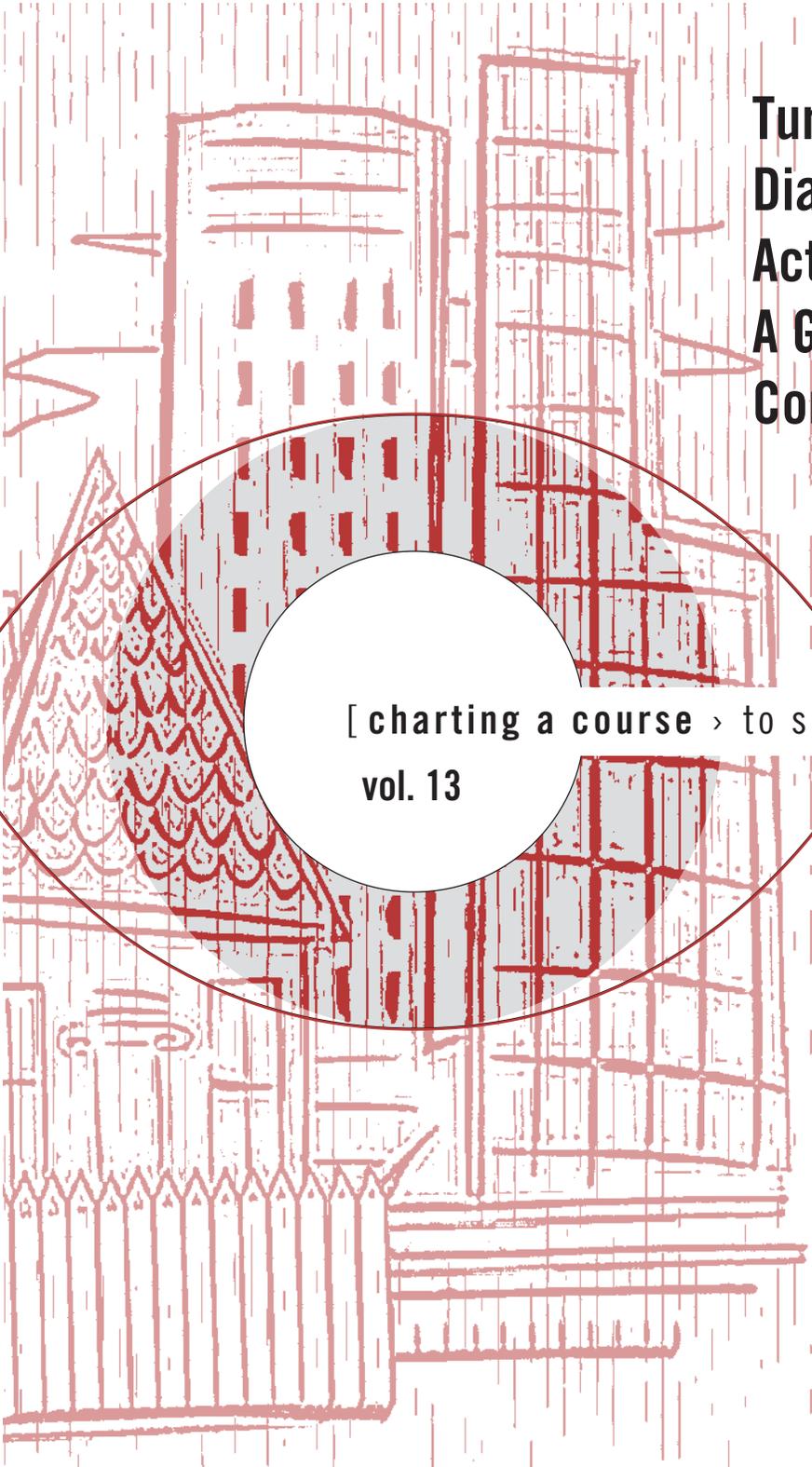




Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: A Guide for Local Communities

[charting a course > to safe living]

vol. 13



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[charting a course > to safe living]
vol. 13



RÉSEAU QUÉBÉCOIS DE
VILLES ET VILLAGES
EN SANTÉ

*Institut national
de santé publique*

Québec 

Avec la collaboration de :

• Ministère de la Sécurité publique

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The [charting a course › to safe living] collection

This document is part of a collection prepared to foster and support safety promotion in life settings. Volumes 4 to 12 are the main components of a safety diagnosis tool kit developed for local communities. To date, the following volumes have been compiled for this collection:

Volume 1

Renée Levaque, Laurence Le Hénaff and Pierre Maurice. *Formation pour l'amélioration de la sécurité et la prévention de la criminalité à l'intention des collectivités locales*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2006.

Volume 2

Josephina Alvarez. *Réalisation d'un diagnostic de sécurité. Trousse à l'intention des collectivités locales – Les diagnostics locaux de sécurité : une étude comparée pour mieux comprendre et mieux agir*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2006.

Volume 3

Julie Laforest. *Indicateurs de vulnérabilité associés à la sécurité d'un territoire*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2007.

Volume 4

Monique Rainville, Louise Marie Bouchard et Pierre Maurice. *Trousse diagnostique de sécurité à l'intention des collectivités locales. Manuel d'accompagnement*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (to be published in October 2010).

Volume 5

Daniel Rochette, Robert Lavertue et Louise Marie Bouchard. *Trousse diagnostique de sécurité à l'intention des collectivités locales. Guide d'élaboration du portrait sociodémographique et économique du territoire*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (to be published in October 2010).

Volume 6

Louise Motard. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities. Guide to Analyzing Crime Using Official Statistics*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2010.

Volume 7

Louise Marie Bouchard. *Trousse diagnostique de sécurité à l'intention des collectivités locales. Guide d'organisation d'une enquête téléphonique sur la sécurité des personnes et la victimation dans les milieux de vie*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (to be published in March 2011).

Volume 8

Louise Marie Bouchard et Michel Ouellet. *Trousse diagnostique de sécurité à l'intention des collectivités locales. Guide d'organisation d'une enquête autoadministrée sur la sécurité des personnes et la victimation dans les milieux de vie*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (to be published in March 2011).

Volume 9

Louise Marie Bouchard et Michel Ouellet. *Trousse diagnostique de sécurité à l'intention des collectivités locales. Guide d'organisation d'une enquête autoadministrée sur la sécurité des personnes et la victimation dans les milieux de vie (version adaptée aux logements sociaux)*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (to be published in March 2011).

Volume 10

Monique Rainville. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities. Guide to Organizing Focus Groups*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2008.

Volume 11

Julie Laforest. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities. Guide to Organizing Semi-Structured Interviews With Key Informants*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2008.

Volume 12

Michel Ouellet, Monique Rainville, Louise Marie Bouchard and Catherine Belley. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities. Guide to Direct Observation of Community Safety*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2009.

Volume 13

Julie Laforest, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: A Guide for Local Communities*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2010.

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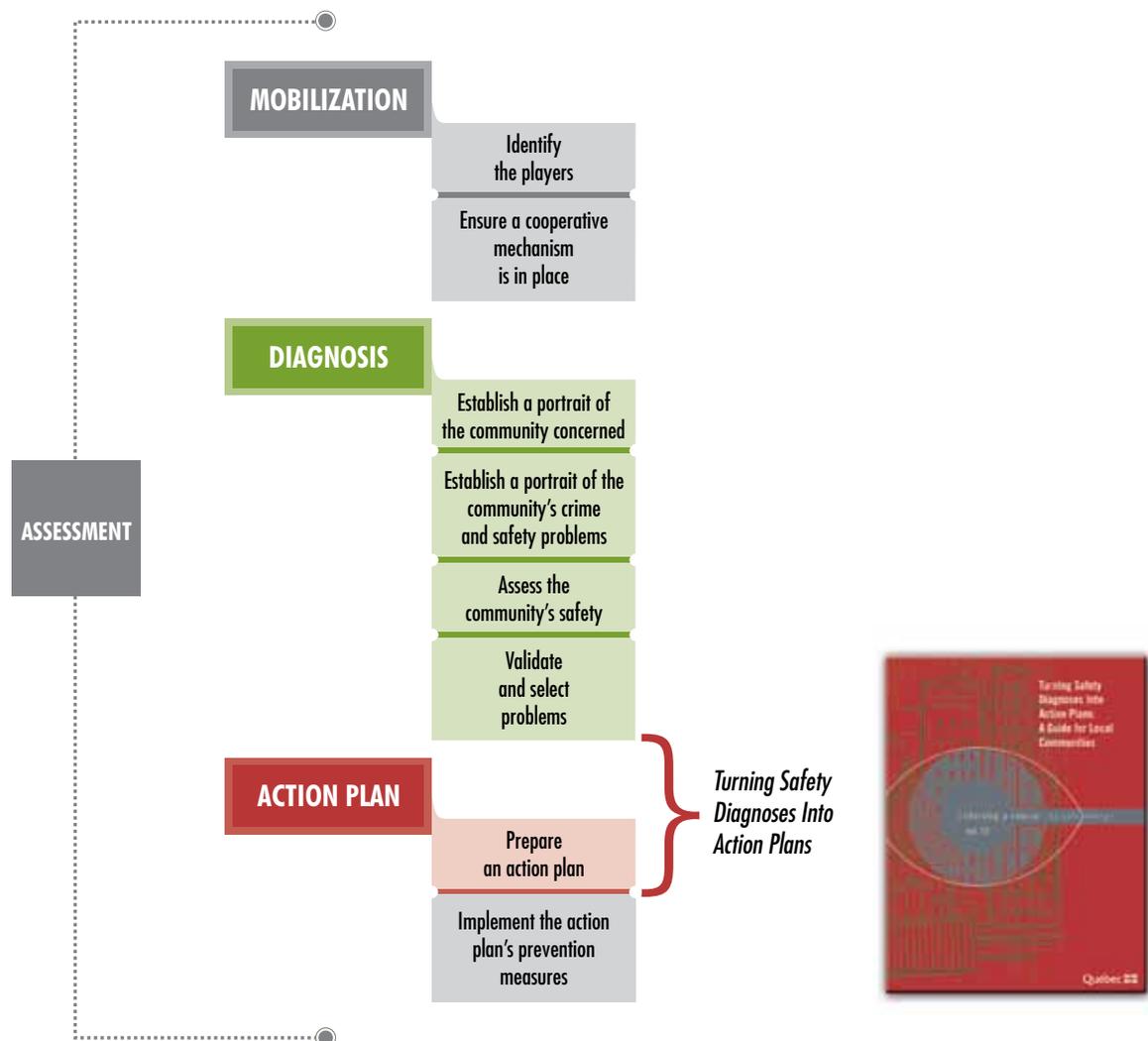
And:

