



Community Walk

A way to gain a new perspective of your community

MN Prevention Program Sharing Conference
Oct 14-15 2025
Duluth MN

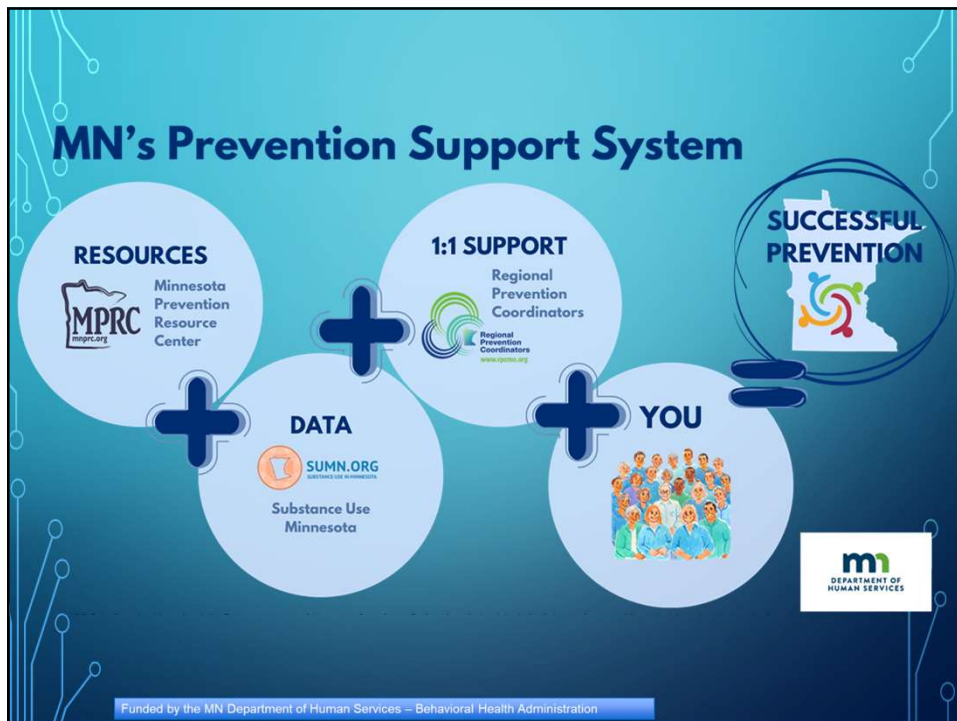
Melissa Perreault – NW MN Region 1
Laura Bennett – NE MN Region 2
Nicki Linsten-Lodge – WC MN Region 3



