Who’s Afraid of the Big, Bad, Wolf? Demystifying Policy
Webinar Handout
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What IS policy?

- “The position or guidelines of organizations and governments which define and support particular values and behaviours”. PARC Workbook for Influencing Physical Activity Policy
- Alternate definition “Policy is like sausage. No one knows what’s in it. And no one wants to see how it’s made.” Unknown
- You can also use terms such as guidelines, standards, pathways, procedures, principles
- Policy can occur at many levels: all levels government, workplaces, neighbourhoods, families/homes

Why DO policy?

- To ensure consistency across entities and though changes in leadership/government
- Good policy is informed by evidence and brings about an important change through a variety of policy tools. If the right policy is chosen and implemented well, it can lead to healthier individuals and communities by addressing chronic disease risk factors and social determinants that negatively impact a community’s health.
- Policy is sometimes favoured because it is a “blunt instrument”: it’s perceived to apply to everyone equally. However, many well-informed policies have unintended consequences that create/exacerbate different in health outcomes of specific populations. These differences, when they are systemic, patterned, unfair, unjust and actionable, are called health inequities (Margaret Whitehead)
- Building healthy public policy is the foundation of the Ottawa Charter For Health Promotion

HOW do I do policy?

This Roadmap is a great resource to help you plan your policy development efforts. The PARC Workbook and OCDPA Toolkit, based on this Roadmap, contain step-by-step worksheets and ideas to help you. While the process may look linear, you may often need to move back and forth between steps, jump over, and return, and so on.
Tips For Policy Work- Addressing common barriers

• Be able to clearly articulate the “problem” you are trying to solve, what you want to do about it, and why what you’re proposing is going to address the problem. Be able to frame your argument to proponents AND opponents in language that resonates with them
• Understand the readiness of your community and decision-makers for the policy. If they are not ready, reconsider your policy efforts (see the “Are We Ready to Address Policy?” resource on the HC Link website)
• Identify who to involve in your efforts. Build on existing relationships. Ask your partners for help.
• BE PATIENT and DON’T PANIC! Policy work can take a looooooong time (think tobacco). It helps to develop markers of success that you can use to bolster your mood, and keep partners involved.

HC Link can support you in your policy development efforts!

HC Link supports community-based coalitions, groups and networks working towards influencing, developing and implementing healthy public policies through:

• Online learning community on policies for healthy communities
• Resources and webinar/workshop recordings on policy topics
• Consulting services to assist you in moving through the policy development process
• Tailored workshops on policy topics

Additional Resources on Policy

**Developing Health Promotion Policies Workbook**  
This workbook from The Health Communication Unit (THCU) (now a part of Public Health Ontario) provides an overview to developing health promoting policies for a variety of settings, such as schools, workplaces, colleges, universities, homes, and communities. Eight-step model is a practical framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating healthy public policies.

**Toolkit to Healthier Communities- Influencing Healthy Public Policy**  
This toolkit from the Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance (OCDPA) is for anyone who wants to advance health policy in their community or encourage change at the local level. See also the accompanying resource **Handbook to Healthier Communities. (Both resources are also available in French.)**

**Workbook for Influencing Physical Activity Policy**  
This toolkit is for anyone who wants to advance health policy in their community or encourage change at the local level.

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