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ABSTRACT

This series of 16 fact sheets provides information on topics related to coalition development. Each ends with a summary and list of references. The fact sheets cover the following topics: (1) understanding of the terms and some reasons for building coalitions; (2) a coalition facilitator guide with information on the role and qualities of the facilitator and on factors that inhibit coalitions; (3) the principles that relate to effective coalition functioning; (4) a process for coalitions to develop a course of action for establishing realistic goals/objectives and a method to establish realistic goals set by the coalition; (5) recommendations for communication, including group facilitation skills and cohesiveness and the decision-making process; (6) communication and methods of communication; (7) evaluating the collaboration process; (8) fundraising and grant writing; (9) needs assessments; (10) suggestions for mobilizing the community; (11) the structure or construction of a coalition; (12) "turf issues" as one source of organizational tension and suggestions to avoid and solve turf battles; (13) the problem-solving process; (14) coalitions that are truly culturally diverse and serve diverse populations; (15) networking; and (16) how to tap private sector resources. (YLB)

Building Coalitions

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The Ohio Center For Action On Coalition Development

Introduction

This is the first in a series of fact sheets compiled by The Ohio Center for Action on Coalitions and lays the groundwork for future fact sheets.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Collaboration with other youth-serving organizations can be an effective and rewarding method of reaching young people. But, collaborating with other groups is a double-edged sword with both advantages and disadvantages. Both should be weighed before entering a collaborative effort. If the benefits don't outweigh the costs, collaboration should not take place.

The advantages of entering a collaborative effort may be immediate or long term, direct or indirect. Some partners may benefit more than others. It is essential that each partner recognize that the benefits will outweigh the costs of participation. (Dluhy 1990)

Advantages

The advantages of collaborating most frequently are: more effective and efficient delivery of programs, professional development improved communication, elimination of duplication, increased use of programs, improved public image, better needs assessment, consistency of information and increased availability of resources.

Collaboration can open a vast complement of resources to the innovative administrator — new staff skills, knowledge, equipment and facilities, and services. These may be available at other

Definitions

- **Alliance** — Individuals or organizations working together in a common effort for a common purpose to make more effective and efficient use of resources, a coalition.
- **Coalition** — Individuals or organizations working together in a common effort for a common purpose to make more effective and efficient use of resources, an alliance.
- **Collaboration** — The process of individuals or organizations sharing resources and responsibilities jointly to plan, implement and evaluate programs to achieve common goals.
- **Cooperation** — Individuals or organizations associating to accomplish a common goal.
- **Coordination** — Individuals or organizations working together to accomplish a common goal.
- **Network** — Individuals or organizations who share information, ideas, resources or goals to accomplish individual or group goals.
- **Networking** — Individuals or organizations sharing information, ideas, resources or services to accomplish individual or group goals.
- **Partner** — An individual or organization working with others to accomplish a common goal with a shared sense of purpose and sharing responsibility for the outcome.
- **Partnership** — Individuals or organizations working together in a side-by-side effort to accomplish a common goal with a shared sense of purpose and a shared responsibility for the outcome.

agencies. Combining the resources of two or more agencies can help to deliver more services for the same money or the same services for less money. The economics of scale, fewer duplicate programs and improved cost-benefit ratios will make the delivery of programs more effective and efficient. (Rossi 1982)

Staff members will grow professionally by meeting with colleagues from other agencies. They will be exposed to new methods and ideas that may benefit them. They may be made aware of new resources that are available and how to obtain them for their programs.

Improved communication between agencies will result in all partners providing more consistent and reliable information to the client. Shared information can mean increased use of programs and more public support. Agencies can share information about policy and legislative issues that effect their clientele groups. A better understanding of work done by others may help when directing clients who need critical information. Better communication between agencies will provide a better evaluation of the total impact of programs.

Coordinated needs assessment can be a benefit of collaboration. Service providers who work together can identify gaps in programs. They also can see critical widespread problems and rate issues for the most efficient use of available resources.

Disadvantages

Some disadvantages of collaborations are: turf protection and mistrust, slow decision-making, limited resources, diverted resources from priority issues, an assumed position contrary to policy and decreased level of cooperation among collaborators during a crisis.

Turf protection and mistrust are complex issues that must be overcome. If a collaborator doesn't trust his or her partners, he or she will not be as open and receptive to new ideas. There will not be a willingness to share resources and burdens.

If the group must reach a consensus to act on an issue, it may take time. Many partners may not be able to go forward without approval of a higher authority or more study. Depending on how well the group communicates or how often it meets, decision by consensus could make acting on a problem slow and ineffective.

Due to limitations of resources, some groups who would be valuable partners are unable to cooperate. Devoting resources to a collaborative effort may take away from other high priority projects.

Sometimes a coalition may take a position that is inconsistent with the policy of one of its partners. This may cause the partner to be uncooperative, ineffective or to withdraw from the coalition.

During a crisis with a partner or the coalition, cooperation among members may decrease. Member organizations are sometimes faced with changes within their organization such as budget cuts, changes in administration or other short-term changes that affect their commitment.

Withdrawal of support by a key member or outside pressures from individuals or groups who disagree with or don't understand the coalition's purpose may cause a crisis. This may strain the partnership.