- Marie-Claire Laurendeau, Senior Advisor, Institut national de santé publique du Québec
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About this guide...

In recent years, several tools based on a setting-oriented approach have been developed to support safety promotion and crime prevention initiatives. This approach advocates the use of a structured procedure for planning and implementing prevention measures in life settings (Figure 1). The procedure involves mobilizing the population and intersectoral partners, making safety diagnoses and preparing action plans. The present document, *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: A Guide for Local Communities*, is one of the tools that follows this setting-oriented approach.¹ It is designed to assist people who are working to develop coherent, integrated action plans that propose feasible, acceptable and effective actions based on safety diagnoses.

Figure 1 Structured procedure for planning prevention activities



1. All published tools are available on the Web site of the Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (crpspc.qc.ca).

It is taken for granted in this tool that 1) local safety promotion and crime prevention initiatives are supported by a cooperative mechanism, 2) the communities concerned are mobilized around the issues of safety promotion and crime prevention and 3) safety diagnoses have been completed. Therefore, the point of departure for the activities discussed in this guide is a list of safety problems that have been identified in a diagnosis and that, ideally, have been documented and validated with your partners and the target population.

The guide describes the steps involved in turning safety diagnoses into action plans. However, it is important to bear in mind that the procedure outlined here represents an ideal approach and that local realities (issues, sociopolitical context, available resources, etc.) must of course be taken into account when applying it. In short, the goal is to strive toward this ideal, while remaining flexible.

Throughout the discussion of the procedure for turning diagnoses into action plans, the guide suggests appropriate references whose usefulness will vary depending on your needs. It also provides a checklist following the description of each step to assist you with the different activities. This checklist may serve simply as a reminder of the activities to be carried out and the conditions needed for this purpose² or it may be used to facilitate reflection on the progress that has been made. Lastly, for easier understanding, the guide uses an evolving example to illustrate the different steps involved in the procedure. This example, which is broken down into a series of sub-examples presented at the end of each section of the guide, describes the activities carried out by a fictitious municipality during each step. The following box contains a description of the fictitious municipality on which the evolving example is based, along with the results of the municipality's safety diagnosis.

2. For easier use, all of the questions in the checklists in this guide have been grouped in a document entitled *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: Activity Checklist*. This document is available in *MS Word* format on the following Web site: www.crpspc.qc.ca.



The example of Saint-Gelais

Saint-Gelais is located within the influence area of a large city and is considered the main town in its regional county municipality (RCM). A few years ago, Saint-Gelais drew up a strategic plan aimed at, among other things, enhancing the safety and feeling of safety of its residents. To that end, the municipal council entrusted the town's healthy cities and towns (HCT) committee with implementing a local safety improvement process involving the preparation of a safety diagnosis and a draft action plan. The HCT committee had 15 months to complete the process.

The first three months were devoted to mobilizing the various partners concerned more specifically with safety and to organizing partnership action around this issue. During that period, the committee took the time to develop a common language and a vision of community safety. With this vision in mind, it spent the next six months carrying out a safety diagnosis for Saint-Gelais.

Once the diagnosis was complete, the HCT committee validated the results by meeting with elected officials, the population, partners and business people to see if the problems identified were the same as those observed by these groups in the municipality. The committee also took advantage of the meetings to determine how important these groups thought the problems were. It asked them the following question: If you had to resolve just one of the safety problems in your municipality over the next three years, which one would it be? The following table presents the different problems identified during the diagnosis, ranked by order of importance on the basis of the consultations.

Problems	Salient features
1. Vandalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable vandalism (graffiti, broken municipal equipment, broken windows, etc.) in the area between the secondary school and the town's main street.
2. Residential theft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous thefts within a one-kilometre radius of the secondary school.
3. Disorderly conduct and incivility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorderly conduct related to drug dealing and use in the southern part of town. • Numerous instances of disorderly conduct on the town's main street. • Disruptive behaviour in the southern part of town.
4. Deterioration in road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding in the northern part of town, especially in the area around the elementary school. • Troublesome traffic, mainly on the roads next to bars on the town's main street. • Impaired driving.
5. Tension between different ethnic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination reported or observed by the population.
6. Feeling of insecurity among residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of insecurity among residents in the southern part of town and particularly among women out walking. • Feeling of insecurity among seniors throughout the municipality.

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Organization of the guide

THIS DOCUMENT HAS FIVE SECTIONS

The first reviews the optimum conditions needed to launch the procedure for turning safety diagnoses into action plans.

1
CREATE

The second explains how to start turning a diagnosis into an action plan by building on the diagnosis and gaining a good grasp of priority problems.

2
BUILD ON

The third explains how to plan coherent, feasible, acceptable, effective and integrated actions.

3
PLAN

The fourth discusses the validation process and different ways of disseminating the action plan.

4
VALIDATE

The fifth provides references for further reading and a list of references consulted.

5
REFERENCES

A sample tool completes the guide.

EXAMPLE

Activity checklist

A checklist of questions is provided at the end of each section to ensure activities run smoothly.

Procedure for turning safety diagnoses into action plans, at a glance

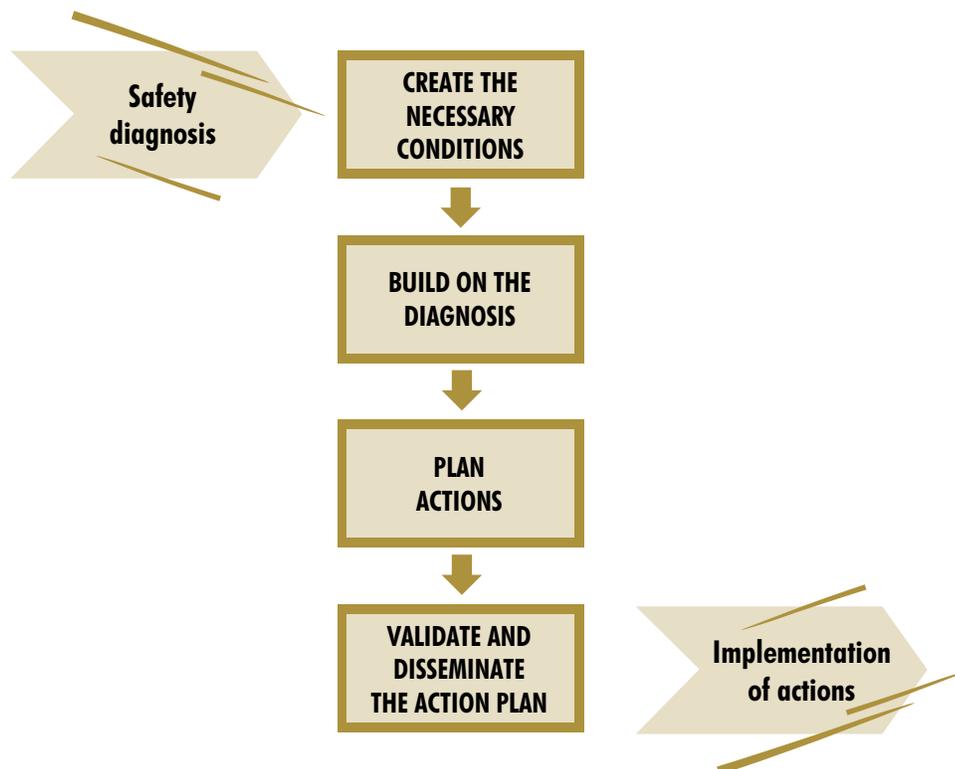
An action plan serves many functions. For example, it is very useful for:

- enlisting the cooperation and participation of the community and partners;
- communicating a common vision of the prevention activities to be deployed in the community;
- identifying proven or effective measures that might be eligible for funding;
- monitoring the implementation of prevention activities.

