Support Networks

Families function more successfully if they have support from the extended family, friends and wider community and satisfying employment.

Formal Support Services

- Designed to carry out a predetermined role or function for a specific group.
- Trained or accredited personnel or specialists usually provide the service.
- In order to access a formal resource the individual or family may need to meet certain criteria.

Communities provide a variety of organisations and services, which support families, providing resources that can be interchanged or substituted for personal resources throughout the lifespan. These may include childcare services, schools, police youth clubs, and parent groups and seniors clubs.

Employment also provides support for families by offering a regular income. Employment can provide self-esteem, fulfilment, confidence and support for individuals and the family to which they belong.

Informal Resources

- Include family, friends and neighbours.
- Those networks rely on their own experiences to assist them in offering advice and support.
- These networks offer emotional security and support.

Relatives provide different levels and types of support, depending on the strength of their interpersonal bonds. They provide a helping hand when it is needed, to childcare or aged care for family members, or to being present for social gatherings of the family. The expectations will be based on the culture and traditions of the group, individual differences and family values and standards.

Friends provide a support network for families in the form of social activities, emotional support during periods of unanticipated change and physical support when the family may need a hand. Good friends share in celebrating the good times and help to relieve the burden during periods of hardship.

Access and Availability

This will vary for different families and individuals. The age of the individual, their level of education, socio-economic status will affect access to resources. Where we live in terms of geographic location will also influence our access to resources. E.g. Rural communities.

Impacts of Change

Positive Changes

- Will lead to an improvement in the living standards of members in the community.
- This change may also result in an increase in the availability of resources.

Examples include:

1. New shopping centres
2. New schools
3. Extension or renovations
4. Playing Fields

Negative Changes

- Can cause worry and concern to individuals if the change leads to a degradation of the standard of living.
- People may often back away if they feel they have no control over the change or if they were not consulted.
- When populations decrease, services and resources begin to change.
- Shops may close, jobs become redundant, value of real estate may decline and transport may become less regular.

Change can be positive for one person and negative for another. An individuals right may be compromised in order to bring about a change that may benefit others.

QUESTION:

What change has taken place in our school community? What was its impact?

TABLE 5.2 Impacts of change on individuals, families and communities

CHANGE	CAUSE OF CHANGE	POSITIVE/NEGATIVE IMPACTS	EFFECTS ON WELLBEING
A new community swimming pool	• Funding from local government • Pressure from the community after a number of child drownings due to children being unable to swim	**Positive** • Opportunity for children to learn to swim • Opportunity for social interaction • Encourages safety • Formation of a swimming club • New jobs available	• Physical, through increased opportunity to exercise • Socioemotional, through knowing that children are safer because they know how to swim • Social, through interaction with others
A new job	• Retrenchment from previous job • Relocating, so need a job that is closer to new home • Want to increase skills, knowledge and experience	**Positive** • Increase in salary • Opportunity to buy wants (e.g. new clothes) • Increase in skills, knowledge and experience • Opportunity to meet new people **Negative** • Longer working hours while learning • Might not get along with new colleagues	• Economic, through increased salary • Socioemotional, through knowing you have the skills for the job • Socioemotional, through knowing you can provide more for your family • Socioemotional, through meeting new people
A bushfire that burns down a number of houses in a town	• Natural causes (lightning or hot, dry weather) • Deliberate act	**Positive** • Brings families closer together by increasing their appreciation and love for one another • Brings community together to help each other with food, shelter and clothing **Negative** • Possible loss of life • Possible injuries/burns • Loss of homes and possessions • Costs of rebuilding	• Socioemotional, through sadness about deaths, injuries, loss of homes and possessions • Physical, through injuries • Economic, through cost of rebuilding and rehabilitation
The birth of a couple's first child	• Decision made to start a family • Financially prepared to have a baby	**Positive** • Joy of having a child • Brings parents closer together **Negative** • Potential stress when child is sick or doesn't sleep • Possible financial strain	• Socioemotional, through parents going through a range of emotional levels as child grows • Economic, through cost of child's needs • Spiritual, through feeling of belonging to family

DECISION MAKING IN COMMUNITIES

There are four processes used in making community decisions. These include:

> **ARBITRATION**- where an individual independent third party hears both sides of a case and settles the dispute with a decision which both parties must abide by. Eg. Family divorce cases to prevent formal and public court hearings due to disputes.

> **CONSENSUS**- when all parties mutually agree on an opinion. This process may involve negotiation or mediation. Each party must feel that their needs have been met and this is evident through compromising.

> **ELECTION/VOTING**- write down the meaning of both on page 119 of text. They are used on all levels of organizations. When a decision needs to be made. Eg. Voting for parliament or local members.

> **REFERENDUM**- used in both political and social decision-making involving large communities. The majority of the eligible votes determine the outcome. Refers to proposals by government bodies and organizations.

WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS FOR OUR COMMUNITY???

Local Government-
- ✓ They may include tribunals but decisions are to be made by major and councilors.
- ✓ Council decisions may be on the following areas:
    - Finance and City Properties
    - Work, Recreation and Emergency Services
    - Planning, Building, Health, Community and Cultural Services

WHAT WAS A RECENT COMMUNITY DECISION????

HOSPITAL UPGRADE

What role does the individual, small group and large groups have to ensure the outcome is occurring???? Write a half a page response to this answer.

INFLUENCES ON DECISION MAKING

* <u>LEGISLATION</u>- guides and influences community decisions. There are local, state and commonwealth Government laws that need to be considered when decisions are made in the community. The aim is to support and protect the rights of community members, which will maintain community well-being.

* <u>ENVIRONMENT</u>- This needs to be considered every time a decision is made. Legislation protects our environment. E.g. Environmental Protection Act and is policed by the Environment Protection Authority. If we protect the environment, we are protecting the well-being of our community members.

* <u>LOBBYING</u>- when members of a community feel strongly about a decision that needs to be made or has been made. Lobby means how a group of people applies pressure to influence a decision. They can do this by being organized, being well informed on the facts, providing realistic alternatives and by showing how decisions may affect the community.

Complete the table by analysing ways that communities can meet the needs of people.

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	NEEDS OF PEOPLE	HOW NEEDS CAN BE SATISFIED
Local	Physical	− Provide sporting Fields − Establish short−term emergency accommodation
	Social	− Have a community festival or agricultural show that celebrates the positive attributes of the community.
	Cultural	− Provision of opportunities for developing cultural understanding across the community− centre for the arts.
	Intellectual	− Provision of library and community-based education courses.
	Emotional	− Provision of counselling and support services.
	Spiritual	− Church or other religions, meditation.
State	Physical	
	Social	
	Cultural	
	Intellectual	
	Emotional	
	Spiritual	
National	Physical	
	Social	
	Cultural	
	Intellectual	
	Emotional	
	Spiritual	
Global	Physical	
	Social	
	Cultural	
	Intellectual	
	Emotional	
	Spiritual	

Change in Communities

Answer these questions in regards to whether the change you would like to occur in your community would be successful.

1. Did we have a targeted and focused mission and goals?

2. Did we have a clear, agreed upon action plan in place?

3. Is there regular feedback on the rate of community change and more distinct outcomes (i.e., behaviour change, community-level indicators?

4. Are there strategies and tactics used (e.g., information, access) strong enough to change behaviour?

5. Have changes been in place long enough to make a difference?

6. Are the changes reaching the right target audience, or a big enough part of the target audience?

7. Are the changes big enough to make a difference for those who are most at-risk for the concern?

8. Do the changes fit what the community needs?

9. Are the changes actually related to the effect (outcome) you want?