

Report of:

**Partnerships for Healthier Kansas:  
Making Theory-Based Health Promotion Accessible to Community Leaders**

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**NEED AND APPROACH**

In order for community-based health promotion leaders to improve the health behaviors of their clientele, leaders must use programs based on evidence and grounded on theory. However, not all leaders understand the theory that grounds effective health promotion strategies. Consequently, their application (and likely adaptation) of health promotion programs may not be effective. They may even do harm to the audience they're intended to help.

To avoid this sort of program deconstruction and to help community leaders effectively apply health promotion strategies, leaders should understand basic behavior change theories and their use.

Quality community health promotion is the direct result of eight practices, two of which are related to improved understanding: Those practices are:

1. Build organizational capacity and administrative support
2. Build staff support
3. Ensure the site has a program champion
4. **Provide training and technical assistance**
5. **Develop internal capacity to deliver program**
6. Develop proactive training and technical assistance package
7. Pilot test training and technical assistance package
8. Assess site readiness

Simply stated, In order to improve the quality of community health promotion, understanding must improve (Mihalic, Fagan, Irwin, Ballard, and Elliott, 2002). Thus, Partnerships for Healthier Kansas utilized training, technical assistance and internal capacity-building strategies among Extension agents, school teachers and community PRIDE groups.

Long-term Aims:

- Improve population-based health practices in communities
- Improve overall health of community residents
- Build capacity in Kansas communities to, collaboratively, address social, behavioral, environmental health with quality, relevant, proven and sustained strategies.

Short-term Aims:

- Improve leader knowledge of effective health promotion programs
- Improve leader understanding of public health , theory-driven approaches
- Motivate leaders to apply the public health approach to local health promotion efforts

**RESULTS**

Partnerships for Healthier Kansas has improved the understanding and application of health promotion theory among community leaders (e.g., Extension personnel, public health department volunteer Board members, civic volunteers, school teachers, etc.). Project products include baseline, midterm and post (Axio, reports) assessments, community assessment tools, education modules for on-site training sessions, completion of community-based pilots of materials/training, and web-based

resources (e.g., video modules, handouts, application exercises) that improve the understanding and effective use of health promotion theory.

#### Partnership Outputs/Activities/Products:

Trainings (Jan. 2007 – April, 2008) –

- State Presentation (pilot with teachers) – March, 2007, Wichita, #25
- National Presentation (pilot with peers) – April, 2007, Kansas City, #80
- Resources generated – Six community grants – Jan. 2008 – Oct. 2008, KSRE; Jan., 2008; Feb., 2008; April, 2008; Oct. 2008
- Regional Presentations (community pilots; modules) – Nov, 2007 (Manhattan; #15), Dec, 2007 (Hays; #15), Feb. 2008 (FCS Agents; #55)
- Project completion videos/resources ready for posting to website

#### Training Modules:

1. Understanding health promotion theory and its application to the real-world.  
*Title: Health Promotion: Formula for Effectiveness* – Overview with Elaine Johannes
2. Understanding the public health approach and using population data in decision-making for health improvements.  
*Title: Public Health: Data Helps Define the Problem* with Whitney Lake Thomas, Graduate Research Assistant, School of Family Studies and Human Services, and Ginny Barnard, MPH, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent, Riley County, KS  
*Title: Theory: Focusing on Causes* with Dr. Karen Myers Bowman, Assoc. Professor, School of Family Studies and Human Services
3. Use of evidence-based programs that promote community health (e.g., Walk Kansas).  
*Title: Walk KS: Implementation of Effective Intervention* with Sharolyn Jackson, Family and Consumer Sciences Specialist, and Dr. Mike Bradshaw, Health and Safety Specialist, School of Family Studies and Human Services
4. Planning for effective health promotion programs.  
*Title: Health Promotion Planning: Tracking Effectiveness* with Dr. Elaine Johannes

#### Community Implementation:

Prior to training, participants revealed little experience or understanding of health promotion approaches. Intent to use behavior change theories as well as a public health approach increased from pre to post assessment among training participants.

For implementation, communities were provided the opportunity to apply for small funds to design a health promotion project (based on public health criteria detailed in the RFP) best suited to fit their community. After grant proposals were screened, Glasco, Kinsley, Melvern, Olsburg, Portis, and Stafford were awarded “Get It – Do It!” grants. Each community designed a “Get It – Do It!” project that addressed gaps identified in a community health assessment, and implemented a project to promote health through methods tailored to their community.

- **Glasco’s** Community Engagement in Physical Exercise supported youth walking programs, student designs for historic walking routes, PRIDE partnership with the school’s Learn and Serve program, and summer activities ranging from expanded swimming pool hours to increased exercises at the Glasco Senior Center.

- **Kinsley’s** expanded collaboration with K-State Research and Extension’s Walk Kansas program launched Dairy Carnival Day with schools and introduced Health Rocks activities to local church groups.

- **Melvern's** trail promotion effort made community members more aware of exercise, eating habits, and the variety of walking and biking opportunities in the Melvern area.
- **Olsburg** and **Portis** improved their city park equipment, facilities, and access. Recently, Olsburg received additional support via the Kansas Health Foundation and the Get It – Do It! project was credited for readying the community for this opportunity.
- **Stafford's** Walk America and Bike & Hike with the Birds blended eco-tourism, health promotion, and community networking. The creative collaboration resulted in after-school youth-led health games in the park, increased participation in annual wildlife events, and brought new high school members to the community coalition.

Combined, the six PRIDE “Get It – Do It!” projects reached 988 Kansans of all ages and generated \$36,285 in local “sweat equity” to support the projects. That’s a 2-for-1 return on an investment of \$18,000 in grants.

In her 2008 “Get It – Do It!” report, Joan Northern, Glasco PRIDE, wrote that:  
*“The [Get It – Do It!] concept of each community building its own project to meet its own defined needs conveys a respect that really promotes the will to deliver. Thank you.”*

#### Technical Assistance and Training

Throughout the year, the implementation communities benefited from training and technical assistance. Specifically:

- Jan., 2008 (Salina): training in public health approach, community health ‘best practices’, adult physical activity; each community gave presentations about their project.
- Feb., 2008 (Manhattan): training in youth-adult partnerships, use of public health data, adapting evidence-based programs to real-world contexts; each community learned about and experienced CATCH
- April, 2008 (Rock Springs 4-H Center): training in working with media, public relations to change communities, adopting public health approaches to our own health;
- Oct. 2008 (Wichita; KS PRIDE Day): recognition and project reporting.

#### References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999). *Promoting Physical Activity: A Guide for Community Action*. US Government Printing Office; available through Human Kinetics: <http://www.humankinetics.com/products/showproduct.cfm?isbn=9780736001526>

Mihalic, S., Fagan, A., Irwin, K., Ballard, D., & Elliott, D. (2002). *Blueprints for Violence Prevention replications: Factors for implementation success*. Boulder, CO: University of Colorado, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

National Cancer Institute (2006). *Using What Works: Adapting Evidence-Based Programs to Fit Your Needs*. Available at: [http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/use\\_what\\_works/start.htm](http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/use_what_works/start.htm)

Pfizer Global Pharmaceuticals (2006). *Milestones in Public Health: Accomplishments in Public Health Over the Last 100 Years*. NY: New York.