

# Module 1: Engaging with Your Community

Estimated length: 1.5 – 2 hours

**Environmental Health and Land Reuse Certificate**  
**Module 1: Engaging with Your Community**

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry  
(Created in 2020)

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## Engaging with Your Community: Objectives

- ❑ Demonstrate the ability to create and activate a development community
- ❑ Describe at least two principles of community engagement
- ❑ Describe three community engagement tools that you could use in your work
- ❑ Explain the role, responsibilities, and scope of practice of a development community team member

## Engaging with Your Community: Details

- ❑ Pre-test
- ❑ Post-test: 70% or higher to receive a certificate
- ❑ Create a 4-digit number to put on your pre-test and post-test
  - Memorize the number or keep a written copy.
  - Use the same number on both the pre- and post-test



ATSDR Regional Representative taking a test, ATSDR, 2019

### Engaging with Your Community: Pre-test

- ❑ Pre-test Module 1
- ❑ Put your memorized 4-digit number on the top right-hand corner of your pre-test

### The Role of an Environmental or Health Professional in Land Reuse

- ❑ Your role can be pivotal in engaging the “development community”:
  - Citizens
  - Community planners
  - Stakeholders
  - Schools
  - Healthcare
  - Others
- ❑ You can build the development community’s understanding of—and capacity to support—safe land reuse and redevelopment.

Your role in the development community can set the tone for early community involvement in safe land reuse planning. Your knowledge of hazardous exposures, the environment, and health education may be welcomed in the development community.

### The Role of an Environmental or Health Professional in Land Reuse

- ❑ Set the tone for early community involvement.
- ❑ Put the community first.
- ❑ Your knowledge of hazardous exposures, the environment, and health education may be welcomed.



Image of a Community Meeting (CDC stock image, n.d.)

**Community members can be an asset in identifying potentially contaminated Land Reuse Sites and inspiring action toward cleanup** — or, at a minimum, restricting access to the site. As an Environmental

or Health Professional in the development community, you can set the tone for early community involvement in safe land reuse planning. Your knowledge of hazardous exposures and the environment (and if you are a Health Professional, health education) will be welcomed in the development community.

**The Role of an Environmental or Health Professional in Land Reuse**

- ❑ Assess and understand all **exposure pathways**.
- ❑ Assess the extent of **community exposure to the land reuse site(s)**.
- ❑ Communicate information in **plain language**.

Figure 6.2. Site Conceptual Model—Exposure Pathway Schematic  
Watters, M. Environmental Health and Land Reuse, in Land Reuse and Redevelopment: Creating Healthy Communities (Berman & Whitehead, Eds., 2019)

The ways that people can come into contact with a hazardous substance include:

- Inhalation
- Ingestion
- Direct contact (touching)

When you engage with the community and analyze the site(s), it is crucial to assess and understand all exposure pathways. Exposure pathways are the ways people can come into contact with a hazardous substance. The three basic exposure pathways include inhalation, ingestion, or direct contact. As an Environmental or Health Professional, you can assess the extent of community exposure to the Land Reuse Site by measuring the amount of contact all populations have with the hazardous substance(s) on the site.

It's important to begin the process with a proximity analysis. This analysis can identify individuals who live near the site in question and what, if any, negative effects they feel as a result of their proximity. **It's especially important to understand who is at increased risk from exposure to toxic agents**, often referred to as **sensitive or special populations**, people who might be more sensitive or susceptible to exposure to hazardous substances because of factors such as age, occupation, sex, or behaviors (for example, cigarette smoking). Children, pregnant women, and older people are often considered special populations. Sometimes, low income communities or communities of color are disproportionately impacted by Land Reuse Sites.

### Activating the Community: Who is Affected by Land Reuse Sites?

- ❑ Your community can be an asset in identifying land reuse sites
- ❑ You can learn about community characteristics and sensitive populations



Community member and certified lead based paint expert explaining remediation. Source: Lloyd DeGane, 2018.

The practice of community involvement requires earnest, respectful, and continued attention. To successfully create a collaborative environment, establish clear expectations, communicate effectively and always put your community first. ATSDR has learned the importance of community health considerations and incorporates these needs in their land revitalization activities.

### Knowledge Check #1

#### Which answer is FALSE?

When activating the development community, the environmental or health professional may

- a) Help build the community's understanding of safe land reuse and redevelopment
- b) Describe all potential exposure pathways in highly technical and detailed language
- c) Establish clear expectations
- d) Understand who is affected by the land reuse site(s), particularly special populations
- e) Communicate effectively
- f) Share their knowledge of hazardous exposures, the environment, and health education, where appropriate
- g) Always put the community first

KC #1: **b) is FALSE.** Environmental or health professionals can communicate in plain language to ensure everyone understands the potential exposure pathways. Highly technical and detailed explanations may confuse community members or be hard to interpret.