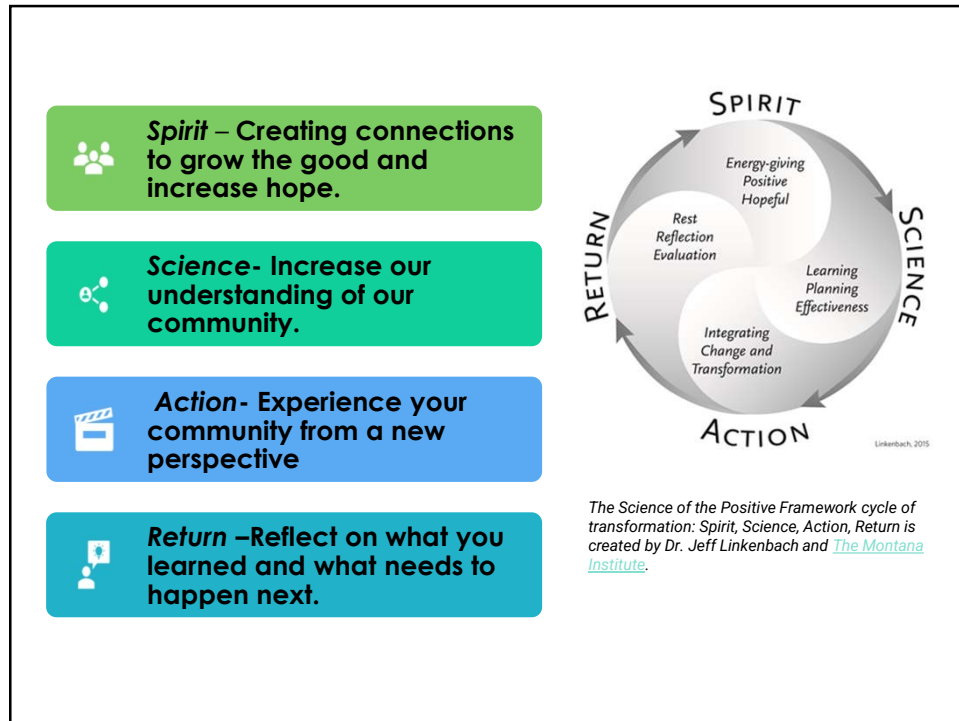
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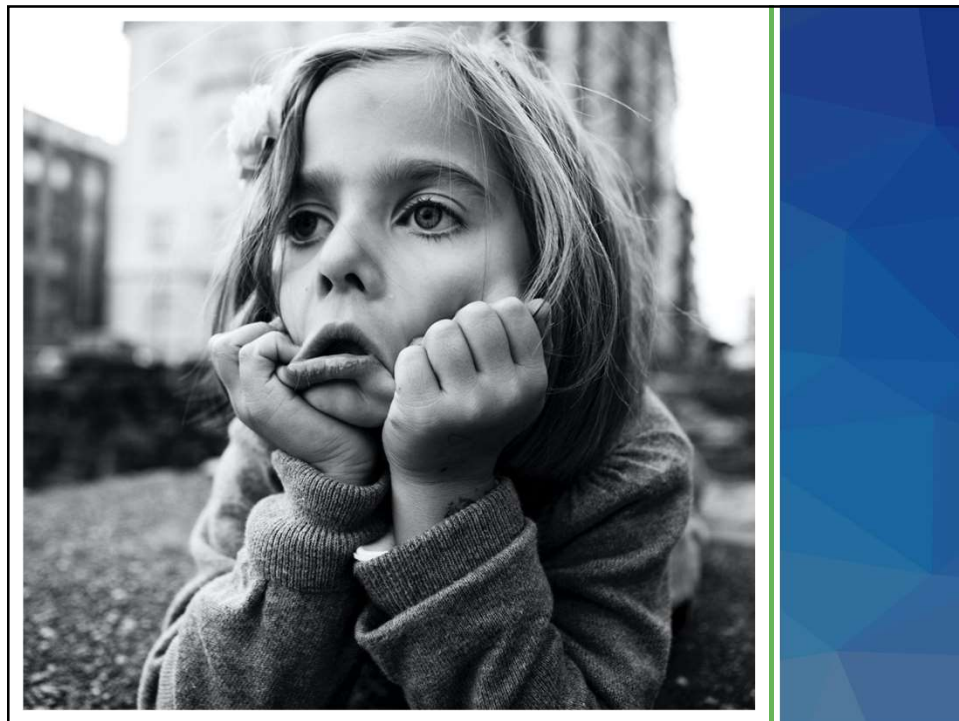
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Spirit: Our Why, Purpose, and Intention

- Understand your community at a deeper level
- Create more meaningful connections and relationships
- Help to see whose perspectives, voices, lived experiences might be missing from your data.
- Create awareness of hopes, concerns, gaps, and what other information might be needed to understand your community.



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DO I BELONG HERE?

When we walk into a room, we automatically assess the environment to see if we belong.

Will I be seen for all of who I am?

Will my voice be heard?

Will my contributions be valued?

Will I be treated with respect and equity?

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Community Walk - How can this be used?

- Walking meeting
- Way to connect and build relationships with coalition members / community partners
- Recruitment strategy
- Opportunity to identify hopes and concerns
- Opportunity to learn more about your community

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Science: How do you take a Community Walk?



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Community Walk – at a glance

- Walk together.
- Observe what you see, hear, smell, and feel.
- Talk about what you notice.
- Take pictures to share.
- Report back observations and any new insights that have been discovered.
- Use this new information to:
 - Facilitate conversation about local behaviors, strengths, and needs;
 - Evaluate different areas of possible projects;
 - Learn more about issues facing the community.

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Plan your walking route to go where your students, families, community members live and in spaces people typically are walking.



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Considerations when planning your route

- Use a map to plan your route. Check for construction.
- Utilize Google Maps or another tool to predict how long your route will take to complete.
- Check the weather forecast.
- Check sunrise and sunset time.
- Plan ahead if you will be walking in the dark.



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During your walk, be observant of:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ■ Accessibility/transportation | ■ Advertising |
| ■ Business and Organizations | ■ Art |
| ■ Opportunities for recreation | ■ Construction /renovations/ repair |
| ■ Open spaces and parks | ■ Resources |
| ■ Gardens | ■ Abandoned buildings |
| ■ Signage | ■ Graffiti |
| | ■ Litter/Drug paraphernalia |

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Pay attention to your experience in the space

- What does it look, sound, smell, and feel like?
- What do I see that is available?
- How accessible is it for walking?
- Does it feel welcoming? Does it feel safe? Why?