To serve these purposes, it is important that the action plan have certain characteristics. In particular, it must be **coherent** and **integrated** and propose **feasible**, **acceptable** and **effective** actions.

A summary of the procedure proposed in this guide for turning safety diagnoses into action plans is shown in Figure 2. It is designed to create the best possible conditions for ensuring the exercise is successful and actions are coherent.

Figure 2 Proposed procedure



Note that the amount of time required to turn a safety diagnosis into an action plan can vary depending on the number of people involved and the complexity of priority problems. Therefore, it is a good idea to draw up an activity schedule and to stick to it as closely as possible. Good planning is essential for deadlines to be met. Remember that if the process takes too long individuals and partners may decide to bow out and the application of solutions will be delayed. Ideally, the entire process should take no more than six months.

Figure 3 summarizes the steps required to turn a diagnosis into an action plan. It provides a brief description of each step, specifies what you need before embarking on it and indicates what the outcome should be.

Figure 3 Procedure for turning safety diagnoses into action plans: step by step

WHAT YOU NEED FOR EACH STEP	STEP	OUTCOME
	CREATE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS [p. 5]	
<p>A clear will to improve safety or reduce crime problems</p>	<p>It is important to ensure the necessary conditions are in place before starting to turn a diagnosis into an action plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A working group on safety improvement or crime prevention • A vision statement on community safety • A summary of local strengths, constraints and issues
	BUILD ON THE DIAGNOSIS [p. 11]	
<p>A vision statement on community safety</p> <p>A list of problems identified during the diagnosis</p>	<p>Identify priority problems</p> <p>The diagnosis may have identified too many problems. In such cases, a process can be applied to decide which problems should be given priority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of priority problems, documented by information derived from the diagnosis
<p>A list of priority problems, documented by information derived from the diagnosis</p>	<p>Gain a good grasp of priority problems</p> <p>It is important to understand these problems in order to better target actions that will be included in the action plan. This involves identifying the problems' circumstances (what, when, where, who, how) and reflecting on their causes (why).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the circumstances and causes identified for each priority problem
	PLAN ACTIONS [p. 19]	
<p>A vision statement on community safety</p> <p>A summary of the circumstances and causes identified for each priority problem</p> <p>A summary of local strengths, constraints and issues</p>	<p>This involves identifying goals and objectives, choosing activities, defining necessary resources and organizing the information in an action plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An action plan
	VALIDATE AND DISSEMINATE THE ACTION PLAN [p. 31]	
<p>An action plan</p>	<p>The working group may decide to validate certain decisions along the way or to validate the entire action plan once it has been completed. In the latter case, it is necessary to decide which stakeholders (decision makers, partners, community organizations, citizens, etc.) will be asked to help validate the plan and how this will be done.</p> <p>It is important to disseminate the action plan when it is finished. A communications plan should be drawn up for this purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A validated and disseminated action plan

Create the necessary conditions

Before a diagnosis can be turned into an action plan,³ certain conditions must be created to facilitate the exercise and optimize local resources. This involves **forming a working group, defining a common vision** of community safety, and having **a good idea of the strengths and constraints of the community** concerned.

1
CREATE



A SAFETY IMPROVEMENT WORKING GROUP

Safety improvement and crime prevention often depend on the existence of a local discussion and negotiation forum where partners from a range of sectors (health, education, police, other municipal services, community groups, etc.) can meet. The mandate of improving safety can be entrusted to a working group already in place or to a new one created specifically to develop a safety improvement action plan.

Appointing a coordinator or a facilitator will ensure continuity in the group's work and make it easier to plan actions. The coordinator or facilitator may be hired by the working group or appointed by the lead organization in the safety improvement process.

Preparing an action plan provides the working group with an excellent opportunity to get the population involved and to ask new intersectoral partners to take part in its work. This additional input should foster coherent, integrated initiatives within the community, as well as more effective action combining available resources and expertise. Remember that inviting new people to participate in a group changes its dynamics. It is therefore essential to take the time to integrate new members so that they can find their rightful place and the group as a whole can get to know them better.

It is not always necessary to form a new working group. The process of turning a diagnosis into an action plan can be carried out by an existing group or by the team that was responsible for doing the safety diagnosis. In the latter case, it might be useful to enlist the participation of other partners because of their ties to the community, their in-depth knowledge of its problems, their access to funding opportunities or their decision-making power with regard to resource commitment.⁴

The working group must not only have a facilitator or a coordinator, but must be equipped to optimize partnership work. A number of tools have been specially designed for this purpose (see *Outil diagnostique de l'action en partenariat* in the list of references).

3. In this guide, it is assumed that the action plan is being drawn up on the basis of a safety diagnosis. If this is not the case, it is suggested that a diagnosis be conducted before the plan is prepared. The *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities* proposes a procedure, topics and tools for making a safety diagnosis. The tool kit is available online on the Web site of the Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (CRPSPC), under the "Diagnostic Tools" tab. http://www.crpssc.qc.ca/default_an.asp?fichier=outils_diagnostic_an.htm.

4. Based on C. Whitzman (2008), *The Handbook of Community Safety, Gender, and Violence Prevention*, London, Earthscan, p. 156.



A COMMON VISION OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

Sharing a vision of community safety will enable partners to discuss their objectives, priorities and respective agendas so that they can arrive at a common understanding of what constitutes a safe community and work together. Therefore, it is useful to discuss and gain a better grasp of how each partner defines community safety. For example, for some people, a safe community is one where there is no crime, while for others it is one where the roads are safe and the different groups making up the population live in harmony with one another. Several visions can be adopted, but it is preferable, as part of a safety improvement process, that the working group agree on a vision statement that will be supported by all the partners involved. This vision statement will serve notably to guide discussions on the goal, objectives and activities of the action plan and thus ensure the plan better reflects each partner's concerns.

In more concrete terms, a vision of community safety is developed by imagining and defining what the various players united around the action plan mean by the term "safe community". This can involve describing the anticipated outcome of a safety improvement process, an ideal to be achieved,⁵ or changes that have to be made. To be effective, a vision statement must be clear and concise, propose a positive vision and be supported by the various partners.

TO DEVELOP A VISION



The RQVVS tool kit includes fact sheets and workshops to help communities that want to develop their own vision of community safety (see the section *Amorcer la discussion – Définir une vision*).

[http://www.rqvvs.qc.ca/trousse_ouils/toc.asp]

Table 1 provides two visions of community safety. It also presents, in the right-hand column, the practical consequences of choosing one or the other of these visions. It should be noted that these are just two examples and a range of other options exist. Regardless of the vision you select, the main thing is that it be shared by all the partners concerned.

5. Adapted from *Communities That Care. Community Planning Training. Developing Community-Level Outcomes*, Module 2.

Table 1 Examples of vision statements

VISION STATEMENT	ANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES OF THE VISION
A safe community is one where people can go about their activities without fear of being the victim of a criminal act and where people of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation or religions live in harmony with each other.	This vision will steer the working group's work toward actions aimed at enhancing social cohesion and preventing crime and delinquency.
A safe community is one where hazards and conditions that can lead to physical, psychological or material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and well-being of individuals and the community.	Since this vision represents a broad view of safety, the working group's work will deal with concerns relating not only to crime and social cohesion but to the reduction of other hazards that can cause injuries (alcohol-impaired driving, speeding, fire and drowning risks, unsafe bicycle facilities, etc.). As well, this vision introduces the need to consider not only the physical consequences of a lack of safety, but

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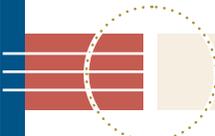
CREATE



AN IDEA OF LOCAL STRENGTHS, CONSTRAINTS AND ISSUES

To make it easier to move toward the ideal described in the vision statement, it is important to be aware of what resources are available in the community and what obstacles will have to be overcome. The information gathered during the diagnosis may be of help here. For example, do you know if there are any local policies that you can build on to develop sustainable solutions? Is there a management plan that specifically targets the community where you want to intervene and that could have an effect on one of the priority problems? Has a public stand been taken in the past with regard to any of these problems? Which individuals or groups support or oppose the process? Which groups are hard to connect with? What are relations like between the various players concerned? What failures have occurred in the past? Are there any conflicts between groups? Are there any funding opportunities? The answers to these questions can be useful for preparing the action plan and will thus help to make it feasible and acceptable.

You may not be able to answer all of these questions at this stage. Moreover, you may not have the resources needed to do an in-depth analysis of the community. Nevertheless, for your action plan to be feasible, you must at least take into account the human and financial resources available to support the process and implement the action plan, as well as the help that can be provided by partner organizations.



Activity checklist⁶

- Do you have a safety improvement working group?

COMMENTS

Yes

No
- Does the working group include all stakeholders?

COMMENTS

Yes

No
- Are all of the partners at the table?