## Activating the Community: Finding the Community Champions

Find and build **community champions** using these **resources**:

- ❑ **Non-profits and community groups**, e.g., friends of the park
- ❑ **Grants awarded**, e.g., **brownfields grant** – who are the partners and **communities of concern**?



Community champions in Howardville, Missouri.  
Source: ATSDR, 2018.

## Understanding Roles throughout the Process of Engagement

### A community champion

- Lives in the community and is passionate about the community's health
- Engages the community, communicates risks, measures success



A community champion leading a meeting in the Missouri "Bootheel" of far Southeast Missouri. ATSDR, 2018.

## Understanding Roles throughout the Process of Engagement

### Community planner

- Manages logistics of the redevelopment project
- Is involved at each step



Community planners discussing a land reuse site. Source: ATSDR, 2017.

## Understanding Roles throughout the Process of Engagement

### □ Municipal agency representative

- Works for a municipal agency
  - Chapter House
  - City government
  - Other
- Is involved at all steps



A brownfields redevelopment specialist working with the City of Tampa, FL. Source: E. Johnson, 2012

## Understanding Roles throughout the Process of Engagement

### □ Environmental or health professional (you!)

- Provides environmental and health services
- Evaluates and communicates environmental and health risks



An environmental health specialist with a Fulton County health agency. Source: M. Robinson, n.d.

## Understanding Roles throughout the Process of Engagement

### □ Developer

- Is in charge of the development steps of the project, from planning through actual site reuse
- Is involved at all steps, primarily in the redesign



Dan French  
Founder & CEO  
at Brownfield Listings

Source: ATSDR Land Reuse Toolkit for Environmental and Health Professionals, 2017.

In some smaller communities, the developer may be rural U.S. Department of Agriculture, or the community itself.



### Revisiting Your Role with Community Champions

- ❑ Community champions are busy and can use your support!
- ❑ You can become a trusted advisor who provides reliable information about contaminants, risks, exposures, and site redevelopment techniques



### Knowledge Check #2

Which answer is correct?

The community planner is

- a) The person who is qualified to provide environmental and health services to a community
- b) The person in charge of the development aspects of the project
- c) A person living in the community who is passionate about his or her community's health
- d) The person who plans the logistics of the redevelopment project

KC #2 Answer: **d) is correct.** The Community Planner plans the logistics of the redevelopment project.

### Knowledge Check #3

Identify **all** the primary responsibilities of the environmental or health professional in the redevelopment of a land reuse site.

- a) Provide a network of resources, including community outreach, grant writing, staffing, etc.
- b) Conduct a site assessment
- c) Activate the community to make them aware of the site
- d) Conduct environmental cleanup of site
- e) Conduct a community health analysis

KC #3 Answer: **b), d), and e) Conduct a site assessment, conduct environmental cleanup, conduct a community health analysis.** These are the primary responsibilities of the environmental or health professional.

## Methods of Engagement



Images of a community land reuse meeting (ATSDR, 2016).

Community engagement can take time. This meeting occurred in Navajo Nation with multiple stakeholders. It was held after a one-year engagement process about how agencies can jointly manage land use and redevelopment. Some of the most successful projects occur when ample time is allocated to community engagement. It builds trust, collaboration, and cohesion.

## Methods to Engage: Resources

- **ATSDR Communication Toolkit:**  
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communications-toolkit/index.html>
  - Tools to increase your communication skills
    - Guidance for presentations (internal to ATSDR but useful guidelines in general)
    - Community Meeting Guidelines
    - Community Concern Assessment Tool (Module 3)
    - Message Mapping Tool (Module 3)

These are just a few of the tools in the ATSDR Communication Toolkit. We encourage you to check out the full toolkit on your own time at the link provided in this slide. We will discuss presentations and meeting guidelines next.



### PowerPoint Templates

- ❑ Use the **minimum number of slides** possible to keep the audience's attention.
- ❑ Use as **few words** on slides as possible.
- ❑ Use **plain language** as much as possible.
- ❑ Use **relevant visuals** on slides (e.g., maps and photos of the site).
- ❑ **Avoid jokes or humor** which may be misinterpreted to mean you are not taking the situation seriously.
- ❑ **Review** the points on your slides against the **message mapping template, worksheet, and checklist** to evaluate your messaging before delivery.

