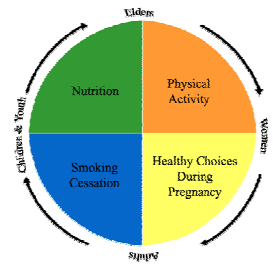




Strategies for Wellness Gatherings MNBC Act Now Projects



Gatherings provide a unique opportunity to exchange information between health stakeholders and participants. Gatherings provide a process to develop consensus, strengthen understanding between stakeholders and establish supportive partnerships and environments for all concerned.

The underlying assumption is that these activities will lead to the following short term outcomes:

- ✓ increased stakeholder (partners and Metis community) receptivity and engagement
- ✓ greater availability of Metis specific health promotion materials and programs; and
- ✓ greater community skill in delivering health programs

The underlying theory is that these short-term outcomes will lead to the longer term goals of:

- ✓ greater sustainability of Metis health promotion programs and services;
- ✓ increased use of Metis health promotion programming;
- ✓ enhanced Metis community independence in health programming; and
- ✓ greater sensitivity to the Metis culture in provincial health promotion policies

In turn, these will lead to the ultimate vision of:

- ✓ increased life expectancy
- ✓ improved quality of life
- ✓ improvements in infant health and longevity, and
- ✓ increased Metis control over health

In planning your gathering you should consider how the event can promote physical activity among participants. Is it by identifying/addressing barriers to activity, increasing participant knowledge of the importance of physical activity or building participant's confidence in their ability to increase their physical activity.

Once you have determined the focus of your gathering you can begin planning your event. Your Regional Health Authority, Aboriginal Services Branch¹ is an excellent resource and should be a primary contact in planning your gathering (or other Act Now project). Letting them know what you are planning will open the door between your community and the Aboriginal Services Branch. They may offer to participate on your planning team or provide suggestions regarding guest speakers or other resources. In addition to the health authority

¹ A list of Regional Health Authority, BC Yukon Heart and Stroke Foundation and Canadian Diabetes Assoc. contacts is available at www.mnbc.ca - click on the Health tab and follow the prompts to get to "Contacts"

you may want to contact the local branch of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Diabetes Association, the Arthritis Society and community recreation centres.

Evaluation is an important part of any planning process. The desired outcomes are largely determined by the focus of your gathering and what you hoped to achieve. Gatherings may seek to:

- ✓ Introduce participants to new forms of physical activity
- ✓ Increase participants understanding of the importance of physical activity
- ✓ Identify how physical activity can impact academic performance
- ✓ Identify strategies to increase access to activity centres
- ✓ Initiate or sustain a wellness advisory committee, walking or other group

The following should be considered when evaluating gatherings:

■ Reach - Who did the gathering reach?

– e.g. Collecting information on the attendance and age groups of participants

■ Effectiveness - How effective was the gathering at meeting its aims and objectives?

– e.g. What did the participants learn about physical activity, body mass index or local recreation facilities?

■ Take Up – Was the gathering a catalyst to the community developing a wellness committee or forming an exercise group? Did the participants increase their contemplation to become physically active as a result of the gathering?

■ Partnership – Did the gathering result in new partnerships with health promotion stakeholders, facilities or other organizations/groups?

The MNBC Act Now Coordinator is available to answer questions and support you in the development of your MNBC Act Now project.

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