



MODULE 8

# QUALITY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS





**MODULE 8 OUTCOME:**

*Leaders contribute to the delivery of community-driven programs and events.*

## **MODULE 8 – QUALITY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

- 8.1 Introduction to Recreation Programming
- 8.2 Community-Driven Recreation Programming
- 8.3 Programming Resources, Revenues and Expenses
- 8.4 Programming Considerations
- 8.5 Ensuring a Positive Experience for Participants

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Ensure community-driven programs and events meet the needs of both individuals and the broader public good.
- Identify strategies for making community-based programs accessible and inclusive.
- Describe planning steps that result in community-driven programs and events.
- Describe financial management activities (budgeting, reporting, etc.) of programs and special events.
- Know where to access resources to support program delivery in Northern communities.

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION TO RECREATION PROGRAMMING

*“Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015).*

This broad definition of recreation includes a wide range of active and passive, formal and informal, activities and programs that incorporate physical activity, sport, arts, dance, fitness, cultural and heritage activities, events and festivals.

Recreation programming is usually thought of as the more formally organized and directly delivered recreation and sport opportunities in a community.

Programming includes after school programs, community games, arts and culture, special events, physical activity programs and promotion, and other activities that appeal to a mix of interests, ages and abilities.

### A SUCCESS STORY FROM CARMACKS *(aud1)*



Cindy Underhill



While it is understood that each community is unique and priorities will be different, the [Framework for Recreation in Canada \(pdf1\)](#) suggests five goals and related priorities that help communities maximize recreation’s potential for individual, community, economic and environmental benefits (ISRC & CPRA, 2015).

1. Foster active living through physical recreation.
2. Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.
3. Help people connect to nature through recreation.
4. Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build caring communities.
5. Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.



Effective recreation leaders recognize that formal as well as informal programming requires leadership from the community. In the field of recreation, there are rarely sufficient human, financial and physical resources to meet all a community's needs and demands. Community recreation is successful when local residents are engaged throughout the planning process and when parents, youth, coaches and volunteers take on leadership roles.

As described in [Module 6 \(mod6\)](#), whenever recreation planning occurs, it is important to engage and involve citizens and stakeholders. Moreover, recreation leaders need to promote the concept of leisure as a right of all community members as well as the importance of recreation education and leisure literacy. When they work together, the potential for recreation to improve quality of life, protect the environment, strengthen families, support healthy and active lifestyles, and ensure diversity-friendly and safer communities becomes a reality.



## 8.2 COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RECREATION PROGRAMMING

The remoteness of most Yukon communities creates unique challenges for recreation programming and events, challenges that are not experienced in urban areas. However, Yukon's natural environment and the passion Yukoners demonstrate for taking part in outdoor activities bring unique opportunities for recreation programming.

In the past, recreation leaders typically determined programs and events using a model that reflected what they knew about community needs, interests, trends and available resources. Leaders would apply their knowledge and experience designing a slate of programs to deliver. Using this approach, a recreation leader begins planning at Step 7 of the process shown in the following illustration.