### ATSDR Communication Toolkit: Community Meeting Guidelines

- ❑ **Develop some understanding of the community.**
  - Demographics
  - History related to environmental issues and health concerns
- ❑ **Invite as many community members as possible.**
- ❑ **Set expectations.**
  - Explain who you are.
  - Explain what you are able to provide.
- ❑ **Be prepared to address basic questions about the contamination and how community members can protect themselves, if needed**

You can also set a timer and go around the room and give everyone a set time to talk. This can keep the playing field level.

### ATSDR Communications Toolkit Community Meeting Guidelines

- ❑ Understand that **community may experience high level of concern even though risk is low. Be prepared** to discuss this.
- ❑ Express **empathy, honesty, and humility** to build trust.
- ❑ Ask for **feedback (phone, email, etc.)** to forge relationships.
- ❑ **Listen.**
- ❑ Use **plain language.**
- ❑ Consider using a **translator**, if necessary.

Empathy and listening skills are very important. People know if you are not “genuine”. Let’s take a look at the Toolkit – **Community Meeting Guidelines**. There are **printouts** on your table. For future reference, you can view these online at this link:

**Touch Base Discussion**

How can you manage a situation where there is high community concern but low risk of exposure?




Image of a Brownfield. Source: Lloyd Oldham, 2014.

What may minimize exposures to site contamination at this site? (Hint: the fence.)

**Methods to Engage:  
Principles of Community Engagement  
(ATSDR, 2011)**

- ❑ Be **clear** about the **goals of the project** and the **populations involved**.
- ❑ **Understand** the **community (culture, economic conditions, social networks, support programs, e.g., healthcare providers or park districts)**.
- ❑ **Build trust, establish relationships, and connect with local leaders**.

There are nine principles of community engagement that we as environmental and health professionals use on a daily basis.

**PROMPT: Read one principle out loud and explain what it means to you:**

1. Be clear about the goals of the project and the populations involved
2. Understand the community (culture, economic conditions, social networks, support programs (e.g. healthcare providers or park districts)
3. Build trust, establish relationships, connect with local leaders

**Methods to Engage:  
Principles of Community Engagement  
(ATSDR, 2011)**

- ❑ Power to create change is **within the community** (not with external entities).
- ❑ All outside organizations **may not share the community's interest**. Reach out **for assistance and partners (local, state, national)**.
- ❑ Respect the **diversity** of the community.

**PROMPT: Read one principle out loud and explain what it means to you:**

4. Power to create change is within the community (not with external entities)
5. All outside organizations may not share your interest. Reach of for assistance and partners (local, state, national)
6. Respect the diversity of the community

**Methods to Engage:  
Principles of Community Engagement  
(ATSDR, 2011)**

- ❑ Mobilize **community assets and strengths** (can do an **asset mapping exercise**).
- ❑ Work together with **all partners** (level the playing field).
- ❑ Understand that **community collaboration** requires **long term commitment**.

**PROMPT: Read one principle out loud and explain what it means to you:**

7. Mobilize community assets and strengths (can do an asset mapping exercise)
8. All partners can work together (level the playing field)
9. Community collaboration requires long term commitment

### Methods to Engage: Community Needs and Vision

- ❑ Consider **long-term sustainability of the community vision.**
- ❑ Lead sessions about the **vision for redevelopment**
- ❑ Identify **assets and strengths.**
- ❑ Vote on **common themes.**
- ❑ Adapt plans that **try to suit everyone.**



Establishing a unified community vision is essential to a successful redevelopment project. You can support your Development Community by leading brainstorming sessions about the vision for redevelopment, finding ways to vote on common themes, and adapting the plan to suit everyone.

It's also important to consider long-term sustainability of the community vision. Because long-term sustainability typically involves discussing complex issues, it can be a challenge for any community or municipality to tackle. The following resources provide helpful approaches and questions to facilitate these conversations.

### Knowledge Check #4

Select all that apply:

Community engagement can be sustained by

- a) Attaining 100% community buy-in
- b) Identifying and mobilizing community assets and strengths
- c) Allowing the community champion to manage the project
- d) Increasing the development community's ability to make decisions and act on them

KC #4 Answer: **b) and d) are correct.** Community engagement can be sustained by identifying and mobilizing community assets and strengths and by increasing the Development Community's ability to make decisions and act.

### Knowledge Check #5

ATSDR's Principles of Community Engagement state that the power to create change lies within the community and not necessarily with external programs and organizers.

- a) True
- b) False

KC #5 Answer: **a) True:** the power to create change lies within the community and not necessarily with external programs and organizers.

