

Supporting Communities in Suicide Prevention



#TxSP23

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Community Engagement Defined

Community Engagement

The process of **working collaboratively with and through** groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations **to address issues affecting the well being of those people.**

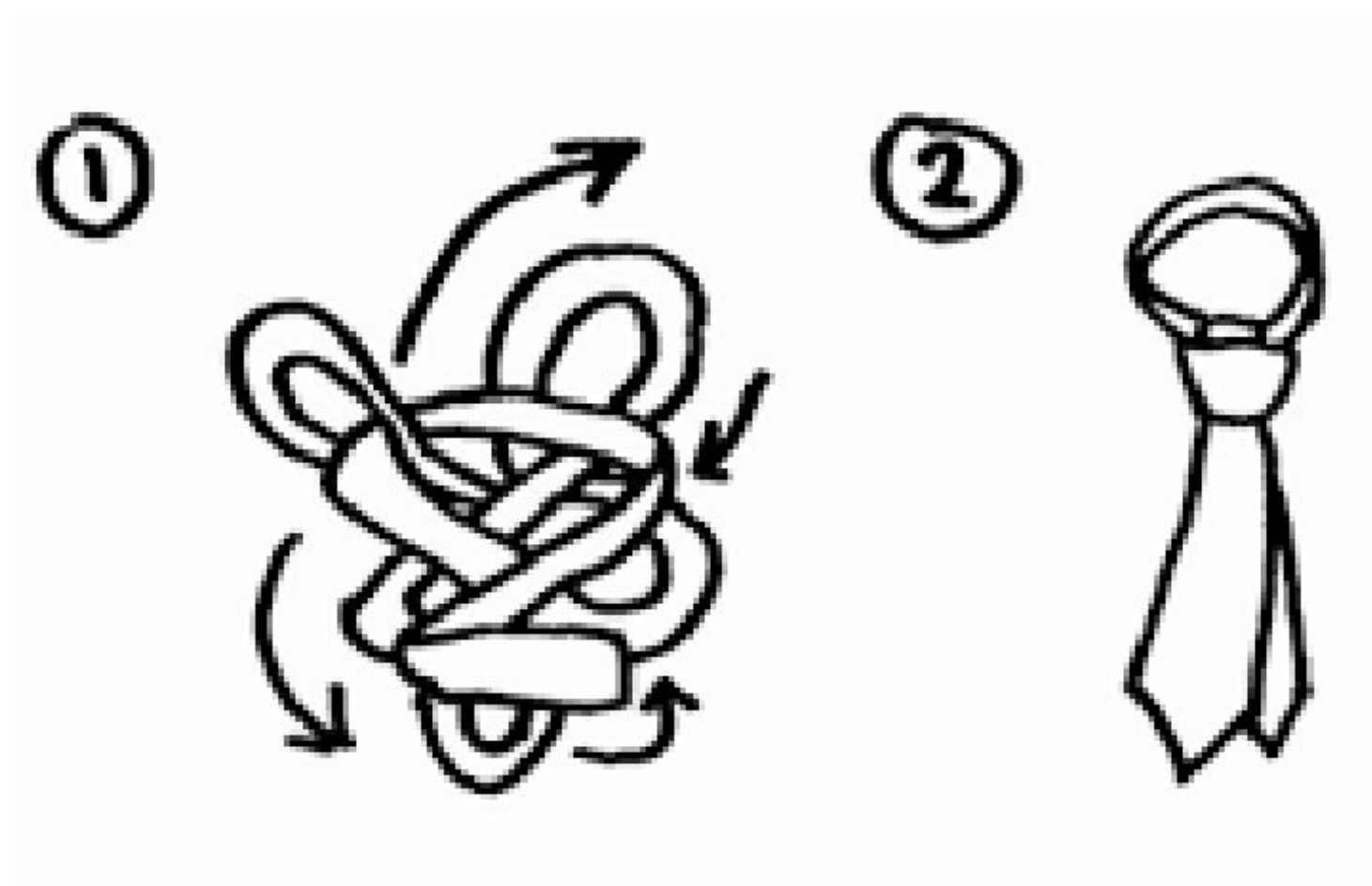
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Principles of community engagement (1st ed) Atlanta (GA): CDC/ATSDR Committee on Community Engagement; 1997

EPISCOPAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

Why it Matters

- Relationships Matter & Community Voices Matter
- Can help move us away from creating technical solutions to adaptive (systemic) issues, gets to the root of the issues.
- Moves us to participatory decision-making that can uncover and mobilize community assets, strengths, and resources that would have been otherwise overlooked

How it is done



Principle of Community Engagement

Before starting a community engagement effort...

