



Asset Mapping

Description:

This tool offers a description of asset mapping, ideas of how to conduct asset mapping, and a template.

How it can be used:

Asset mapping is an excellent activity to collect, acknowledge, and honour all community assets. It can be done with both large and small groups. Use the following suggestions to help guide an asset mapping activity within your community.

Asset mapping is an activity that collectively identifies assets within or around a community. An asset can be defined as anything that improves the quality of a community. Examples include:

- Expertise and skills of individuals in the community
- Community beliefs, traditions, and stories
- Community history
- Community groups
- Natural environments
- Community buildings and spaces
- Local businesses and services
- Local institutions and organizations (private and public)

It can be described as *“a positive element (person, place, tradition, program, etc.) that makes the community a safe, healthy, and good place to live”*.

The core of understanding and appreciating community assets includes:

- Recognizing that everyone has skills and talents that are relevant to community well-being;
- Understanding that each time individuals share their abilities the community is strengthened;
- Envisioning communities as places where the assets of individuals are identified, valued, and moved into action;
- Being respectful and mindful of cultural sensitivities in your approach;
- Striving for inclusivity.

The process of asset mapping shows the connections between people and places; it can foster a greater sense of community pride and ownership; and it can build capacity for turning common ideas into positive actions. The knowledge gathered through asset mapping can guide further planning activities and ensure that plans reflect the pulse of the community.





Determine the types of assets to include

If you are conducting an asset mapping exercise for your Health and Wellness Planning, you are likely looking at a broad range of assets. Consider including the following and add any others that reflect your community experiences.

- People – people are the central focus of all communities. Consider experiences, histories, hobbies, interests, training, skills, knowledge, talents, memberships, etc.
- Culture – culture can be the foundation of a community. Consider language, traditions, beliefs, stories, practices, art, music, history, food, clothing, Elders, etc.
- Spaces – spaces of all sorts are valuable to your community. Consider natural spaces, hunting, trapping, and fishing grounds, camps, parks, trails, lakes, beaches, mountains, forests, rivers, etc.
- Environment – the earth around you. Consider your air, water, agriculture, resources, food security, etc.
- Places – buildings and locations that enhance your community. Consider your health centre, your recreation centre, city parks, churches, playgrounds, band offices, schools, cultural camps, homes, etc.
- Organizations – both community-based and those from outside the community that provide services. Consider your health and wellness programs, social services, community groups, provincial care organizations, not-for-profit organizations, etc.
- Services – those that provide services to the community. Consider fire services, emergency services, police, home care, recycling, utilities, roads, communication, transportation, recreation, leadership, governance, etc.
- Businesses – those that contribute to the economy of your community. Consider stores, restaurants, services providers, etc.
- Relationships – the intangible “glue” that connects people in your community. Consider family ties, work relationships, volunteering relationships, parenting groups, faith groups, choirs, relationships with outside organizations, etc.

Ideas for conducting an asset mapping exercise

Conducting an asset mapping exercise can be effectively done in a large group. As such, it is an excellent activity to hold in a community meeting.

As a group, or breaking off into smaller groups, you can have people list their perspectives of the key assets. You can help by providing the categories and perhaps some examples. If you have the wall space, sticky notes are a good way of gathering a lot of information.

You can organize the categories by posting the headings on the wall and encouraging people to post their ideas under each category. Then you can collate the responses.





Another idea is to post a large map of your community and have people post their ideas onto the map. This is best done with a smaller group due to the volume of sticky notes. If using a map, be sure to stretch their ideas further than just physical spaces.

Another idea is to organize as a circle. There would be four categories and all ideas could be posted in that format. A template with ideas is provided below.

