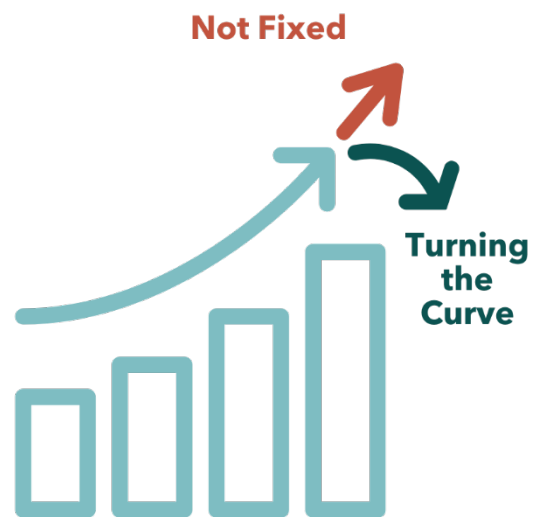




TOOL TURN THE CURVE

OVERVIEW

Facilitators use Turn the Curve to help a group take a data-based approach to solving their issue. By using the metaphor of a leaky roof, Turn the Curve makes using a data-based approach accessible. It asks you to consider an issue where a trend is going up, like the number of hungry families in a community. Then it asks to consider what it will take to turn the curve on this trend in data. To do that, you need to tell the story behind the data, identify key partners, and create an action plan. This tool includes a script you can use to explain the approach and a worksheet you can use to guide a group through the activity.



WHEN TO USE

Use Turn the Curve when a group has identified an issue they'd like to work on but need help figuring out what to do to address it. This can be a helpful activity for a launch meeting where a group will be getting started. The activity will allow people to take a bird's eye view of the issue before deciding what to do or who should be involved.

HOW TO USE

1. Explain the Turn the Curve Approach. You can use the following as a script.

To illustrate the commonsense approach of turn the curve thinking and how we use it in everyday life we will look at a common situation of a leaking roof.

How can you tell if the roof is leaking? Water on the floor, down the walls etc. You measure how badly the roof is leaking by how much water is in your house. You might put a bucket out and measure the number of inches in the bucket after each rainstorm!

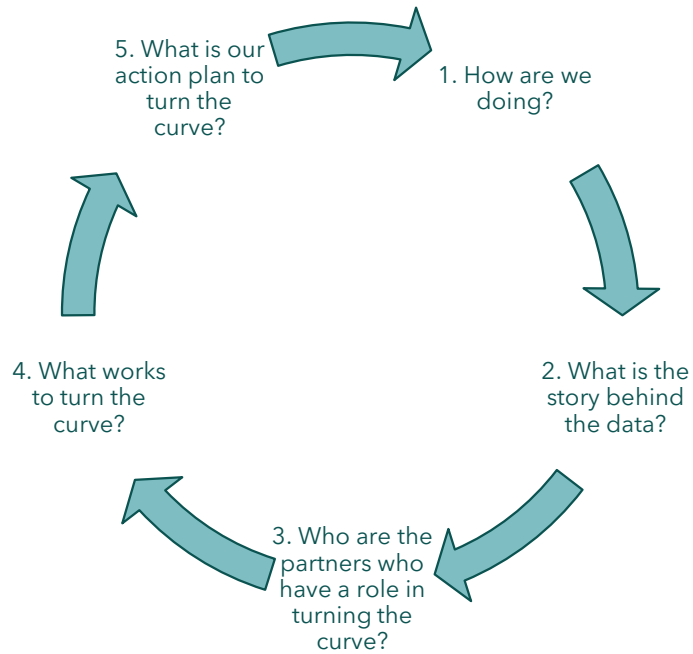


You can see by the 3 data points which represent the number of inches from the last three rainstorms, that the **trend is going up** and so we can assume that this line is going to keep heading up if you don't do anything about it.

Since you're not OK with a forecast that says you're going to have more and more water in your home, you decide to do something to turn the curve on this data line and **send it toward zero**.

You get up on your roof and you try to find out why your roof is leaking. This is the **story behind the baseline**, the causes of why this picture looks the way it does.

Then you think about who are some of the people who might help you fix the leak (brother-in-law, neighbor, professional roofer)? These are some of your **potential partners**.