Summary

This fact sheet provides an understanding of the terms and some reasons for building coalitions. It is intended to help individuals to better use the series of fact sheets developed by the Ohio Center for Action on Coalitions. Comments and ideas for improvement of this series are welcomed.

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Coalition Facilitator Guide

Coalitions and collaborations don't just happen. They come about because of a common problem and goal. But, it still takes a person (or small group of persons) to provide the impetus to bring a group together and start things moving.

This person (or persons) may or may not also assume the role of facilitator.

The facilitator conducts meetings, is able to bring diverse ideas together, also helps the group in working toward mutually identified and achievable goals. Also, the facilitator should be perceived by the coalition participants as trusted and neutral.

Role of the Facilitator

The most important role of the facilitator is to lay the groundwork for trust to grow as the partnership develops. Openness and informality, the absence of "power plays," and sharing ideas help create on-going relationships. The facilitator builds a foundation of trust and commitment by:

- Teaching people to think in new ways about sharing information and resources.
- Establishing brainstorming sessions to allow all ideas to flow without worrying about methodology.
- Helping tie together various comments, questions and concerns raised in discussion.
- Being sure everyone is aware of decisions being reached.
- Involving the "quiet" people during the meetings.
- Being process and goal oriented. Keeping the meetings and discussion focused on the objective of the group. Being alert and sensitive to the fine line between diversionary and related, helpful discussion.
- Discussing controversial issues thoroughly. Rather than pushing things through, attempt to reach a consensus.
- Being aware of decision-making processes and those used by other coalition members.

Qualities of Facilitators

If the coalition is to succeed, the facilitator must recognize the usefulness and importance of sharing with others across and within systems. Qualities of a successful facilitator are:

- A positive mental attitude, especially when people predict failure before the project is given a chance to succeed.
- Strong commitment to the goals of the group.
- Ability to listen and reflect on what was presented.
- Neutrality. If controversial issues arise, he or she needs to ensure everyone in the group has equal opportunity to express their views in an atmosphere of comfort and confidence.
- Awareness of what is not being said and how to have it stated.
- Awareness of when to facilitate and when to participate.
- Ability to "seize the moment." When to conclude the discussion and move to the next step by consensus.
- Good interpersonal communication skills including equal treatment and listening.

Factors Which Inhibit Coalitions

- Competitiveness.
- Dominating rather than shared leadership that discourages group decision making.
- Inflexibility in scheduling meetings and activities.
- Lack of understanding about how schools and community agencies operate.
- Hidden agenda for personal advancement.
- Cynicism about the advantage of information sharing.
- Time constraints and pressure to "push things through" without giving adequate time for discussion and to work through conflicts.
- More emphasis on talking than listening.
- Preferring to do things alone rather than spending time negotiating.
- Prescribing actions for a partnership (coalition) from the top down.
- Lack of procedure for making decisions and solving disagreements when they emerge.

A Tip for the Facilitator

Keep a journal. It can:

- Track the process of coalition development. It will help analyze, compare and determine overall progress.
- The abilities of the facilitator can determine the success of a coalition group. Walking the tightrope of neutrality, developing trust, and guiding the group toward consensus goals will go a long way toward having a successful coalition.

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Building Coalitions

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Coalition Functioning

A Committee in Disguise

Starting and maintaining a coalition is no big mystery. It is similar to starting and maintaining a committee where there is a need and people interested in finding a solution. The United States started as a coalition of colonies with a need (problem) and people interested in finding a solution.

Though the functions of a committee and a coalition are very similar, the word "committee" may need to be avoided. Negative comments have often been made about committees. For example: "The camel is just a horse put together by a committee." "The fewer committee meetings the better." "Too much of my day is used up in useless committees."

Elements for Success

- **Common Goals** — What is the expressed need (or "problem equals . . .") the group agrees is a priority. What is the desired change? These need to be understood by all involved.
- **Communication** — Use common language that everyone can understand. Avoid professional jargon. Each member needs to know what is taking place and what is expected. For example, minutes of meetings should be distributed to all members.
- **Each Member is Important to the Coalition** — Each participant should be able to perceive themselves as an important part of the whole, contributing to its success.
- **Opportunity to Participate** — Each member should have input into goals, methods and decisions, as well as discussion.
- **Ownership** — Feeling a part of the coalition and responsiblity for some action is an important result of participating in the decision-making process.
- **Delegation** — Delegate to each entity a part they can control. That provides an opportunity for ***individual accomplishments*** as well as contributes to the *overall success* of the coalition.
- **Efficient, Effective Meetings** — Keep the meetings moving toward the agreed goals. Each should show progress toward the overall target(s) and participants should recognize this progress when they leave.
- **Process and Pattern** — Establish a format for conduct of meetings and decision-making early in the development of the coalition.
- **Shared or Situational Leadership** — It is important that many persons or groups share leadership responsibilities.

While attention to group goals and objectives is essential, developing and maintaining committees and coalitions is also an interpersonal process. This requires close attention to group process and skills.

Summary

The principles that relate to effective coalition functioning coincide with the principles of effective committee functioning.

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Coalition Goal Setting

Your Road Map to Success

Before you start a trip, you may need a road map to tell you how to get to your destination. A coalition also should have a plan for how they want to meet their goals. This fact sheet will help develop your plan as a coalition, to be successful.

This fact sheet will:

- Provide a process for coalitions to develop a course of action for establishing realistic goals/objectives.
- Provide a method to accomplish realistic goals set by the coalition.