COMMENTS

Yes

No
- Do they participate regularly (attend meetings, take part in the work and discussions, etc.)?

COMMENTS

Yes

No
- Is the facilitator or coordinator accepted by the members of the group?

COMMENTS

Yes

No
- Is there a common vision of community safety?

COMMENTS

Yes

No
- Do you have a precise idea of what resources are available to support the process?

COMMENTS

Yes

No
- Do you have an idea of what resources are available to implement the action plan?

COMMENTS

Yes

No

6. All of the checklists in this guide have been grouped in a document entitled *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: Activity Checklist*. This document is available in *MS Word* format on the Web site of the Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (www.crpspc.qc.ca).



The example of Saint-Gelais

Makeup of the working group

As mentioned in the example at the beginning of this guide, the HCT committee will prepare the action plan and thereby ensure greater continuity in the safety improvement process as a whole. However, in view of the problems identified by the diagnosis, the committee has decided to invite additional partners to the table, including a representative of the community's comprehensive secondary school, a representative of the chamber of commerce and a representative of the youth centre near the school.

Vision

Because of the changes made in the committee's makeup, it was necessary to review the various steps taken to make the diagnosis. It was also necessary to rediscuss the vision of community safety to ensure that it still reflected the opinion of all the members of the group.

Based on these discussions, consultations with partners and the concerns expressed during the community forums organized to validate the diagnosis, the committee decided not to change the vision statement that it had adopted when it began its work. This statement is all-encompassing and reads as follows: "A safe community is one where hazards and conditions that can lead to physical, psychological or material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and well-being of individuals and the community."

Strengths, constraints and issues

The committee asked the local development centre (CLD) to provide it with a summary of the community's sociodemographic and economic strengths and constraints based on the information at the centre's disposal. The CLD promised to submit a preliminary report within 60 days. The HCT committee also asked two other committees in charge of drawing up local action plans on family policy and healthy lifestyle habits to set up an information exchange mechanism so that all action plan strategies would be better integrated into the community.

Although the committee is still waiting for the CLD's summary of local strengths, constraints and issues, it knows that it has six months to prepare an action plan and that it can access the services of a professional with the municipality's community life branch to facilitate and support its work. It also knows that the action plan must have a three-year time frame, starting from the submission date, and that the municipality has promised to allocate a budget of \$15 000 per year to implement and coordinate activities. Furthermore, the committee can count on two partners for extensive support during its planning exercise: a community worker from the recreation service and a professional from the public health branch. Both partners will provide assistance in preparing the action plan. As well, all partners are willing to contribute, within their means, to any actions that specifically concern them.

Build on the diagnosis

Once all the necessary conditions are in place, it is time to start working on the action plan. This involves reviewing the diagnosis to extract as much information as possible on the community's safety problems so that you can plan coherent actions that take local realities into account. It can be useful for at least one person who took part in the safety diagnosis to be on hand when the action plan is being prepared. In that way, the person's knowledge of the safety problems and the manner in which they were identified can be used to advantage.



The *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities* proposes a procedure, topics and tools for making a safety diagnosis. The tool kit is available online on the Web site of the Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (CRPSPC), under the "Diagnostic Tools" tab.

[http://www.crpsspqc.ca/default_an.asp?fichier=outils_diagnostic_an.htm]

2

BUILD ON

Two steps are suggested here to enable you build on the diagnosis. The first is designed to **identify priority problems** in cases where the diagnosis has pinpointed too many problems to deal with all at once, while the second is designed to **gain a better understanding of priority problems** before the action plan is drawn up.



IDENTIFY PRIORITY PROBLEMS

Once the diagnosis is complete, you may find that available resources and capabilities are insufficient to address all of the safety problems identified or some of the types of problems raised. In such instances, the action plan must focus on a limited number of problems. Although there is no definite rule here, it is usually realistic to attempt to resolve three or four problems. Therefore, it will probably be necessary to choose only some of the problems pinpointed during the diagnosis. This section suggests a way to make the decision-making process easier.

Organize the information on each problem

If this has not been done yet, organize the information needed to rank the problems by order of importance. For this purpose, simply compile the relevant information already gathered on each of the problems identified at the end of the diagnosis. The compilation may take the form of a fact sheet or a list. The main thing is to obtain an overview of the problems present in your community so that enlightened choices can be made. Section 1 of the tool *Gaining a good grasp of priority problems* on page 39 describes a very simple procedure for organizing this information.

■ Decide who will make decisions

You will have to decide early on which players will take part in the decision-making process. Generally speaking, it is the working group that has the authority to make decisions, but it may be useful to ask partners for their input as well. The population may also be consulted.⁷ In short, there are a range of options. You simply have to decide which one is best suited to your situation.

If new people are asked to take part in decision making, you must ensure they are familiar with and support the vision of community safety you have chosen.

■ Define the selection criteria

It is important that the working group agree on the criteria that will be used to guide the selection of priority problems. For the criteria to be valid, they must be explicit. In some cases, they will enable you to provide your partners and the population with transparent explanations as to why you made certain decisions.

Usually, the first criterion the working group has to consider in deciding whether or not to give priority to a problem is the **importance of the problem**. Secondly, the group must determine whether or not it is possible to act on the problem based on the criteria of **effectiveness** and **feasibility**. The working group may also decide to give priority to problems that have received the least attention to date, those identified by the population or those that have aroused interest in the media and political circles. Several decision-making criteria may thus be envisaged. However, you must ensure that the ones you choose have the support of all parties concerned and are clear and explicit.

Importance of the problem

A problem may be important because it is frequent, has numerous victims (direct or indirect), has major repercussions (death, disability injuries, economic losses, major infrastructure damage, etc.) or is on the rise.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the ability to reduce, eliminate or improve a problem situation. Effective approaches can be identified on the basis of expert opinions or measures that have been evaluated or tested.

Feasibility

Feasibility refers to the ability to take action using available technical, human and financial resources. One problem may be targeted over another equally important one simply because funding opportunities exist. Similarly, a working group may decide to give priority to a problem that interests a particular partner because this will ensure that the partner participates in the action plan and will make it easier to implement the actions.

■ Choose the procedure

The working group must identify the most appropriate decision-making procedure based on the problems derived from the diagnosis and the criteria selected. The procedure can be very open and flexible (e.g. discussions, brainstorming) or more organized, involving a detailed, systematic approach (nominal group technique, voting, etc.). Once again, there are a number of possibilities and your choice may vary depending on the groups involved.

7. See *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities. Companion Guide*: section on validating and disseminating the diagnosis results [www.crpspc.qc.ca: Diagnostic Tools].

Above all, it is important to remember that all participants must agree on which problems should be given priority, for this will mean that they will agree on the results. Inevitably, a consensus can only be reached through compromise. The success of the exercise depends not so much on the number of people asked to participate but on the techniques used to reach a consensus (see the section Choosing priorities in the list of references).

■ Give priority to a few problems

Now that you know who will take part in choosing priorities, what criteria they will use and how they will proceed, it is time to decide which safety problems you will work on in your action plan. At the end of the exercise, you will have a list of a few priority problems that have garnered consensus support.



The example of Saint-Gelais

The HCT committee decided to limit the number of priority problems selected for preparing the action plan to three. Following discussions, it was agreed that there were enough partners represented on the committee to decide which priority problems should be selected. Furthermore, it was clear that the members' opinions converged as to the relative importance of the different problems and the effectiveness and feasibility of the preventive actions that might be taken. A consensus was therefore reached simply through discussion rather than with the help of a special technique. The committee members unanimously decided that it would be appropriate to choose problems based on the order of importance established when the diagnosis results were validated. Therefore, the action plan will focus on vandalism, residential theft, and disorderly conduct and incivility.

Priority problems	Salient features
Vandalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considerable vandalism (graffiti, broken municipal equipment, broken windows, etc.) in the area between the secondary school and the town's main street.
Residential theft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous thefts within a one-kilometre radius of the secondary school.
Disorderly conduct and incivility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disorderly conduct related to drug dealing and use in the southern part of town. Numerous instances of disorderly conduct on the town's main street. Disruptive behaviour in the southern part of town.



GAIN A GOOD GRASP OF PRIORITY PROBLEMS

You must have a good understanding of the problems identified during the previous step in order to decide which actions would be the most appropriate for addressing them. To that end, you probably need to gather and organize additional information on each problem. This data collection process is different from that conducted during the diagnosis, which was aimed at identifying crime and safety problems. This time, the process is designed to enable you to 1) identify the circumstances under which the problems arise, 2) reflect on the problems' causes and 3) envisage the best solutions.

Identify the circumstances

To identify the circumstances under which the problems arise, it is necessary to answer the questions "what", "when", "where", "who" and "how". Using the data gathered during the diagnosis, the working group must try to compile, if this has not been done yet, all available information on the concrete manifestations of priority problems, the players involved, the people affected and in what way, the places where the problems appear, the length of time the problems have occurred, the time of day or year they occur and how the population perceives them. It is not necessary, of course, to answer every potential question, but it is useful to obtain as much information as possible. This will enable you to see the problems more clearly and better identify which actions should be deployed and supported. The tool *Gaining a good grasp of priority problems*, provided at the end of this document, illustrates a simple way to compile this information (see section 2 of the tool).

