
NEIGHBORS *FOR* BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS

ASSET-BASED

STARTING POINT:

The starting point for ABCD is with what's strong, not what's wrong. Some misunderstand this as an attempt to minimize life's challenges, or normalize injustices, nothing could be further from the truth. ABCD is the process by which relational power is mobilized to produce sustainable and satisfying change. With that in mind, starting with what's strong enables local people to get organized to address what's wrong and making what's strong even stronger.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF ASSET-BASED:

Some of the core principles of Asset-based are encapsulated in the following statements:

1. We cannot know what a community needs until they first know what they have.
2. Every community has more gifts, skills, talents and resources than any one person or organization can know, and these are easily disabled by professional intervention.
3. These gifts, skills, talents and resources need to be identified, brought together and converted into innovative resident-led action to improve people's lives and economic opportunities in a community driven way.
4. Organizers need to organize their structures in a way that does no harm to the first three principles, and ideally conforms to them.
5. Taken in the round, asset-based calls for a shift towards a capacity-oriented approach to organizing where people are not viewed as passive recipients of services, but as producers of their own and their community's well-being.

CO-PRODUCER CONCEPT:

The asset-based approach asks searching questions of those who seek to define certain neighborhoods by the sum of their deficits, challenging them to open their eyes and see what is actually before them. Being actively present to the capacities and resources that exist in every community (which include the gifts of individual residents, associational inventiveness, environmental fruitfulness, cultural heritage, and economic possibilities) becomes difficult when you view the people and place you serve by the sum of their problems. To really show up in a neighborhood you've got to set aside the utopian impulses to fix, save and deliver, and instead be curious, collaborative and humble.