Definitions

These terms are important to understand as you work with coalition members to develop goals.

- **Goal/Objective** — A specific result desired in a certain amount of time.
- **Short-Term Goal** — Component to do over a short period. It also may lead to accomplishment of a long-term goal of the coalitions. Short-term goals may include the individual goals of the different organizations.
- **Long-Term Goal** — Component to do over a long period. The long-term goal should include the complete goals decided by the coalition.
- **Group Goal** — A goal determined by members of the coalition that will further the cause of the group. It is blend of individual goals.
- **Individual Goal** — A goal determined by an individual coalition member that will be his or her contribution to the complete goal of the coalition.

Characteristics of Goals

It is important that members of the coalition keep certain characteristics in mind as they develop goals. As each is developed, put it to the test. Does it include the following characteristics?

Goals must be:

- **Believable** — They should describe situations or conditions that the coalition believes can be achieved. Avoid the "pie-in-the-sky" goals that members do not believe nor find possible to do.
- **Attainable** — It should be possible to do the goals in the designated time.
- **Tangible** — The goals should be capable of being understood or realized.
- **On a Timetable** — A completion date should be included in the goal statement.
- **Win-Win** — The goals must allow all members of the coalition to be successful.

After the goals have been established, allow the members to review them before they are written in final form. Input and acceptance is a vital ingredient to successfully accomplishing the group's goals.

Establishing Coalition Goals

By the time goal setting takes place members or organizations should have already participated in a needs assessment. From this, the group:

- Develops a list of priorities (worksheet on brainstorming).
- Shares what problems or needs are being addressed by their agency/organization (individual goals).
- Identifies group goals. Finds new problems to address and enhances present work on problems.

Group goals need to be a blend of individual goals. It is vital that all members of the coalition participate in goal development. This will:

- ◆ Help meet members' needs and interests.
- ◆ Show how individual action can lead to group goals.
- ◆ Stimulate cooperation and commitment.

It is also important for all coalition members to:

- ◆ Allow each group member to keep their identity and specialties. Draw on each other's strengths.
- ◆ Not allow hidden agendas to jeopardize the work of the coalition. Members should be honest, up-front and willing to modify their ideas for the goals of the coalition.
- ◆ Recognize everyone for their involvement. A coalition is a cooperative effort to address a problem and the same is true for the recognition.

Turning Goals Into Action

It is vital for the coalition members to write the group's goals. Goals that are in one's head are merely dreams, but written goals are a commitment.

Goals are turned into action by working from the long term to the short term. Decide what must be done and in what order. Next decide what will be done during a specific period. Design small, specific "bite-size" programs and activities that support the short-term goals. If order is important, decide a sequence for your activities. These questions will help:

- ◆ Where does the group want to be in one year? Six months?
- ◆ What "bite-size" programs or activities will move the coalition toward this position?
- ◆ What program or activity should be done at the next meeting?

Summary

The general goal of a coalition is the positive change in people and programs. By developing sound goals, the coalition will have a road map that will enable you to address issues of today and tomorrow.

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Communication in Coalitions

Developing Members

The coalition has been selected and is ready to begin addressing the challenges that lie ahead. To be effective and efficient. the members need to understand important group processes. Using these will help the group work together and do more.

When people gather as group, they may not act in the same way as when they are alone or with one other person. Each group develops its own pattern of interaction as it goes through various phases, as members become comfortable. learning to know and trust one another. As trust develops at least four things should happen:

1. The group should develop valuable facilitation skills.
2. The group should develop cohesiveness.
3. The group should use an effective decision-making process.
4. The group should exhibit critical thinking.

Group Facilitation Skills

Forming a group requires teamwork. perseverance, cooperation and imagination. The group's facilitator and members each have unique responsibilities to helping to make the coalition successful and to meet its goals.

Facilitator Functions

- Relieve the anxiety of members about being with unknown members.
- Develop an agenda. This will allow each coalition member to know what is to be done.
- Have an agenda for each meeting. Share with members before the meetings.
- Do not allow yourself to become the focus.
- Do not allow one member to dominate the discussions.
- Encourage silent members.
- Halt side conversations.
- Help the group to stay on the topic.

Facilitator/Member Functions

- Initiate new ideas. goals and procedures.
- Share the responsibility of seeking information and opinions.
- Clarify what others have said, when appropriate. by adding examples, illustrations or explanations.
- Explain the relationship among facts, ideas and suggestions of two or more group members.
- Support group members though praise and agreement. Tell others they agree with what is being proposed if they do.
- Mediate differences between others and bring about collaboration from conflict.
- Be certain that all have an equal chance to be heard.

Group Cohesiveness

Having a good facilitator and willing members form a coalition does not imply they have a cohesive group. It may appear the group members like each other and seem to get along. However, cohesive characteristics come with time, as the group works together. In *Group Process*, Joseph Luft suggests four criteria have to be met before a set of individuals can be considered a group.

- Interaction takes place among members.
- Members share a common purpose or goal.

- A differentiation of jobs emerges.
- The value of being a part of the group is greater to the individual than being separate.

The group must develop a strong feeling of "we-ness," member talking in terms of "we" rather than "I." "We" team members:

- Display loyalty and congeniality to each other.
- Work together for a common goal.
- Take responsibility for group tasks.
- Endure pain and frustration for the group.
- Defends against criticism and attack.

