

Levels of Community Change

A Game to Teach the Social Ecological Model and Policy, System, and Environment Change

Time: 20-50 minutes

Equipment and Supplies

- Game mat or area delineated with lines or ropes. (See Set-up.)
- Targets (shaded areas, buckets, boxes, as appropriate)
- Health behavior scenarios
- Objects to toss to targets (balls, bean bags, coins, etc.) and timer (optional)

Do Ahead

- Review activity instructions
- Select appropriate scenarios and insert in envelope
- Prepare game area

Intended Audience

Adults or youth ages 14-18

Lesson Objectives

Participants will . . .

- Identify levels of community change that influence health behaviors (based on social-ecological models).
- Identify factors that influence health behaviors at each level.
- Recognize the relative difficulty and potential impacts associated with strategies at each level of community change.
- Explore ways to target numerous levels of change.

BACKGROUND

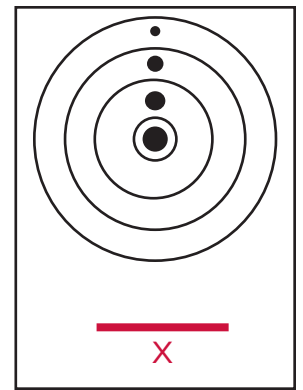
Social ecological models recognize that individual choices and behaviors are influenced by numerous, interrelated factors across multiple levels, suggesting that health promotion strategies should target individual change (education), *and* social, organizational/ physical environment, and policy changes.

WHAT TO DO

Set-up

Levels of Community Change can be played in a small, indoor area or in a large, outdoor area. Generally speaking, the set up involves these steps:

1. Lay out a set of four concentric circles to represent the levels of community change, also known as the social ecological model.
2. Choose four targets appropriate for the size of your circles. Ideally, the targets get smaller in size as they move out to larger circles.
3. Label the targets (beginning in the center circle):
 - Individual level = 1 point
 - Group/Social level = 5 points
 - Organizational level = 10 points
 - Policy/System level = 20 points



For play in a small or indoor space:

1. Draw concentric circles on a large sheet of paper or form them on the floor with tape or rope. Place a strip of tape about 5 feet from the bottom of the circles.
2. Draw circles as flat targets or choose containers, like boxes or bowls, for three-dimensional targets.

For play in a large or outdoor space:

1. Create large circles with rope on a grassy area or with chalk on a playground area. A Hula-Hoop or other large ring may be used for the smallest circle. Use a small rope or other marker to create a line for players to stand behind.
2. Choose targets such as 5-gallon buckets or something that is big enough to hold the tossed objects.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Experience: Setting the Stage

Ask the following questions to help introduce the concept of levels of community change.

1. To what extent do you think factors beyond your own knowledge and preferences affect your eating decisions? A great deal or not much?
2. In what locations do you usually purchase/eat foods?
 - What impacts your own decisions in those places?
 - Who influences which foods are in those locations?
 - What kinds of rules or regulations impact which foods are there?
3. Which factors influence your choice to buy or consume nutritious vs. unhealthy foods? How often are those factors within your control (mostly, sometimes, or rarely)?

Read the descriptions of the levels of community change and a few scenarios. Explain how each scenario fits into one or more levels.

Level Descriptions

Individual—knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, demographic factors, and personality traits

Group/Social—the support or lack thereof provided by friends, family, and peers, as well as social norms and identity

Organizational—rules, regulations, guidelines, policies, cultures, and structures in place at institutions where people live, work, worship, and play, including the built environment

Policy/System—local, state, and federal policies, laws, and wide-reaching systematic practices

Experience: Playing the Game

1. Divide into two teams; form two lines behind the line.
2. Have a player select and read a health behavior scenario.
3. After the player's team agrees on the level of community change most needed to address the scenario, the player tries to toss a coin or bean bag from behind the tape into the square at that level.
4. Award points for landing in the correct area; team must justify other levels to get points.
5. Teams alternate taking turns to toss object.
6. Options: Allow an additional chance to toss an object toward the target and score points if the team can describe an action they could actually take related to the scenario. Move the throwing line closer to the target each round. Allow for other creative ways to attain points. Purposely give one team some type of advantage.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect

- Why is the individual level target the largest?
- Why is the systems level target farther than the others?
- Why is it worth the most points?
- Are most of your decisions about health behaviors affected by factors at one level, two to three levels, or all four levels of the model? Give examples.
- Did anything else happen that mirrors real life? (Was the playing field uneven, were the rules bent, etc.)

Generalize

- Why is individual or group change easier to achieve than organizational or policy change? Give examples.
- Which types of change can impact the most people? Which require the most effort from individuals? Which are passive? Give real-life examples.
- Are disadvantaged populations affected differently by some change strategies? Give examples.

Apply

- Name a health issue you are concerned about. How could you encourage change at each level within your community related to that issue?
- How can community groups promote change at all levels?

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Interested in reaching a large audience with multiple games and facilitators? Check out the Facilitator Instructions available at ohio4h.org/changegame.

Share your game experiences: smathers.14@osu.edu

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SOURCES

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