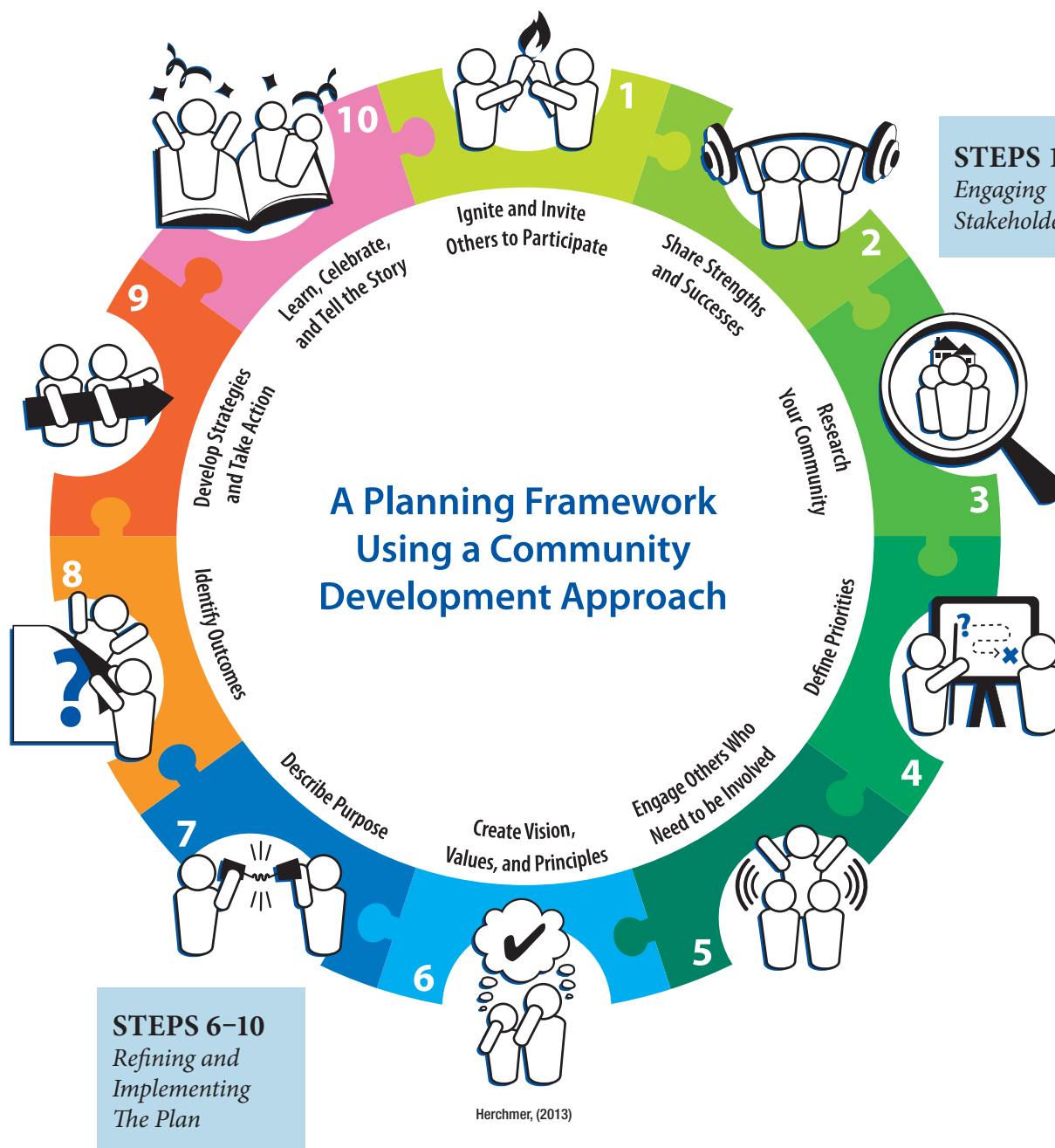
Of course, when planning begins at Step 7 and is done by one leader, the process moves much faster. Although this type of approach could lead to meaningful programs and good community participation, it is more likely to result in activities and experiences that do not meet a community's diverse needs, have little chance of sustainability, and result in the same group of people participating and volunteering.

Sometimes it is necessary to plan and implement programs and events quickly and leave the responsibility to one recreation leader. However, this is not always an ideal approach to planning.

An ideal approach uses all ten steps, builds a sense of community ownership, engages the community, involves diverse stakeholders, and builds from organizational or community assets. Local residents are knowledgeable about their communities. Citizens and stakeholders can contribute to making decisions, and when engaged, will participate in designing and implementing meaningful and relevant programs and events.

As introduced in *Module 6 (mod6)*, a 10-step planning model (Herchmer, 2013) provides a framework that results in community-driven programs and events. When a community development approach is used, and Steps 1 through 10 are implemented, the process may take longer. However, the results are almost always meaningful, relevant and sustainable. Regardless of the approach selected, successful programs result from an investment in planning with the community, not just for the community.

At first glance, ten steps may appear intimidating. However, once the model is understood and put to use, the need for each step will be appreciated. With use, this will become an intuitive approach to programming and planning community recreation. The following pages describe the importance of each step and how to put each into place.