The diagnosis should already contain a considerable amount of information on the priority problems you have chosen. However, some clarifications may be needed. In such instances, police, municipal, and health and social services, as well as schools and community organizations, are a good source of additional information, not only on the circumstances under which the problems arise, but also on possible solutions or measures already in place. Involving these bodies in the process will also involve them in the action plan that has to be prepared and will provide a more comprehensive view of the solutions to be proposed. It might be useful to consult scientific advisors in order to take advantage of their knowledge about the known causes of the problems and tried and true solutions. The working group will thus be better equipped to decide which measures should be created, improved or continued when it draws up its action plan.

Reflect on the causes

In addition to documenting the circumstances under which each of the priority problems occur, it is very useful to reflect on the problems' causes. This involves answering the question "why". The safety diagnosis, local expertise and the scientific literature can guide the working group's discussions in this regard.

The following questions may also be used to guide these discussions⁸ :

- What might explain why this problem is present in the community?
- What does the problem seem to be related to, and what conditions mitigate it or make it worse?
- What changes or recent events might be related to the appearance of the problem?
- Has the problem appeared elsewhere?
- If so, have the causes been identified?

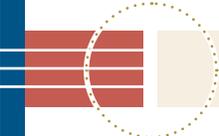
8. It is not necessary to answer all of these questions. They should simply be used as guideposts for discussing the problems' causes.

■ Envisage possible solutions

It is also possible at this stage to envisage possible solutions. Moreover, discussions on potential obstacles to the implementation of these solutions, as well as on potential partners, can generate ideas that can be included in the action plan. You can also reflect on whether certain places, client groups or causes are common to any of the priority safety problems you have identified. If so, you can then reflect on what solutions could be applied to more than one of these problems.



The Web site of the Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (CRPSPC) contains summary documents on a range of public safety problems. It is a good point of departure for discussion on the causes of and solutions to many of these problems. Each thematic document contains a section on some of the risk and protective factors associated with the problems ("Subjects Discussed" tab) and suggests possible solutions or actions. [<http://www.crpsspqc.ca>]



Activity checklist

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did at least one of the people who took part in the diagnosis also take part in choosing the priority problems? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did you have enough information to choose the priority problems? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did you ask the right players to help choose the priority problems? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do the priority problems reflect the diagnosis? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have you proposed a systematic approach (selection criteria and procedure) for reaching a consensus on which priority problems should be selected? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do all the people who helped select the priority problems agree on the final choice? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are the partners concerned by the problems chosen involved in the rest of the process? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In view of the problems selected, should any other partners be involved in the process? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have you generated any ill feelings among partners by not including the problems they chose in the final list of priority problems? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have you selected a realistic number of priority problems? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have you taken advantage of the knowledge of field workers or scientific advisors to help you better understand the problems? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |
- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do you have enough information on each problem to identify the circumstances under which it occurs, reflect on its causes and consequences, and envisage possible solutions? | <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>No</p> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p style="margin: 0; color: #0056b3; font-size: small;">COMMENTS</p> | | |



The example of Saint-Gelais

The HCT committee organized a day of discussion on the circumstances, causes and issues associated with the three problems that will be the focus of the action plan. It invited all local groups to participate, including community organizations, elected officials, merchants, citizens and municipal employees. As well, facilitators from the town's youth centre agreed to help enlist the participation of enough young people to ensure this age group was represented in all of the workshops. The young people were also asked to host the lunch.

The day's discussions enabled participants to gain a better grasp of the problems. The main conclusions are listed below:

In the example given here and those provided at the end of the other steps in the process, we will discuss only the first two priority problems: vandalism (problem 1) and residential theft (problem 2).

Circumstances:

- Private residences are a prime target of thefts.
- The thefts usually occur during the day when people are at work.
- Stereo systems and audiovisual electronic equipment are the items most frequently stolen.
- There is no common pattern to the thefts, suggesting they are isolated acts committed by amateurs.
- The guilty parties, in cases where they have been identified by the police, are almost always young men under 25 who live in the region.
- The thefts are concentrated around the town's main street.
- For the most part, vandalism takes the form of graffiti, especially on abandoned buildings, and of broken equipment in the park next to the main street.

Possible contributing factors (causes):

- The residents of Saint-Gelais are faced with major economic problems, particularly because of the closure of a factory that employed a large part of the population (problems 1 and 2).
- There are three abandoned buildings in the area of the town's main street (problem 2).
- Few people make use of the park: the play areas are in disrepair and are dangerous for children, the park's layout isolates users, two of the streets next to it are hazardous for young children, and the lighting is too poor to organize recreational activities such as petanque in the evening (problem 2).
- Apart from competitive sports, there are no recreational activities for young people aged 15 or over (problems 1 and 2).
- The town has several social problems, including a high percentage of single-parent families and teenage pregnancies, an employment rate that has been on the rise for the past three years, and several areas that can be qualified as vulnerable on the basis of the social and economic deprivation index (problems 1 and 2).

Plan actions

You can now count on a community whose members are mobilized and on intersectoral partners who share a common vision of community safety. You also have an idea of the community's strengths and weaknesses, as well as a good understanding of the priority problems you want to address. Moreover, you have started to envisage possible solutions. All you have to do now is plan actions based on the knowledge you have acquired to date and ensure these actions are **coherent, feasible, acceptable and effective**. To maximize spinoffs, the actions you plan must also be integrated. Several work sessions will be needed to elaborate the action plan, and some back-and-forth between the different steps is to be expected. This section of the guide describes the **desirable characteristics** of an action plan, proposes a **model plan** and suggests a **procedure for preparing one**.

DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ACTION PLAN

An action plan should be coherent...

A coherent action plan is one that reflects the results and information obtained by the safety diagnosis. In other words, the plan is supposed to deal with problems identified by the diagnosis. It should also satisfy expectations and mirror the sociodemographic and economic situation in the community concerned.

An action plan should be INTEGRATED...

An integrated action plan is one that proposes **comprehensive** measures that will be carried out in **partnership** and take into account the **complementarity** of proposed solutions. For measures to be **comprehensive**, they must reflect the full range of groups targeted, areas of intervention and action strategies. Indeed, the most effective preventive measures for acting on complex issues such as crime and safety are generally those that combine several different strategies to deal with multiple client groups in a variety of settings and that target several different aspects of a particular problem. For measures to be carried out in **partnership**, the action plan has to mobilize and enlist the participation of players from different sectors. An integrated action plan will thus foster and maintain ties between the different players in the community. Lastly, for solutions to be **complementary**, the action plan must flow from and be aligned with prevention initiatives already in place in the community.

An action plan should be FEASIBLE...

A feasible action plan is one that takes into account the technical, human and economic resources that are available in the community. It also considers potential obstacles to carrying out certain activities and, if possible, proposes remedial strategies.

An action plan should be ACCEPTABLE...

An acceptable action plan is one that is supported by the community and local players (politicians, partners, client groups). The measures it contains must reflect the community's characteristics and have no adverse effects on any particular group.

An action plan should be EFFECTIVE...

An effective action plan is one that truly prevents or controls the problems identified. A good way to determine if its measures will be effective is to consult experts or descriptions of successful initiatives. Working with scientific advisors is another option that may be considered.

MODEL ACTION PLAN

Action plan...	Prepared by...	Date
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PART 1

Context of the safety improvement process:	SITUATE THE ACTION PLAN WITHIN THE PROCESS
Vision:	
Priority problems:	
Goal:	

PART 2

General objective A:	FORMULATE GENERAL OBJECTIVES	Problem targeted:
General objective B:		Problem targeted:
General objective C:		Problem targeted:

PART 3

Specific objective 1:	General objectives:																		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;">Activities</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Lead organization</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Partners, collaborators and their roles</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Necessary resources</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Schedule</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Results indicators</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Activities	Lead organization	Partners, collaborators and their roles	Necessary resources	Schedule	Results indicators													PLAN IN ORDER TO REACH EACH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE
Activities	Lead organization	Partners, collaborators and their roles	Necessary resources	Schedule	Results indicators														

Specific objective 2:	General objectives:												
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; height: 20px;"> </td> <td style="width: 15%;"> </td> <td style="width: 20%;"> </td> <td style="width: 10%;"> </td> <td style="width: 15%;"> </td> <td style="width: 25%;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>													

Specific objective ... :	General objectives:												
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; height: 20px;"> </td> <td style="width: 15%;"> </td> <td style="width: 20%;"> </td> <td style="width: 10%;"> </td> <td style="width: 15%;"> </td> <td style="width: 25%;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>													

For questions or comments, contact [enter contact information]



WHAT SHOULD YOUR ACTION PLAN LOOK LIKE?

Action plans can be organized and presented in several different ways. The model proposed on the opposite page is the one explained in this section.⁹ It is designed to ensure that the plan has the right characteristics (i.e. it is coherent, integrated, feasible, effective and acceptable) and forms a complete, well-structured document. The model can be adapted and improved, if necessary. Regardless of the model used, it is important that it include all relevant information: vision of community safety, priority problems, goal, objectives, actions or measures, etc.

