



Community Readiness Assessment!

Contribution by Maria Griffin

In year 1 and 3 of your cooperative agreements, each of you completed a Community Readiness Assessment, or CRA, to see if your community was ready to participate or become engaged in learning your language. Now that you are in year 5, it's time to conduct the CRA for its third and final time.

We do have some new people on board, so I thought I would take some newsletter space to talk about the CRA and the Community Readiness Model, as well as how it can be used on a regular basis.

What is the Community Readiness Model?

The Community Readiness Model (CRM) measures the

- Efforts and activities,
- Resources,
- Knowledge, and
- Attitudes

of community members and leadership in order to assess a community's level of readiness to take action on an issue. The CRM uses five (5) key dimensions.

1. Community knowledge of the issue
2. Community knowledge of efforts
3. Community climate about the issue
4. Leadership
5. Resources

The CRM comprises several key components, of which you may be familiar.

1. Receiving a set of survey questions
2. Interviewing key respondents using the survey
3. Scoring the interviews
4. Calculating the readiness score
5. Developing a plan of action

For the NLCC cohort, this means that you are asked to measure the efforts and activities, number of resources, community knowledge, and community attitudes about learning your language across the educational continuum.

What should NOT be expected from the model?

- The model can't make people do things they don't believe in.
- Although the model is a useful diagnostic tool, it doesn't prescribe the details of exactly what to do to meet your goals. The model defines types and intensity of strategies appropriate to each stage of readiness. Each community must then determine specific strategies consistent with their community's culture and level of readiness for each dimension.



What CAN be expected from the model?

The model can help you identify the community's stage of readiness to change...whether it be for language, suicide prevention, diabetes management, etc. By following the key components listed previously, you can discern which of the nine stages (see image below) your community falls in its readiness to move forward in addressing the issue.





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The stage number doesn't really have much meaning unless you pair a stage with each of the 5 key dimensions. Each dimension can be at a different stage, which each of you experienced in years 1 and 3 of the CRM that you conducted. For example, the table below shows each dimension, a readiness level score obtained from the survey, and a readiness stage aligned with the readiness level score.

Dimension	Readiness Level	Readiness Stage
Community knowledge of the issue	3	Vague awareness
Dimension/Score Analysis: Community members have only vague knowledge about the issue (e.g. they have some awareness that the issue can be problem and why it may occur).		
Community knowledge of efforts	3	Vague awareness
Dimension/Score Analysis: A few community members have heard about local efforts, but know little about them.		
Community climate about the issue	2	Denial/Resistance
Dimension/Score Analysis: Community believes that this issue is a concern, in general, but believes that it is not a concern in this community or that it can't or shouldn't be addressed.		
Leadership	2	Denial/Resistance
Dimension/Score Analysis: Leadership believes that this issue is a concern, in general, but believes that it is not a concern in this community or that it can't or shouldn't be addressed.		
Resources	4	Preplanning
Dimension/Score Analysis: Current efforts may be funded, but the funding may not be stable or continuing. There are limited resources identified that could be used for further efforts to address the issue.		

When you implement the CRM for year 5, please remember that numbers can increase or decrease. The stages only measure how ready your community is for language and if it is ready to change. It is NOT a reflection on how well you are doing in implementing your project objectives.

If your number has decreased since year 3, look at your plan of action. Were you able to conduct all the activities? Did an outside element not included in your plan affect your activities? What can be changed in your plan to increase the community's readiness to engage in language?

If your number increased since year 3, again, look at your plan of action. What activities were well-received? Can you identify which activities were embraced by the community? Do have additional data collected that can provide you with lessons learned to further improve your engagement with your community?



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You can use the CRM for other “communities.” For example, if you conducted a focus group and want to know more about a subset of that focus group, go ahead and conduct a CRM for that group. Readiness is community-specific, so feel free to use the knowledge and experience in conducting a CRM and apply it to other communities that engage in language revitalization.

If you want to continue this conversation, or if you have questions, feel free to contact Cree at cree@sisterskyinc.com, Jim at jim@garybess.com, or Maria at maria@sisterskyinc.com.

Resource:

Plestad, B. A., Jumper-Thurman, P., & Edwards, R. W. (2014). Community Readiness for Community Change (Community Readiness Model handbook 2nd edition). Retrieved from University of Alaska, Anchorage, Institute of Social and Economic Research: <https://iseralaska.org/static/akpfs/Community%20Readiness%202014.pdf>