



ASKING STRATEGIC QUESTIONS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES*

The GHPC COVID Collection

WHY IS A STRATEGIC MINDSET IMPORTANT DURING A PANDEMIC?

In working to improve community health, the focus is often on the day-to-day activities of program implementation. During a crisis like COVID-19, the focus is justifiably on keeping individuals, organizations, and communities healthy. However, operating with a singular focus on the shorter-term response can lead to missed opportunities to better align community efforts for greater impact during and well beyond the pandemic.

Adopting a more strategic way of thinking (or mindset) about community health needs during and following the initial phases of the pandemic means reflecting on the ways that different organizations and initiatives can be engaged to address the differing needs of populations across your community, ensuring that you are actively seeking the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including community members, and paying attention to emerging learning that can support meaningful and lasting change in community health.

What does this mindset consider?

- *The experiences of other communities*
- *The assets or resources available for addressing an issue*
- *The highest impact strategies when making decisions about a particular initiative*

The COVID-19 pandemic response necessitates creative approaches. While there may be shortages of basic supplies, there is no scarcity of opportunity. How organizations and communities respond now can be the basis of new or improved models for collaboration and care coordination in the future.

The Strategic Questions can be widely applicable to a number of different instances and settings, and can be helpful in guiding your organization's planning and action during the pandemic. When working with these questions, it is important to

engage a range of stakeholders to ensure a diversity of perspectives as the questions are answered.

ADOPTING A STRATEGIC MINDSET

Why will a strategic mindset lead to greater success and impact?

As you consider current opportunities to leverage and sustain, use these Strategic Questions to:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the challenges you are addressing during COVID-19. Use this information to achieve greater impact.
- Create and align efforts around a common vision for your communities. This might include how you better prepare for emergencies in the future.
- Connect your daily actions to the achievement of your long-term goals.

* Originally created with support from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.

When this strategic mindset is integrated into an organization or collaborative's way of operating, there is greater potential for impact and sustainability. The Strategic Questions tool can assist organizations and their partners in practicing, and over time adopting, a more strategic way of thinking about their efforts.

The questions focus around three key areas:



Developing
A deeper understanding
of an issue



Creating
A shared vision



Identifying
Opportunities for
achieving greater impact

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

The Strategic Questions presented below assist organizations in analyzing their programs and activities for long-term impact.



Questions to Frame the Issue

- Who can help us gain a better understanding of this issue?
- How has this issue changed over time?
- What factors contribute to this issue?



Questions to Create a Shared Vision

- What do we want to be different?
- What is the individual and collective value of achieving this vision?



Questions to Identify Opportunities for Impact

- What can we learn from how others have approached similar problems?
- How can we contribute to and draw from what others in our community are doing?
- How can we change the policy, system, and environmental factors that contribute to a problem?
- What are the potential consequences of our actions over time?

For more information:

Georgia Health Policy Center
55 Park Place NE 8th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-413-0314
chsdteam@gsu.edu
www.ruralhealthlink.org