



## **DIALOGUE TOOL: *Are we using Recreation to build a Healthy Community for All?***

### **Introduction:**

Considerable research shows that communities enjoy greater social, economic, and environmental benefits when their citizens live active, creative lives, and are **engaged** in their communities. This is especially true for individuals and families that find it challenging to participate due to monetary, cultural, health or other considerations.

More specific to recreation, research indicates that leisure activities and parks are essential to our physical, intellectual, social, spiritual well-being, to our quality of life, to the environment and our economic sustainability.

### **Where does a community begin if they want to improve?**

Recreation can mean different things to different people, but from a community perspective it is about serving the public good by:

- building an understanding of the potential of recreation;
- providing opportunities for people to engage in recreation, and;
- supporting people so they can take part in the opportunities.

Addressing these priorities requires healthy, competent recreation leaders and organizations with the capacity to contribute to the public good as well as build a supportive community. Everyone needs to be committed to:

- gathering and promoting information about the individual, community, environmental, and economic benefits delivered by recreation;
- meeting the recreation needs of citizens and communities, particularly the needs of those who may face additional barriers, and;
- education that will enhance leisure literacy levels so individuals can participate in a broad range of recreation opportunities. This involves skill development, interest, confidence, as well as ensuring *everyone* has access and support to participate in recreation opportunities.

Although great things are happening in most communities, we can always do better. The best way to approach improvements is to gather a cross-section of stakeholders and take the time to examine the entire community, gathering information that will help identify strengths and areas that may need attention.

***Use this Dialogue Tool to informally assess your community's progress in the provision of inclusive recreation.*** The tool will be especially effective if it is used as a “conversation starter” in a community. The intent of the tool is to take a “pulse” by initiating guided conversations that will help to celebrate the strengths of your community as well as become a catalyst for change.

**Circle the rating that best describes your community** for each of the statements listed below.

# Section 1: Delivering the Benefits of Recreation in Our Community

The following statements assess your view of how your community is doing in terms of delivering the benefits provided by recreation, fitness, sport, arts, and culture:

***Recreation, Sport, Fitness, Arts, Culture, and Parks are ESSENTIAL TO PERSONAL HEALTH - Active Living is a key determinant of health status.***

1. PERSONAL HEALTH (physical and mental)	Assessment of the status of these statements within our community:								
	Doesn't sound like our community							Sounds like our community	
a. active lifestyles and recreation are valued	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
b. benefits of recreation are well promoted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
c. active living in workplaces is encouraged	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
d. health care professionals often prescribe exercise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
e. health care professionals often prescribe recreation and social activity									
f. physical activity and recreation are a high priority in senior centres	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
g. schools and recreation agencies ensure that all children and youth are active	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
h. health and recreation practitioners collaborate to develop optimal physical activity and recreation services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
i. the physical design of the community encourages active transportation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	

Comments:

***Recreation, Sport, Fitness, Arts, Culture, and Parks are key to balanced HUMAN DEVELOPMENT - helping Canadians reach their potential.***

2. Individual Growth and Development	Assessment of the status of these indicators within our community:								
	Doesn't sound like our community							Sounds like our community	
a. our schools and recreation agencies collaborate to ensure that children and youth are exposed to leisure activities – to explore their interests and potential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
b. a full spectrum of leisure opportunities are available for all residents (physical, creative, social, mental/intellectual, spiritual, heritage)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	

**Recreation, Sport, Fitness, Arts, Culture, and Parks are key to balanced HUMAN DEVELOPMENT - helping Canadians reach their potential.**

2. Individual Growth and Development	Assessment of the status of these indicators within our community:							
	Doesn't sound like our community				Sounds like our community			
c. tools are available to help individuals make the best use of leisure time (leisure education)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
d. leisure activities and programs are affordable, accessible, and available to all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
e. innovative programs and activities are offered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know

Comments:

**Recreation, Sport, Fitness, Arts, Culture, and Parks are Essential to QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE.**

3. The Quality of Life in our Communities and Sense of Place	Assessment of the status of these indicators within our community:							
	Doesn't sound like our community				Sounds like our community			
a. community decision makers understand the relationship between recreation, parks and quality of life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
b. our community is known for its recreation, sport, arts, cultural and heritage facilities and programs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
c. we are proud of our parks system	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
d. recreation facilities are well run and maintained	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
e. programs, services, and facilities are accessible to those with special needs – all can share opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
f. citizens perceive community decision making as fair and equitable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
g. citizens feel a sense of belonging and that they all have a place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know

Comments:

**Recreation, Sport,  
Fitness, Arts, Culture,  
and Parks are Reduce  
self-destructive and  
ANTI-SOCIAL  
BEHAVIOUR.**

