The **Social Action Theory** is a community-oriented model that is used to increase the problem-solving ability of entire communities through achieving concrete changes towards social justice. That is, individuals within communities come together to redress the imbalance of powers or privileges between a disadvantaged group and society at large. Although this community-community-organization model is applicable to many social issues, it, in particular, can be used to redress health problems that are disproportionately affecting certain communities, such as drug and alcohol use among adolescents in poor and at-risk neighborhoods. The Social Action Theory applies key concepts that are used within many community-organizing and community-building models. These key concepts include empowerment, critical consciousness, community capacity, social capital, issue selection, and participation and relevance, which are defined below.

1) **Empowerment** is any social process that allows people to gain mastery over their lives and their community. In doing so, empowerment aims to transform power relations between communities, institutions, and governmental agencies. For example, communities may feel more empowered when they work together to strengthen their cultural identity and their community assets.

2) **Critical Consciousness** is a mental state by which members in a community recognize the need for social change and are ready to work to achieve those changes. Although this process is not obvious, it is completely necessary in achieving community involvement. We can raise critical consciousness by engaging individuals in dialogues, forums, and discussions that clearly relate how problems and their root cause can be solved through social action.

3) **Community Capacity** are characteristics of a community that affect their ability to mobilize and identify and solve social problems. These characteristics include the presence of leadership, participation, skills, sense of community, and more. Community capacity can be enhanced in many ways, such as through skill-building workshops that allow members of the community to become more effective leaders.

4) **Social Capital** are community resources that exist via relationships formed between community members. Social resources such as trust, reciprocity, and civic engagement can connect individuals in a fragmented community across social boundaries and power hierarchies, facilitating community building and organization. Social networking techniques and enhancing social support are important methods that build social capital.

5) **Issue Selection** is the process by which communities identify winnable, specific goals that unify and build community strength. In this process, individuals work together to select issues they feel are relevant to the entire community.

6) **Participation and Relevance.** Lastly, after selecting an issue, communities need to engage members and work on implementing their plan of action.

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