts:

As chaos and conflict is a necessary process of building an authentic community, SWPs should embrace conflicts and turn them into opportunities for growth.

Risk Management in Community Work

Management of Volunteers & Members of the Community

Some of the most valuable resources to SWPs in community work are the volunteers and members of the community. The differences between volunteers and members of the community can vary depending on the **context of the community and the design of the community initiatives**. Throughout the community initiative process, SWPs should carefully consider the roles and responsibilities of volunteers and members of the community as it determines how they and **their expectations would be managed**.



Volunteers

Volunteers help to build more cohesive communities and **serve as an important bridge** between SWPs and members of the community. Volunteers can be recruited through **different platforms** and are **diverse**. Depending on the initiative planned, volunteers can consist of members of the community.

It is therefore important for FSCs to set up **formal systems and processes** to assess potential volunteers on their suitability and set clear **guidelines** on their roles, boundaries, and levels of accountability (to the community and agency). When utilising volunteers, SWPs would need to carefully consider the roles that would be most suited to their age and strengths.



Members of the Community

Members of the community are an important part of community work as they can look out for and provide immediate **support** to other members in need.

SWPs may occasionally have to provide **confidential and/or sensitive information** about an individual or family while linking members for mutual support. SWPs should ensure that **informed consent** is given before connecting members and that any information shared is on a **need-to-know basis**. SWPs would need to carefully consider the profile and needs of the various members before matching or linking them to each other, to minimise potential conflict and enhance the likelihood of a successful match.

Risk Management in Community Work

Effective Risk Management



Support SWPs with **risk management guidelines/standard operating procedures:**

- Foster confidence in workers to manage idiosyncrasies of members of the community and unpredictable situations in the community.
- Strengthen practice by encouraging SWPs to be more reflective and creative.
- Guide SWPs on their accountability to members of the community and the community.

Train SWPs on risk management in the **community work context:**

- Equip and prepare SWPs with skills to manage risks, especially in situations where there are significant disagreements about:
 - "Acceptable" Risk
 - Risk Aversion
 - Risk-Taking
 - Differences in rigidity and flexibility between the organisation and the partners' way of carrying out the community work programme itself.
- Prepare SWPs to understand the "risk appetite/tolerance" of community partners in managing risk issues such as clients' confidentiality issues, which may differ from that of the workers' organisation.



Organisation risk culture in community work:

- An organisation with positive risk culture is characterised by:
 - Open dialogues about risk and community work service values and goals.
 - Openness and trust amongst staff and managers across different levels of the organisational hierarchy.
 - Provision of opportunities in the workplace for reflection on:
 - Managing risk in the community; and
 - Integrating risk management into the roles, functions and values of the SWPs.

Risk Management in Community Work

A community example by SCCFSC - Engaging communities when working with minors, children, young persons, and marginalised groups.

A group of volunteers wanted to meaningfully engage the children in the community. They were concerned about the potential risks that the children in the community may be exposed to, which may lead to negative influences. Hence, they wanted to build trust and influence the children positively and inculcate good values in the latter through games. However, in linking volunteers with the children, there can be concerns about safety for the children.

To help allay these concerns, SWPs chaperoned the sessions to ensure safety and manage potential risks. SWPs also sought consent from the children's parents so that they were aware of the children's engagement with the volunteers. The volunteers also invited parents and included other neighbours into the group so that it would be more ground-up and citizen-led. Every time someone new joined the group, the group's purpose and roles were reiterated so that there was informed consent by all parties involved. SWP's role was to facilitate and be accountable to the community.



The boundaries and roles of SWPs need to be clear. **The group decides for themselves their wants and expectations.** SWPs could facilitate such discussions but decisions are ultimately made by the group. **Everyone in the group has to be accountable.** Nonetheless, disagreements and concerns may arise.

As such, SWPs may overcome this through:

- Engaging, explaining, and setting clear expectations:
- Following the 4 quadrants (TO, FOR, WITH, BY) in Chapter 3. If the context is more community-led, ideally, the responsibility to address these concerns should lie with the community. SWPs should not override the community's accountability. However, if it is agency-led, it will be SWPs' role to address the issue.
- Giving members of the community the autonomy to suggest and decide how they would like to address the risk in community-led initiatives. SWPs should only step in, in the event that there are safety concerns or when members of the community are stuck.
- If there are ethical dilemmas, SWPs should raise them internally with their supervisors to discuss.

Supervision of Community Workers

Reflective & Reflexive Practices

Reflective and reflexive practices are important for **effective community work**. Both reflection and reflexivity are processes that should occur in tandem on a continuum.



Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is fundamental in the journey of professional growth as it enables SWPs to become aware of their thoughts, actions, responses, internal and external rationale, and framework. SWPs are encouraged to take time to **reflect on their daily work** so as to develop insights into the decision-making process. These insights gained on what was done or not done will then **contribute to enhancing future practice**.

SWPs should also record their work in field notes as part of the documentation and supervision process. These field notes can be used in their reflective process to evaluate what they should do differently and/or better.



Reflexive Practice

As we grow deeper and further in practice, reflexivity should be weaved into reflective practice. Reflexive practice is important as SWPs engage with communities that have very different social identities, that carries varying levels of power and privilege in society.

Reflexivity in practice requires SWPs to **examine their practice**, what ideas inform and organise it, and to grow and develop ourselves so that we can connect and work with others in a way that acknowledges, is sensitive to, and can skillfully negotiate issues of social differences (Burnham, 2012). Engaging in reflexivity **requires critical thought and consideration**, as well as **follow-up actions based on new understandings** that we have developed.

Being reflexive requires SWPs to recognise that they are **active in shaping their surroundings** and begin to critically take circumstances and relationships into consideration. Rather than merely reacting to them, reflexivity allows SWPs to **review and revise ethical ways of being and relating to the various contexts**. This may be challenging for SWPs as they would need to be open to new information that challenges the beliefs and habits that are ingrained in them.

While it can be challenging, it is necessary so that SWPs can meet the needs of unique communities better.

Supervision of Community Workers

Below are some questions to guide reflection and reflexivity in your practice. It is not an exhaustive list. While the questions can be thought through individually, it is **highly encouraged that intentional spaces be created with supervisors, peers, and working teams, to discuss these questions**. This is especially so in community work, where the group context offers more diversity in participants, which in turn allows for more alternative responses that can stimulate learning.

It is highly encouraged for SWPs to **engage in these questions frequently** when evaluating their work. SWPs should then **move into action with the new understandings** that they have gained and continue this process of reflection, reflexivity, and action iteratively.



Guiding Questions

Reflective questions:

- What theories/models/concepts apply to this community/community work?
- What role does the community see me/my organisation play in the community?
- What assumptions do I have about the members of this community and how has that impacted my work with them?
- Did I use the knowledge and skills that I intended to in my work with members of the community? What did I not do so well? How can I do better?

Reflexive questions:

- What are some learnings about the community that challenge my assumptions and narratives of the community? How does these learnings influence my work with them in future?
- How comfortable am I with the role that the community sees me/my organisation playing? Why?
- How does my own experience in my community influence the way I am interacting with this community? Is it helpful/unhelpful?



Areas to Cover in Supervision

What should supervisors provide guidance on:

- **Task-related support:** Tangible and practical guidance on work-related tasks (e.g. walking a supervisee through tasks they are unfamiliar with, helping supervisees prioritise tasks).
- **Encourage reflective practice and critical thinking:** Facilitate exploring and processing of thoughts, feelings and responses to specific situations in their work.
- **Emotional support:** Provide a safe space for supervisees to share their work-related stressors, discuss strategies to better manage workloads and help supervisees prioritise tasks. Supervisors to have regular conversations on self-care with supervisees.

Different types of supervision discussions should be prioritised depending on the supervisee's level of experience and stage of community work.

Reflection Section

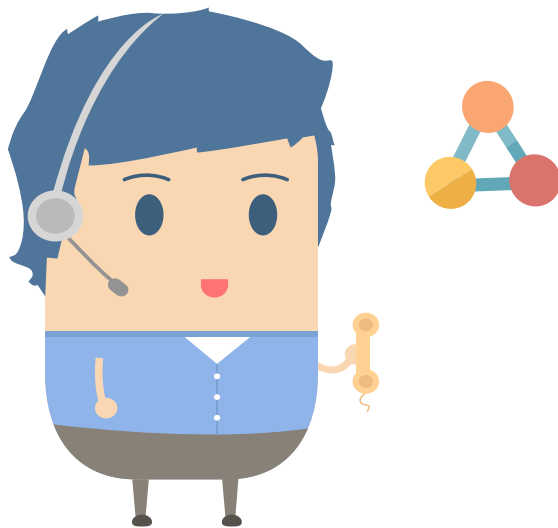
Community is like a garden, it is an organic living thing; if it is neglected, it can overgrow with weeds and suffer decline. Communities must be actively maintained... all this activity is the lifeblood of culture, and this is where the essence of patriotic spirit and a sense of togetherness is born

- Cory Bernadi

Reflective Questions:

- What are the skills that you will need to develop in community work?
- What are some existing skills and competencies that you can tap on in community work?
- What are some challenges that you may face in doing community work? How will you navigate them?

