

## What is ABCD Overview

METHOD	TIME	KNOWLEDGE
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[Created by Neighborhood Transformation for the Global CHE Network](#)

### ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD) I: WHAT IS ABCD OVERVIEW?

Date: 05/06 (rev 11/10)

(1 HOUR)

- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Participants will understand ABCD principles and how they function.
  2. Participants will understand why it is important to focus on assets and not needs, as has been the case in the past.

**OVERVIEW FOR TRAINERS:** This is used in Urban TOT I and is the first lesson of ABCD.

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**Role Play:** Two people talking

5"

- 1<sup>st</sup>** It is really hard to identify who is working in this neighborhood, do you know how to?
- 2<sup>nd</sup>** No, I wish I did. It is much easier in a rural community than in a city.
- 1<sup>st</sup>** I agree. All I see are problems. How can we solve so many different problems?
- 2<sup>nd</sup>** Who knows! I only wish there were some strengths in this neighborhood but I sure don't know what they are.
- 1<sup>st</sup>** Me either.

**---SHOWD questions---**

S = What do you See?  
H = What is Happening?

- I. What is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)?
- A. From the name "What is Asset Based Community all about"

3"

- I. **Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)**

- A. What is ABCD:
1. ABCD focuses on Assets
  2. It's community based
  3. Community development
  4. Implies people-controlled
  5. Assets are skills and knowledge, not just physical abilities
  6. Assets already present.

- B. Distribute **Church Focusing on Assets Case Study**  
Describe Assets based on what is read in the case study

20"

- B. What Learned about Assets from Church Focusing on Assets Case Study:
1. Church known because the things they had been doing in the neighborhoods.
  2. All people have gifts of skills, knowledge and dreams
  3. They found that focusing on needs created dependency

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Asked 8 simple questions which did not scare people, but helped them talk.</li> <li>5. Gathered answers in interviews, at neighborhood activities and on, through school children bringing them home.</li> <li>6. Surprised in the many assets found in individuals</li> <li>7. Collected answers from over 500 people and put in a data base.</li> <li>8. Sorted data base to see what people wanted to learn and who might teach them. Team organized many small</li> <li>9. trainings based on neighborhood people's interest</li> <li>10. People pleased the members had listed to them</li> <li>11. Merely being on receiving end is not very rewarding</li> <li>12. Everybody wants to share what they have</li> <li>13. It builds pride and self-worth</li> <li>14. Receiving and sharing assets builds relationships</li> <li>15. Mapping assets helps with planning for the community.</li> </ol>
<p>II Assets Focus Instead of Needs Focus</p> <p>A. What Happens when we focus on Needs</p>	10"	<p>II. <b>Assets Focus Instead of Needs Focus</b></p> <p>A. <u>Focusing on Needs</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is a focus on the negative - what is not there or lacking</li> <li>2. Focuses on professionals providing services for the people</li> <li>3. People have no control in what is happening.</li> <li>4. People are consumers</li> <li>5. Implies that there is nothing in the neighborhood which can help the neighborhood</li> <li>6. Needs focus causes us to compartmentalize lives. People have no value, they are worthless.</li> </ol>
<p>B. What is the difference Between Focusing on Assets Instead of Needs</p>	10"	<p>B. <u>Differences in Focusing on Assets Instead of Needs</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assets focus on what people have while needs focus on what people lack</li> <li>2. Assets focus on neighbors making connections and contributions while needs focuses on service provided by outsiders.</li> </ol>