4. The Reduction of Anti-Social Behaviour	Assessment of the status of these indicators within our community:							
	Doesn't sound like our community				Sounds like our community			
a. citizens understand that recreation helps to reduce crime	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
b. community and social service agencies value recreation as a deterrent to negative social activity among youth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
c. subsidies for recreation and sport are available to children and youth at risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
d. diversity is celebrated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
e. recreation is viewed by the community as a solution for reducing racism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know

Comments:

**Recreation, Sport,  
Fitness, Arts, Culture,  
and Parks are Build  
STRONG FAMILIES and  
HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES**

5. Strong Individuals, Families and Healthy Communities	Assessment of the status of these indicators within our community:							
	Doesn't sound like our community				Sounds like our community			
a) families value and encourage active, creative lifestyles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
b) a variety of after school programs are available	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
c) opportunities for family recreation are available	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
d) opportunities for family volunteering are available	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
e) municipal support for recreation, parks and active living is evident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
f) a community development approach is applied (helping people and their organizations to help themselves)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
g) citizens representing all aspects of the community are included in decision making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
h) training volunteers is viewed as a good investment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
i) information about volunteer opportunities is easy to find	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
j) citizens are generally willing to invest their time, talent and resources in the community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
k) community pride and spirit is evident in our community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know

l)	there are high and diverse levels of participation in community activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
m)	citizens feel a sense of belonging and neighbourliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
n)	opportunities for celebration and fun exist	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
o)	business and corporations partner to provide or sponsor programs and services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
p)	there are safe gathering places to connect people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
q)	organizations are generally networked and aware of one another's work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know

Comments:

***Recreation, Sport, Fitness, Arts, Culture, and Parks are Reduce health care, social service, and police/justice costs! PAY NOW or PAY MORE LATER!***

<b>6. Reduction in Health Care, Social Service, and Police/Justice Costs</b>	<b>Assessment of the status of these indicators within our community:</b>								
	<b>Doesn't sound like our community</b>							<b>Sounds like our community</b>	
a. citizens generally feel safe	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
b. programs and services are developed to target 'higher need' populations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
c. health, social service and recreation practitioners work together to provide therapeutic and rehabilitation opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
d. police value recreation as a deterrent to crime and anti-social behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	
e. health practitioners value recreation as a means to build resilient, healthy individuals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know	

Comments:

## Section 2: Pursuing an Inclusive Delivery System (Could evolve to become practice guidelines)

Building on the broad feedback above, the following assessment and dialogue can help people working in the recreation, health and other fields better understand how they might work together to support meaningful recreation participation for people living with mental health (or other) challenges.

This tool will help to determine the capacity of staff and agencies to provide recreation services for people living with mental health challenges across the many stages and places that they choose to access service.

An Inclusive Recreation Delivery System	Assessment of the status of these indicators within our community:							
	Doesn't sound like our community							Sounds like our community
<b>Awareness of Recreation for Mental Health</b>								
a. Community members are aware of the prevalence of mental health issues in society and our community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
b. Recreation staff and volunteers are aware of mental health challenges in the general population	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
c. School counselling staff recognize the prevalence of mental health challenges among student population	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
d. Health practitioners understand the importance of recreation and physical activity in mental health recovery and living well in the community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
e. Recreation staff and volunteers recognize the value of recreation and physical activity in mental health recovery and living well in the community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
<b>Information and Referral</b>								
f. Recreation staff and agencies acknowledge their role in delivering inclusive recreation services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
g. People living with mental health challenges are aware of and can access recreation opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
h. Recreation staff are aware of mental health support resources if they need information or want to refer participants to other services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
i. Health professionals have the information that they need to refer patients/clients to a recreation contact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
j. There is a person or agency in the community that connects people to healthy living resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
<b>Connecting, Collaborating and Navigation</b>								
k. There is a supportive culture for organizations working together in our community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
l. Recreation practitioners work with other agencies and businesses to meet the leisure needs of the community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
m. Recreation Therapists and Community Recreation staff work collaboratively to provide seamless access to a continuum of recreation service.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
n. A specialized role exists to help people with mental health challenges navigate their engagement in community and the services that they need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
o. A recreation promoter educates the public re value of recreation and how to access recreation opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
<b>Assessment, Programming and Inclusion</b>								
p. Citizens recognize their right to recreation services and their responsibility to contribute as well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
q. Staff and volunteers have the training necessary to provide inclusive services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know

r.	Citizens have access to self-assessment tools to make leisure choices based on their individual interests, needs and constraints	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
s.	There are a wide variety of programs accessible to people living with mental health challenges	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
t.	A leisure partner program is available for those who prefer to participate in leisure pursuits with a partner to support them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't know
<b>Places to participate and belong</b>									
u.	There are social programs where people with mental health challenges feel a sense of belonging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
v.	People with mental health challenges feel comfortable and safe in community recreation spaces	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know
w.	Full inclusion in community recreation opportunities is a reality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't Know