

UNCHealthySolutions

enhancing public health capacity and strategy

Systems Change for Health

A National Training Program

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Background

Public health professionals are increasingly working on policy, systems, and environmental solutions to health problems. A state legislature might be trying to enact policies to address the opioid epidemic, and state and local agencies might be planning for how to implement the policies. Advocates might be seeking to raise tobacco excise taxes or persuade local businesses to enact their own organizational policies to limit the use of tobacco products on their premises. A collective of non-profits and county agencies might be trying to improve the service system for children with special health care needs. Local or state agencies might want to reduce obesity rates by enhancing the built environment where people live, work, learn, and play.

To effectively work on systems change, professionals need skills and tools to articulate the problem, choose a solution, influence the change process to enact and implement that solution, and then evaluate its impact.

Systems Change for Health™ is a training curriculum written and copyrighted by James Emery, MPH and Carolyn Crump, PhD (part of the UNC Healthy Solutions team with the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health). Funded originally by the Directors of Health Promotion and Education, the curriculum is based on 21 competencies identified by the authors (Emery J and Crump C, 2006, 2018). The curriculum has been taught at both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and throughout the country within state and local health departments.

The curriculum consists as either a packaged series of courses or as a tailored learning experience to meet the needs of clients. Each course is designed to meet multiple adult-learning styles by providing mini-lectures about concepts, and then facilitating experiential activities (e.g., role play, case study, small group exercises, and individual reflection). The instructors provide individual and team coaching during all activities.

The curriculum consists of one introductory course, and five skills-based courses:

- Introduction to the System/Policy Change Process (1 day)
- **Course 1:** Assessing and Defining the Problem (2 days)
- **Course 2:** Analyzing Potential Solutions (2 days)
- **Course 3:** Influencing the Systems Change Process (2 days)
- **Course 4:** Implementing System Changes (2 days)
- **Course 5:** Evaluating Systems Change Interventions (2 days)

This document describes each course. You can learn more about the courses and download a list of the 21 technical competencies they support at: <https://SystemsChangeForHealth.web.unc.edu>.

References

Emery, J. and Crump, C. (2006, 2018). *Systems Change for Health™ Competencies for the Public Health Workforce*. Available at: <https://SystemsChangeForHealth.web.unc.edu>.



Introductory Course: *Introduction to the Systems Change Process*

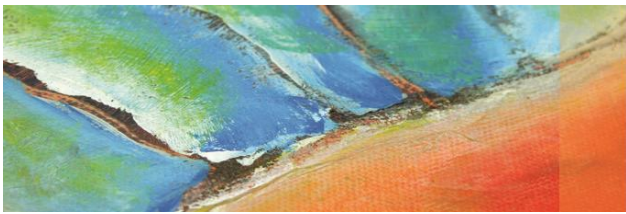
Timeframe: 1 day

Learning Objectives: By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize that a problem definition is socially constructed
2. Recognize how policy analysis tools can help guide solution development
3. Identify a range of advocacy strategies and tactics
4. Identify implementation components
5. Recognize how message framing is critical to the policy change process
6. Recognize the utility of a project logic model for evaluation planning

This introductory course orients participants to the systems change process, including how a local or state coalition might influence the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and built environments. Through interactive exercises, lecture, and group discussion, participants become familiar with five topics: 1) defining social/health problems; 2) analyzing potential solutions; 3) influencing the change process; 4) implementing enacted changes; and 5) evaluating system changes.

The course provides a gateway to the series of five skills-based courses or to other tailored learning experiences about changing systems to improve health and social problems.



Course 1: Assessing and Defining the Problem

During this 2-day, skills-based workshop, participants learn to define a health or social problem in terms of the systems and structures that perpetuate the problem. Participants consider how problems are socially constructed in order to gain the attention of system and policy decision-makers. They consider sources of information about the problem, including “evidence” (as contrasted with “data”) and stakeholder perspectives on the problem. They learn how social determinants of health can be investigated to reveal structural inequities that are the root causes of health disparities. Participants are introduced to systems thinking to clarify the scope of a problem, and to point toward the type of solution to pursue. They practice drafting a problem statement for different target audiences.