1. **Be clear about the purposes or goals of the engagement effort and the populations and/or communities you want to engage.**
2. **Become knowledgeable about the community's culture, economic conditions, social networks, political and power structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experience with efforts by outside groups to engage it in various programs. Learn about the community's perceptions of those initiating the engagement activities.**

For engagement to occur, it is necessary to...

3. **Go to the community, establish relationships, build trust, work with the formal and informal leadership, and seek commitment from community organizations and leaders to create processes for mobilizing the community.**
4. **Remember and accept that collective self-determination is the responsibility and right of all people in a community. No external entity should assume it can bestow on a community the power to act in its own self-interest.**

For engagement to succeed...

5. **Partnering with the community is necessary to create change and improve health.**
6. **All aspects of community engagement must recognize and respect the diversity of the community. Awareness of the various cultures of a community and other factors affecting diversity must be paramount in planning, designing, and implementing approaches to engaging a community.**
7. **Community engagement can only be sustained by identifying and mobilizing community assets and strengths and by developing the community's capacity and resources to make decisions and take action.**
8. **Organizations that wish to engage a community as well as individuals seeking to effect change must be prepared to release control of actions or interventions to the community and be flexible enough to meet its changing needs.**
9. **Community collaboration requires long-term commitment by the engaging organization and its partners.**

Community Engagement Continuum



| Outreach | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Shared Leadership |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|------------------------------------|
| We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |

Promise to Community

Collaborative Continuum

CDC Model

Himmelman's
Collaborative
Continuum

Outreach

- Networking

Consult

- Coordinating

Involve

- Cooperating

Collaborate

- Collaborating

Shared
Leadership

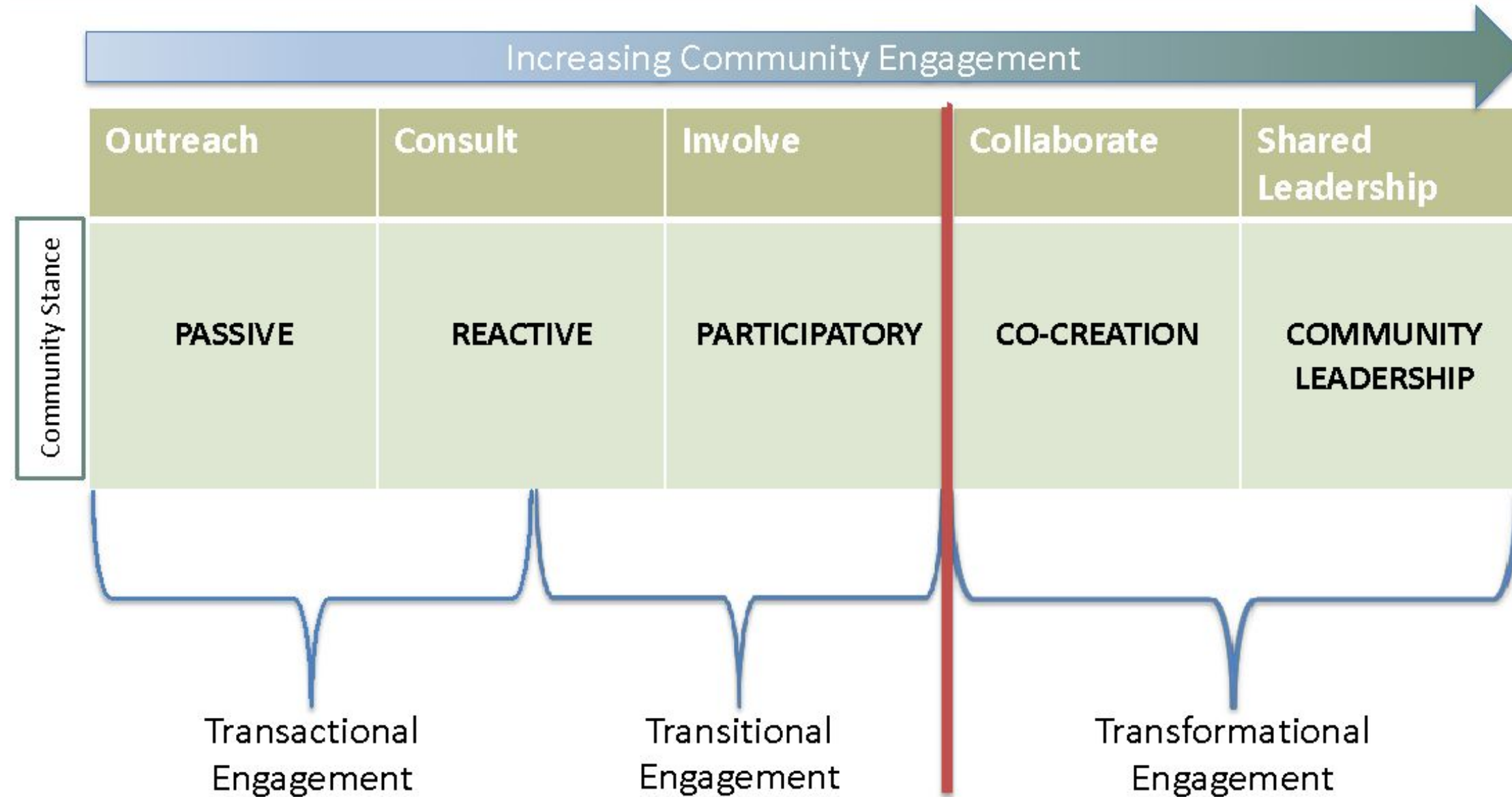
Shared Leadership



What Makes a High-Functioning Collaborative?

