Creating a Shared Vision

Creating a shared vision helps a team identify and agree on a common goal. This resource can help guide a school health team through the process of creating a vision. Below are some key questions to help define and explain why a shared vision is an important step in creating a healthy school community.

What is a vision?
A vision is an inspirational and motivating statement that sets the overall direction for the group’s work.

What is a shared vision?
A shared vision is a common understanding of what a healthy school community could look like in the future. It is based on input from all key stakeholders (e.g., staff, parents, students, community members).

Why is it important to have a shared vision?
A shared vision ensures that all school community members have an opportunity to define the school’s overall direction for health and wellness. This helps the school community stay committed to the vision. It’s important to link health to the school’s existing vision so that it becomes part of the overall school culture.

When should a shared vision be created?
A school health team should create a broad vision before assessing or implementing health initiatives. It may be necessary to revise or modify the vision once an assessment has been completed.

Who should be involved?
A vision should be created by all those involved in the school community: staff, students, parents and community members. Ideally, a school health team reflects views from all members of the school community.

For more information on starting a school health team, see the Health Champions and School Health Teams: Leaders in Building Healthy School Communities resource.*

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*To find more information about identifying health champions and starting a school health team, visit http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp
Factors That Lead To Successful Change\(^1,2\)

As a school health team, consider all the key factors that promote successful change—a vision, skills, incentives, resources, and assessment and action plan strategies—to keep the team moving forward and engaged. If any of these factors are left out, it can slow down the process of successful change.

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**Vision:** An inspirational and motivating statement that sets the overall direction for the group’s work.

**Skills:** The talents, experience, creativity and/or knowledge that individuals can contribute to the group.

**Incentives:** Factors that motivate an individual to perform an action (e.g., healthy rewards, extra gym time, recognition, release time).

**Resources:** In-kind, non-monetary items or community resources to assist in completing action plans. These may include administrative support, volunteers, classroom time or a small or large budget.

**Plan:** A timeline and responsibilities that link the group’s vision and mission, keeping decisions and activities focused and intentional. Action planning is an important step in building a healthy school community.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) For more information about developing a school health action plan, visit [http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp)
Vision Process

The steps below can help a school health team create a shared vision. This process may be completed in one meeting or over several meetings.

Building consensus is an important part of creating a shared vision. School health teams are often made up of a variety of members from the school community (e.g., students, staff, parents, health professionals, community representatives) who may bring different opinions to the table.

Involving a diverse range of people in creating the vision for a healthy school community will generate more ideas than involving only a few individuals. A variety of perspectives may also lead to innovative ideas and a more holistic vision.

This vision process offers ideas about how to collect feedback from a school health team and other key stakeholders. It is important to record their answers and ideas, and to reach consensus within the group, before writing a vision statement.

Step 1

Initiate discussion with the school health team

Start by using team-building icebreakers and discussion questions. These activities will allow all members of the team to feel comfortable with each other, so that they are more likely to share their ideas about what a healthy school community should look like.

Icebreakers

Choose an icebreaker based on the learning style of your school health team. Links to a few icebreakers are found on page 5.

Discussion questions

The following questions can help start a discussion on why creating a vision is important (see also the definitions on page 1 of this document):

- What is a vision?
- Why is it important to have one?
- Does our school have a vision already? Is wellness included in it?
- Who should be involved in creating a vision?
- When should a vision be created?
- Where should we post our vision statement?
- How does or how could our school show support for the vision? What actions support the vision?

Step 2

Gather input from stakeholders

Vision activities

Choose a vision activity that best meets the needs of your school. Refer to page 5 for a link to some vision activities.

- Vision activities can be used during a school health team meeting to help brainstorm ideas about how a school can become a happier and healthy place.
- A school health team may wish to use these activities to gather input from staff and students in a classroom setting or school assembly.

Create a vision

How to make a great vision statement

• Make your vision statement about the future.
  - Imagine your school in the future. Don’t get caught in the present—think beyond the next year or two.

• Make your vision statement descriptive.
  - Your vision statement should inspire action. This can be achieved when your vision statement provides a clear mental picture of what your school community will look like in the future.

• Make your vision statement personal, and include your school values.
  - Start your vision statement with why your school values having a healthy school community, or why you want it to be an even healthier place in the future. This only needs to be a sentence or two.
  - Consider internal thoughts, emotions and feelings. How do you want the community, parents, students and staff to view their school?
  - Personalize your vision statement by considering what makes your school unique. This will help inspire and energize everyone involved in the school community.

• Make your vision statement realistic.
  - Keep it simple. Your vision should provide clear criteria and allow for measurable outcomes.

• Write your vision statement in the present tense.
  - Describe your vision statement as if you were reporting what you actually see or feel.

Examples of vision statements

Elementary school vision
“ABC Elementary believes students and staff are empowered learners when they are part of a healthy school community. We strive to provide an environment that promotes healthy eating, active living and positive social environments for our students, parents, staff members and community partners.”

High school vision
“WC High School recognizes that a healthy school community allows students and staff to be their best. We encourage school spirit, healthy and affordable food choices, and a safe environment for social and emotional well-being.”

K–12 school vision
“John Smith School is dedicated to providing a healthy environment where students learn and play. It is a place where healthy eating, active living and positive relationships are part of the culture and daily routines. We support students in developing the skills they need to become healthy adults.”
Step 4

Sharing the vision

- Post your vision statement in central locations so that everyone can see it, such as
  - school entrances
  - main offices
  - common areas
  - theatres
  - gyms

- As a school health team, brainstorm who you would like to share your vision with and ideas about how to do so. Suggestions include
  - school assemblies
  - parent newsletters
  - student posters
  - school announcements
  - parent evenings

Step 5

Reflection

Either individually or as a team, reflect on the process of creating a shared vision. The following questions can be used to initiate a discussion:

- What worked well in the process of creating a vision?
- Were there difficulties in the process?
- What can we do to improve next time?

Supportive Resources

Icebreaker activities
For a series of icebreaker activities that can help your team members get to know each other and work well together, visit http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp.

Vision activities
To find activities that can support you in creating a shared vision in partnership with students and other school community members, visit http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp.