1.0 WHO IS YOUR PROGRAM FOR AND WHY IS IT NEEDED?

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In this section of the toolkit we consider the program rationale - who is the program for and why is it needed? Before we can develop an effective program or service we need to be able to answer these questions.

In this section:

Target group
Stakeholders
What are needs?
Needs assessment process
Collecting data for your needs assessment
Steps in needs assessment
Results of needs assessment

STI and BBV national strategies

These national strategies will help you ensure that your program is appropriate

It is important to ensure that all elements of your program align with either the state or national strategies for blood-borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections. These strategies have been created to guide the development of STI and BBV prevention, testing and treatment programs. The current national strategies can be found on the Depatment of Health website and the Western Australian (WA) strategies can be found on the WA Department of Health website.

The more specific we can be about the nature of the health issue, the beneficiaries of the health intervention, and the needs of these beneficiaries in relation to the health issue, the more likely it is that we will be able to develop an effective program.

Unfortunately, needs assessment is often skipped completely in the planning process or lacks the detailed information required to inform good planning decisions. Some reasons for this may include understanding the reason for needs assessment and how to use it to build the rationale and intent of the program/project, resource or time constraints, difficulties accessing data, or lack of skills and knowledge to undertake needs assessment effectively.

This section of the toolkit provides step-by-step guidelines for conducting a needs assessment to develop a strong program rationale. First you need to define your target group and who your stakeholders will be.

1.1 Target group – who are you aiming to reach?

The target group is whom your program is designed for. It should be clearly described and defined.

The nature of the target group – size, demographic, age, gender, ethnicity, location, etc – will obviously influence the style of intervention. You may need to re-define your target group as you progress through the planning process e.g. different program strategies may be needed for different sub-groups within the target group.

1.2 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are groups or individuals who will be affected directly (e.g. program recipients) or indirectly (e.g. health workers) by the program. You will need to consult and participate with your stakeholders throughout the project to assess the needs your program will address and to ensure the program continues to meet stakeholder expectations.

There may be a **diverse range of stakeholder groups**, communities, organisations and individuals that are important to your project. You need to identify the **range of expectations** these stakeholders may have of the project early on and continue to monitor how well the project is meeting expectations during implementation.

You will also need to **revisit your list of stakeholders** as you implement the project to reflect changes in the stakeholder organisations or other external changes that could affect the success of your project.

1.3 What are needs?

Bradshaw (1972) suggests there are four different types of needs[3]. We need to consider these different types of needs to fully understand how to address the health issues in a community.

Normative need
what expert opinion based on research defines as a need

Expressed need
what can be inferred by observation of a community's usage of health services

Comparative need
examining the services available in one region to determine the services needed in a different region with a similar population

Felt need
what people in the community say they want or feel they need

Click on this link for further information about understanding different types of needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs[4]

Self-actualization — morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

Esteem — self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect for others, respect by others

Love/belonging — friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety — security of: body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property

Physiological — breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) is a theory of human motivation. The model proposes that the most basic physiological needs must be satisfied before other needs are addressed. Higher level needs (esteem, self-actualization) will be pushed into the background or become non-existent until lower level needs (physiological, safety, love/belonging) are adequately satisfied.

1.4 Needs assessment process

A needs assessment is an important process to:
- Identify as much relevant information as possible to guide the development of best practice programs and activities
- Ensure that programs and activities are planned, are as effective as possible and are most likely to achieve their goals and objectives
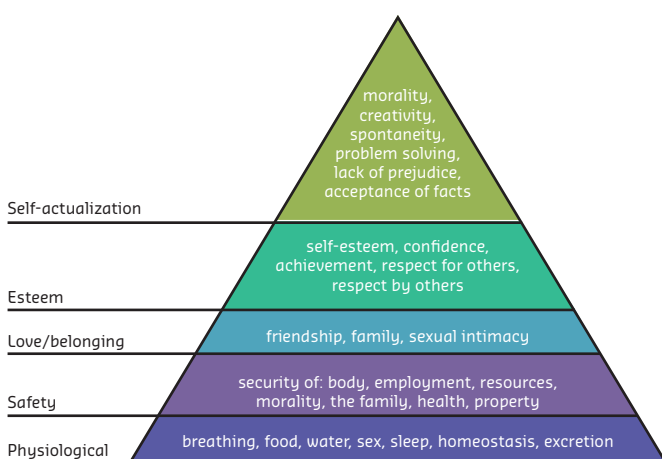- Ensure that communities are engaged in identifying their needs.

Information collected during needs assessment can be used to plan a program so that it best meets local conditions and addresses priority issues. A judgment has to be made about all the information collected in order to select a health issue, target group, setting or focus for a program.