Trust is the most important ingredient to developing a cohesive group. The first crisis most groups face involves the ability of members to trust themselves and each other. Trust will reduce a members' fear of acceptance and support. It involves everyone's self-disclosure.

The Decision-Making Process

Every group makes decisions. Groups that make effective decisions usually use a decision-making process. They select alternative solutions and chart a course of action. The way a group makes a decision influences how members feel about the group. It also can determine how well the group members support the decision. Steps in group decision-making are:

1. Define the problem.
2. Decide a method for making the decision.
3. Gather information
4. List possible alternative solutions.
5. Develop list of pros and cons for alternatives.
6. Decide an alternative solution and carry it out.
7. Evaluate.

Define the Problem

The problem should be written clearly so all group members know and understand it. Larger problems should be divided into sub-problems. This will allow for better understanding among group members, thus, finding a successful solution.

Decide on a Method

There are different methods to arrive at a decision. They include consensus, voting and the leader deciding. Let's look at some advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Consensus is the synthesis of ideas. When alternatives are discussed, the group hears the views of all the members and discusses the issue until it is felt everyone agrees. A vote is not taken, but the facilitator gives any member the chance to object. If there is objection from any one member the group must continue to look for an alternative. Advantages to this system include:

1. Cooperative decision-making, since all members have a hand in the decision.
2. Provides for a "win-win" solution.
3. Facilitates open communication.
4. Requires all members to listen and understand all sides.
5. Sets the stage for an action plan.

Disadvantages to consensus decision-making are:

1. It takes a large amount of time. The larger the group the more time it takes.
2. Some group members may not want to speak out if the trust level is low.
3. The leader must play a facilitating role. Some leaders are not willing to share the control.

Voting is another acceptable method. After the information has been gathered and alternatives listed, the group decides which will be the best way to solve the problem. The idea behind the system is that though the majority rules, the

Increasing Group Cohesiveness

Factors that increase group cohesiveness

1. All members complete worthwhile tasks and feel they are appreciated by the group.
2. Members clearly perceive the group goals and consider them to be realistic.
3. Members perceive the group as an entity in its own right, calling it "the group" or "our group."
4. The group has prestige.
5. Members possess knowledge or material needed by the group.
6. Members perceive the issues at hand to be of importance.
7. Personal interaction among members is based on equality, with no one exercising much authority over anyone else.
8. Members are not jealous and competitive with one another.

Source: Holli, B. B., and Calabrese, R. J. (1991) *Communication and Education Skills* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia: Lee and Febiger.

minority must go with the decision. The main advantage is this method requires less time to make a decision. However, members who were on the losing (minority) side may not feel committed to the decisions. They may not wholeheartedly help to accomplish the task.

Letting the leader decide is a method that would only be used in extreme cases when time does not allow input from other group members. Even if a leader is unable to meet with the group, he or she should contact some members of the group for their ideas. This method takes members completely out of the decision-making process and, thus, the group commitment level will be extremely low.

Gather Information

Information on the problem should be shared. The more that is known, the more productive the discussion of alternatives will be. All members should be allowed to add specific information to the pool of information.

List Possible Alternatives and Solutions

Members should list all the possible solutions to the problem. This is not the place to limit thinking! List responses so none are forgotten.

List Pros and Cons

For each solution, list the pros and cons. Consider all implications of each alterative. This will provide direction as the group moves closer to deciding on just one solution.

Decide on an Alternative

This is the point of deciding which alternative is the best solution and will move the group ahead. Remember all members need to have a stake in the decision and a part in the plan of action.

Evaluate

Once a decision has been made, it is essential that the group have an evaluation system in place. Much can be learned and applied to future decision-making.

The way a group feels after making a decision is important, especially if the group plans to have a continuing positive relationship. High levels of harmony are noted by positive feelings, a high percentage of membership participation and shared decision-making.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is:

- The ability to see that problems have multiple solutions.
- An alternative to making decisions by blind acceptance, impulse or whim, tradition or habit.
- A process, not an outcome
- A method of exploring and imagining alternatives.
- A process used to develop and evaluate positions on issues.
- An essential element of problem solving, decision-making and creativity.
- A total approach to understanding how we make sense of a work that includes many parts, not simply one way of thinking.

Principles of Critical Thinking

1. A learning environment must provide the opportunity for adults to consider the strengths and weaknesses of opposing views.
2. Evaluate a wide range of alternatives when making decisions.
3. The atmosphere of the learning environment should be one of collaborative inquiry by the members.
4. The learning environment must reflect probing questions by the members.
5. Adult learners should engage in exploratory dialogue with themselves or others, proposing ideas and translating subject matter insights and evidence into reflective thought.
6. Members identify implications of actions.
7. A learning environment in which generalizations are challenged facilitates critical thinking. (Jones 1989)

Am I a critical thinker? For each pairs listed below, which one best describes your actions as a coalition team member?

A Critical Thinker

Goes through a problem.
Says, "Let's find out."
Listens.
Says, "There ought to be a better way."
Takes a big problem and separates it into smaller, easier to manipulate, parts.
Focuses.
Learns from mistakes.

Accepts the viewpoints of others.

Recognizes the limits of knowledge and is sensitive to bias and prejudice.