The action plan proposed here has three parts. The first explains how the plan fits into the safety improvement process, presents the community safety vision, describes the priority problems, and explains the goal of the action plan. The second part details the general objectives associated with each of the priority problems selected. As for the third part, it presents the specific objectives and detailed planning for each activity. Each line of this last part of the plan is reserved for one activity. Note that when a specific objective concerns the causes of more than one problem, it will be related to several general objectives (see the next section).



HOW SHOULD YOU PROCEED?

It is now time to identify the goal and objectives of the action plan, choose activities, detail the resources needed to carry them out, and organize this information in the plan. **Bear in mind that it is important to include some measures that will achieve results quickly.** This will enable the partners involved in the process to see results soon after the action plan has been launched, even though they continue to work on prevention over the longer term.¹⁰ Of course, measures that target medium- or long-term objectives should be included only in action plans that cover a fairly long period.

It is also necessary to decide on the duration of the action plan. Will the initiatives it proposes be carried out over one year, two years or three years? To make this decision, you have to answer the following question: "What can be done and how long will it take to do it given available resources, the nature of the action priorities, the partners involved, and so forth?"



3
PLAN

9. This model action plan is available in *MS Word* format on the Web site of the Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (www.crpssp.qc.ca).

10. C. Whitzman (2008), *The Handbook of Community Safety, Gender, and Violence Prevention*, London, Earthscan, p. 182.

MODEL ACTION PLAN

Action plan...	Prepared by...	Date :
-----------------------	----------------	--------

Context of the safety improvement process:
Vision:
Priority problems: list and description
A Goal:

B General objective A:	Problem targeted:
General objective B:	Problem targeted:
General objective C:	Problem targeted:

C Specific objective 1:	General objectives:
---------------------------------------	---------------------

Activities D	Lead organization E	Partners, collaborators and their roles F	Necessary resources G	Budget H	Schedule I	Results indicators J

Specific objective 2:	General objectives:

Specific objective ... :	General objectives:

For questions or comments, contact [enter contact information]

■ Determine the goal of the action plan and the objectives to be achieved

Once you have decided which priority problems you want to act on, have documented them more thoroughly and obtained a good idea of the measures already in place, you are ready to embark on an important step in the action plan's preparation: you can now decide what changes you want to make in the community concerned. An action plan must cover all of the priority problems identified. To that end, you must define the goal and general objectives of the plan, as well as the action strategies from which will arise the plan's specific objectives.

Each component of the action plan is identified by a letter. For easier reading, this letter is also indicated, if necessary, next to the component's description (pages 23 and 26).

A

DEFINE THE GOAL **A**

In order to define the action plan's goal, it is necessary to think of a general statement which describes a desirable situation, that is, a set of conditions that must be achieved. For this purpose, you have to refer to your vision of community safety. The goal of an action plan is usually global, non-measurable and long-term. Generally speaking, it is the over-riding goal of all of the actions to be taken on a range of problems.

SET GENERAL OBJECTIVES **B**

General objectives are set on the basis of the priority problems identified. Contrary to the action plan's goal, its general objectives are precise and must be achieved within a certain time limit. Each general objective is described by a statement on a desired change in a problem that is expressed in the form of a measurable anticipated outcome. The outcome must be realistic and specific and involve a deadline.

DEVISE ACTION STRATEGIES

This step is crucial for it consists in defining the methods, or strategies, that will be used to achieve the plan's general objectives. These strategies may involve acting on previously identified causes (e.g. a lack of leisure activities for adolescents) or propose the implementation of protective measures (e.g. improving the safety of residences). They will vary depending on the target (i.e. the population or the environment) and the level of intervention (i.e. individuals or families, different life settings or the community as a whole). We suggest that you consult the box on the next page to learn more about how to formulate these strategies.

FORMULATE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES **C**

Specific objectives must be formulated following the same rules as those for general objectives. Specific objectives flow from the strategies selected to achieve the plan's general objectives. They can concern more than just one problem, particularly when they are aimed at dealing with causes common to several different problems.

3
PLAN

Devise action strategies

For an action plan to be integrated and effective, it is a good idea to diversify its targets and levels of intervention. It is also suggested that the plan apply several strategies at once. In order to address a particular problem, you may decide that it is first necessary to raise awareness among the population, adapt the physical environment to make it more suitable (e.g. change the lighting in a particular place), train the people who work with a particular client group, offer new services, and so forth. You may also decide that it is necessary to act on the community more globally, for example, by capitalizing on its economic development or amending municipal by-laws. The table provided in Figure 4 may help you to explore a fairly wide range of possibilities. It can be used to identify which strategies should be deployed depending on the target and level of intervention selected. Obviously, it is not necessary to fill in all the boxes in the table when preparing an action plan, but opting for several different strategies is more likely to ensure the plan is integrated and effective.

Targets of intervention

For each priority problem, you have to ask yourself if it would be better to act on the **population**, the **environment**, or both. If you decide to act on the population, will you target the population as a whole or only specific groups (based on gender, age, sociocultural characteristics, etc.) ? Within the context of crime prevention, you also have to decide

whether you will focus on victims or offenders. Lastly, in the case of the environment, you have to determine whether it is the **physical** or the **social** (organizational, legislative, regulatory, etc.) environment that needs to be changed.

Levels of intervention

Three levels of intervention can be identified: individuals or their families, specific settings frequented by the target population (school, work environment or other), and the community as a whole (village, neighbourhood, municipality, regional county municipality).

Action strategies

Once your targets and levels of intervention have been defined, you must decide which strategies will be implemented to achieve your general objectives. Strategies are the methods, techniques or tactics that you will deploy to act on a given target at a particular level. These strategies can be aimed at acting on previously identified causes or propose the implementation of protective measures. You must reflect on the kind of action you want to take in order to decide on the type of strategies you wish to apply. You will then be able to formulate specific objectives on the basis of these strategies.

Figure 4 Action strategies: possible targets and levels of intervention



LEVEL \ TARGET	Population		Environment	
	Population as a whole	Particular group	Physical	Social
Individuals or families			→ Strategy 2	
School, work environment, or other		→ Strategy 3		→ Strategy 5
Community	→ Strategy 1	→ Strategy 3	→ Strategy 4	



The example of Saint-Gelais

The action plan being developed includes several strategies for resolving problems in the municipality. The five strategies discussed below are aimed at reducing residential theft or vandalism and thereby improving safety in the area of the town's main street.

Goal: improve safety in the area of the town's main street.

General objective A: reduce the number of thefts in private residences in the area of the main street by 10% within one year.

General objective B: reduce graffiti in the area of the main street by 25% and the cost of repairing vandalized equipment by 50% within one year.

Target: population as a whole Level: community	 Strategy 1 Implement a residential certification program (take action with regard to a service in order to deploy a protection measure)
---	---

Specific objective: implement a residential certification program by June [general objective A].

Specific objective: give safety labels to 10% of residences by December [general objective A].

Target: physical environment Level: individuals or families	 Strategy 2 Increase residential safety (take action with regard to a protection measure)
--	--

Specific objective: improve protection measures (alarm systems, door locks, exterior lighting, property marking, etc.) in 10% of the area's residences by September [general objective A].

Target: young people in secondary school Level: school and community	 Strategy 3 Increase the supply of recreational activities for young people (take action with regard to a service in order to act on an alleged cause)
---	---

Specific objective: by the end of the school year, improve the supply of recreational activities between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. for young people who attend secondary school, in order to make such activities available during 60% of that time period, and organize recreational and other activities in the park four nights a week in the summer [general objectives A and B].

Target: physical environment Level: community	 Strategy 4 Work on the physical layout of the park and the surrounding area (take action with regard to a setting in order to act on an alleged cause)
--	--

Specific objective: by the end of next summer, renovate the park's main facilities (lighting, play areas, play equipment, vegetation) and improve road safety in the surrounding area through traffic mitigation measures (signs, speed bumps, speed limits, etc.) [general objectives A and B].

Target: social environment Level: workplace (environment)	 Strategy 5 Improve the socioeconomic conditions of the population (take action with regard to a social environment in order to act on an alleged cause)
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Specific objective: by the end of the year, set up a committee to reopen the factory that was shut down [general objectives A and B].

■ Choose activities and define necessary resources

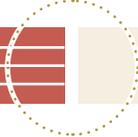
Once the action plan's goal and objectives have been set, a large part of the work required to prepare the plan has been completed. The next step is to plan each of the measures or actions that you will take in the community. You have to think of the activities and resources that will be needed for this purpose.