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Action: Taking a Community Walk



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ACTION:

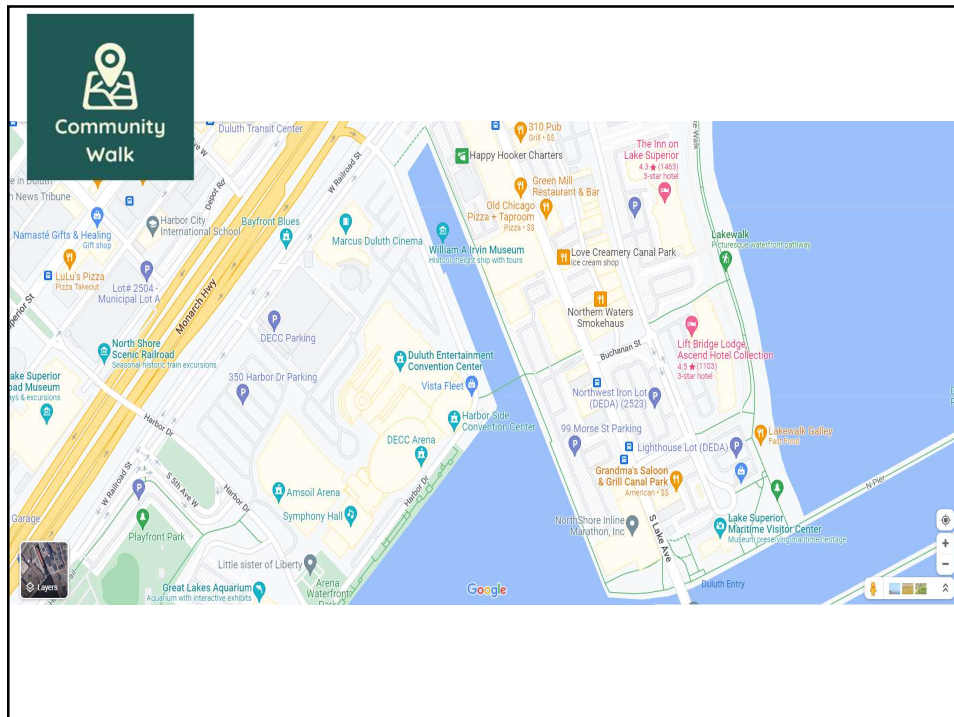
- Travel in small groups, no larger than five.
- Each group travels on their own route.
- Talk with group members to find out about their hopes, concerns/challenges and to get to know a bit about the neighborhood.
- Take pictures and notes to help you in processing, understanding or remembering. Use caution so the camera or notebook don't act as a barrier, or a means of detaching from the experience. Consider using an audio notes app on your cell phone.
- Participants will report back after the activity on what was observed, discovered, and any insights gained.

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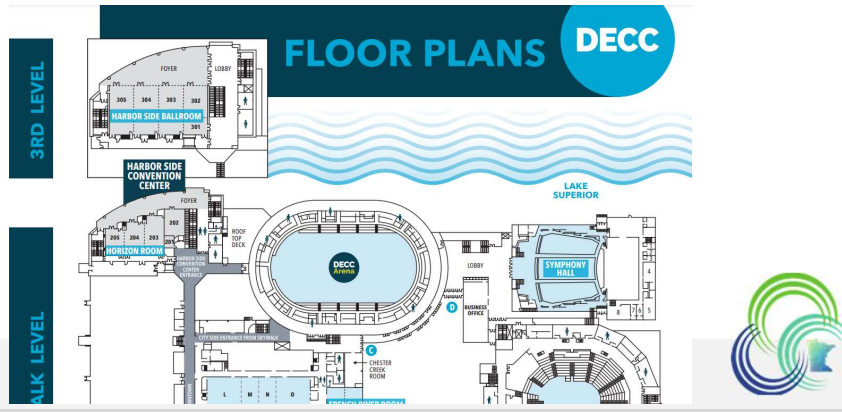
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Let's Practice!

- Get into groups of 2-4
- Take 10 minutes to walk around the DECC
- Keep record of your observations



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**Return: Reflections from
your experience during the
Community Walk**



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Observations and Reflections

- What did you see?
 - Who did you meet?
 - What surprised you?
 - What about this stood out?
 - What are the impressions of the community based on your observations?
 - What are your assumptions about the community and
- people based on your observations?
- What other information needs to be gathered for a better understanding?
 - Whose perspective, voices, lived experiences might be missing? How can they be included?

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- What went well?
- What didn't? Why?
- What do you think was the best moment of the activity? Why?
- Did anything surprise you?

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