A Non-Critical Thinker

Goes around it, and never gets past it.

Says, "Nobody knows."

Waits until it's their turn to talk.

Says, "That's the way it's always been done."

Takes many little problems and rolls them together until they are unsolvable.

Sprays.

Only learns not to make mistakes by not trying anything new.

Unable or unwilling to consider others' points of view.

Afraid to say, "I don't know."

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Communication in Coalitions

What is It? How Do We Do It?

Communication skills are important to developing professional and personal relationships. Relationships begin and grow through communication, and the quality of communication influences the quality of the relationships. Effective communication skills are essential. Without them, one's effectiveness in all roles in life — professional, leader, manager, parent, friend, etc. — is limited.

Coalitions have been defined as "individuals or organizations working together in a common effort . . . for a common purpose to provide better services at lower cost." Good communication is required for individuals or individual organizations to establish coalitions, cooperate with one another, determine a common purpose and coordinate efforts. The first step in developing these skills is to understand what communication is, ways we communicate and methods of communication. This is particularly important when working with groups.

What is Effective Communication?

Communication is what we do to give and get understanding. It is an exchange of words and meanings, a two-way process of sending and receiving messages. Effective communication occurs when there is shared meaning. The message that is sent is the same message that is received. There must be a mutual understanding between the sender and the receiver for the transmission of ideas or information to be successful.

For members of groups, effective communication may be defined as:

- Using language that is appropriate to others' levels of understanding.
- Making sure others receive the information or knowledge intended.
- Developing relationships with others.
- Talking with others in a way that facilitates openness, honesty and cooperation.
- Providing feedback.

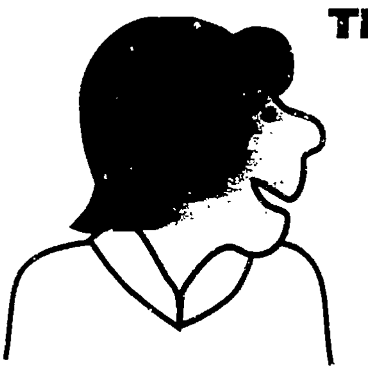
Doing these things leads to increased understanding and effective communication among members.

The Communication Process

Effective communication is usually two-way. The two-way communication process includes:

- **A Sender** — This is the first person to speak or the one who initiates the communication.
- **A Receiver** — This is the "listener," the one or ones for whom the message is intended. Receivers are usually interpreting and transmitting messages simultaneously. They are listening to what is being said and thinking about what they are going to say when the sender stops talking. Simultaneously, they may be reacting in nonverbal ways — with a smile or nod, flushed face, trembling hands or in some other way, depending on how they are interpreting the message.
- **The Message** — This is what the sender wants the receiver to know. It includes the verbal message (content) and nonverbal messages inferred from the sender and the environment.
- **Feedback** — This is the lifeline of effective communication, the ingredient that distinguishes two-way from one-way communication. Without it, senders and receivers are far less likely to achieve mutual understanding about the message.

The Communication Process



Message and Means of Communication

–telephone
–letter
–person-to-person
–?

Sender

Purpose/Objective
Medium: should fit message
Encode: put into words
Transmit

Receiver

Reception
Decode: message interpreted
Meaning is assigned
Behavior (verbal or nonverbal)

Feedback

–to gain mutual understanding
–the lifeline of successful communication

After the first few seconds, interpersonal communication becomes a simultaneous two-way sending and receiving process. While senders are talking, they are receiving nonverbal reactions from receivers. Senders make inferences based on the receivers' reactions and adjust subsequent communication accordingly. For example, they may change their tone, speak loudly or use simpler language. The ability to do this results in the message being better understood. It helps prevent miscommunication.

Miscommunication: a Breakdown in the Process

Sometimes a breakdown occurs in the communication process. The message that was sent is not the message that was received. This can be due to a number of factors that act as barriers to or interfere with effective communication. Some things that can affect the interpretation of messages are:

- **The environment.** This includes room size, shape, lighting and color, temperature and furniture arrangement. These factors can either facilitate or interfere with the communication process. For example, a small conference room is a more appropriate meeting place for a group of six to eight people than a large auditorium. Also, if the temperature is too cold or too hot, participants may be distracted and unable to focus on what is being done.
- The unique **personal attributes** of the sender and receiver. These include things like appearance, educational backgrounds and the physiological state of each communicator at the moment. For example, we tend to listen more closely to someone whose appearance is clean and neat and who is educated, especially in professional settings. Also, a person who is calm is better able to receive the intended message than someone who is agitated or angry.
- **Culture and psychological interference.** Culturally, people are different with different interpretations of the same phenomena. Experiences in other cultures can lead to psychological interference in communication, that is, bias, prejudice and being closed-minded. These attitudes may arise from the region of the country a person grows up in; an ethnic, racial or religious identity; or a socioeconomic identity.
- The **human tendency to perceive information selectively**. People often hear what they want to hear, especially if it reaffirms established beliefs and values or supports personal decisions. This is sometimes a problem in groups because

some individuals are intolerant of others who interpret the information differently. Although many people feel they are open-minded, unprejudiced and able to see all sides of an issue, there is a tendency to maintain an expected view of reality and miss the objective truth. We select what we want to hear.