Agenda Snapshot

Day 1

- Noticing problems
- Evidence vs. data
- Stakeholder perspectives
- Root causes and inequities
- Systems thinking

Day 2

- Types of system solutions
- Impact and feasibility
- Problem statement

Learning Objectives

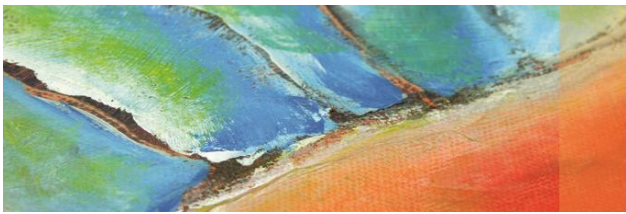
1. Describe how evidence, stakeholder perspective, and social determinants of health contribute to a problem definition
2. Identify structural inequities that perpetuate the problem
3. Use systems thinking to scope and diagnose a problem
4. Develop a concise problem statement

Key Handouts and Practice-Based Tools	Key Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Domain conceptual model b. Stakeholder FAQs about evidence/data c. Sources of evidence/data d. Example of a system “map” of a problem e. Stages of policy process and key people involved f. Understanding a policy’s structure and syntax g. TOOL: Template to build a problem definition h. Reference list for course 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify stakeholder perspectives b. Review and interpret evidence and data about a problem’s determinants and inequities c. Role-play a stakeholder discussing the problem d. Identify the problem on a system map e. Draw a system boundary f. Identify potential system solutions to problem g. Review a legislative bill h. Construct impact by feasibility matrix i. Draft and critique a problem statement

Competencies related to this course (Emery J & Crump C, 2006, 2018):

Domain 1: Assessing and defining the problem

- a. Collects, summarizes, and interprets information relevant to an issue
- b. Defines the problem needing a policy, system, or environmental solution



Course 2: Analyzing Potential Solutions

During this 2-day, skills-based workshop, participants learn to analyze (compare) and select system/policy/environmental solutions to pursue. The workshop introduces the need for analysis methods and how they can incorporate the socio-political values of the stakeholders. Participants learn about the policy analysis process and how to sequence analysis with windows of opportunity for influencing decision agendas. Stakeholder values are introduced in a simulated role-play experience and information is recorded in a stakeholder log. Participants use a stakeholder power analysis and an impact analysis, and combine the results to inform the decision-making process. The workshop concludes with a review of sample policy briefs.

Agenda Snapshot

Day 1

- Process of policy analysis
- Preemption
- Stakeholder values

Day 2

- Stakeholder power analysis
- Impact analysis

Learning Objectives

1. Construct and use a stakeholder power analysis
2. Develop feasibility and impact criteria
3. Construct and use an impact analysis
4. Synthesize the results to formulate a decision
5. Describe how to structure a policy brief

Key Handouts and Practice-Based Tools	Key Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Domain conceptual model b. Agenda cycle model constructed from policy theories c. TOOL: Stakeholder Log d. TOOL: Stakeholder Power Analysis e. TOOL: Impact Analysis f. TOOL: Making the Decision g. Guidelines for writing a policy/issue brief h. Examples of policy briefs i. Reference list for course 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assimilate evidence/data of a problem b. Role-play a stakeholder discussing potential solutions c. Identify potential solutions d. Identify key stakeholder values e. Interpret a timeline of policy agenda cycles f. Analyze stakeholder position and power g. Identify impact analysis criteria h. Analyze potential impact of solution(s) i. Combine analytic results and make a decision j. Structure a policy brief

Competencies related to this course (Emery J & Crump C, 2006, 2018):

Domain 2: Analyzing potential solutions

- a. Defines criteria for selecting among proposed options to improve the problem
- b. Records the options in clear and concise written statements
- c. Estimates the health, fiscal, administrative, legal, social, and political implications of each option
- d. Predicts the feasibility and expected outcomes of each option
- e. Analyzes the options using decision analysis methods (e.g., cost-benefit)
- f. Builds consensus for the chosen course of action



Course 3: Influencing the Systems Change Process

During this 2-day, skills-based workshop, participants learn to plan and use advocacy skills. The workshop introduces the process of influencing decision-makers who develop and manage systems, and enact policies and built environments. Participants learn a range of persuasion and pressure strategies and tactics, and incorporate them into an advocacy plan. Instructors integrate theory and practice-based approaches to help participants learn to frame and reframe messages about structural change. Participants practice delivering both written and spoken messages, with additional emphasis on how to “stay on message” during an interview with a media reporter.

Agenda Snapshot

Day 1

- Education, advocacy, lobbying
- Advocacy coalitions
- Advocacy strategies

Day 2

- Planning a campaign
- Framing/reframing messages
- Staying on message

Learning Objectives

1. Identify policy and media advocacy strategies
2. Plan advocacy strategies
3. Frame written and spoken messages
4. Stay on message during interviews

Key Handouts and Practice-Based Tools	Key Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Domain conceptual model b. Types of advocacy (definitions) c. Stages of a systems-change campaign d. Advocacy strategies and tactics e. Escalating advocacy pressure f. TOOL: Planning for advocacy g. Framing elements h. TOOL: 3-part structure to frame messages i. Steps to reframe messages j. Usefulness of types of media k. Checklist for working with media l. Tips for being interviewed by media m. Reference list for course 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plan an advocacy campaign using data on the problem, solutions, stakeholders, and decision-makers. b. Debate membership for an advocacy coalition c. Critique an advocacy campaign d. Review a policy brief e. Critique framed messages f. Frame a written message g. Deliver a framed message h. Review the analysis of a media story and the plan for reframing the core message i. Practice being interviewed on camera