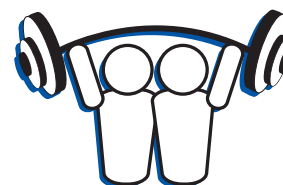
*A Recreation Programmer may start at Step 7 to implement a program but, beginning at Step 1 is much more likely to generate "buy-in" from the community.*

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO PLANNING

<b>STEP ONE</b>	<b>IGNITE AND INVITE OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE</b>
<b>Involving others from the beginning ensures diverse and innovative thinking about the program or event.</b>	
<p>Invite others to be involved in helping to plan and implement your program(s), event(s) or other initiatives.</p> <p>Consider whether you need to plan for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one program or special event;</li> <li>• a cluster of programs for a specific target audience (e.g. youth, seniors); or</li> <li>• a specific type of interest (e.g. cultural, arts, nature, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>Host a small informal meeting or chat individually with others in your community.</p> <p>Keep the number of people you involve small, but engage those who enjoy and are good at examining the “big picture” and like creating new and different ways of doing things.</p> <p>The people you need to involve at this point are likely those who serve the same target audience or have expertise or resources that would support the program or event you are considering.</p>	



<b>STEP TWO</b>	<b>SHARE STRENGTHS AND SUCCESSES</b>
<b>This step helps identify and access new resources from potential partners (e.g. time, talent, dollars and in-kind contributions).</b>	
<p>An asset-based approach identifies the strengths and successes a community already has and builds from there.</p> <p>Instead of responding to a lack, need or problem in the community, this approach recognizes a community’s strengths. Look for support within the community rather than relying on outside “experts”.</p> <p>Seek the assets (e.g. skills, talents, passions or resources) each individual or organization can contribute.</p> <p>For example, is there someone who has a passion for art who can volunteer once a week during your after school program? Is there unused space in a church basement for a preschool program? If high school students need volunteer hours to graduate, can they help with the Christmas Craft Fair?</p> <p>Start looking for resources in your conversations with the people you identified in Step 1.</p>	







### STEP THREE

## RESEARCH

Research helps to reduce duplication of programs, services and events within the community and the re-invention of a program that may have already been developed elsewhere. When we avoid re-inventing the wheel, we can make better use of scarce resources (e.g. volunteers, grants).

Involve participants in researching and gathering information.

The kind of information needed depends on whether the planning is for (a) one program or special event, or (b) a cluster of programs for a specific target audience or interest.

If planning for one program or event, find out whether or not there is an interest and a need. Collect examples of similar programs or events from other communities. Gather information about programs being offered by other organizations and programs and events that have been delivered in the past.

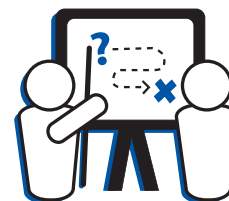
If planning for a cluster of programs for a specific target audience (e.g. youth) or interest (e.g. arts and culture), you will need a broader range of information. This could be done using surveys, one-on-one conversations, public meetings, etc. You may need to:

- Develop a community profile to identify who lives in your community by age, gender, special interests and barriers to participation. Click here ([pdf11-6](#)) for a template.
- Create a list of the programs, talents and other assets that already exist in your community. Use this template ([pdf11-7](#)) from Manitoba's Recreation Director's Handbook.
- Approach local associations, governments, service clubs, churches, schools, businesses, etc. to determine what is being offered and when, who (age and gender) and how many participate, and the successes that have resulted.
- Find out what people are interested in, what they would like to experience, and what talents they can share.

In this step, think about how recreation programs and events can best serve the public good. For example, are programs needed to help create a stronger sense of community, reduce obesity, promote culture, engage youth, etc?

Keep in mind that recreation leaders need to address community needs, issues or trends rather than react to the wishes of specific stakeholders.

