

Levels of Community Change

Intended Audience:

- Adults (also appropriate for youth ages 14-18)

Lesson Objectives:

Session participants will:

- Identify “levels of community change” that influence health behaviors (based on social-ecological models).
- Identify factors that influence health behaviors at each level.
- Recognize the relative difficulty and potential impacts associated with strategies at each level of community change.
- Explore ways to target numerous levels of change.

Time: 20-50 minutes

Equipment and supplies:

- Game mat or area delineated with lines or ropes. (See page 2.)
- Targets (shaded areas, buckets, boxes, as appropriate)
- Objects to toss to targets (balls, bean bags, coins, etc.) and timer (optional)

Do Ahead:

- Review activity instructions
- Select appropriate scenarios and insert in envelope
- Prepare game area

A game to teach about the Social Ecological Model and Policy, System and Environment Change

BACKGROUND

Social Ecological models recognize that individuals’ choices and behaviors are influenced by numerous, interrelated factors across multiple levels, suggesting that health promotion strategies should target individual change (education), AND social, organizational/ physical environment, and policy changes.

WHAT TO DO

Ask the following questions to help introduce the concept of Levels of Community Change.

Experience: Familiarize participants with the topic by asking...

- To what extent do you think factors beyond your own knowledge and preferences affect your eating decisions? A great deal or not much?
- In what locations do you usually purchase/eat foods?
 - What impacts your own decisions in those places?
 - Who influences which foods are in those locations?
 - What kinds of rules or regulations impact which foods are there?
- Which factors influence your choice to buy or consume nutritious vs. “unhealthy” foods? How often are those factors within your control (mostly, sometimes, or rarely)?

Read the descriptions of each level of change and examples of scenarios (provided) and explain which level(s) each fits in.

Playing LEVELS OF COMMUNITY CHANGE

1. Place tape about 5 feet from the bottom of the game mat.
2. Divide into two teams; form two lines.
3. Have a player select and read a Health Behavior Scenario.
4. After the player’s team agrees on the level of community change most needed to address the scenario, the player tries to toss a coin or bean bag from behind the tape into the square at the level they selected.
5. Optional – Allow an additional chance to toss an object toward the target and score points if the team can describe an action they could actually take related to the scenario.
6. Teams alternate taking turns to toss object.
7. Other Options – Move the throwing line closer to the target each round. Allow “creative” ways (“cheating”) to attain points. Purposely give one team some type of advantage.



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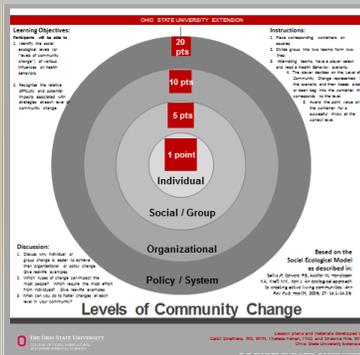
Sources:

1. Stokols D. Translating social ecological theory into guidelines for community health promotion. *American Journal of Health Promotion: AJHP*. March 1996;10(4).
2. Sallis, J, Owen, N and Fisher, E. Ecological Models of Health Behavior, chapter in Health Education and Behavior edited by Glanz, K, Rimer, B and Viswanath, K et al, Edition 4, 2008.

Large/Outdoor Version



Game Mat available at
<http://www.ohio4h.org/books-and-resources/learning-lab-kits>

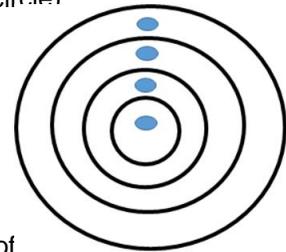


Make it Yourself:

Make your own mat by drawing concentric circles on a large sheet of paper and drawing target zones for each level. Toss coins or bean bags at the targets.

Directions for Activity Area Set-Up: (Without game mat)

1. Lay out a set of four concentric circles to represent the Levels of Community Change (also known as the Social Ecological Model).
2. Choose four targets appropriate for the size of your circles. Ideally, the targets get smaller in size as they move out to larger circles.
3. Label the targets (beginning in the center circle):
 - o Individual Level = 1 point
 - o Group/Social Level = 5 points
 - o Organizational Level = 10 points
 - o Policy/System Level = 20 points



Size Options:

Small/Indoor

- Draw circles on a large sheet of paper or form them on the floor with tape or rope.
- Choose containers for targets (boxes, bowls, etc.) or draw circles that serve as flat targets.
- Toss small bean bags, foam balls, coins, etc.

Large/Outdoor (pictured at left)

- Create large circles with rope on a grassy area or with chalk on a playground area. A "hula hoop" may be used for the smallest circle.
- Choose targets such as 5 gallon buckets.
- Toss tennis balls, large bean bags, etc.

X

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- Why is the individual level target the largest?
- Why is the systems level target farther than the others? Why is it worth the most points?
- Are most of your decisions about health behaviors affected by factors at one level, two to three levels, or all four levels of the model? Give examples.
- Did anything else happen that mirrors real-life? (Was the "playing field" uneven, were the rules bent, etc.)

Generalize:

- Why is individual or group change is easier to achieve than organizational or policy change? Give examples.
- Which types of change can impact the most people? Which require the most effort from individuals? Which are passive? Give real-life examples.
- Are disadvantaged populations affected differently by some change strategies? Give examples.

Apply:

- Name a health issue you are concerned about. How could you encourage change at each level within your community related to that issue?
- How can community groups promote change at all levels?

DEVELOPED BY

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