- **Shared Purpose** and passionate members
- **Shared Leadership** (not held by an individual or single organization)
- **Action oriented** to drive effort toward the common goal
- Members feel **trust and respect** one another
- Membership is **diverse and inclusive**
- **Structure developed** to assist and sustain

Community Engagement Continuum



Modified from Hashagan, S.: 2002, Models of Community Engagement (Scottish Community Development Centre, Scotland).

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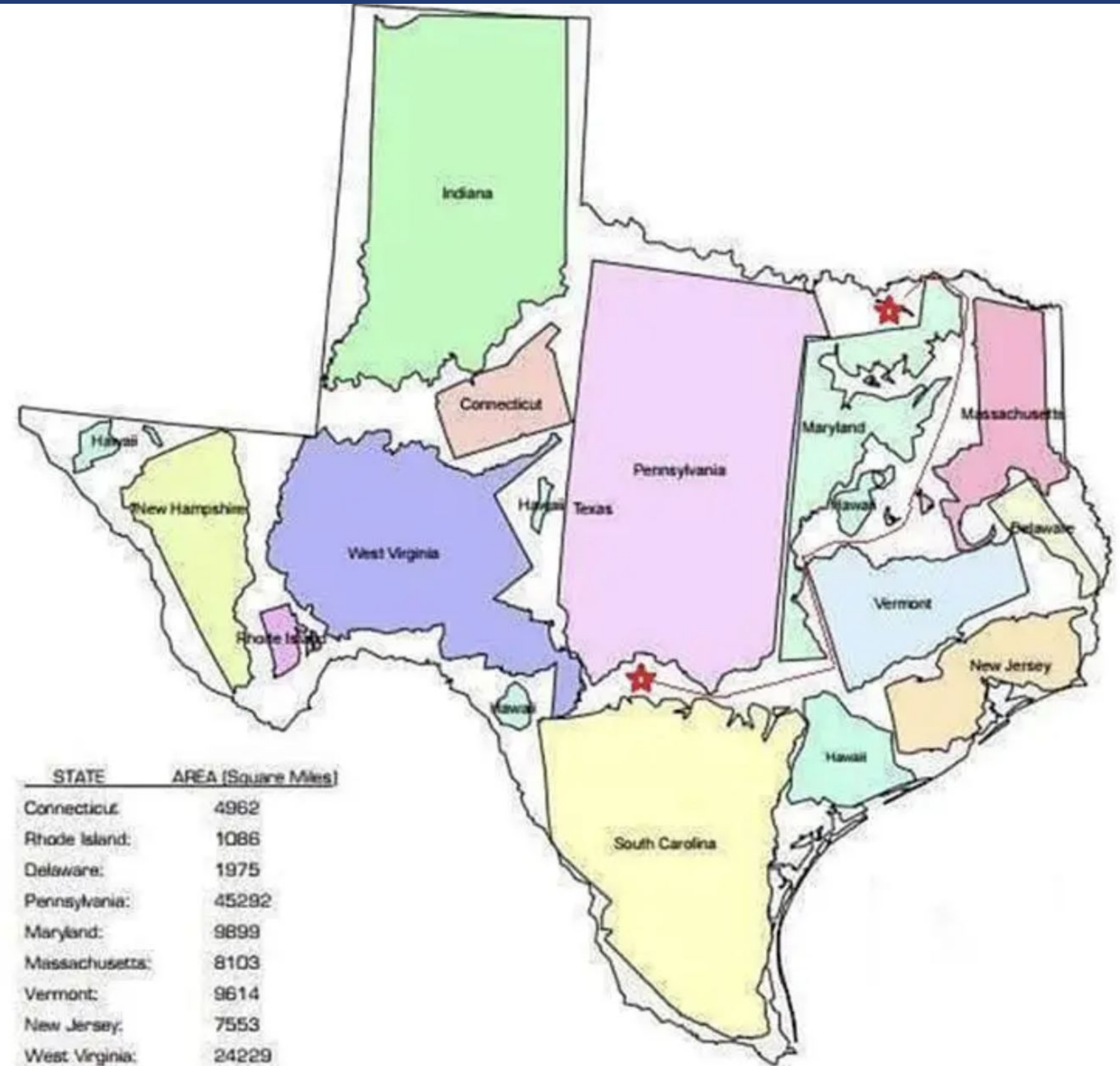
Texas Suicide Prevention Council

