

# COMPONENT 2: Community Readiness & Assessment Guide

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## Purpose

This component helps communities understand their current strengths, resources, gaps, and opportunities related to brain health, dementia awareness, caregiver support, and healthy aging.

## Why It Matters

Before selecting initiatives, communities need a clear understanding of local needs and existing resources. Completing an assessment helps ensure Healthy Brain Community efforts are data-informed, community-driven, and responsive to local priorities.

## Expected Outcomes

- Conduct a baseline community assessment
- Identify existing brain health, dementia, and caregiver resources
- Map available services and supports
- Identify gaps and unmet needs
- Identify priority populations
- Select focus areas for action planning

## Key Actions

- Conduct a baseline community assessment
- Map existing services and supports
- Identify priority populations

## Estimated Time to Complete

Approximately 1–3 months. Time may vary depending on community size, stakeholder engagement, survey distribution, and availability of local data.

## Who to Involve

Steering Committee Members • Public Health Professionals • Healthcare Organizations • Aging Services Organizations • Community-Based Organizations • Tribal Partners • Caregivers • Individuals with Lived Experience • Older Adults • Community Leaders

## Tools Included in this Component

| Tool Number | Tool Name                          |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 2.1         | Healthy Brain Community Assessment |
| 2.2         | Dementia Support Resources Log     |
| 2.3         | Service Mapping Template           |
| 2.4         | Priority Population ID Worksheet   |

### Step 1: Conduct a Baseline Community Assessment

**Purpose:** Gather information about community strengths, needs, resources, and opportunities.

**Tool to Use:** Tool 2.1 Healthy Brain Community Assessment

**Recommendations for Success:**

- Engage a variety of community members.
- Include professionals, caregivers, and residents.
- Use multiple methods to collect input.
- Consider online and paper survey options.

### Step 2: Map Existing Services and Supports

**Purpose:** Identify and document existing resources available in the community.

**Tools to Use:** Tools 2.2 Dementia Support Resources Log and 2.3 Existing Services Mapping Template

**Recommendations for Success:**

- Include healthcare, public health, aging services, transportation, and community organizations.
- Document referral processes and accessibility.
- Consider both formal and informal support.

### Step 3: Identify Priority Populations

**Purpose:** Identify populations with the greatest need or greatest opportunity for impact.

**Tool to Use:** Tool 2.4 Priority Population Identification Worksheet

**Recommendations for Success:**

- Use assessment findings, local data, and lived experience.
- Consider underserved populations and barriers to care.
- Select 2–4 priority populations initially.

## Step 4: Review Findings and Identify Priorities

**Purpose:** Review assessment findings and determine which Healthy Brain Community initiatives should be prioritized.

**Recommendations for Success:**

- Identify community strengths.
- Identify service gaps.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Focus on priorities that align with community needs and available resources.

## Discussion Questions

- What are the greatest brain health and dementia-related needs in our community?
- What resources already exist?
- Who is not currently being reached?
- What barriers prevent people from accessing support?
- Which populations should we focus on first?
- Which initiative will have the greatest impact?

## Tips for Success

- Use multiple sources of information, including surveys, local data, and community conversations.
- Focus on community strengths as well as gaps.
- Start small and focus on the most important priorities.
- Engage individuals with lived experience throughout the process.
- Use findings to guide selection of Healthy Brain Community initiatives.

## Component Completion Checklist

- ☐ Baseline assessment completed
- ☐ Assessment results reviewed
- ☐ Community resources identified
- ☐ Service mapping completed
- ☐ Gaps and opportunities documented
- ☐ Priority populations identified
- ☐ Community priorities selected

## **Additional Resources** **(Component 9)**

- CDC Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI) Road Map
- South Dakota Department of Health Head Forward
- Dakota at Home
- South Dakota Alzheimer's Association
- Administration for Community Living (ACL)

## **Next Steps**

The goal of this component is to identify the strengths, gaps, and priorities that will help guide selection of the Healthy Brain Community initiatives most relevant to your community. **Use the information gathered to select one or more initiative components:** Community Engagement & Awareness, Brain Health Education & Risk Reduction, Dementia Awareness & Early Recognition, Caregiver Education & Support, or Dementia-Friendly Community Practices.