

LSICD04 (SQA Unit Code - FX5A 04)

Demonstrate competence and integrity as a Community Development practitioner



Overview

The definition of Community Development is expressed in the following key purpose:

Community Development is a long-term value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion. The process enables people to organise and work together to:

1. identify their own needs and aspirations
2. take action to exert influence on the decisions which affect their lives
3. improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live, and societies of which they are a part.

The Community Development process is underpinned by a set of five key values on which all practice is based. Community Development practitioners need to relate these values to their roles and actions. There are many tensions inherent in putting the ideals and values into practice within the realities and complexities of communities. Community Development practitioners need to become competent in the necessary skills and knowledge and to work with integrity to support communities who may have few recognised resources and limited access to decision-makers.

Key Area One (Core) has been designed as the core or underpinning Key Area and applies to all Community Development practice in all roles and settings and at all levels. People who describe themselves as Community Development practitioners and/or manage Community Development practitioners need to be able to articulate their understanding of Community Development as a process and an activity which 'aims to bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion'.

Key Area One (Core) applies to all practitioners who undertake and/or manage Community Development – whether as unpaid activity within their community, paid Community Development workers/officers, or other professionals who adopt a Community Development approach.

Key Area One (Core) contains the definition of Community Development practice (as above), five Key Values and five standards. Together these constituent parts form an integral whole that underpins all Community Development practice. It is not appropriate to use any part in isolation as they are all interdependent on each other.

This standard concerns the way Community Development practitioners relate to others, being clear about their role, their contribution and their boundaries. It is about reflecting on their own day-to-day practice against the values, skills

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and knowledge of Community Development and seeking to improve their practice through continuing professional development.

This standard is relevant to all Community Development practitioners.

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Performance criteria

- You must be able to:*
- P1 ensure that your own behaviour, presentation and perspectives are consistent with maintaining effective working relationships
 - P2 ensure that personal differences do not impact on their work with communities and groups
 - P3 analyse what external factors may affect what they can deliver, and share this with others
 - P4 deliver good quality practice which is based on Community Development values
 - P5 work in ways that enable and support the development of strong, autonomous community groups and which do not encourage dependency on the practitioner
 - P6 think and critically reflect to develop plans of work that reflect community needs and priorities and Community Development methods and values
 - P7 promote understanding of diversity and ensure equality of opportunity in your area of responsibility
 - P8 self-appraise the strengths and weaknesses in your own practice through informal feedback from community groups and colleagues as well as through more formal supervision and appraisal systems
 - P9 identify training and other opportunities to develop and maintain the skills and competence required to carry out their Community Development role
 - P10 review your role and evaluate the impact this has on their practice and their relationships with others
 - P11 maintain your awareness of current and emerging developments and methods in Community Development

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

The following knowledge and understanding statements relate to the four standards within Key Area One. It is not necessarily the case that every Key Area One knowledge statement relates to every standard, but it is likely that a knowledge statement relates to more than one standard.

Community Development values and processes

- K1 the values on which Community Development is based
- K2 historical and contextual knowledge of national and local Community Development and the aspects and approaches of Community Development
- K3 how the process of Community Development facilitates people and groups to come together around common issues and supports them in the actions they decide to take
- K4 the role of Community Development in widening people's horizons, promoting their participation, and encouraging critical and creative responses to their collective situation
- K5 the importance and value of the autonomy and independence of community groups and communities of interest
- K6 the Community Development National Occupational Standards
- K7 the range of and existing links between contacts in an area or neighbourhood

Power, inequality and justice issues

- K8 theoretical approaches to forms of injustice, discrimination and social exclusion which operate globally, nationally and locally
- K9 how inequality and injustice impact on the lives of individuals and communities
- K10 theoretical approaches to power and powerlessness within society
- K11 how structures and organisations create and maintain their power and the impact of this on individuals, communities and Community Development practitioners
- K12 the concepts of community empowerment and community engagement and how Community Development contributes to their successful implementation
- K13 how the history and impact of oppression and discrimination affect working relationships
- K14 how beliefs, values and prejudices towards different cultures, traditions and backgrounds can affect working relationships
- K15 how the links between environmental, economic and social inequalities

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can affect people at local, national and international levels

Decision making

K16 democratic decision-making processes and participatory practices/techniques

Community Development's relevance to organisations

K17 how to monitor and evaluate Community Development's contribution to government and organisational policies and relevant targets

K18 the importance of, and methods for, raising the profile, relevance and effectiveness of Community Development within organisations and public bodies

K19 the range of policies that may impact on communities

Reflective practice

K20 the concept of reflective practice based on the values of Community Development

K21 the significance of divided or conflicting loyalties and how this can affect working relationships

K22 the implications for communities of different forms of interventions made by voluntary organisations and statutory bodies

K23 how individual reflections contribute to collective processes of reflection and analysis

K24 understanding how one's own values and beliefs can affect practice and relationships

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Additional Information

Values

The five key values which underpin all Community Development practice are below.