- The **activities** you include in the action plan stem from the actions or measures that are to be implemented in order to achieve each specific objective. They pinpoint the place or setting where the interventions will occur, as well as the target population—choices that are often made when the action strategies are selected. 
- For each activity, it is necessary to identify at least one **lead organization**, as well as the **partners/collaborators** who would like to take part and the role they will play. The working group must therefore determine who is interested. Defining the contribution (role and responsibilities) of each partner officializes the partner's commitment to and involvement in the action plan.  
- **Human, technical and material resources** will be needed to carry out the various activities. Accordingly, these resources must be specified as much as possible in the action plan. The approximate cost of each activity must also be determined. It is up to the group in charge of preparing the action plan to decide whether or not a **budget** will be included in the document. If it decides not to include one, it must nonetheless discuss and draw up a budget. Where applicable, funding strategies also have to be envisaged at this stage.  
- Generally speaking, a logical procedure must be followed in order to achieve an objective. Therefore, it is preferable to plan an activity **schedule** and specify the order in which the activities are to be carried out. This order must be reflected in the schedule deadlines. 
- In addition to a schedule, the action plan can include **results indicators**. A results indicator is a statement that is used to measure an activity's progress. There may thus be several results indicators for each specific objective. The more these objectives are expressed in measurable terms, the easier it is to formulate results indicators. These indicators have two functions. First, they serve to monitor the implementation of the action plan and, second, they play an essential role in evaluating the project, for they can be used to measure the extent to which the anticipated results are being achieved. 

■ Write the action plan

To write the action plan, you have to compile in a single document all of the information gathered during the previous steps and activities. Using the model proposed in this guide will ensure you don't forget anything. Remember that the action plan must be presented in a clear and attractive manner. Too much text will make it more difficult to understand, while too little will make it vague and incomplete. The presentation must follow a logical order. If numbering is used, it must reflect this order and highlight the links between the plan's different components.

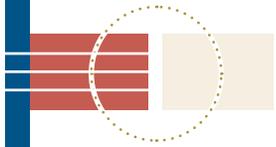
You may decide to ask a lead person or a coordinator to write the action plan. You can also decide to set up sub-working groups based on the problems or objectives selected, bearing in mind that your action plan has to be coherent and integrated. If you opt for sub-working groups, one or two sessions should be planned to harmonize their work.



Activity checklist

Internal structure

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has the goal of the action plan been clearly defined? <u>COMMENTS</u> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have the general objectives been clearly defined? <u>COMMENTS</u> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has each general objective been broken down into specific objectives (several strategies)? <u>COMMENTS</u> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have the specific objectives been clearly defined? <u>COMMENTS</u> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do the specific objectives represent steps for achieving the general objectives? <u>COMMENTS</u> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are the activities presented in the order in which they are supposed to be carried out (e.g. does facilitator training come before the workshops the facilitators have to lead)? <u>COMMENTS</u> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



- Are the human, material and financial resources needed to carry out the activities clearly specified? Yes No

COMMENTS

- Has an activity schedule been drawn up? Yes No

COMMENTS

Coherence

- Does the action plan cover all the priority problems selected during the identify priority problems step? Yes No

COMMENTS

- Are the sectors concerned by each priority problem taking part in the action plan? Yes No

COMMENTS

Integration

- Do the strategies in the action plan involve different targets and levels of intervention? Yes No

COMMENTS

- Have causes common to several problems been identified and, if so, do any of the strategies target these causes? Yes No

COMMENTS

- Do the activities in the action plan involve different targets and levels of intervention? Yes No

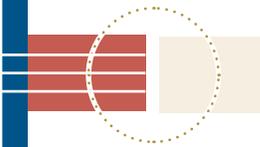
COMMENTS

- Are different sectors and partners taking part in the action plan? Yes No

COMMENTS

- Do any activities conflict with each other or duplicate ones already under way in the community? Yes No

COMMENTS



Effectiveness

- Can the specific objectives be met with the activities selected (based on the activities' nature, intensity, duration, frequency, target clientele, relevance)? Yes No
COMMENTS
- Is there sufficient evidence that the objectives can be met with the actions planned (based on the actions' effectiveness)? Yes No
COMMENTS

Feasibility

- Does the action plan provide for any activities that will achieve results over the short term? Yes No
COMMENTS
- Are the roles and responsibilities of each partner/collaborator clearly defined? Yes No
COMMENTS
- Are the human, material and financial resources needed to carry out the activities available? Yes No
COMMENTS
- Have you obtained the support of the partners you approached? Yes No
COMMENTS
- Is the activity schedule realistic? Yes No
COMMENTS

Acceptability

- Have the activities received the support of partners and the population? Yes No
COMMENTS
- Do the activities respect individual rights and freedoms? Yes No
COMMENTS
- Have all of the action plan's components been approved by all of the parties? Yes No
COMMENTS





The example of Saint-Gelais

The HCT committee has completed its draft action plan. The plan is now ready to be validated and disseminated. Below is a short excerpt concerning one of the strategies selected to combat the problem of theft in the area of the town's main street.

Specific objective:

Improve protection measures (alarm systems, door locks, exterior lighting, property marking, etc.) in 10% of the area's residences by September.

General objective:

A [reduce the number of thefts in this area by 10% within one year].

Activities	Lead organization	Partners, collaborators and their roles	Necessary resources	Budget	Schedule	Results indicators
Raise awareness among the area's residents:					12 months	% of residences in the area that have improved their protection systems ¹¹
a. Publish an article in the local weekly	HCT committee	Municipality and police service Role: provide advice on the article's content	A person to write the article and submit it to the local weekly		March	Media activities carried out
b. Prepare a brochure	Municipality	HCT committee Role: advise the municipality's communications service	Municipality's communications service	2 000 \$	April	Brochure
c. Distribute the brochure	Municipality	- Merchants - Community organizations - Police service Role: Distribute the brochure or facilitate its distribution			June	Brochures distributed

11. This information may be hard to obtain given the means at the committee's disposal. Nevertheless, information from informants involved in the community can be used to do a qualitative assessment of the extent to which the desired results have been achieved. This information can also be obtained during a citizens forum organized at a later date to monitor the action plan implemented by the committee.

Validate and disseminate the action plan

The methodology suggested in this guide includes a number of activities that serve to validate your work as you go along (e.g. using the findings of the diagnosis, having several intersectoral partners take part in selecting priorities and in implementing the plan, etc.). However, a separate step can also be devoted to validating the plan. It is up to the working group to decide if this is necessary based on the context in which the action plan is being drawn up, the issues involved, the priority problems, community dynamics, and so forth. If the working group decides to do a validation exercise, it is preferable that they plan it carefully by answering the following questions:

- Why do you want to validate the action plan (to determine if it is relevant, acceptable and realistic, if it adequately addresses the community's needs, if it has obtained the approval of partners, if it has met with resistance, etc.)?
- Who will be involved in the validation process (citizens, decision makers, administrators, politicians, partners, target groups, general population, business people, etc.)?
- What strategies will be deployed (formal meetings, focus groups, community forums, kitchen table meetings, mailings, surveys, etc.)?
- In what format will the action plan be made available for validation (print version, electronic format on a Web site, summary, excerpts, PowerPoint presentation, etc.)?
- Who will be in charge (all the members of the working group, a particular person, etc.)?
- When will the validation take place?
- What budget will be necessary?

Once the action plan has been completed and validated, it can be disseminated in whatever manner you want. When you draw up a communications plan, bear in mind that the people you would like to contact do not all have the same needs and that you have to be careful at times not to offend people's susceptibilities. For example, it might be a good idea to present the action plan to administrators and elected officials before you present it to a wider audience. Moreover, to present it to the population, you might decide to publish a series of articles in a local newspaper discussing the approach followed and the different parts of the plan. To disseminate the action plan to municipal representatives (elected officials and senior public officers), you might choose to invite them to a summary presentation on certain aspects for which you would like to boost their support and to give them a copy of the entire plan after the presentation. In addition, you might decide to make an electronic copy of the plan available on the Web site of the municipality or the organization in charge of preparing it. In short, you can obtain better results if you tailor the way you present the plan according to the population you want to reach and the objectives you want to achieve. The following questions, which are very similar to those given above for the validation process, can guide you through the process of disseminating the action plan:

- Why do you want to disseminate the action plan (to enlist commitment and support, provide information, etc.)?
- Who will the plan be disseminated to (citizens, decision makers, administrators, politicians, partners, target groups, general population, business people, etc.)?
- What strategies will be deployed (formal meetings, kitchen table meetings, mailings, Internet, print and electronic media, etc.)?

- In what format will the action plan be made available (print version, electronic format on a Web site, summary, excerpts, PowerPoint presentation, etc.)?
- Who will be in charge of disseminating the action plan (all the members of the working group, a particular person, etc.)?
- When will the action plan be disseminated?
- With what budget (if necessary)?



The example of Saint-Gelais

The HCT committee of Saint-Gelais did not feel it was necessary to organize a special activity to validate the action plan. The fact that partners had actively participated throughout the process and two citizens' representatives already sat on the committee seemed sufficient to ensure that the actions proposed were relevant, acceptable and feasible. However, as a logical follow-up to discussions with the committees on family policy and healthy lifestyle habits, the committees were sent a preliminary version of the action plan to obtain their comments. The committees' comments were then incorporated into the plan and efforts were devoted to drawing up a good communications plan targeting elected officials, municipal administrators, partner organization administrators and the population as a whole. The plan included communications activities tailored to these groups and to the messages to be conveyed. The municipal council soon adopted the proposed action plan and entrusted its implementation to the municipality's community life branch. Afterwards, the HCT committee continued to play a consultative role in order to monitor the action plan.