Next you **consider what works** to fix a leak - Patching material, get a whole new roof, sell the house. You have some choices about types of patching material. Some will work better than others. Tar is probably better than duct tape.

So now that you've got a picture of what's going on, the important final question is **what are you going to do?** This is your action plan.

Finally, you **implement your action plan**. Maybe you've hired a roofer who's gotten up on the roof and patched it. Next thing you do is wait for the next rainstorm to see if it's still leaking.

If it's still leaking, you get back up on the roof and start the process over again and try something else. This is an **iterative process**. Hopefully you fix the roof in one pass. But the things we are working on are much more complicated than a leaking roof, and one iteration won't do it.



So, this is the whole results thinking process that is at the heart of turn the curve thinking! It's how we solve everyday problems. And communities working to improve the quality of life, or managers working to improve their program's performance can use this same process.

Notice that we identified the "inches per bucket" measure easily. With a leaking roof, it's obvious what's important and what could be measured. But with programs, agencies and service systems, the choice of what's important and what to measure is much more complex.

2. Collect key pieces of data that are indicators of whether you are currently achieving your result. Depending on the group, you may ask the different participants to each bring data they have access to.
3. Provide each participant with a Turn the Curve worksheet.
4. Begin by filling out your result and indicator(s) as a group. This should be a shared sense of where you're headed and what you're measuring to find out if you've gotten there.
5. Provide some time for participants to read through the data.
 - a. Ask them to fill out the How Are We Doing and What is the Story Behind the Curve Sections.
6. Ask participants to share their responses.
 - a. Questions for Discussion
 - i. Where are we headed (assuming no changes are made)?
 - ii. What tells us we're headed in that direction?
 - iii. What's the story behind the data?
 1. How has your experience reflected the data?
 2. How has your experience differed?
 3. What has caused the trends we're seeing in the data?
 4. If [insert another perspective] looked at this data, how might they explain the cause of this data trend?
 5. How much impact does [insert root cause] have?
7. Note: Make sure that you identify root causes. For example, if your group has identified that students engaging in fights has led to higher rates of suspensions, identify the root cause of the fighting. Are there underlying tensions leading to fights? Do students lack activities outside of school? Do students have the skills needed to navigate conflict and clear role models? As a group, prioritize the root causes.
 - a. You can begin by having participants name their top and bottom priority and describe why.



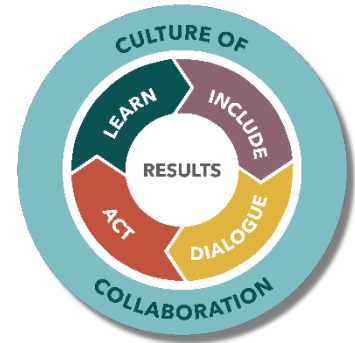
- b. After understanding how different people prioritize them, you can vote on the priorities. Emphasize that turning the curve will likely take strategies that address multiple causes, but prioritization helps us decide where we'd like to focus our next efforts.
- 8. Next, identify who needs to be involved to address the root cause and potential strategies. By mapping potential strategies according to ease and impact, it can be easier to identify easy, high impact activities to focus on.

COMMUNITY LEARNING MODEL

Results

Clear articulation of the results sought is at the center of the model. The desired results and the re-assessment of them drive the community learning process.

Turn the Curve is a tool for the Results phase of the Community Learning Model. To learn more about tools for results and the other areas of the Community Learning Model, visit civiccanopy.org/clm.





WORKSHEET TURN THE CURVE

RESULT

A condition of well-being for a specific population or community. What are you hoping to achieve?

INDICATORS

A measure which helps quantify the achievement of a result.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Based on indicator baseline data, where are we headed (assuming no changes are made)?

WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND THE CURVE?

Why is this data trend occurring?

ROOT CAUSES

List in order of priority, the root causes influencing the "curve" of the baseline.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



WHO ARE PARTNERS WHO MIGHT HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN TURNING THE CURVE?

List potential partners and, if known, the role(s) they might play.

PARTNERS	ROLE

WHAT WOULD WORK TO TURN THE CURVE?

Place your ideas on the map according to its relative difficulty to implement (easy/hard) and potential impact (high/low).