- **Substitution, addition and simplification**. These things occur as messages are passed from person to person. Each receiver tends to alter the message unconsciously when he or she becomes the sender and passes it on to another. Members in a group can be told the same message at the same time: but, they will each "hear" it somewhat differently and, therefore, communicate it differently outside the group.

These factors can lead to a breakdown in the communication process, especially in groups where there is a greater likelihood that one or more of these factors will be present. When a breakdown occurs, the result is *miscommunication*. The receiver gets a different message than the one intended. The results are usually negative and can include:

- Lost time
- Feelings of resentment
- Rumors
- Poor relationships

Because these results can greatly affect the cohesiveness and effectiveness of a group, it is critical that all members be aware of them and help safeguard against them.

What Are the Ways We Communicate?

There are at least three important ways we communicate. One way — symbolic communication — we do not often consciously think about, though it has an impact on the ways we react to and behave toward others. The other two ways — verbal and nonverbal communication — are generally better understood.

Symbolic Communication

Symbols can be defined as things that stand for or represent other things or objects that represent something abstract. The interpretation of the Greek word for it is "tokens, pledges or signs by which one infers a thing." Symbols play an important role in our interactions. They are often the basis for many of our reactions to other people and the consequent behaviors.

The symbols in our lives include where we work, our job titles, where we live, the vehicles we drive, the clothes and jewelry we wear, etc. It also includes more personal characteristics like age, gender, educational level, ethnic background and cultural heritage. We constantly process this information and "size people up," whether it is those we see on the street or those with whom we interact with frequently. We often make judgments about people based on this symbolic information. The problem with this is that these assumptions are frequently wrong.

Think about attending the first meeting of a community coalition. You do not know the facilitator, who comes in wearing old, worn clothes and is slightly unkempt. He is also loud and boisterous and fails to get the meeting started on time. What is your reaction? Probably not very positive. He lost credibility based on his appearance and behavior before you had the opportunity to meet him. If he had been well-dressed and well-mannered, your reaction would be very different. Our behaviors toward people are often based on our observations with no real knowledge of whom the person is or anything about him or her.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is carried out through symbols known as "words." It includes the actual words used to send messages and the way in which they are arranged into thought units. Because words are the primary symbols used in this type of communication, it includes both oral and written communications. Personal conversations, group discussions anc peeches, as well as letters and memos, are all f ns of verbal communication. Some are spoken and some are written.

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is the most influential form. If the verbal and nonverbal messages being sent are not in agreement, receivers generally will believe what they "hear" nonverbally. If interpersonal communication is to be effective, people need to send verbal and nonverbal messages that are congruent with one another. For example, if an individual says, "I am not angry!" but has a flushed face, clenched teeth and fists, and speaks in an angry tone of voice the message that is heard is, "I am very angry!"

There are four major categories of nonverbal communication:

1. **Eye Contact** — Effective eye contact includes spontaneous glances or looking or gazing at another person in a way that communicates concern, interest, support and so forth. Appropriate eye contact is an excellent way to let others know we are interested in them and what they have to say. It says we respect them enough to listen and that we are open to communicating with them. On the other hand, ineffective eye contact tells others we are not interested in what they have to say or that we do not respect them. This includes staring, glaring or not looking at another individual. For effective eye contact in groups, let your gaze move back and forth across the group. Look at everyone, or at least at every area of the room. Don't stare off into space or always look at one person or one side of the room.
2. **Body Orientation** — This refers to posture, body movements, facial expressions, limb placement and so forth. Leaning toward and directly facing the sender of a message communicates interest and attention. If the receiver also has a relaxed face with a pleasant expression, a supportive communication climate is established. The communication process is hindered if the person is physically distant from or not facing the sender, does not use gestures, have no facial expression and is either slouching or having a rigid posture.
3. **Verbal Quality** — That's right, verbal quality is a form of nonverbal communication. If verbal quality is to contribute to effective communication, the tone of voice must match the message. It is important that the person talking speak in an audible tone of voice that communicates confidence, strength and directness. If the tone does not match the message, or the speaker appears to be passive and hesitant or demanding and authoritative, the listener will stop paying attention. The same is true if the sender frequently stutters, pauses, repeats things or uses incomplete sentences. Watch for this in groups. Who pays attention to the person who stutters, stammers, repeats things and mumbles? Who listens when the speaker is confident about what is being said and speaks audibly?
4. **Energy Level** — Energy level is how we let others know we are interested in and enthusiastic about what we are doing, or that we could not care less. A person who is alert, bright and receptive helps create an effective communication environment. If a person is apathetic, sleepy or jumpy, there probably will be breakdowns in the communication process. Energy level is contagious in groups. One enthusiastic person can turn a meeting with a group of tired, listless members into a lively encounter where a lot is accomplished. One apathetic, tired person also can kill the group's enthusiasm.

Effective Communication

People today have more choices of communication methods than ever before. There are . . .

- Face-to-face conversations
- Meetings
- Telephones in offices, cars and airplanes.
- Memos, letters and telegraphs
- Electronic mail and FAX messages
- Media methods (such as, newspapers, magazines, radio, television)

With so many choices, it is sometimes difficult to know how best to communicate. Keep three things in mind when selecting a method:

1. The importance of the message.
2. The effectiveness of different methods.
3. The kind of feedback you want.

If the message is important, it is often best to put it in writing. This is especially true if it is to be sent to several people or there is a need to document that information was shared. If it is an "oh, by the way . . ." type of message intended for one or two people, a phone call or note may do.