Appendices



Appendix A

1. Sample of a Working Community Process Guide

| Working Community Work Process Guide Sample (not meant to be prescriptive) | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------|---|--|
| Name of Agency: Partnership with: <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Residents from: _____ Neighbourhood <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Informal/ Interest Groups: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Organisations/ Institutions: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Local Businesses/ Associations: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Others: _____ Time Period: _____ to _____ | | | | |
| Discovering, Engaging, & Understanding the Community | | | | |
| Discovering Resources and Assets: | Tasks/ Activities to be implemented | Role of SWPs | Which community work value will be reflected? | Completed (Yes/No)/ Date of Completion |
| Talents, gifts and skills of members of the community | | | | |
| Networks and connections of informal/interest groups | | | | |
| Resources and services of local organisations/ institutions | | | | |
| Hotspots and natural bumping spaces in physical/ natural environment | | | | |
| Contributions of local businesses/ local economies | | | | |
| Other assets | | | | |
| Others | | | | |
| Conduct Needs Analysis/ Identify a Community Priority | | | | |
| Notes | | | | |
| Discover what members of the community care about and are keen to come together to act on | | | | |
| Other Remarks | | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Name of Community Initiative: | | | |
| Leveraging of Identified Strengths, Resources and Assets for Community Building | | | |
| Co-designing the Community Initiatives: | Details | Which community work values /principles will be reflected? | Completed (Yes/No) /Date of Completion |
| Visioning & Planning: Aims and Objectives of Community Initiative | | | |
| Initiated by | <input type="checkbox"/> By members of the community <input type="checkbox"/> With members of the community <input type="checkbox"/> For members of the community | | |
| Implementation Plans | | | |
| Outcomes/ Milestones | | | |
| How are the voices of community members being included in this initiative? | | | |
| Thought Process of SWPs: | | | |
| Empowering and Strengthening Interdependence in the Community | | | |
| Empowering and Strengthening Interdependence: | Was this process reflected in the initiative? (Yes/No) | If so, how was it reflected? If not, what were some difficulties? | Other Remarks |
| Moving from passivity to action | | | |
| Empowering of relationships in the Community | | | |
| Community Ownership: Enlarging the <u>WITH</u> and <u>BY</u> Spaces: | | | |
| What can the members of the community do by themselves? (BY) | | | |
| What does the members of the community need help with? (WITH) | | | |
| What does the members of the community need external agencies to do for them? (FOR) | | | |
| Learning points/ Remarks | | | |

| Evaluation and Reflections: | | |
|---|--------|---------------------------|
| Domains | Method | Results & Learning points |
| Outcome 1 | | |
| Outcome 2 | | |
| Outcome 3 | | |
| Voices of the community | | |
| Any key turning points: | | |
| What were successes and how did it look like? How did the community celebrate the successes? | | |
| Were there failures to be embraced? What were the learning points? | | |
| What would be done differently in future? | | |



- Does the template above fit into the community work project I am planning for?
- What are some things that fit and some that don't?
- What are the things in the template that I might not have information about? Who are the people that I can work with to gather the information?
- Are there any members of the community or stakeholders that I can work on the above with?
- Are there other important information, not captured in the template, that I need to capture?

2. A Community Work Example from SCCFSC

COMMUNITY STORIES

Sports is the New Language of Love - 14 Indus!

I 4 Indus is a place-based neighbourhood group that comprises of youths and adults interested in sports. The group meets weekly to connect with neighbours through sports and keep youths in the area meaningfully engaged.

"Kami gembira melihat kanak-kanak bermain bersama-sama di tempat yang selamat. Kami juga gembira kerana dapat bersama dengan mereka."
(We are happy to see the children coming together to play in a safe place and we can be part of them.)

Sukma and Masita were concerned about their children after a video of their children fighting with other youths went viral online. Like all parents, they want their children to grow up in a safe environment and engage in meaningful activities. Knowing that their children are enthusiastic in playing games, they decided to communicate with the children through sports.

From Badminton to Captain Ball, from Galah Panjang (team games) to soccer, the usual Wednesday Parent-Kid dates have now evolved into movie nights and BBQs. When parents strive to understand their children and speak their love language, relationships strengthen, and miracles happen - their children are no longer fighting in the community or at least they "fight" meaningfully through sports!



START Let's start with what's strong and not what's wrong

Turn problems into opportunities for people to connect

Relationships are built at the speed of trust. Continual engagement and learning conversations are vital in building trust



Look at what communities are passionate about and can offer



Assets - What are resources available that communities want to contribute?



Small acts, big impact! No matter how small, all gifts can be appreciated by others



Bumping places in neighbourhoods are common ground for natural place-based connections



Inclusivity - Who else can we invite into the circle that would contribute to the betterment of the community?