STEP FOUR	DEFINE PRIORITIES
<p><b>This step clarifies the type of program(s) or event(s) that will provide the greatest return for local efforts and resources.</b></p>	
<p>The first three steps can feel messy and unclear. However, at this point ideas, priorities and direction will begin to emerge. The small group involved will be able to describe the priorities even though you may not have the details about how it will be put into place.</p> <p>Take some time to write down and share the priorities that are emerging. This helps to identify who else needs to be involved, the scope of the plan, and the resources needed.</p>	



STEP FIVE	ENGAGE OTHERS WHO NEED TO BE INVOLVED
<p><b>Engaging others who need to be involved ensures community ownership for designing and implementing the program or event rather than assigning responsibility to one paid staff person. This step also contributes to the development of partnerships and collaboration.</b></p>	
<p>Quality programs and events require knowledge and resources from other individuals, organizations, funders, businesses and sectors.</p> <p>Up to this point in the process, only a general direction has been determined. It is now important to “go wider” and involve others to develop the program or event details.</p> <p>For example, you may have determined that your priority is to fill a gap because there are no youth programs or because almost all recreation programs have been focused on sport. Your next step is to engage others to generate ideas for specific youth and/or non-sport programs and events (e.g. dance, music, fitness, etc.).</p> <p>A useful metaphor is to think of this as it relates to pouring concrete. A frame has been built to contain the cement; however, when participants and other organizations are invited to be part of the next step, it is still wet enough that they are able to write their own ideas in it.</p> <p>In other words, involve participants in designing the details of the program or event and how to implement it. Involving them at this stage means they are more likely to make the future direction their own.</p> <p>Engaging others leads to staff, volunteers, organizations, businesses and other partners working together. It also increases opportunities for more partnerships and collaboration between individuals, organizations, funders and businesses.</p>	





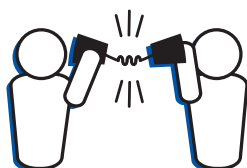
## STEP SIX

## CREATE THE VISION AND VALUES FOR THE PROGRAM OR EVENT

**A vision is needed for inspiration and will make your community want to be part of the program or event.**

By this time, a positive and ideal vision of the program or event has emerged. Rather than one person's vision, it expresses the group's or community's possibilities of an ideal future for the program or event.

Communicate the vision through a description of what you want it to become and the impact you anticipate it will make. It should resonate with everyone and make them feel proud and excited to be part of something worthwhile and much bigger than themselves.



## STEP SEVEN

## DESCRIBE PURPOSE

**The purpose of the program or event is needed to provide clarity. It is typically one sentence that can be used in marketing and social media materials as a concise and accurate description.**

A purpose or mission is the reason for the program or event. It describes its function, often becomes the public description, remains constant, and is simple enough to be repeated by every individual involved.

Determine the purpose by answering three questions. Then, combine them into one sentence:

1. What key benefit or outcome is delivered by this program or event?
2. Who is it for?
3. How will we do it?

For example, if these three questions were applied to an afterschool program for children, it might look like this:

1. Our community's children will reach their full potential
2. For Youth in Grades 6 - 8
3. By providing an after school program.

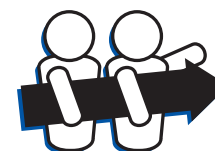
The resulting purpose statement might be:

*We will support our community's children to reach their full potential by providing an after school program for youth in grades 6 to 8.*



STEP EIGHT	IDENTIFY OUTCOMES
<b>Outcomes explain why the program, event or initiative is important, and the impact it has on the individual and/or the broader community.</b>	
<p>Outcomes are the desired results or impact of a program, event or activity. They are about individual, organizational and community change, and the differences that result from your work.</p> <p>For individuals, outcomes can include change in knowledge, status or condition, behaviors, attitudes, values or skills.</p> <p>For example, an after school initiative could deliver these <a href="#">Sample Outcomes (pdf28)</a>. At a broader level, outcomes can deliver social, environmental and economic benefits.</p> <p>Any activity can have more than one outcome, and some may even be unanticipated. However, identifying desired outcomes is essential for successful planning.</p> <p>Outcomes should answer one of two distinct questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will stakeholders and community have that they don't have now? or</li> <li>• What is lost if this is not done?</li> </ul> <p>Always plan with the end (outcomes) in mind.</p>	