The Importance of Local Coalitions



THE TEXAS CHALLENGE? GEOGRAPHY

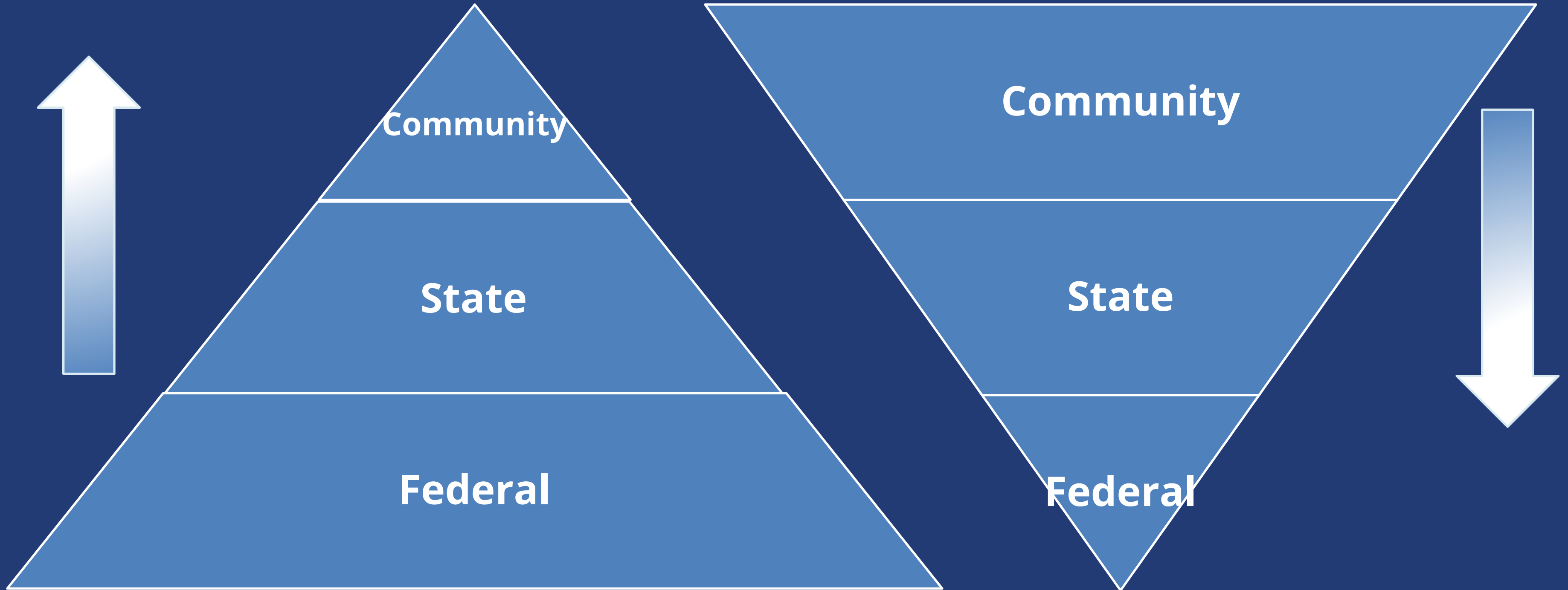
Of the 160 million acres encompassing Texas, 130 million are classified rural.



| STATE | AREA (Square Miles) |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Connecticut | 4962 |
| Rhode Island | 1086 |
| Delaware | 1975 |
| Pennsylvania | 45292 |
| Maryland | 9899 |
| Massachusetts | 8103 |
| Vermont | 9614 |
| New Jersey | 7553 |
| West Virginia | 24229 |
| Indiana | 36183 |
| Hawaii | 8429 |
| New Hampshire | 9266 |
| South Carolina | 30941 |
| TOTAL: | 195,532 sqmi |

How funding flows:

Where
Texans
intersect:



Texas Suicide Prevention Council

2020

- No local coalitions reported funding

2021

- No local coalitions reported funding

2022

- 2 received funding

Roadmap For Impact

In 2001, 10 communities informally came together to draft the first Texas State Plan for Suicide Prevention.

Their mission:

- Create, support and empower Texas communities;
- Advance suicide prevention education through local and state policy;
- Implement community-based priorities;
- Enlist local communities and organizations; and
- Support state agency and legislative action for suicide prevention.