SCCFSC uses the **8 touchstones** below as important elements for community building for the "Sports is the new language of love" story of the i4Indus neighbourhood group. The touchstones are **not meant to be a prescriptive step-by-step method**, but rather important elements that do not need to follow a particular sequence.



TOUCHSTONE ONE: INTRODUCING CONNECTORS TO EACH OTHER AND FORMING A COMMUNITY-BUILDING TEAM

Neighbours (Sukma and Masita) were connected to the group. They are two residents amongst others with good informal connections within their neighbourhood and helped connect other residents to the I4Indus group

TOUCHSTONE TWO: RECRUITING A COMMUNITY ANIMATOR

SWP had insights into the issue of children fighting in the community, gathered concerned residents and animated conversations on what can be done to make things right. The trust that the animator had built through the years helped.

TOUCHSTONE THREE: APPRECIATING THE ASSETS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

This is about discovering what people cared about strongly enough to act on together and what assets existed locally that they could tap into to address shared priorities with their neighbours. The mothers naturally had the gift of cooking, while others were good at organising games. With two of these assets, i4Indus came to light and the group used physical spaces like the badminton court and BBQ pits and had fun together.

TOUCHSTONE FOUR: ENGAGING LOCAL GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

In every community, there are formal and informal associations. They can be stronger transformative power with associations from varied causes coming together for the betterment of the community. I4Indus is an association that saw residents who were interested in sports and bonding with their neighbours came together.

TOUCHSTONE FIVE: BUILDING CONNECTIONS AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

The craft of community building is an intentional one. Community animators and connectors are endlessly curious about how they can better create the conditions by which everyone's gifts can be discovered and received. People who came together for I4Indus forged friendships and connections that saw them engaging and having exchanges outside of the group activity.

TOUCHSTONE SIX: VISIONING AND PLANNING

Many communities create their own visions that weave together the work of members of the community and SWPs. The I4Indus group aimed to reduce youth delinquencies in the community by meaningfully engaging the youths. They also invited and included SWPs into the group and collaborated towards that common cause.

TOUCHSTONE SEVEN: IMPLEMENTATION

Civic actions can start externally or internally. External orientations tend to put collective effort into influencing/leveraging assets that are not local and that are outside community control. Internal orientation by contrast tends to seek to discover, connect and mobilise resources that are local and within community control. The choice is in where to start. In I4Indus, SWPs were intentional in asking what members of the community wanted to do about a concern they had observed and what was within their capacity to implement.

TOUCHSTONE EIGHT: CELEBRATE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Being clear about what is celebrated and the importance of doing this ensures community driven change becomes more visible. If we learn to celebrate the moments and relationships and not the monuments and events, we will see that there are endless opportunities to say thank you in an authentic way. The members of the community came together to celebrate not only occasions like birthday parties and festive events but also the friendships that they had forged and impact they have created in their community.

Appendix B

References

- Burham, J. (2012). Developments in Social GRRRAACCEEESSS: visible-invisible and voiced-unvoiced. In I.B. Krause, (ed.). *Culture and Reflexivity in Systemic Psychotherapy: Mutual Perspectives*. 139-160.
- Forde, C. and Lynch, D. (2014). Critical Practice for Challenging Times: Social Workers' Engagement with Community Work. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 44(8), 2078-2094.
- Hood, C. C. and Rothstein, H. (2000). *Business Risk Management in Government: Pitfalls and Possibilities*. CARR Discussion Paper No. 0 (Launch Paper)
- McKnight, J. L. and Russell, C. (2018). *The Four Essential Elements of an Asset-Based Community Development Process: What is Distinctive About an Asset-Based Community Development Process*. Asset-Based Community Development Institute.
- Mini, P. K. P. and Sathyamurthi, K. (2017). The 'Community' in 'Community Social Work'. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 22(9), 58-64.
- Kretzmann, J. and McKnight, J. L. (1996). Assets-based community development. *National Civic Review*, 85(4), 23.
- Peck, M. S. (1998). *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace* (2nd ed.). Touchstone.
- Rothman, J. (1974). Three models of community organization practice. In F. Cox, et al. (Eds.), *Strategies of community organization*. 22-45.
- Rothman, J., Erlich, J. L. and Troyman, J. E. (2001). *Strategies of community intervention* (6th ed.)
- Poppo, K. & Stepney, P. M. (2008). *Social Work and the Community: a critical context for practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Posavac, E. J., & Carey, R. G. (1997). *Program evaluation: Methods and case studies* (5th ed.). Prentice-Hall.
- Reamer, FG. (2001). *The social work ethics audit: a risk management tool*.
- Warren, R. L. (1978). *The community in America* (3rd ed.). University Press Of America.