STEP NINE	DEVELOP STRATEGIES AND TAKE ACTION
<b>This step operationalizes or makes the program, event or initiative happen (e.g. marketing, staff, volunteers, risk management, budgeting, etc.).</b>	
<p>Strategies are broad actions that move us toward the vision, purpose and outcomes for the program or event. In the previous after school example, enrichment and recreation, small group tutoring, and mentoring are strategies as they are longer-term activities providing a general direction.</p> <p>Strategies start from where the individual, organization or community is and moves them towards the outcomes wanted in the future. They recognize and address the challenges that prevent the achievement of the desired outcomes.</p> <p>Strategies are implemented by developing action steps, roles, costs and timelines. See this <a href="#">Program Planning Checklist (pdf29)</a> to find out what details are typically included. There are also checklists for planning special events (<a href="#">pdf30</a>).</p> <p>Remember, an action plan needs to list all the tasks that are to be completed, when they will be completed, and by whom. Refer to Manitoba's <a href="#">Recreation Director's Handbook (pdf11-8) (pdf11-9)</a> for more detail.</p>	




**STEP  
TEN**
**LEARN, CELEBRATE AND TELL THE STORY**

**Step 10 helps to measure the difference your event, program or initiative has made in the community as well as how it could be improved.**

It is always important to review and renew your plan and to discuss the program or event with stakeholders and participants.

Holding a meeting to reflect on the successes and challenges brings about learnings, stories and reasons for celebrating. It also leads to new outcomes and strategies for continuing to move forward. Participants are inspired and energized by what has been achieved.

Documenting your learnings, stories and reasons for celebrating ensures an ongoing record of your program or event, a review and evaluation of what you have done, and strategies for improving the next plan. This documentation can be recorded in various ways (e.g. written report, video, attendance records, self-appraisals, observations, discussions and/or questionnaires).

It is important to critically and honestly consider the information collected and what it may or may not mean. The results can be used to enhance or improve current programs and plan new ones. Always record results of this process as things may be forgotten or distorted over time.

Celebrate often! Create fun and new ways to celebrate successes and the completion of major milestones or activities.

*Asking Questions That Matter...and Some Tools to Answer Them (pdf21)* is an excellent toolkit for community-based program evaluation designed for Yukon service providers.

For a sample program plan and forms (registration, photo release, waiver, and feedback form) that can be adapted, download the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon's *Nordic Walking Leaders Guide (pdf31)*. The Manitoba *Recreation Director's Handbook (pdf11-10)* also includes sample program forms and templates.

Review this list of considerations *(pdf32)* to help you ensure successful programs and events, and this document *(pdf11-11)* for a range of programming ideas.



## 8.3 PROGRAMMING RESOURCES, REVENUES AND EXPENSES

As described in [Module 3 - Funding and Budgeting \(mod3\)](#), a budget is critical to ensuring your program or event operates in a financially responsible manner and is sustainable.

Budgets are usually the responsibility of management, but ideally recreation leaders, whether staff or volunteers, should have input and/or responsibility for the budgets of the programs they lead. Program and event budgets need to consider operating expenses as well as anticipated income or revenue sources. This sample [Budget Planning Worksheet \(pdf33\)](#) provides examples of potential expenses and income.

Program operating costs might include staff wages, equipment, materials and supplies, and perhaps transportation. Check with your supervisor to see if your budget also needs to include insurance and office supplies.

Program income may come from the recreation operating budget or you may need to raise money through grants, fundraising, fees and in-kind services. If you charge fees, make sure you have a policy in place for those who cannot afford to pay to participate.

For more information on handling revenues and expenses, please refer to [Module 3 \(mod3\)](#).

While there is usually good access to resources for recreation programming in Northern, rural and/or remote communities, it can take time and skill to access them. Module 3 describes a variety of sources for financial and non-monetary resources for recreation programming.

You may decide to charge fees for your program to help recover the cost of materials and wages. Keep in mind that fees will not recover all costs. Fees posing a barrier to participation necessitate finding other ways to cover program expenses.

Be creative and look for a variety of resources, not only cash, to support your program. Other resources may include volunteer time, in-kind contributions of materials or use of a facility, and programs offered by Yukon Special Recreation Groups and Sport Governing Bodies.

When cost is a barrier to participation, Canadian families are supported through programs such as Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Kid Sport. In Yukon, the [Kids Recreation Fund \(url7\)](#), administered by Sport Yukon, provides funding for children from lower income families to participate in recreation and sport.