A needs assessment will answer the following questions:
1. **What does the community REALLY need?**
2. **Is there an indication that needs are not being met or change in service delivery is required?**
3. **Is the need for directional change indicated (e.g. we want to decrease STIs)?**
4. **How much time, money and other resources are required?**
5. **What are the most relevant issues?**

1.5 Collecting data for your needs assessment

Make sure that you collect as much data as you can. This will help you in the long run. Different groups of people consider needs differently. Gathering information from a wide range of sources will enable you to build a complete picture. Remember we are usually dealing with a community or population that is complex so it is unlikely you will find out what are considered the needs from just one place.

Collect as much health and demographic data on your community of interest as possible to get an idea of the scope of the issue. Check out the following sources of data:
- Australian Bureau of Statistics **www.abs.gov.au** including their census data.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare publications such as the Australia's Health reports available at **www.aihw.gov.au**.
- Local government websites.
- Epidemiology Branch of WA Health for SHBBV surveillance reports, testing data and notifications data. For more information about epidemiological data available or to make a request for data contact **epi@health.wa.gov.au**.
- Data from your own organisation e.g. clinical statistics may provide valuable information.
- Information from journals, the Internet, other publications and organisational reports. Use only reputable sources for your information for example research organisations and institutions, peer-reviewed publications.
- Information from consumers/community members and other people affected by the health issue. You might hold a community forum, run a focus group, and/or speak to key players such as community leaders or the head of an organisation.
- Experts in the field - either experts in the health topic or people who know the community of interest. Contact SiREN at **siren@curtin.edu.au** if you are unsure where to find an expert.

1.6 The steps in needs assessment

The steps in needs assessment are shown in the flowcharts in **Figure 1.1 – Identify the health problem** and **Figure 1.2 – Analyse the health problem**.

Figure 1.1: Identify the health problem

1. Identify and consult stakeholders

2. Collect data and conduct a preliminary review of the literature

3. Discuss data with stakeholders

4. Determine priorities with stakeholders

Figure 1.2: Analyse the health problem

1. Conduct a more specific literature review

2. Describe the target group

3. Explore the health problem

4. Identify the factors which influence the health problem

5. Assess community resources

The factors influencing a health problem can be identified at different levels:
- **Individual level** (e.g. age, gender, perceived risk)
- **Community level** (e.g. community norms, acceptability of services)
- **Systems or policy level** (e.g. availability of services)

A note about cultural sensitivity

Data collection and program development should consider the preferences and characteristics of the target group as this may influence the cultural acceptability of different approaches. For example, in Aboriginal culture, it is shameful and embarrassing to discuss sexual health issues. The following resources may be useful when planning a culturally sensitive program:

Djiyadi: Can we talk? A manual for sexual health workers and other professionals who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. **https://www.ntahc.org.au/sites/default/files/Resource/djiyadi_-_can_we_talk.pdf**

DOIN IT RIGHT! This toolkit provides guidance on delivering appropriate sexual and reproductive health activities to young Aboriginal people. **http://www.ahmrc.org.au/media/resources/public-health/sexual-reproductive-health.html**

The Office of Multicultural Interests provides a number of tools for working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities including tips on how to collect data and cultural competency training. **https://www.omi.wa.gov.au**

1.7 Results of needs assessment

At the end of the needs assessment you should have:
- A health problem of agreed priority
- Characteristics of the target group (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)
- An indication of the magnitude of the health problem (size of target group, prevalence data, location of target group, etc.)
- Factors influencing the health problem identified (individual, community, system or policy level factors)
- An indication of community resources to be involved in the health planning process (human resources, financial resources, materials, venues, etc.)
- Commitment from a range of groups and parties to bring about change
- Key people (allies, stakeholders, community members etc.) identified and involved in program planning.

1.8 I'm stuck! Where can I get more information?

Please contact SiREN at **siren@curtin.edu.au** or visit the SiREN website **www.siren.org.au** for more information about needs assessment and developing a strong program rationale. The following links and references may also be useful.

Working with stakeholders and partners. The SiREN website has a range of resources that will support you to establish and develop relationships with program stakeholders and partners. **https://siren.org.au/**

The PABCAR model[5] This is a decision-making tool for health program planning and is useful for the needs assessment process. This tool is described in detail in the following section of this toolkit. Further information is available at **www.lgreen.net**.

Health Needs Assessment Workbook. Steps through the stages of developing a health needs assessment. **http://healthimpactassessment.pbworks. com/f/Health+needs+assessment+workbook+- +HDA+England+-+2002.pdf**

GUIDE: Undertaking Needs Assessments. This guide describes how to undertake a needs assessment to ensure effective planning and implementation of programs. **https://www.checkup.org.au/icms_docs/182816_12_ GUIDE_A_Guide_to_Undertaking_a_Needs_ Assessment.pdf**

The Community Tool Box has a tookit on Assessing Community Needs and Resources **https://ctb.ku.edu/ en/assessing-community-needs-and-resources** and a guide on how to undetake a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) **ctb.ku.edu/en/ tablecontents/sub_section_main_1049.aspx**