**CREATE A PIPELINE OF BEST PRACTICE
SUICIDE PREVENTION ASSETS TO LOCAL
COMMUNITIES**

Texas Suicide Prevention Council

140 entities working together to improve suicide prevention outcomes:

- Statewide Partners
- Local Coalitions
- SMVF Partners
- Higher Education Partners



Texas Suicide Prevention Council

Collaboration and
Capacity Building

Texas State Plan
for Suicide
Prevention

Training and
Symposia

Outreach

Coalition
Development

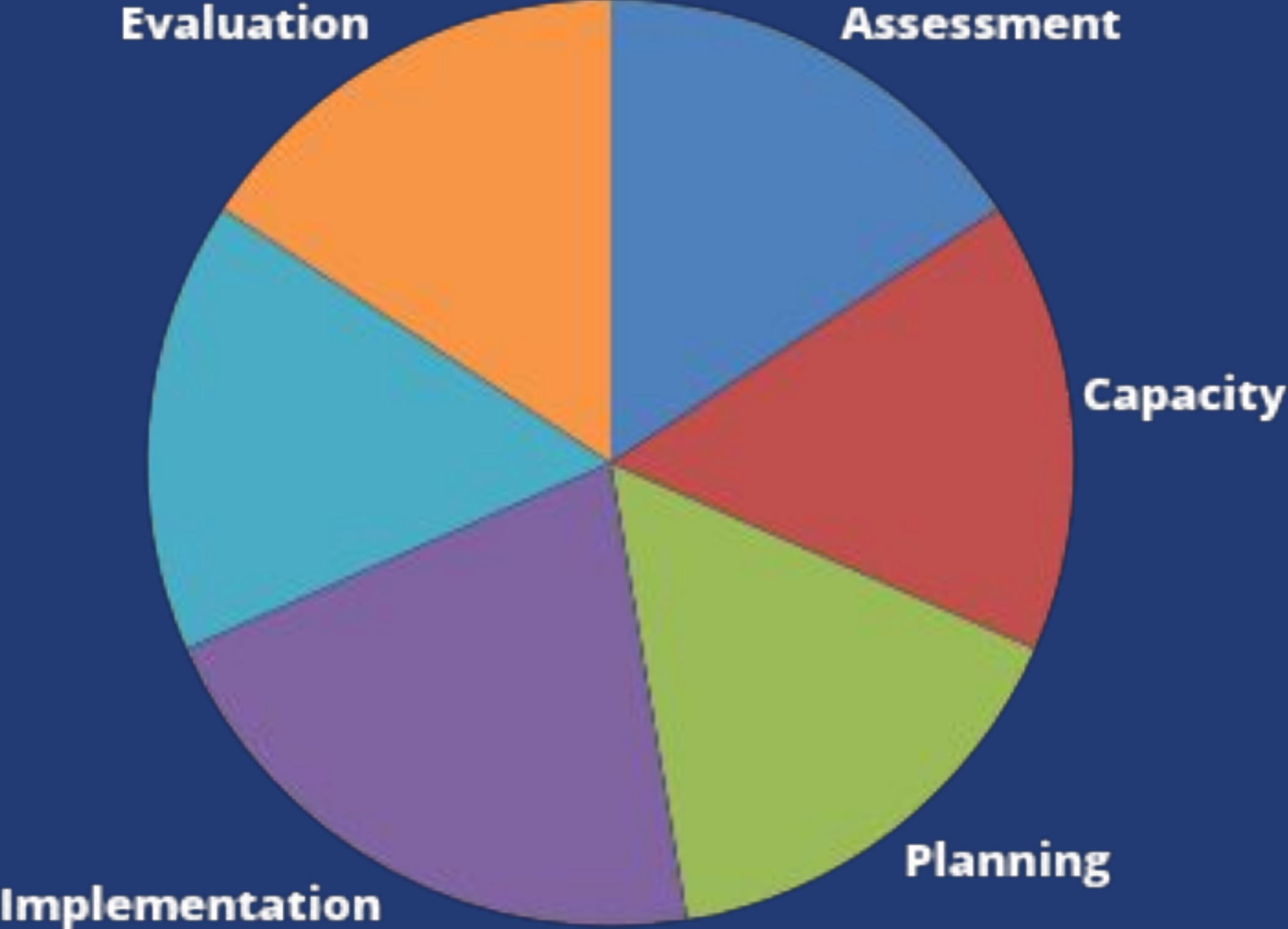
- Technical Assistance
to support partners