[RHEAL Leaders \(url34\)](#) (Rural Healthy Eating Active Living) is a Yukon program that provides funding through short-term contracts to local recreation leaders who deliver active living programs in rural Yukon communities.

## 8.4 PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

Recreation leaders who have been involved in planning, delivering, and evaluating multiple recreation programs know that no two programs are alike. Characteristics of participants, availability of volunteers or other resources, the focus on different target groups, interests, and priorities of funders or managers constantly influence how we plan for and implement recreation.

### A SUCCESS STORY FROM HAINES JUNCTION (aud8)



Lia Fox

This section of Quality Programs and Events describes some recreation programming considerations (e.g. age, ability, priority, etc.). Each brief description is accompanied by a list of resources designed to provide further information and guidance for recreation leaders.

### *Specialized Programming*

Recreation planning and programming may target a certain demographic. Age is often used as a basis for program design because abilities, attention span, interests, etc. change as people grow and develop. Although it is important to plan for age-appropriate activities, it is just as important to program recreation which brings people of different age groups, interests and backgrounds together. Ensure recreation programming has a mix of activities and events, some of which target specific ages and interests and others that bring the community together and strengthen relationships.

When planning for specific age groups, keep in mind that participants of different ages will seek different outcomes. As a result, the focus and activities offered need to be appropriate. Manitoba's [Play Leadership Training Manual \(pdf34-1\)](#) includes information about planning for different ages. The Manitoba [Recreation Director's Handbook \(pdf11-12\)](#) includes characteristics and activity tips for different age groups.

### *Youth*

Although it is often challenging to program recreation opportunities for youth, it is well worth the effort. These experiences can further develop skills that will help them in their adult life and in the workforce. Recreation programming must involve youth to generate ideas as well as to plan, implement, and evaluate activities and events.



*The Community Recreation Handbook for Northern Saskatchewan (pdf12-6)* explains the importance of developing strategies to engage youth in recreation programming as participants, leaders and volunteers. The *Youth Engagement Toolkit (url35)* is a user-friendly resource from British Columbia designed to support and strengthen the practice of engaging and involving youth. *Bridging Silos in Aboriginal Communities (vid6)*, presented by Isabelle Aube, explores a model where all departments work together for the greater good of the youth of the community.

Youth programs and leadership development are the responsibility of Yukon Government's Youth Directorate. *BYTE (url36)* (Bringing Youth Towards Equality) is a nonprofit organization focused on empowering youth throughout Yukon and Canada's North. BYTE offers a variety of opportunities for youth development (e.g. workshops, projects, youth leadership training, etc.).

### **Seniors and Elders**

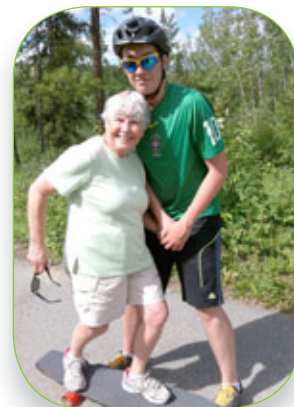
The increase of people over the age of sixty across Canada is now evident in Yukon as well. Recreation and active living support healthy lifestyles for seniors and reduce the incidence of chronic disease and pain. Long winters and limited public transportation pose barriers to participation for this group. The Active Living Coalition for Older Adults (ALCOA) is a national nonprofit organization that promotes a society where all older Canadians lead active lifestyles. In Yukon, ElderActive Recreation Association (ERA) serves Yukoners over the age of 55 encouraging active lifestyles through participation in recreation and sport.

### **Inclusive Recreation**

As described in *Module 6 - Planning for Recreation (mod6)*, inclusive recreation means it is easy for everyone to participate should they choose to do so. As programming (planning and delivering recreation programs and events) needs to be inclusive, the following resources provide useful information about inclusion.

The Manitoba *Recreation Director's Handbook (pdf11-13)* offers tips for inclusive programming and information about different types of disabilities. Parks and Recreation Ontario offers a pre-recorded webinar, *Creating Inclusive Programs for Diverse Communities (vid7)*. Yellowknife Association for Community Living offers an easy-to-read "how-to" guide for social and recreational inclusion (*pdf35*).