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<p>B. Implications of Focusing on Assets</p>	<p>10:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Assets focus on citizens deciding what they want while needs focuses on people being a consumer dependant on others</li> <li>4. Assets focus on the fact that people are the answer, while needs focuses on the solution being outsider driven professional programs.</li> <li>5. Assets focuses on skills already existing in the neighborhood that need to be identified, while needs focuses on the neighborhood's lack of solutions to the problems</li> <li>6. Assets focus on taking a holistic approach in the community while needs focus on compartmentalizing problems to be addressed by specialists</li> <li>7. Focusing on assets builds peoples self image &amp; worth, empowering them, while focusing on needs demoralizes people.</li> </ol> <p>B. <u>Implication for Focusing on Assets</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People contribute what they have, therefore they feel ownership</li> <li>2. Using what they have, their work is sustainable</li> <li>3. Realize they don't need outsiders to do something</li> <li>4. Gain confidence in themselves and builds their self image</li> <li>5. Costs much less because work is accomplished by volunteers, therefore is sustainable</li> <li>6. Empowers people instead of disempowering them</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>ATTITUDE:</u></b></p>		
<p><b><u>SKILL:</u></b> Participants will be introduced to the ABCD principles.</p>		
<p><b><u>EVALUATION:</u></b> Facilitators will know the participants have learned the content of this lesson when they understand the ABCD principles and know how they can work within an urban CHE program.</p>		
<p><b><u>MATERIALS:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Newsprint</li> <li>- Masking tape</li> <li>- Marking pens</li> <li>- <i>Hand Out</i> Church Focusing on Assets Case Study</li> </ul>		

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### Case Study of Church Focusing on Assets in Their Target Neighborhood

Pantano Christian Church in Tucson, AZ, a city of 500,000 had been working on reaching outside their four walls to a nearby neighborhood to begin to see that neighborhood transformed in a wholistic; physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially.

They worked in the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor which was about one square mile. They did many things for their target areas such as cleaned up parks and streets, helped in the elementary school by painting some classrooms, tutoring kids, reaching out to help the teachers. There was a government funded program to weed out crime and build development which meant they had five neighborhood associations functioning which the church sometimes participated in.

This was good but this focused on seeing the bad things in the neighborhoods and not really dealing with what was already good going on there. They realized by identifying needs and focusing on them they were focusing on the negative not the positive. Also the people in the neighborhood felt since this was a large middle class church of 2000 members they would supply everything necessary to fix the problems in their neighborhoods.

People were dependent on professionals for all of their help instead of the way they grew up where neighbor helped neighbor. Therefore the neighborhoods were dependent on the church and government to fix everything and people were doing little to anything for themselves.

Pantano heard about an approach called Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) which had been going on for 20 years which focused on the assets found in the neighborhood. It focused on the assets of individuals, local informal groups found in the neighborhoods as well as the more institutional organizations like community policing, schools, non-profit organizations involved in the community. They knew very little about the positive things which were found in people and built people.

Key people went to a training which introduced them to this approach of focusing on assets. They learned that all people have skills, knowledge and passion for certain things but no one knew what they were. The training taught them how to identify the assets in each of the three groups found in their neighborhoods. They learned it was all about helping people know more about their neighbors and established relationships which led to neighbors helping neighbors.

They then prepared the interviews and then initiated one-on-one interviews with the people they wanted to get to know. They asked questions about the gifts and abilities people were born with; they asked about skills and the things people liked to do. They also asked about dreams and provided an opportunity for each person to express what they would do if they "could snap their fingers and be doing anything." These questions identified individual skills, knowledge, things they wanted to learn if teaching were available as well as what informal groups they were involved in and what they likes in their neighborhood and one thing they would like to see changed.

Those church members split into 5 teams, one for each neighborhood with three to five members on each team. They did this because the 29<sup>th</sup> St. corridor had five identifiable neighborhoods. As they continued some of the group activities they had been doing for the past two years in the neighborhoods how to ask eight non-intrusive questions to people they talked to as they were in the neighborhood.

Some went door to door with neighborhood members asking these eight questions. One neighborhood sent questionnaires home with school children while another neighborhood created a door hanger rang the bell of each home saying they were working with the neighborhood association and asked people to fill out the questionnaire and they would be back to collect them within the hour.

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Gradually, the church leaders began to understand that what they were hearing was meant to convey a message to the congregation about its appropriation of the blessings available to those who give, and about the apparent lack of blessings for those who were on the receiving side

Over a period of six months they had collect answers to the eight questions from over 500 neighborhood people. As they got the answers they were loaded into a data base so that they could tabulate the information. Neighborhood meetings were held to present the findings as well as written up in the association newsletters. What they found astonished them: here were carpenters, plumbers, artists, musicians, teachers, and caregivers. Here were gifted and talented people, people

They found there were multiple groups of people interested in learning about different things with some of the participants having the skills to teach them. Therefore the church organized short trainings around topics of interest which excited the people because what they had said through the questionnaire was being acted upon.