Competencies related to this course (Emery J & Crump C, 2006, 2018):

Domain 3: Influencing the systems change process

- a. Plans a policy, system, environmental change approach
- b. Implements policy-advocacy strategies
- c. Monitors the change process and its outcome
- d. Educates decision-makers, media, partners, and the general public by providing relevant information (i.e., become an informational resource)
- e. Frames messages and tailors materials to influence the change process
- f. Implements communications strategies to impact social learning, agenda setting, and message framing



Course 4: Implementing System Changes

During this 2-day, skills-based workshop, participants learn to plan for the implementation of a newly enacted system change decision (e.g., enactment of a law, organizational policy, procedure or process). The workshop explores how the governance or organizational system could implement the enacted changes. Participants will learn about statutory authorities for implementation, and the public and private administrative structures and functions. They will apply critical thinking skills to analyze rules and regulations, and consider forces for deregulation. Case activities will explore how to assess and monitor the authorities and tactics (games) used by agencies during implementation.

Agenda Snapshot

Day 1

- Planning for implementation
- Authority to implement
- Structures and functions
- Rules and regulations

Day 2

- Implementation politics
- Preemption as strategy
- Influencing implementation

Learning Objectives

1. Analyze the authority granted for implementation
2. Identify key considerations when planning for implementation
3. Analyze rules and regulations
4. Identify political games that can influence implementation

Key Handouts and Practice-Based Tools	Key Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Domain conceptual model b. Implementation structures and functions (federal, state, local) c. Stages of formal rulemaking d. Regulatory policy and rulemaking e. TOOL: Template to analyze policies, rules and regulations f. TOOL: Planning components for implementation g. Sources of internal and external control h. Types of preemption i. Political games to prevent implementation j. Reference list for course 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review a case story about implementation authority evolving over time b. Mini-Cases: Identify authority structures for six policy examples c. Identify regulations that influence U.S. citizens' daily life d. Mini-Cases: Identify enforcement needs for six policy examples e. Tour www.regulations.gov website f. Consider historical lessons about preemption and implementation "games" g. Analyze a marked-up regulation using a model for comparison h. Skit: Implementation games at an agency

Competencies related to this course (Emery J & Crump C, 2006, 2018):

Domain 4: Implementing system changes

- a. Predicts how the relevant bureaucratic entities (e.g., agencies, departments) might implement the enacted changes
- b. Plans how to monitor and assist each entity as it develops the budgets, rules, guidelines and procedures necessary to implement the enacted change
- c. Assists entities with planning for structural and programmatic adjustments
- d. Monitors the implementation process to document how the solution is or is not functioning as intended



Course 5: Evaluating Systems Change Interventions

During this 2-day, skills-based workshop, participants learn to plan how to evaluate a systems-change project. The workshop will draw from both theory and practitioner expertise to provide concepts, tools, and skill practice. Participants will learn about evaluation designs and methods. They will consider when to conduct outcome monitoring versus outcome evaluation, especially when projects rely on evidence-based strategies promoted by the funder. Focusing the design will ultimately identify the “right fit” for the project. Participants practice designing an evaluation for a project, and then enhancing the evaluation plan when the project has the opportunity to scale up. Participants use a timeline activity to explore how systems-change evaluation has evolved over the past 30 years.

Agenda Snapshot

Day 1

- What is evaluation?
- Evaluation components
- Focusing an evaluation design

Day 2

- Evaluation examples
- Plan an evaluation (2 phases)
- Ethical issues

Learning Objectives

1. Define “evaluation” and distinguish it from “research”
2. Use a logic model to plan an evaluation
3. Identify evaluation questions for a policy change project
4. Identify an evaluation design for a policy change project
5. Identify evaluation indicators for a policy change project

Key Handouts and Practice-Based Tools	Key Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Domain conceptual model b. Stages of a systems-change campaign with implementation activities and outputs c. Sample project logic model d. Types of evaluation designs e. Types of evaluation questions f. Types of evaluation indicators g. Data collection methods h. Analysis methods i. TOOL: Evaluation planning template j. Reference list for course 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Compare research and evaluation as paradigms of inquiry b. Mini-Cases: Compare the evaluation needs of policy projects, and then critically review their evaluation designs c. Plan the evaluation for a 2-stage project d. Construct a timeline of evaluation methods e. Discuss how to respond to ethical issues that can arise during evaluation

Competencies related to this course (Emery J & Crump C, 2006, 2018):

- Domain 5: Evaluating systems change interventions
- a. Develops mechanisms to monitor policy/system/environmental change
 - b. Evaluates the impact of the change
 - c. Incorporates evaluation findings into future planning and analysis efforts