The *Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (url37)* supports Canadians with disabilities to lead active, healthy lives. To better understand inclusive recreation programming, work through their online training tool, *Moving to Inclusion (url38)*. *Active Living After School: How to for After School Programs (url39)* also offers eight steps to inclusion for children and youth with a disability.



Everybody Gets to Play™ is a Canada-wide initiative led by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association to make recreation more accessible for children living in low-income situations. The [Northern Supplement to Everybody Gets to Play™ \(pdf7-2\)](#) introduces barriers to recreation participation across the North and includes a list of [Success Factors \(pdf7-1\)](#) that can help leaders plan and deliver more inclusive and accessible recreation programs. [The Northern Links \(url40\)](#) website offers a First Nations, Inuit and Métis Supplement to Everybody Gets to Play™.

There is no shortage of creative strategies across Yukon to ensure that everyone gets to participate.

- The Watson Lake Recreation Board has a scholarship fund set aside for coaches and families to access covering the cost of fees and equipment.
- Skates and helmets are available at no cost for ice rink users in some communities.
- Goalie equipment and other gear are sometimes owned by the local hockey association and loaned to children and youth for the season.
- The Winter Active for Life Equipment Lending Library, a partnership between RPAY and Cross Country Yukon, offers loans of snowshoes and cross country skis for seasonal use in communities.
- Liard First Nation covers the cost of downhill skiing passes for their children and youth at Mount Maichen.
- Some communities (e.g. Mayo) have policies that ensure all children's activities are offered free of charge.

*[How to engage people who need recreation the most.](#)* Discover how to generate interest and break down some of the barriers to participating in recreation. Watch the video and put your own creative thinking to work.

### ***Recreation and Active, Healthy Lifestyles***

Although reports from the [Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute \(url41\)](#) show Yukon children as slightly more active than other Canadian children, only a small percentage meet Canada's guidelines for physical activity. Twenty-five percent of Yukon children are not active outside of school hours (DataPath Systems, 2010) and girls living in rural Yukon demonstrate the lowest levels of physical activity (Freeman, Saab, King & Gropp, 2011). Statistics are similar for Yukon adults. Interestingly, Yukon has more of a split between a very active group in the population and a very sedentary group.



Recreation leaders need to encourage citizens to embrace physically active lifestyles. *The Yukon Active Living Strategy (pdf2)* provides rationale for increasing physical activity levels and identifies priorities for encouraging Yukoners to be more active. Regardless of the type and target of recreation programs, all leaders need to consider how to get people moving more.

Healthy eating supports an active and healthy lifestyle. Yukon Government's *Pathways to Wellness (url29)* offers tips and ideas for healthy lifestyles supported by healthy eating, physical activity, happiness, etc.

Refer to the sampling of resources below to help you promote, design and offer recreation programs that foster an active, healthy population. Be creative, get people up and moving, and build opportunities for physical activity into all programming.



*ParticipACTION (url42)* promotes Canada's physical activity guidelines and the importance of play.

Come Meet the Challenge! *Physical Activity and Nutrition Initiatives in Aboriginal Communities: A Resource Guide (pdf36)* was developed by the National Indian and Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization. It provides suggestions and examples for designing and delivering physical activity and healthy eating programs in an indigenous context.

RPAY's *Healthy Living Menu of Workshops (url43)* offers workshops that train local community leaders to deliver programs such as fitness and Nordic walking in their own communities.



The YMCA developed *Raising Healthy Kids: Activity Guide for Recreation Leaders* ([pdf37](#)) that provides 32 ready-to-use asset-building activities, eight activity sheets, eight newsletters, and six handouts that encourage elementary-age children to eat healthy and be physically active.

### ***The After School Time Period (ASTP)***

The after school time period (ASTP) has recently emerged as a priority in response to low levels of physical activity and increasing incidence of obesity among children and youth.

Most children get about half of their total daily physical activity between the hours of three and six o'clock. However, during these hours, the average child is sedentary for 107 minutes and moderately to vigorously active for only 14 minutes (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2011). Recreation programming during the ASTP can improve this statistic by providing structured opportunities for social and emotional learning as well as encouraging more physical activity. This fact sheet ([pdf38](#)) provides more information about the benefits of after school recreation programs and why they are important.

