



# Sikh Awareness Society

“Supporting the Youth & Strengthening Families”

## Conduct a Community Assessment

A community assessment can give you a clear picture of what’s going on in your community. It can help members of your community agree on why it’s important to focus on youth and how to best address problems.

A well-documented assessment also can be used to persuade elected officials, funders, and other key groups to support your work.

A comprehensive community assessment will help you identify:

- The problems you would like to address in your community;
- Where those problems occur;
- Which youth and families are most affected by those problems; and
- What resources and strengths your community has to address those problems.

A community assessment also will provide a snapshot of current conditions from which you can later measure the success of your efforts. It will help you gain support and credibility for your efforts

## How Do You Conduct a Community Assessment?

While the idea of conducting a community assessment may seem like a lot of work, it actually follows a straightforward process. This guide will walk you through that process and provide you with tools to make things a bit easier.

Remember, this is not something you should do alone. Building a community partnership comes first. Bring together people who have an interest in youth, will provide ongoing leadership, and will be champions for this effort. These people may include your faith and community leaders, local business owners, media and, most importantly, families and youth themselves. Take advantage of existing community resources and bring together people with different views, experiences, and skills. Also, be aware that people are most successful in changing their lives only when they are truly ready to change. The same is true for communities. As you build your partnership and conduct an assessment, keep an eye on the feedback you receive. There are many factors to determine readiness, such as the community’s support, the scope and size of the problem, and the resources you have to draw on. As a result of your assessment, you may find that your community is ready to move ahead, or you may identify areas to work on before you can launch your initiative for youth.

- Step 1: Establish the What, Where, and Who
- Step 2: Learn More About the What, Where, and Who
- Step 3: Identify Resources in Your Community
- Step 4: Analyse and Learn From the Data You’ve Collected
- Step 5: Develop a Plan of Action
- Step 6: Share What You’ve Learned

### Step 1: Establish the What, Where, and Who

Which indicators are of most concern to your partnership?

Where would you like to concentrate your efforts?

Who? Is there a specific population you would like to focus on?



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## Step 2: Learn More About the What, Where, and Who

After you have established specific goals for your work, you'll need to gather as much information on the issue or population you're addressing as you can.

## Step 3: Identify Resources in Your Community

- The services and programs that exist in your community (faith-based services, voluntary organisations/programs, etc.);
- The financial resources your community has
- The material resources your community has (e.g., technological resources, equipment, space and supplies);
- The human resources your community has (e.g., staff, volunteers); and
- The training and technical assistance that is needed and available and how to access these resources.

## Step 4: Analyse and Learn From the Data You've Collected

- What youth/community problems can be identified based on the data?
- What are the strengths of the community in addressing these problems?
- What geographic areas are most affected by these problems?
- How did the data compare with your initial perception of the problems?
- How did the data change your understanding of these problems?
- What are the underlying factors that contribute to these problems (what risk factors are most prominent)?
- What are the underlying factors that can help solve these problems (what protective factors are most available to help)?
- What additional data do you need to better understand the scope of these problems?

## Step 5. Develop a Plan of Action

After you have analysed the data, develop a plan of action based on what you learned. This plan should identify the issues you want to address, the strategies you will use to tackle those problems, the coalition partners who can help in implementing the chosen strategies, and the outcomes you intend to achieve. Here are some questions to help guide your plan of action:

- What target population do you want to serve and help?
- Which indicators are you trying to change?
- Which organisations and programs are already in place serving that need or population?
- How will your new programs fit with what is already there?
- What do you need to implement those programs (e.g., funding, training, and technical assistance)?
- Who can provide that support?
- How can you determine the success of your plan?

## Step 6: Share What You've Learned

Planning, implementing, and sustaining a new community initiative requires the participation and support of the whole community. You have the best chance of success if you share what you've learned through your assessment with the greater community.

Create a report of your assessment's findings and recommendations and share it with the community by holding community



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forums, or advising community leaders. Invite participation, input, or feedback, as appropriate.

Here is one possible outline for your community assessment report:

1. **Introduction:** State why you performed an assessment. Tell what you set out to do and how you went about doing it. Summarize the information that you have to share.
2. **Key Findings:** Present the major findings from your assessment and the central problems that emerged.
3. **Additional Factors:** Present the associated risks that were identified. Speak about the community perceptions that will need to be considered in addressing these problems.
4. **Strengths and Resources:** Map out the resources that are available in the community to address these issues.
5. **Action Plan:** Lay out your plan of action. The plan should include, as specifically and comprehensively as possible, the strategies you will implement to address the needs you uncovered.
6. **Measures of Success:** Propose the ways you will determine the success of the implementation of your plan.
7. **Challenges:** Identify the challenges to be addressed in order for this effort to be a success.
8. **Conclusions:** Present your conclusions, and invite your audience to get involved.