Different methods are more effective in some situations than others. For example, if there is no rush in sharing information with group members, distribute a memo at a meeting or put it in the mail. If there is more urgency, it may be appropriate to send it via electronic mail or fax. Keep in mind most people do not have ready access to a fax machine. It may take more time to get the message from the machine to a person.

It is sometimes wise to use a variety of communication methods to send the same message. A good example of this is when an important topic is to be discussed in a meeting. Providing a handout with pertinent information, outlining major points on a chalk board or flipchart and discussing the issue facilitates the process.

Remember that feedback is the lifeline of effective communication. It is easy to get in two-way, face-to-face communication. The receiver's reactions to the message (such as, agreement, surprise, boredom, hostility) can tell the sender a great deal. It allows one to get immediate indications of how the message is being received. In this situation, the individuals involved can discuss the message, ask questions for clarification and resolve any misunderstandings. This is far more difficult when using written communication. Writers cannot clarify for readers because they do not see them.

It is especially important to consider these factors when selecting methods to communicate with a group. Remember, you are working with busy people. They have many roles and responsibilities as well as hectic schedules. Use their time wisely!

Summary

Effective communication is a skill. It can be learned and improved upon with practice. This is necessary if individuals are to come together and become a group. Through the process of communication — sending and receiving messages — individuals can develop understanding and respect for one another, share information, challenge each to think differently and find the best possible solutions to the issues around which the group has formed.

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Evaluating the Collaboration Process

Evaluating and monitoring collaborative efforts are essential tasks if we are to be successful in coordinating programs for young people. Evaluation efforts become more manageable when approached from two different levels. These include: 1) evaluation of the collaboration process and 2) measuring the impact of programs for targeted audiences. This fact sheet focuses on evaluating the collaboration process.

An evaluation of the collaborative process can be pursued by studying several different potential outcomes.

Potential Areas of Evaluation

Quality

- **Training** — What has the group done in training other youth professionals, coalition members or youth?
- **Continuity** — How long has the group been together? Is there still a desire to work together? What type of structure been developed to assure the continuity of the collaboration, such as, officers, membership guidelines, memoranda of understanding?
- **Involvement** — How active are the group's members? How often do they meet? How much volunteer and professional time is being focused on a particular problem because of the collaboration?

Comprehensiveness

- What types of individuals and organizations are represented? Are these the right type of individuals to accomplish the work of the collaboration?
- Has there been an increase in the number of referrals between collaboration members? What has been the nature of these referrals?
- What types of data bases or directories have been created to facilitate the sharing of information and assistance related to youth issues?

Access and Equity

- Do all youth in the community have equal access to collaboration efforts? Has access to services been enhanced by collaboration efforts?
- How do other non-collaborators obtain access to the information and services of the collaboration members?

Information and Advocacy

- How has information increased to parents, public, policy makers and youth?
- To what extent do member organizations promote each others' efforts, workshops and conferences?
- How is the group serving as an advocate for youth issues in the community?

Cost-effectiveness

- Has existing funds been used more effectively? How?
- Has duplication of services been reduced or eliminated?
- How has the group been able to access new funds because of working together?

Additional General Questions

- What are you doing that is really working well?
- What are the major problems you are facing?
- Are there unanticipated outcomes because of working together?

To explore the questions in the proposed areas of evaluation, many methodologies can be used. Some most common include:

- Surveys/Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Structured Observation
- Review of Records and Reports
- Focus Group Interviews
- Interaction Analysis

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Building Coalitions

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Ohio Center For Action On Coalition Development

Extra Resources for a Coalition

Notes on Fundraising and Grant-Writing

Organizations join coalitions or collaborations to combine various resources in working toward a shared goal. What if additional resources are needed?

Usually, coalitions seem to prefer less formal in-kind-type resource sharing. One organization might provide meeting space, another agrees to provide copying and postage. Sometimes, a more formal memorandum for sharing larger resources may be used. For example, one organization may agree to provide a specified amount of a staff member's time to work on a particular coalition effort. In other situations, the coalition may decide that member agencies do not have the needed resources available. Then, it may be necessary to undertake some sort of fundraising.

The search for funds may take one of two basic directions, a general fundraising campaign, or the submission of a specific proposal to a foundation or public organization.

You need to find out which funding sources are out there, who can tap them, what the rules are for using them and how to secure them. A funding search should embrace both private and public sources.

Fundraising

There is no magic in fundraising. Above all, you need to be a good planner, organizer, manager and marketer. When these skills are combined with enthusiasm and common sense, you will be successful.

Fundraising requires pre-planning and a well-organized execution. Generally, it is not something that can be done well in response to a crisis. Designate someone as the chief fundraiser. Give that person the authority and responsibility to represent the cause and to raise the money needed. Provide the clerical and other kinds of support he or she needs to get started and do not expect instant results.

Building a group's credibility in the community takes time and that is the basis for successful development program. People must be aware of you and have a positive impression of what you do and how you manage your resources before they will support you.

Six Steps to Raising Money

1. **Set program goals.**
   - Develop objectives to reach your goals.
   - Plan the methods you will use to reach those objectives.
   - Design specific activities to carry out the methods.

