



SWK456/556 GENERALIST  
PRACTICE WITH GROUPS,  
ORGANIZATIONS, AND  
COMMUNITIES

# Chapter 10: Engagement, Assessment, and Planning with Communities

- “Community provides the structure that supports social interaction and connectedness among people over time. The characteristics of the community in which people grow, live, and develop can have important implications for the resources and opportunities available to them.” **What does this mean?**
- Three types of communities:
  - Spatial/geographical
  - Social communities/based on common interests or identities
  - Political communities/venues for civic engagement

# Chapter 10: Theoretical Perspectives on Community

- Systems Theory: From this framework, a community is a system of dynamic and interrelated components such that when one component changes, all other components of the system change to reestablish the status quo.
- Ecosystems Perspective: focuses on the interdependence of people and their environments in our understanding of communities.
- Power and Conflict Theories: Political, economic, and social dominance of some groups over others within a community often results in decreased access to resources for certain groups.
- Strengths, Empowerment, and Resilience: focuses on identifying possibilities and strengths of individuals, groups, and communities, rather than on their deficits and problems.
  - Asset-Based Community Development: a model for community work that is strengths-based. See video on E360!

# Chapter 10: Assessment and Planning

- Using evidence-based practice: literature review!
- Community needs assessment process!
  - Observation
  - Previous studies and service statistics
  - Census data
  - Administrative data (community level)
  - Interviews with key informants (micro practice skills!)
  - Focus groups (mezzo practice skills!)
  - Community forums
  - Survey data (research methods skills!)