### Knowledge Check #6

Select all that apply:

Environmental or health professionals can support the development community by

- a) Leading sessions about the vision for redevelopment
- b) Finding ways to vote on common themes
- c) Adapting the plan to suit everyone
- d) Supporting the development community in all of the above ways

KC #6 Answer: **All of the above.** These are all ways environmental or health professionals can support the development community.

### The Visioning Technique

Help your development community attain a shared community vision by talking about what their ideal environment would look like.

- What would I see?
- What would I hear?
- What would I feel, taste, or smell?

The **Visioning Technique** helps individuals arrive at a shared community vision by getting them to talk about what their ideal environment would look like. Begin by inviting citizens to a collaborative setting, where they'll visually depict their own image of what they would notice in their community if the changes they sought became true. It can be as simple as covering tables with large posters of plans or even blank sheets of white paper and providing colored markers. Ask specifically for images, because they succinctly carry a lot of information. Ask them to describe what your community might look like in the future, **using all of the bodily senses**:

What would I see?

What would I hear?

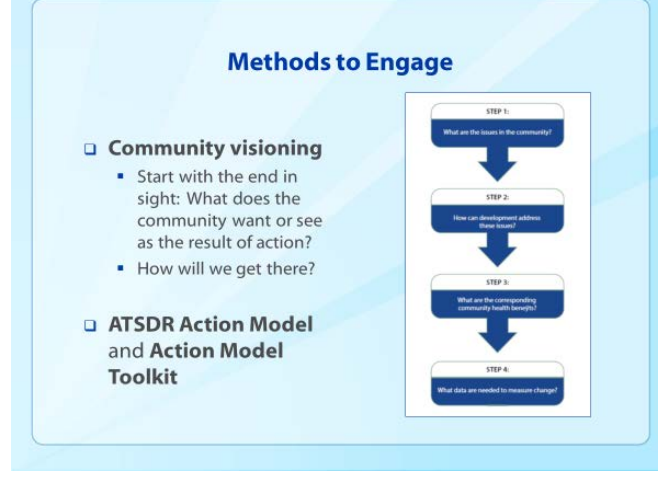
What would I feel, taste, or smell?

According to Ken Meter, a Brownfields & Reuse Opportunity Working Group (BROWN) member from Crossroads Resource Center, the following three questions serve as great thought-starters, but also provide guidance to keep the community and facilitators grounded throughout the process:

How can the development community create an inclusive process?

How can the group set a guiding vision for sustainability for the community?

How will progress toward that vision be measured?



The ATSDR Action Model Toolkit helps the wide range of members of the development process find ways to integrate health into the redevelopment. In addition to municipal agencies, Environmental or Health Professionals, and planners and developers, the community can also use the Action Model to identify common goals or visions and ensure they're incorporated in strategic planning.

Over 40 communities across the U.S. have used the Action Model/Toolkit to help address redevelopment concerns, create a Healthfields redevelopment vision/approach, identify health benefits of the redevelopment, and create indicators to measure improvements in health over time. We have been able to consolidate models across these communities and have created a unique data set of community-derived public health indicators associated with redevelopment.



### The ATSDR Action Model and Action Model Toolkit

- ❑ **The action model process helps members of the development community.**
  - Integrates health into the redevelopment plan
  - Identifies common goals or visions
- ❑ **The model is community-based and can lead to**
  - Improved health and quality of life
  - Reduced risks
  - Boost in community pride

### Methods to Engage: Action Model

- ❑ **Action Model video clip: [Baraboo, Wisconsin Action Model Video](#)**
- ❑ **Where can I find members for my development community?**
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Community centers
  - Organizations (like the 4-H Club, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Salvation Army)
  - Local hospitals and health clinics
  - City Council

It is a good idea to keep an open mind and foster an inclusive process. Development community members may even want to join the project after it has been going for a while. That is OK and helps everyone to feel included and that their ideas are valued.

### Methods to Engage: Action Model

- ❑ **First, form the development community**
- ❑ **Next, address issues**
  - What are the conditions that the development community wants to improve?
  - What would help solve them? How can your development community solve them?
    - Do you know anyone else who might be interested in the project?
    - Search out and include any other community members who are interested.