Equality and Anti-discrimination

Community Development practice challenges structural inequalities and discriminatory practices. Community Development recognises that people are not the same, but they are all of equal worth and importance and therefore entitled to the same degree of respect and acknowledgement. Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to challenge the oppression and exclusion of individuals and groups. This will be undertaken in a way which:

1. acknowledges where there is inequality and discrimination, and rejects and challenges any form of it
2. supports and develops anti-oppressive policies and practices
3. respects, values, supports and promotes the value of difference and diversity
4. promotes and supports diverse communities to agree on their common concerns and interests
5. acknowledges the diverse nature of society and seeks to understand and support others to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to marginalised communities and minorities

Social Justice

The aim of increasing social justice is an essential element of Community Development practice. It involves identifying and seeking to alleviate structural disadvantage and advocating strategies for overcoming exclusion, discrimination and inequality. Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to achieve change and the long-term goal of a more equal, non-sectarian society. This will be undertaken in a way which:

1. recognises that social justice incorporates environmental, political, cultural and economic justice
2. recognises and challenges inequalities and power differences
3. values diversity of experience
4. promotes human and civil rights and responsibilities
5. promotes a sustainable environment
6. challenges the underlying causes, and effects, of structural power imbalances
7. makes the link between local, societal and global contexts

Collective Action

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Community Development practice is essentially about working with and supporting groups of people, to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence so they can develop an analysis and identify issues which can be addressed through collective action. Community Development practitioners will work with communities to organise, influence and take action. This will be undertaken in a way which:

1. promotes the active participation of people within communities
2. supports the rights of communities to organise, access support and take action
3. respects the rights of others when planning collective action
4. empowers communities to recognise and acknowledge their existing skills, knowledge and expertise and how these may be used to achieve their goals
5. uses the power of the collective voice and of collective action
6. recognises the wealth of creative and positive resources present within communities

Community Empowerment

Community Development practice aims to empower individuals and communities, through using the strengths of the community to bring about desired changes. It involves supporting people to become critical, creative, liberated and active participants, enabling them to take more control over their lives, their communities and their environment. This process is based on mutual respect and equal and genuine partnerships between all those involved. Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations and encourage them to work together. This will be undertaken in a way which:

1. promotes the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action
2. encourages an understanding and commitment to the long term nature of Community Development practice
3. promotes the rights of communities to be consulted, involved in, and to influence decision making that affects their lives
4. promotes accountability and transparency
5. promotes co-operation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities
6. uses research to support communities in determining needs as a basis for influencing

Working and Learning Together

Community Development practice promotes a collective process which enables participants to learn from reflecting on their experiences: for example, evaluating how well they had identified the needs, to what extent particular activities helped them to achieve their aims, and what they could have done

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differently. Community Development learning is based on participatory and experiential processes with the aim of improving future Community Development practice. Community Development learning and Community Development practice are inseparable. The practice informs the learning in an ongoing cycle. Community Development practitioners will support individuals and communities working and learning together. This will be undertaken in a way which:

1. recognises, shares and values skills, knowledge and experience
2. promotes empowerment through building on existing knowledge and skills
3. creates opportunities for collective learning through shared reflection on action
4. encourages reflection on own practice, values and beliefs
5. uses analysis and evaluation to inform future action
6. promotes learning from the experiences of communities locally, nationally and globally

The following examples correspond to each of the key values:

1. Community Development practitioners recognise the basis of their power and influence
2. Community Development practitioners are clear about their commitment to social and environmental justice for all
3. the skills, knowledge, experience and expertise of others is acknowledged and valued
4. Community Development practitioners model the principles behind community empowerment in their day-to-day practice
5. Community Development practitioners continually seek out ways to improve practice and increase knowledge to meet changing needs and challenges

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