Conclusion

Given the community's safety problems, the HCT committee of Saint-Gelais opted for a realistic approach aligned with the means at its disposal and capable of producing results in the fairly short term. Right from the start, they decided to address no more than three problems.

A year after the plan was launched, the municipality decided, based on the preliminary results, to call on the HCT committee again in order to ask it to take the necessary steps to include the other problems identified in the safety diagnosis in the action plan. An additional annual budget of \$10 000 was approved for this purpose, bringing the total annual budget available for the next four years to \$25 000. Convinced that these new conditions would allow the initial plan to be expanded considerably, the committee members joined forces again to update the document. They all believe that the new plan will enable the municipality to move closer to the vision of community safety defined at the outset: "a safe community is one where hazards and conditions that can lead to physical, psychological or material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and well-being of individuals and the community."

References



SUGGESTED READING

■ Safety promotion and crime prevention

The Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (CRPSPC) has assembled various documents and tools such as best practices compendiums, policy papers, and training, diagnostic, intervention and assessment tools which can support communities that wish to promote safety and prevent crime. This material addresses a range of issues, including bullying and taxing, juvenile prostitution, youth dating relationships, exposure of children to domestic violence, and elder abuse. [www.crpssc.qc.ca]

■ Community development

Québec's healthy cities and towns network, the Réseau québécois des Villes et Villages en santé, proposes a tool kit entitled *Trousse d'outils – Connaître et accompagner les communautés* on its Web site. This tool kit was prepared to enable community development workers to acquire knowledge about communities, establish community portraits, provide communities with support and guidance, and work in teams. [www.rqvvs.qc.ca]

J. Lévesque (ed.) (2002). *La santé des communautés : perspectives pour la contribution de la santé publique au développement social et au développement des communautés*. Québec: Institut national de santé publique du Québec. [www.inspq.qc.ca]

■ Teamwork

Despite the advantages of working in a team, it is sometimes hard to work with people who have different visions and objectives. Below are a few references that will prepare you to deal with the problems that can arise in teamwork situations.

- The document *Formation pour l'amélioration de la sécurité et la prévention de la criminalité à l'intention des collectivités locales* contains two modules on the steps involved in forming a working group, the problems related to teamwork and partnership, and various strategies that can be deployed to overcome these problems. One of the modules (Module 2) introduces the reader to the concept of teamwork, while the other (Module 4) looks at consensus building. [http://www.crpssc.qc.ca/default.asp?fichier=outils_formation_formation.htm]
- The tool kit of the Réseau québécois des Villes et Villages en santé contains two sections on teamwork: "Amorcer la discussion" and "Travailler en équipe : animer un groupe et améliorer le climat de travail." [http://www.rqvvs.qc.ca/trousse_outils/toc.asp]

■ Partnership

The document *Outil diagnostique de l'action en partenariat* comprises 18 statements that will enable you to assess your strengths and determine what improvements you need to make in order to work more easily in partnership. [http://www.cacis.umontreal.ca/pdf/Outil_DX_%20partenariat.pdf]

A. Bilodeau, S. Lapierre and Y. Marchand (2003). *Le partenariat : comment ça marche ? Mieux s'outiller pour réussir*. Montréal: Régie régionale de la santé et des services sociaux Montréal-Centre.

■ Choosing priorities

Techniques exist for choosing priorities. Module 4 of *Formation pour l'amélioration de la sécurité et la prévention de la criminalité à l'intention des collectivités locales* discusses two of these techniques: the Delphi method and the nominal group technique.

[http://www.crpspc.qc.ca/default.asp?fichier=outils_formation_formation.htm]

■ Preparing an action plan

C. Gagnon (2007). "L'élaboration d'un plan d'action Agenda 21^e siècle local. Une opération décisive et délicate." In C. Gagnon and E. Arth. *Guide québécois pour des Agendas 21^e siècle locaux : applications territoriales de développement durable viable*.

[http://www.a211.qc.ca/9579_fr.html]

■ Validation

M. Rainville. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities. Guide to Organizing Focus Groups*. Volume 10 of the [charting a course to safe living] collection. Québec: Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2008.

■ Assessment

If you want to learn more about doing assessments in the context of safety promotion, crime prevention or community development, consult the following references:

- R. Levaque, L. LeHénaff and P. Maurice (2006). *Formation pour l'amélioration de la sécurité et la prévention de la criminalité à l'intention des collectivités locales*. Volume 1 of the [charting a course to safe living] collection. Québec: Institut national de santé publique du Québec, Module 3, pp. 55-65. [http://www.crpspc.qc.ca/default.asp?fichier=outils_formation_formation.htm]
- B. Denis (2008). *Guide d'évaluation de projets en prévention des problèmes de sécurité et de criminalité*. Québec: Ministère de la Sécurité publique. [http://www.msp.gouv.qc.ca/prevention/publicat/guide_evaluation_projets/guide_evaluation_projets.pdf]
- Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (2003). *Evaluating Crime Prevention through Social Development Projects: Handbook for Community Groups*. Government of Canada. [http://www.securitepublique.gc.ca/prg/cp/_fl/Evaluation_handbook-E.pdf]

- The Institut national de santé publique du Québec has developed a guide to help local communities evaluate their projects themselves: *Petit guide d'évaluation participative à l'intention des initiatives de développement des communautés*.
[<http://www.rechercheparticipative.org>]



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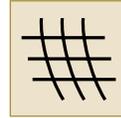
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[https://servicesenligne2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/sel/publications/PorteAccesTelechargement?lng=Fr&systemName=21367648&client=Serv_corp]

Shapiro, J. Action Planning Toolkit. [<http://www.civicus.org/new/media/Action%20Planning.pdf>]

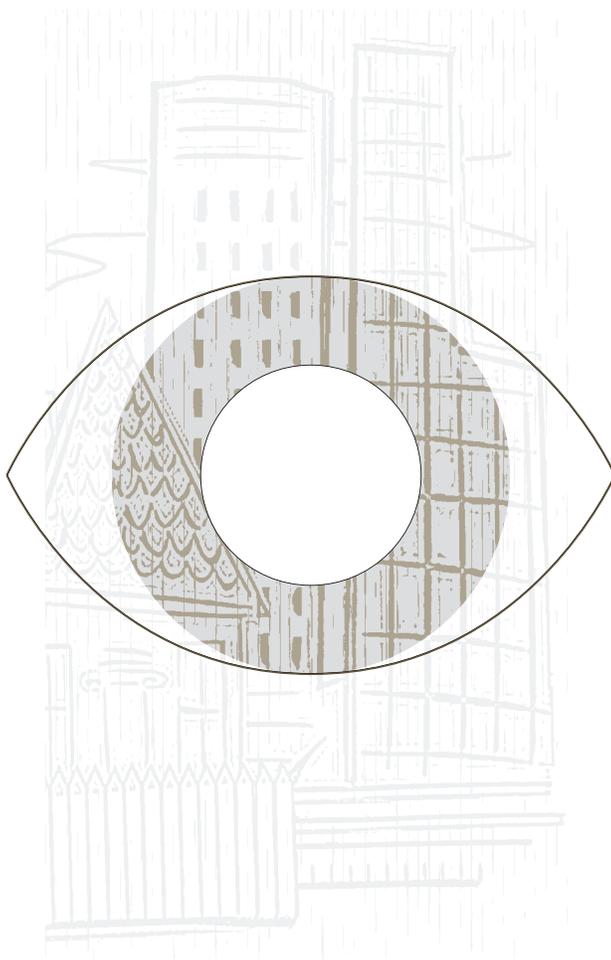
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Sample tool

**GAINING
A GOOD GRASP
OF PRIORITY
PROBLEMS**



Gaining a good grasp of priority problems

This tool can be used to organize and present available information on priority problems.

SECTION 1

PROBLEM

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SALIENT FEATURES DRAWN FROM THE DIAGNOSIS

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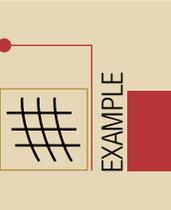
SECTION 2

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROBLEM

Manifestations of the problem:

Players :

Persons affected and in what way? :



Where, when and since when? :

Public perception of the problem:

CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

Why does the problem exist in the community? Why is it an important problem for the community?

What does the problem seem to be related to and under what conditions is it made worse or mitigated?

What changes or recent events are linked to the emergence of the problem?

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

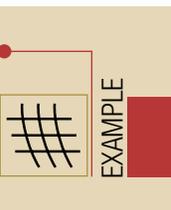
What possible solutions have already been identified?

What are the potential obstacles to implementing these solutions?

Which partners should be involved in these solutions/actions?

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

This tool, *Gaining a Good Grasp of Priority Problems*, is available in MS Word format on the Web site of the Centre québécois de ressources en promotion de la sécurité et en prévention de la criminalité (www.crpspc.qc.ca).



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