Active After School is a project of the *Canadian Active After School Partnership* ([url44](#)) (CAASP). Together, a number of partners are strengthening and spreading quality active after school programs across the country. The CAASP website provides extensive resources for program and activity planning.



The Canadian Active After School Partnership provides a variety of videos for *Training After School Program Staff* ([url46](#)).

There are a variety of resources that may help build on the strengths, talents and energy of Aboriginal youth. Look around for those that offer suggestions for designing and delivering culturally-relevant, after-school programs.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada developed *Cool Moves™* ([url47](#)) in response to the growing health crisis threatening Canada's children. Cool Moves™ provides leaders with fun activities and healthy recipes that can be integrated into after school and other programs. This YouTube video ([vid9](#)) explains Cool Moves™ and the five resources that are available to download and use.

## 8.5 ENSURING A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of community-driven planning and delivery of recreation programs, activities and events is to ensure participants and communities benefit and experience positive outcomes. A positive participation experience requires planning, safety, an enthusiastic and caring leader, and positive interaction with the leader and other participants.

A positive experience is much more likely when the principles of good communication are followed. Leaders are role models and need to:

- use appropriate language (e.g. no swearing),
- be empathetic and understanding,
- demonstrate patience with all participants,
- help people to feel welcome and included,
- understand how to solve problems and resolve conflict, and
- use positive child guidance strategies to address misbehaviour.

Manitoba's *Recreation Director's Handbook (pdf11-14)* offers suggestions for effective verbal and written communication, behavior management, effective conflict resolution and problem solving.

#### 5 STEPS TO PROBLEM SOLVING

- Step 1. Recognize and define the problem. What are the facts?  
How extensive is it?
- Step 2. Brainstorm possible solutions.
- Step 3. Assess the alternatives. What would happen if you tried  
the different alternatives?
- Step 4. Decide on the best alternative and go for it!
- Step 5. Evaluate what happens. Did it work? If not, go back to step 3  
and try again.

(Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, 2008)

Managing a group of children and handling those who misbehave takes patience and perseverance. Recreation leaders who do not have experience with groups of children can find some behavior overly energetic or challenging. Two videos, *Building Positive Relationships with Children and Youth in After School Programs (vid10)* and *Supporting Children and Youth with Challenging Behaviors (vid11)*, offer suggestions for building positive relationships with children and ensuring great experiences for all participants.

Saskatchewan Sport's Resource Manual for Sport Leaders includes a section titled *Positive Play with Children (pdf40)*. This section is worth downloading as it describes the characteristics of quality communication, how to set and communicate expectations for positive behavior, strategies for building self-esteem in children, ways to handle difficult behavior, and the use of achievement awards.

The Manitoba *Play Leadership Training Manual (pdf34-2)* is another useful resource for recreation leaders who work with children. The manual includes strategies for managing misbehaviour and positive behavior, preventive discipline techniques, tips to communicate with children, guidelines for establishing rules, and ideas for planning programs that support good behavior.

It is important that recreation leaders set and maintain consistent standards of behavior for children. However, it is also important to focus on the whole child and not only the behavior. Recognize the strengths and qualities of each child and point these out. Reinforcing what a child does well strengthens good behavior, builds confidence and increases learning. Reinforcing positive behavior also limits those that are undesirable.

Understand that multiple factors can impact behavior. Children experience traumatic events at home, mental health issues, and physical/intellectual disability or sensory impairment. These challenges can influence behavior resulting in hitting, tantrums, yelling or complete lack of engagement. Your ability to support these children effectively will have a significant impact on the positive outcomes they, and the other children in your program, experience.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a lifelong disability resulting from exposure to alcohol before birth. FASD can result in a range of mild to severe cognitive, behavioral, physical and sensory disabilities. Recreation leaders will benefit from understanding what FASD is and the way in which it affects behavior. *[FASD: A Guide to Awareness and Understanding \(pdf41\)](#)* provides basic information about FASD for a variety of readers and provides strategies for effective communication. More information on FASD is available through *[FASSY, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon \(url48\)](#)*.

