

Policy Brief for Policy Makers:

Building naturally supportive communities to promote well-being

A policy brief

Suzanne Tough, PhD

Professor, Community Health Sciences & Paediatrics
Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary
Max Bell Burns Policy Fellow

Nancy Reynolds

Principal Consultant, Sterling Lifestyle Solutions
Max Bell Burns Policy Fellow



Max Bell
Foundation



Agenda

- Public policy process
- What's the role of evidence?
- Preparing a brief
- Discussion of sample brief; what works, what doesn't?

Policy making

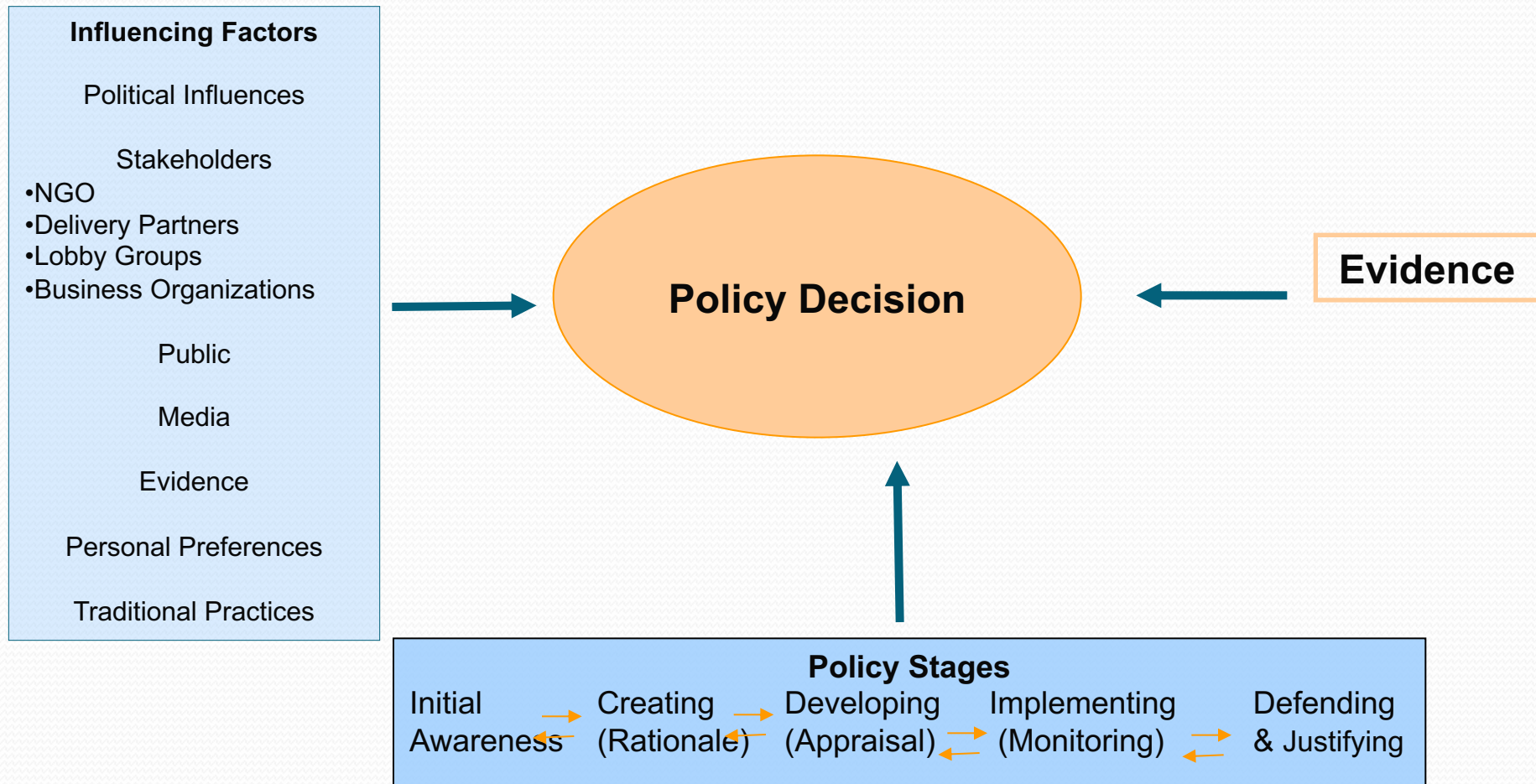
.....is more art than science

.....is not purely rational

..... is frequently unpredictable

..... reflects societal values

- Pestieau (2003)





Questions Policy Makers Ask:

- What is the problem?
- Why does it matter?
- What can and should be done about it?
- How should we do something?
- How will we know it worked?
- What should we stop doing?

Theories of public policy change

3 C's CLEAR CONCISE CONVINCING

What you want done?

Why is it important?

What impact will it have?

The hot water tank

Advocating for a public policy

1. Engage decision-makers
2. Gather best evidence and mobilize knowledge
3. Build a narrative
4. Engage with the community
5. Support development of policy options

Engaging decision makers

- Why?
- When?
- With whom?



The Briefing Note

Prepares Minister/Deputy/ADM for;

- a meeting
- question period
- a decision



Policy brief contents

- Summary
- Issue
- Background
- Considerations
- Recommendations

A Saleable Policy Idea

- Substantive and Relevant
- Built on evidence- both problem and solution*
- Serves broad public interest
- Communicable and Achievable
- Values align with government

** Beware of the Anecdote*

Discussion

- Sample brief;

Building naturally supportive communities to promote well-being; A policy brief

What are natural supports and why are they important?

- Natural supports are informal give-and-take social connections
- Promotes success and demotes crime activities among youths
- Natural supports enhance mental health

Almost 30% of Canadian children report they have “no important adults” in their lives



Why Communities?



SUPPORTS
LOCAL
RESIDENTS



ENHANCE
SAFETY



ENHANCE
SECURITY



SENSE OF
BELONGING

What can I do to create more naturally supportive communities?



Tell people about why natural supports are important



Participate in and promote social snacking



Ask community leadership if they are using a natural supports approach



Create spaces, participate in activities, and build a sense of belonging in your community



Source: unsplash.com

Questions

- How do you pick out salient messages to make the narrative align with the evidence?
- What are some of the pieces that are consistent ?
- What is the key point(s) that may be important across Ministries?
- How is the summary framed?

‘Tell them what they need to know, not what you know’

Successful Translation

- Infographic
- Easy to Understand
- Relatable
- Know your audience

‘Tell them what they need to know, not what you know’

Conclusion- Success Looks Like

That policy-makers will:

- Take account of new knowledge to modify their priorities and agendas;
- Consider different ways of tackling persistent issues being brought to their attention; and
- Look for ways to address them

Become the 'Go To' person

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the support and contributions of the:

- Owerko Centre at the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute
- Cuthbertson & Fischer Chair in Pediatric Mental Health at the University of Calgary



Max Bell
Foundation



Additional Resources



Please visit the Connections First website for additional information on naturally supportive communities:

www.connectionsfirst.ca

