Glossary of Community and Administrative Practice Terms

**Administration:** The practice of management and leadership, see below.

**Approach to practice:** A model or cohesive set of methods and techniques that conceptually guides practice activities. Common direct practice examples are behavioral and cognitive. Common community practice examples are planning, development, and advocacy.

**Baseline data:** Baseline data is information on a condition or problem before an intervention is implemented. Baseline data typically concerns client outcomes such as initial functioning rather than the service delivery system.

**Barriers:** What blocks the use of existing resources or future solutions, e.g., language, transportation, culture, etc?

**Capacities:** Strengths, assets, accomplishments, resources, opportunities and skills on which to build an intervention.

**Change agent:** The entity (person or organization) initiating the change

**Change target:** The entity (person, family, group, organization, or community) receiving the change.

**Client centered:** The concept a service program, agency, or delivery system is guided and driven by client needs and strengths, that is, vision, mission, and activities involve listening to clients, inventing solutions that clients agree meets their needs, personalizing services to the needs of each client to the extent possible, and having client outcomes as criteria in the feedback loops.

**Community:** Community comes from the Latin com=with or together (implying more than one) and unus=one e.g., many together as one.

**Community practice:** A change approach that involves the community. How the community is involved in community practice varies by those defining the term. Three common ways to involve the community are as a resource, method, and target. With **community as a resource**, the community is seen as one source of assets for change, e.g., some community associations may provide funding for clients in need, such as when Lions Clubs provide eye glasses for needy kids. With **community as a change method**, the community is a key element in the intervention strategy for solving a problem, for example, meeting with neighbors, churches, community leaders, and employers to help people with disabilities to maximize their independent living. With **community as target**, a “better functioning” community is seen as result of a change designed to solve a social problem, e.g., increasing the connectedness of neighborhoods and city organizations to fight crime as with crime watch. While this classification may be conceptually useful, it is possible for a community practice approach to view the community as resource, method, and client, e.g., a JC sponsored clean up campaign to improve the neighborhood.

**Community action:** A community practice approach characterized by the use of power, influence, and negotiations to achieve change, for example, MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving).

**Community development:** A community practice approach to building community by enabling, teaching, and motivating people and local organizations for self-help, e.g., facilitated self-help as with Promise Keepers. It is also referred to as locality development or social development.
Community planning: A community practice approach to community practice involving a rational structured process that includes the setting of goals, objectives, and priorities, such as with Goals for Dallas.

Condition of concern: A fact or documented statistic about the phenomena under study. These statements should tell the nature and severity of the condition, the characteristics of the people involved, etc. Conditions become problems when they are judged negative, harmful, or pathological. Some examples of conditions might be 40% of the children raised in Texas live in families that have yearly income below the poverty level.

Documented need: What theories and data analysis reveals is needed. Methods include comparing inventories of existing services to components of a comprehensive array of services, analyses of surveys, census data, social indicators, standardized tests, theoretical frameworks, etc.

Felt or perceived need: What people feel is needed. Techniques for determining felt need are individual and group meetings, field surveys, public hearings, etc.

FUD (slang for fear, uncertainty, and doubt). Something created by employees to disable a system and make it harder for the system to respond, e.g., Microsoft always created FUD to combat a product from its competitors by saying Microsoft would soon release a similar, but better product that would be around far longer time than the competitors.

Goal: Goals describe future expected outcomes or states. They are not measurable but provide programmatic direction. They focus on ends (e.g., lower domestic violence rates) rather than means (e.g., provide more shelter beds). An example is: To reduce the debilitating effects of teenage parenting.

Human services: Human services facilitate daily living by enabling individuals, families, and other primary groups to function, to cope, and to contribute. Human services build on people’s capacities to address their problems with:

- Themselves, for example, emotional and mental difficulties
- Primary groups, for example, family conflict, divorce, child abuse
- Other nonrelated individuals, for example, crime
- Organizations, for example, unemployment, poverty; and
- Communities and the larger society, for example, deviance.

Indicator: A quantifiable measure of a phenomenon, e.g., the number of drunk driving arrests is an indicator of addictions in a community.

Leadership: The task of linking a group/organization with and guiding a group/organization through outside political, technological, economic, and sociocultural forces and institutions. Leaders often focus on an organization’s environment while managers often focus on activities inside the organization.

Locality Development: An approach to building community by enabling, teaching, and motivating people and local organizations for self-help, e.g., facilitated self-help. It is also referred to as community development or social development.

Management: The process of arranging the structures, people, work tasks, and technology to achieve the goals of a group of people. Management tasks are often remembered by using the term POSCORBE which stands for Planning, Organizing, Staffing, COordinating, Reporting, Budgeting, and Evaluating. Managers often focus on activities inside the organization while leaders focus on the organization’s environment.

Mission: A short, easy to understand statement that communicates to the public what an agency or program is about.
**Model**: See approach

**Needs**: Statements identifying the population at risk and the problems they experience (number, type, distribution, etc.).

**Nominal group technique**: A committee process to generate ideas, encourage increased involvement by members, and maintain agendas and time schedules. NGT involves writing down of ideas and then allowing each group member to express one idea.

**Objective**: Objectives are clear, realistic, specific, measurable, and time limited statements of actions which when completed will move towards goal achievement.

**Organization**: A group of people united around achieving a common mission.

**Outcome objective**: Objectives that address the ends to be attained. They usually begin with words like to reduce, to lower, or to improve. For example: To *lower the number of adolescents becoming pregnant by 10 percent as measured by health department data by Dec 98*

**Outcome**: The results desired from a process expressed in terms of change from the beginning to ending state, e.g., a reduction of risk factors in kids by 5% or an increase in preventive factors in kids by 5%.

**Perspective**: A point of view about a phenomena that helps to differentiate, analyze, understand, or intervene, e.g., the strengths perspective.

**Process objective**: Objectives that specify the means to achieve the outcome objectives. They usually begin with words such as to provide, to serve, to train, etc. For example: *To provide 2 hours of peer counseling on responsible sexuality and parenting to 25 Jr. high school males and 25 Jr. high school females identified as “high-risk” by Dec 1998 as measured by peer counselor records.*

**Sanction**: That which provides someone authority or legitimacy to do something.

**Social Indicator**: A measure reflecting the status of a population (e.g., age range, income level, education attainment), and contextual influences (e.g., social, economic, ecological, and political influences).

**Social Development**: An approach to building community by enabling, teaching, and motivating people and local organizations for self-help, e.g., facilitated self-help. It is also referred to as community development or locality development.

**Social Services**: See human services below after vision statement.

**Stakeholder**: Any entity that has some influence or risk in a process or outcome, e.g., a client or funder.

**Theory**: Sets of concepts and constructs that describe and explain natural phenomena [Tolson, E., Reid, W., & Garvin, C. (1994). Generalist Practice: A task centered approach. NY: Columbia U. Press, p. 21.] For example, one common social work theory is systems theory.

**Vision statement**: A vision states the "big picture" of what you want to accomplish. It specifies what you expect things to be like for the agency or clients after all desired changes are implemented. It is designed for the public and should not contain professional jargon.