

Development of an Evaluative Framework for use by First Nations Health Organizations

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About the Project

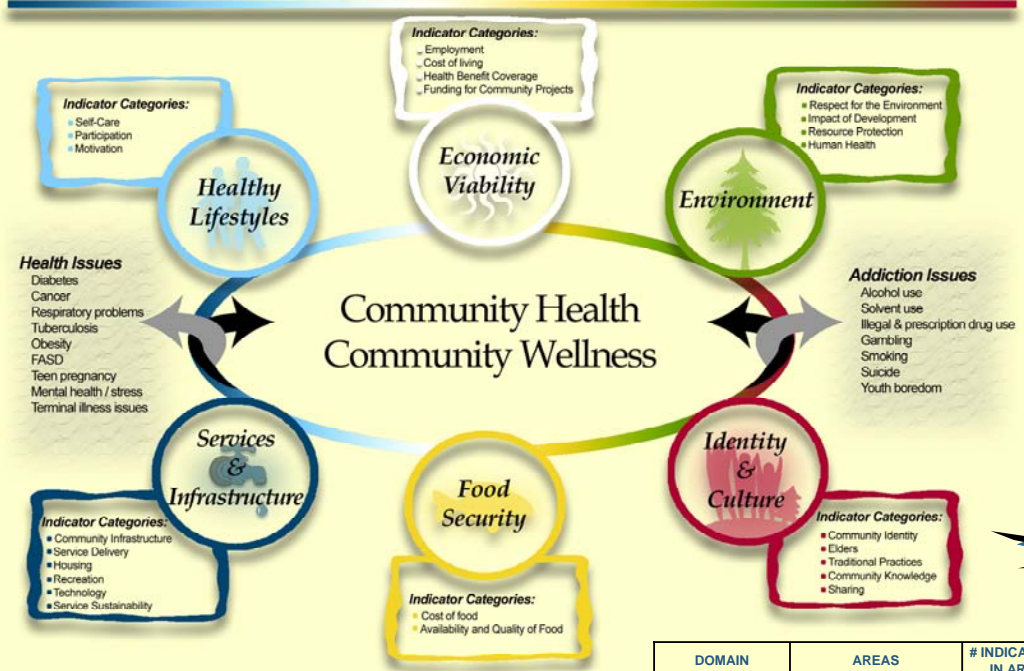
Research Objective: To develop a framework and indicators relevant to First Nations and Aboriginal communities in northern Saskatchewan that will help them plan, track, and evaluate community-based health and human service programs.

Study Design: The study involved community-based health directors from six First Nation communities and three provincial communities in northern Saskatchewan. A collaborative and community based approach was taken in the design of the study, data collection, and interpretation of results. Draft community health frameworks and indicators were developed through a comprehensive literature review. Logic models describing each health program in each of six First Nations communities were also developed to identify a baseline of potential indicators for the new community health framework. Interviews and focus groups were held with community collaborators to revise and refine a final framework and set of indicators. The resulting tool kit was then piloted in one community. Pilot activities included determining the source and extent of existing community level data and identifying gaps in data that would require local initiatives to fill.

Findings: Existing measures and indicators of community health do not necessarily address local priorities for measuring progress on health improvement in First Nations and Aboriginal communities in northern areas. This project developed a new framework for community health and wellness that includes new domains and indicators relevant to our community partners. This poster will focus on the areas of cultural identity, food security, and healthy lifestyles. In some areas, existing indicators and data sources for community level information could be identified. In other areas, existing indicators were identified, however, no community level data could be found. Finally, there are some areas for which indicators still need to be developed. The framework and indicators are presented in a tool kit format intended to be of practical and immediate use at the community level.

Conclusion: Health directors, who have been involved in all aspects of the research process, see the value of the new framework and indicators for planning, tracking, evaluating, and improving the delivery of community-based health services. They also appreciated the depictions of their existing community health programs in the form of logic models. A second phase of this study, which will focus on a more detailed exploration of two community health domains and the development of associated indicators of particular significance to community collaborators, is planned.

Key Domains & Indicator Categories: Community Health and Community Wellness



Domain Descriptions

- Economic Viability:** A state of community self-sufficiency, where there are businesses and economic partnerships to promote a local economy; jobs available to sustain personal and family needs; food, housing and medical services that are affordable; and a sense of optimism when community members consider future developments.
- Environment:** Based on a respect for and commitment to the environment, this domain refers to the knowledge and resources necessary to manage the impact of development, both within and outside the community, and to ensure the environment is protected for future generations.
- Food Security:** Food security is defined as the ability to identify and access nutritious food that will contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Food security takes into account the cost of food, access to nutritious food, use of traditional foods, and the relationship of food to one's health.
- Healthy Lifestyle:** Healthy lifestyles relate to positive personal life choices that include proper diet and physical activity and that build respectful healthy relationships with family and community. It involves making life choices that contribute to and foster the development of positive self-esteem within the individual.
- Identity & Culture:** An ability to convey community history, cultural and traditional practices and language, along with the nurturing of a holistic approach to life and intergenerational relationships; activities that promote community culture and identity are acknowledged as key to developing positive self-esteem and positive self-image for community members.
- Services & Infrastructure:** Defined as the availability and access to services and related infrastructure; respectfully delivered health and human services; adequate and affordable housing, recreation facilities and programming; and specialized services designed to meet the needs of Elders and youth.

Implications for Policy, Delivery, or Practice

Results of this study are targeted to community-based health directors and service providers who are interested in developing evaluative frameworks appropriate to their local First Nations and Aboriginal program and service priorities and needs.

DOMAIN	AREAS	# INDICATORS IN AREA	SAMPLE INDICATOR
Identity & Culture	Community Identity	11	#5 – number and type of community events held
	Elders	8	#16 – Elders leaving community for end of life care
	Traditional Practices	19	#22 – language used in council or assembly
	Community Knowledge	8	#36 – community decisions involving Elders
	Sharing	3	#43 – level of informal volunteering
Food Security	Cost of Food	3	#3 – number of food retailers in community
	Availability & Quality of Food	13	#5 – number of delayed or lost food shipments
			#8 – compensation for unfit shipments
Healthy Lifestyles	Self-care	8	#5 – comfort with disclosing health issues
	Participation	7	#15 – number of Elder/youth activities
	Motivation	16	#17 – number of programs cancelled

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