Local Coalitions

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Abilene Suicide Prevention Coalition | East Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition | Midland Suicide Prevention Coalition |
| Alamo Area Teen Suicide Prevention Coalition | El Paso Suicide Prevention Coalition | Milam County Suicide Prevention Coalition |
| Austin-Central Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition | Ft. Bend Area Suicide Prevention Coalition | Montgomery County Behavioral Health & Suicide Prevention Task Force |
| Bastrop-Tri County Suicide Prevention Coalition (Bastrop Cares) | Galveston County Suicide Prevention Task Force | Morris County Collaborative |
| Bell County Suicide Prevention Coalition | Hays County Suicide Prevention Coalition | Panhandle Suicide Prevention Coalition |
| Bexar County Suicide Prevention Coalition | Heart of Texas Suicide Prevention Coalition (Waco) | Pick With Austin |
| Big Bend Suicide Prevention Awareness | Highland Lakes Suicide Prevention Coalition | Rio Grande Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition |
| Brazos Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition | Hill Country Suicide Prevention Coalition | Suicide Awareness Coalition of Tarrant County |
| Caldwell County Suicide Prevention Coalition | Houston Area Suicide Prevention Coalition | Suicide Prevention Coalition of Corpus Christi |
| Collin County Suicide Prevention Coalition | I.AM.Here Coalition-Grant | Texas Tech Mental Health Institute |
| Comal County Suicide Prevention Coalition | Halliburton Foundation | Uvalde Together Resiliency Center |
| Dallas Area Suicide Prevention Coalition | Laredo Suicide Prevention Coalition | Wichita Falls Suicide Prevention Coalition |
| Del Rio-Val Verde Suicide Prevention Coalition | Levelland Suicide Prevention Project | Williamson County Suicide Prevention Coalition |
| Denton County Suicide Prevention Coalition | Lubbock Suicide Prevention Coalition | Wise County Suicide Prevention Coalition (Star Council) |
| Eagle Pass Suicide Prevention Coalition | McMullen Suicide Prevention Coalition | |
| | Mental Health Task Force of Brazoria County | |

Texas Suicide Prevention Council

LOCAL COALITION INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVES



Texas Suicide Prevention Council Inquiry



Regional Coalition

Collaborating Across Sectors and
Regional Partners



How it all started

2014

- Mental Health Task Force came together to discuss gaps and needs
- Consisted of twenty-nine provider agencies and city and county officials
- Over a series of meetings, the task force established a written plan and shared goals for the community

2015

- MAP was established (Mental Health Advocacy Partners)
- Website for the community to access resources was a key focus
- With the support of the McKenna Foundation, MCOT and SOS (Signs of Suicide) were established
- The development of MCOT and SOS has not only been a support to a suicide safer community but gives the ability to track data and see true numbers to the unique challenges in Comal County

Continued Growth

-MAP has become a clearinghouse for the community, partners, and citizens to rely on for vetting mental and behavioral health resources, training, and events

The last two years MAP has focused on three areas

Training

Outreach

Suicide
Prevention
Council

The Suicide Prevention Council of Comal County

Why did we need the council?

- By participating in Zero Suicide meetings, we recognized Comal County was underrepresented in the data considered for the state's plan for suicide prevention
- There was a focus on outreach and training for the community, but the prevention piece was missing
- The increase in the number of completed suicides over the years proved the need for a council

How we got started?

- With the support of MAP the Suicide Prevention Council of Comal County was able to launch a successful first year
- MAP revised their website to include information specific to the SPC (logo, hashtag, resources, and suicide prevention colors)
- MAP also provided the first order of promotional items including stickers, business cards, magnets, etc.

Our First Two Years

- Comal County Fair Parade
- Workforce Lunch and Learn
- Pride
- 1845 Creative Golf Classic Fundraiser
- Men's Health Fair
- Movie advertisement at all theaters in Comal County
- Documentary screening of STAY followed by panel discussion



The Future

- Multidisciplinary approach to prevention
- Continue to offer trainings to the community/workforce
- Stay involved in community events
- Establish and grow a social media presence
- Consider 501c3 designation as we continue to fundraise

Making the SPC a household name for training, resources, and support by expanding outreach efforts



