



Things You Can Do in One Hour or Less

Understanding your community is the first step to begin breaking down barriers.

You could look up a community profile that tells you information such as population trends, income levels, education levels, ethnicity and cultural make up, family structure, and employment profiles (to name a few dimensions).

However, understanding your community takes more than just numbers on a piece of paper. First-hand experiences, as expressed by community members themselves, help you gain a richer understanding of the barriers that may prevent them from participating in physical activity.

Here are eight things you can do in under an hour each week to get to know your community better. Schedule it into your day timer if you need help making it a habit.

As you drive to or from a meeting, you can:

1. Actively notice who is in the neighbourhoods and places that you drive by.
2. Stop at a park, local food store, strip mall, laundromat or thrift store for a quick walk about.
 - Ask yourself: Is who you see reflective of who you serve?

In five minutes, you can:

3. Chat with one new person each day or week. Keep the conversation casual; introduce your role in the community and be honest... let them know you want to learn more about the community you work in.
 - Make things interesting by setting a staff challenge. At the end, share with each other who you met and what you learned about the community.
4. "Google" the website of a local community organization that you don't currently work with. Find out what they do and think about what connections may be possible. Remember to keep a list somewhere!

In half an hour, you can:

5. Host a tour of your organization. Invite a group to visit and share information on what your organization does. A lot can be learned from the questions you are asked. Remember to introduce your frontline staff!

In one hour, you can:

6. Set up a meeting with a service provider that you don't already have a relationship with to share information about your organizations.
7. Go to an existing group meeting or class and introduce yourself and your role in the community. Extend an invitation to drop-by and say "Hi!"
8. Bring a map of your neighbourhood to a local gathering place, such as the food bank or a play group. Strike up a conversation by asking people to draw the places that are most important to them.



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