



WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF ABCD?

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is about local people working together for the well being of their home place. ABCD needs a home to work. ABCD is primarily relationship building for action for a collective purpose, a path to organize groups and people in a community to act together for the common good. The focus is upon building power (the ability to act effectively) through relationships. How? First ABCD is an approach to discover local community assets. This mapping is mostly what people do in the name of ABCD. Second and more importantly ABCD is "practices and principles" for mobilizing a local community to move into action with residents at the center... not outsiders. The community is the principal actor not the client. ABCD is a path to "organize an organization" or community partnership of local people and their stakeholder groups to find, connect, and make productive a growing circle of local assets working for the common good.

HOW TO MOBILIZE A COMMUNITY THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS?

First discover what people care about enough to act on in your local community? What will people commit to act on? Discover 'motivation to act' through learning conversations out in the community. What is the motivation to act? What is the collective purpose that a wide circle of people will act on together? Who is committed to act?

Second find and engage specific connector leaders (people who are leaders in a community sense meaning people with trust, influence, and a circle of relationships to call upon) to form a connector leaders group. This is the core group for collective action that can use their connections and relationships to engage a wide circle of the local community working together. ABCD is community organizing; principles and practices to bring people into committed relationship for collective action towards what people really care about--enough to act.

Community development that works best is not about manufacturing anything but about bringing out the basic goodness that is there in each local community. Every community is a place filled with gifts to be given and care to be discovered. The song of community is, "We need you. We need you. Join us." There is no one we don't need.