### Methods to Engage: Action Model

- **Host your first Development Community Meeting:**
  - [Facilitator's Guide for an Action Model Workshop \[PDF - 70 KB\]](#) (printed at table)
  - [Action Model PowerPoint for Workshop \[PPTX - 764 KB\]](#)
  - [Blank Action Model Form \[DOCX - 29 KB\]](#) (printed at table)
  - [Sample Action Model in the Community Health Monitoring Report from the Baraboo, Wisconsin Project \[PDF - 7.4 MB\]](#)

AT YOUR TABLE WE HAVE PRINTED EXAMPLES OF THE FACILITATOR'S GUIDE, THE ACTION MODEL POWERPOINT, AND A BLANK ACTION MODEL FORM. YOU CAN ACCESS THE SAMPLE ACTION MODEL IN THE BARABOO ACTION MODEL REPORT LINK IN THE SLIDE ON YOUR OWN TIME.

### Methods to Engage: Action Model Exercise

Let's look at your hard copies of the **Action Model Toolkit Facilitator's Guide** and **Template** that you can download from the **Action Model Toolkit**.

**Action Model Workshop Facilitator's Guide**

Organizing and leading an effective workshop is key to the success of your Action Model project. Here are some tips on how to plan and run your meeting with the Development Community.

**Prepare for Your Workshop**

**Find a space.** You can usually find an established group or organization that will allow you to meet in their space. Use a conference room, for example. For example, previous Action Model workshops have been held at:

- Libraries
- Local health agencies
- Local hospitals
- Volunteer Army facilities
- Schools

**Advocate your meeting.** See if a member of the Development Community can advocate to your local government. Your city's office of development can be a great resource for this.

ACTION MODEL FORM

DATE	DEVELOPMENT PARTNER	HEALTH ISSUE	IMPACT

Let's take a look at the blank Action Model Template. Take a few minutes to fill in at least 1 or 2 rows of the Action Model. You can use the facilitator's guide for assistance, or we will circulate in the room to provide assistance. We will report out after 5 minutes.

## A Picture is Worth 1000 Words

□ Community members take pictures of things they wish to change and provide a short caption with the photo

□ Pictures can

- Raise awareness
- Evoke emotion
- Create action



Example: Photovoice (see <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/109019819702400309>)

You can lead community projects to document community conditions through photographs and captions. In the example here, youth in a community in Upstate New York documented the lack of playground equipment and benches/tables/garbage cans and presented the photos to their City Council. The result was a new playground and an overall park upgrade.

## Photovoice Example: Niagara Falls, NY



Photovoice Example: Niagara Falls (New York State Department of Health, undated)

In this example, community members compared their bus stop to one in another neighborhood. “We have no shelter or garbage can ... nothing ... we can’t sit down and wait for the bus. They have a shelter, garbage can, and bench at their bus stop”.

### **Community Based Participatory Research**

- **CBPR is a partnership approach to research that involves equitable collaboration between academic researchers, people or groups, and partners that share decision-making power and ownership. These groups typically include**
  - Public health professionals
  - Community-based organizations or groups (e.g., churches, schools, advocacy or policy groups, and social organizations)
  - Community members

### **CBPR (cont'd)**

- **CBPR encourages contribution of expertise from each member of the partnership during every step of the process.**
  - Partners contribute different skills and knowledge.
  - CBPR can overcome potential distrust of the research system.

### **Additional Community Engagement Tools**

- **Health impact assessment (HIA)**
  - Implemented before a project is started to determine whether it will have health impacts
    - E.g., rail corridor development
    - E.g., new hospital
    - E.g., proposed redevelopment plan
- **Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE EH)**
  - A method used largely by health agencies to determine environmental impacts in communities

### Knowledge Check #7

Select the best answer:

The visioning technique for building a shared community vision begins by

- a) Interviewing community leaders
- b) Encouraging community members to talk about what their ideal community might look like
- c) Conducting role playing with different members of the community
- d) Telling the community what is best for their land reuse site

KC #7 Answer: Bullet 2 – Getting individual to talk about their ideal community is the Visioning Technique for building a shared vision

### Knowledge Check #8

The community engagement tool “**Photovoice**” asks community members to take photos of things they wish to change and provide a short narrative to explain each photo.

- a) True
- b) False

KC #8 answer: **a) True**, Photovoice has community members take pictures of things they wish to change and include a short narrative.

### Knowledge Check #9

Select all that apply.

The ATSDR Action Model Toolkit is intended for use by

- a) Municipal agencies
- b) Environmental or health professionals
- c) Planners and developers
- d) Community members
- e) All the above groups who can use the action model to identify common goals or visions and ensure they are incorporated into the strategic planning for the land reuse site.

KC #9 answer: **e) All of the above**. Everyone can use the Action Model.

### Review Your Slides

**Post-test is next**

- ❑ 70% required to pass
- ❑ Can take it multiple times
- ❑ Test is homework for tonight (open book)

### Thank you!

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