



ABCD Toolkit:

What is ABCD?

Asset Based Community Development

In our experience, of working in 30 different neighbourhoods in Torbay, Asset Based Community Development is the most positive way to bring people together. It is always about looking for what is strong in a community and building on what's already there. This is best achieved by embedding a community builder.

When we begin to work with a neighbourhood or community. We talk to everyone, in the street, at bus stops, benches, on the buses, in cafes, pubs, shops, at groups, classes, at church and in the park. We go door knocking.

We ask lots of questions, for example, 'What do you like about living here?' 'What's your favourite thing to do here?', 'What's going on already?', 'Where are your favourite places?', or 'Do you remember something special that happened here?'.

We make an 'asset map' with residents, on big paper, of all the things already going on in their community. We draw the streets and the buildings and spaces where things already happen...a map of their neighbourhood and the assets in their community – these can be physical assets, places, spaces, or groups, or the people that run them, or the skills, wisdom and experience of the residents themselves. We find the connectors in the community – the people that make things happen and love to bring others together.

Then we listen. We *really* listen ... to what people want to do in their street, flats, cafes, community centres, outdoor spaces in their neighbourhood...or in another neighbourhood, or in the town or city centre ...or even online! We listen to what they want to do...not what we think it would be a good idea for them to do. It's about going where the energy is and making things happen with them and with other people, who want to do the same things together. Ideas come from them and the idea belongs to them.

We might say, 'What would you like to do?' 'Where would you like to do it?' 'How would you like to do it?', 'Would you like to set it up? Would you like to run it? ...do you know anyone who could help?' 'What day would work for you?' ...'What time?'

We remove barriers and link up people who want to do the same things together. Community Builders are like matchmakers, the glue bringing everyone together to do the things they want to do!

Our Community Building has been based on geographical locations – at the neighbourhood level. But the same approach can be used for any community – you just need to find their bumping places – be that online, via social media or in a physical space!