Applying Coalition Models to Community Settings

Meeting People Where They Are



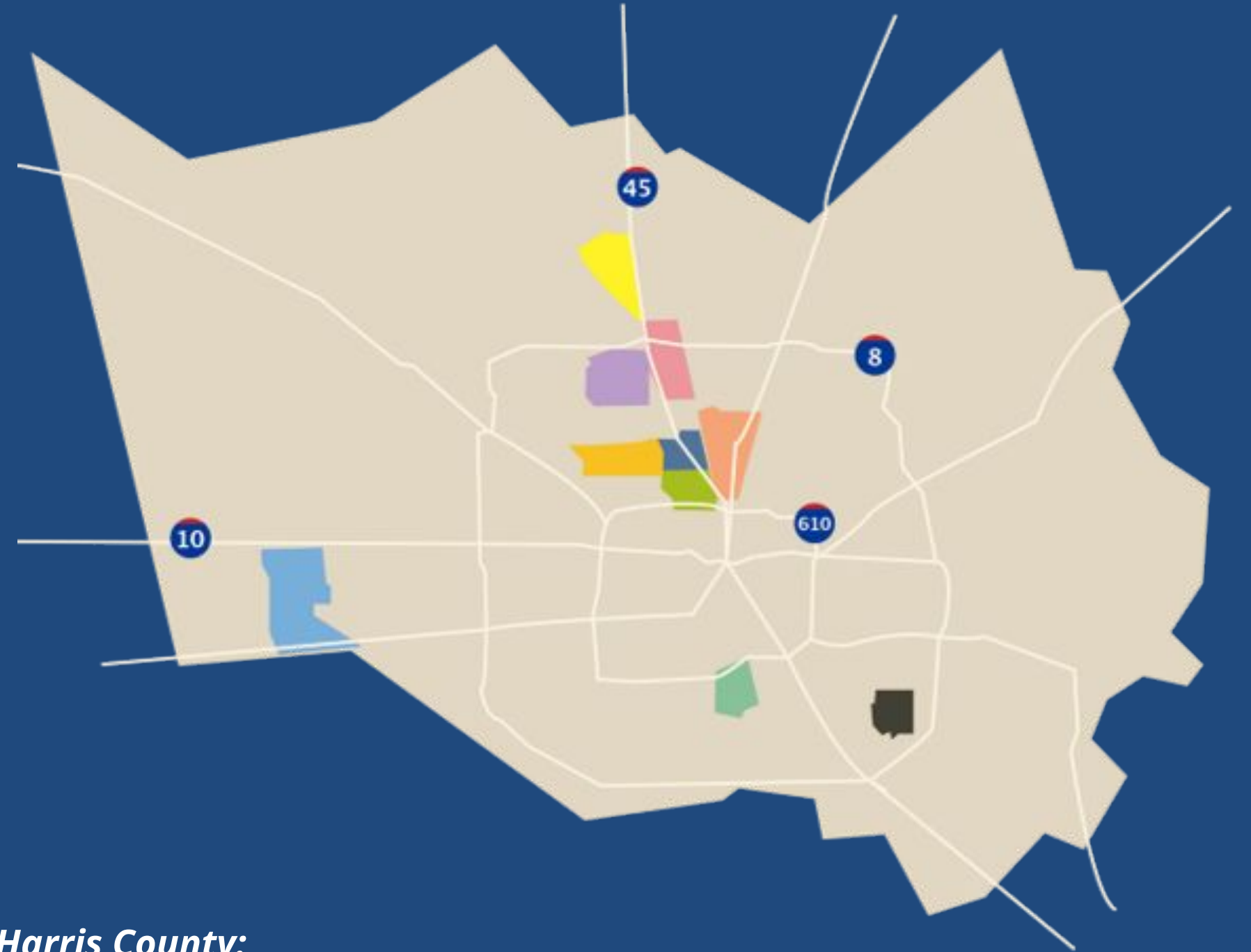
Healthy Minds, Healthy Communities: A Community-Initiated Model

Focused in ten diverse zip codes (40K) with:

- Highest disproportionate impact of COVID-19
- Highest number of suicides
- Lowest usage of behavioral health services

Goals:

- Build sustainable networks led by community members committed to changing attitudes and beliefs about mental health, suicide, and emotional wellness
- Provide tools and training so that community members can better support each other in real time
- Strengthen access bridges between qualified behavioral health professionals and communities throughout Harris County



Harris County:

Most populous county in Texas and third most populous county in the United States at 4.8 million people as of 2020 census.

Houston:

Largest city in Texas and fourth largest city in the United States with 2.5 million people as of 2020 census, with 145 different languages spoken and 48% of residents speaking a language other than English at home.



**Who are the people
in your
neighborhood?**



Intervention #1: World Cafés in Focus Communities

Using a Community Initiated Care Model means identifying what communities want and need first.

Task Sharing

- The community shares in the solution to the challenge

Community Acceptance

- The culture, ethos, stigmas, and perspectives of the community must be reflected in the project

Community Leadership

- Sustainability is only possible with community ownership and investment in the project

Perspective Matters

- Everyone in the community must have a voice in the process for it to have a long-lasting impact



Who's NOT at the table?

- Non-English speakers
- Different socio-economic classes
- Varying educational attainment
- Diverse faith communities
- Newcomers to the community
- Different age groups

Does your coalition reflect the varying demographics of your community, city, or county?



EMERGENT STRATEGY

THE 9 PRINCIPLES

adrienne maree brown

1. SMALL IS GOOD, SMALL IS ALL

(THE LARGE IS A REFLECTION OF THE SMALL)

2. CHANGE IS CONSTANT (BE LIKE WATER)

3. THERE IS ALWAYS ENOUGH TIME FOR THE RIGHT WORK.

THERE IS A CONVERSATION IN THE ROOM THAT ONLY THESE

PEOPLE AT THIS MOMENT CAN HAVE. FIND IT.

