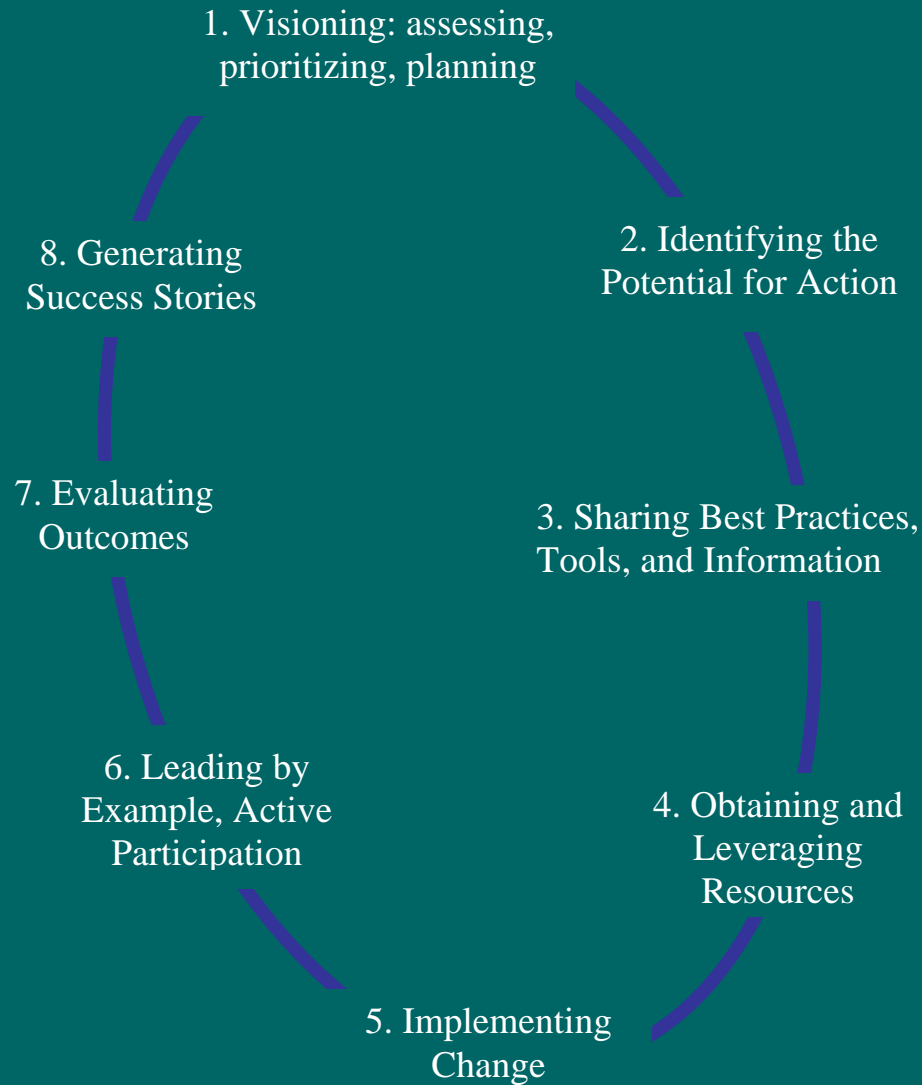


## How does a healthy community work?

A healthy community engages a diverse group of partners that represent the needs of all members of the community. The process the group uses to build a healthy community involves the following, although they may not always occur in the same order for every community:



# Iowa: A Healthy Community



**An introduction.**



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans  
[www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us)

## Why take a healthy community approach?

### Maximizing Limited Resources

Collaborating with others helps avoid duplicating efforts and “reinventing the wheel.” Focus is not always on increasing resources, but best use of existing ones.

### Maintaining the Commitment of Key Partners

Each partner identifies specific actions they are committed to achieving within specific time frames.

### Most Challenges Involve Multiple Factors

A healthy community approach recognizes the interrelatedness of economic, social, and political influences on the health and well-being of people and places.

### Shaping the Future

Changing one part of a system affects the other parts, often in unintended ways. By focusing on how the community as a whole works together to promote health, these unintended consequences can be considered before they become crises.

### Re-energizing the Power of Democracy

Democracy requires building relationships and participation from a broad base of constituents. Participation from this broad base encourages leadership, dedication, and ideas for sustained change.

### Thinking Creatively

When most people think of government, they think of resources drawn from society and outputs in the form of programs. Not only does the healthy community framework expand thinking beyond this traditional “black box” of government, it transforms the box by bringing government and private society closer together as partners in change.



## What is a healthy community?

*Commitment to collaboration*

*Ongoing communication and relationships*

*Sharing a focus on the future*

*Sustaining action*

*A broad definition of "health"*

Lifestyle and behavior

Social, political, economic, and physical environment

Human genetics and biology

Medical care

*A broad definition of "community"*

People and places united by a common interest.

More than the city or town in which you live.