4. NEVER A FAILURE, ALWAYS A LESSON

5. TRUST THE PEOPLE

(IF YOU TRUST THE PEOPLE, THEY BECOME TRUSTWORTHY)

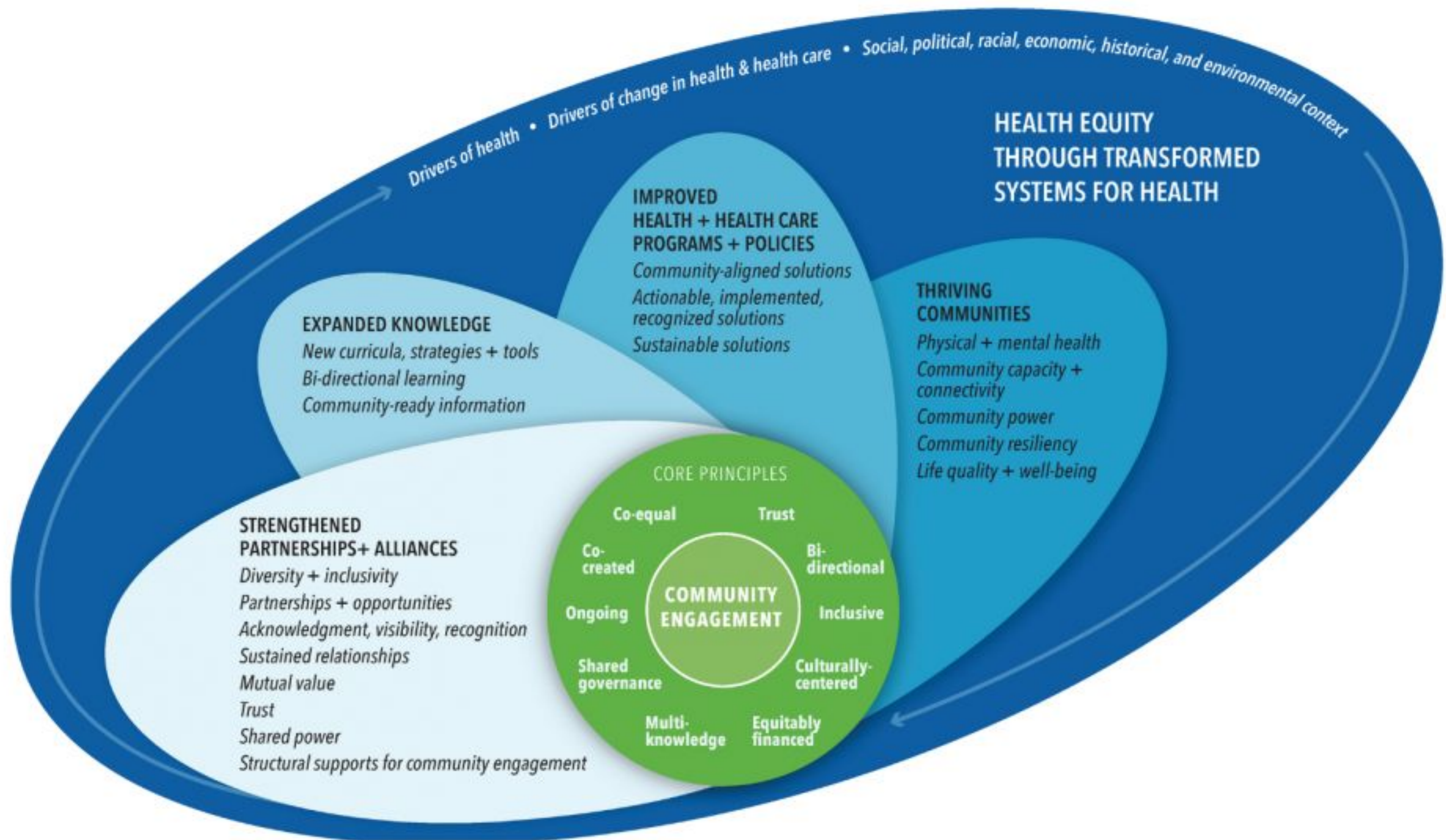
6. MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST

7. FOCUS ON CRITICAL CONNECTIONS MORE THAN CRITICAL MASS

BUILD THE RESILIENCE BY BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS

8. LESS PREP, MORE PRESENCE

9. WHAT YOU PAY ATTENTION TO GROWS



Organizing Committee for Assessing Meaningful Community Engagement in Health & Health Care Programs & Policies. 2022. Assessing Meaningful Community Engagement: A Conceptual Model to Advance Health Equity through Transformed Systems for Health. *NAM Perspectives*. Commentary, National Academy of Medicine, Washington, DC. <https://doi.org/10.31478/202202c>.