2. **Inventory all your resources.**
   - Preview all the people and organizations in your community who might be able to help.
   - Brainstorm with key staff and volunteers. Develop a specific list of names, individuals, civic organizations, political organizations, media, businesses, etc.

3. **Develop a fundraising campaign.**
   - A well-structured annual campaign includes the use of as many fundraising techniques as are necessary to move toward that ultimate goal

   Bill Riley, Kansas 4-H Foundation Director, considers a good fundraising campaign like a baseball diamond. It has four major parts:
   - **Vision** — Goals, purpose, potential prospects.
   - **Cultivation** — Informs prospects of

goals and current activities before the request for funds is made (brochures, media, contacts).

- **Solicitation** — The actual request to potential donors for general or specific purpose and how they will be contacted.
- **Recognition** — How you thank donors and inform the public when appropriate.

To hit a "home run" with your efforts, all four parts should be developed before a campaign begins. Any costs associated with fundraising should be included in campaign budget (including brochures, postage, plaques or mementos), with the funds to be raised for program activities. The Ohio State University Winter 1990 *BUCK$ LINE* contains helpful information on the "successful ask" that relates to cultivation and solicitation. It underlines how there should be an ongoing, two-way relationship with potential donors, not just a "quick hit-and-run to the bank."

4. **Assess your financial and personnel needs.**

- Decide what you need in people, money, services and products to reach the fundraising goals.

5. **Implement fundraising activities.**

- New programs are best funded by one or two large gifts from foundations or corporations.
- Programs that do not have new components are more easily funded through a variety of annual campaign activities, such as a membership drive and special events.
- Development activities must be planned to support the programs.
- Consider recruiting civic groups to do benefits: car washes, bake sales, a dance, a spaghetti dinner or fish fry. Not only do they raise money, but you have a great chance to educate them about the issues you are working to solve — with their support.

6. **Evaluate your results.**

- Assess what went well and what went badly in every project as each is completed:
  Did you reach the goals?
  How much money did you raise before expenses?

Foundation Grants, Government Grants and Contracts

When you are unable to secure all the needed funds from within you own community, foundation grants and government grants and contracts can help. Many foundations are interested in helping reputable community groups in meeting local needs. Competition for funding can be stiff.

Generally, all funding organizations like to see an organized plan or proposal for upcoming activities and expenditures. It is not uncommon for a foundation to initially ask for a brief letter (two to three pages) telling about the organization, your plans and the amount of funding requested. These requests should describe the following in specific terms:

- The nature of the problem to be addressed.
- The solution proposed.
- Documentation of the group's ability to carry out the objectives.
- Financial needs associated with the request, including evidence that the effort will not rely solely on the funder's support.
- Documentation that a systematic evaluation will be carried out to demonstrate that funding has made a difference.

The process of preparing proposals for government funding depends on the funding agency. Although different programs may require different formats for the proposals, applicants for government funding should be prepared to include the following standard sections in their proposals.

- **Proposal Summary** — The summary appears at the beginning of the proposal. It should interest the reader in what is to follow. When applications are screened, the summary may be the only part of the proposal read.
- **Institutional Background and Qualifications** — The discussion of the organization should be clear and to the point. Leave a favorable impression without overloading the reader with unnecessary details.
- **Statement of the Problem** — This is the most important part of the proposal. It tells the reader why you want to perform the activity for which you require funding.
- **Program Objectives** — Program objectives need to be stated in measurable terms. Statements about objectives should quantifiable: use terms like "to increase"

or "to reduce" instead of ones like "to create" or "to provide."

- **Methods or Technical Approach** — The next step is to explain the methods by which you propose to achieve your objectives. This section should present a reasonable scope of activities that can be accomplished within the time allotted for the program and the applicant's resources.
- **Evaluation** — It is important to plan carefully the evaluation of your activities at the inception of the project and not as an afterthought. Many evaluations depend on measuring certain characteristics before the program activities begin. Funding agencies expect you to have given thought to evaluating the proposed program during proposal preparation.
- **Future and Other Necessary Funding** — When requesting funding for a new project, financial planning should go beyond the proposed grant period. Show funders you are planning. The funding arena is a competitive one, and is not without its own politics. Few sources will fund any project beyond three years. They prefer to "rotate" resources since needs are always greater than dollars available in any year. They also want to avoid any long-term personnel costs, usually in the fringe benefit area.

If the problem is long-term, a coalition is likely to have two alternatives. The problem or need should be limited so the approach is do-able within the period the funds are available. If long-range staff needs are foreseen, the coalition needs to approach a regular source of dollars about assuming continuing costs for the position(s). The availability of a funding source might be limited. Some organizations fund "new, innovative" efforts for short periods, then move on to other "innovative" approaches to community priorities. This provides the donor with regular visibility to the public.

- **The Budget** — Varying degrees of detail are required in an estimated budget. Funding organizations usually provide budget forms and instructions for their completion. Be specific when preparing your budget. Funding sources do not like to see every cost estimate rounded upward and expect to be presented the true anticipated costs (to the best of your ability).

Obtaining Funds for Problem Solving Projects

After members of a community organization begin to address a problem, they frequently consider developing a special program or project. Remember time is a resource that coalition members already possess. Before rushing into writing a proposal, figure out whether this is what you really want. Despite whether you are applying to a foundation, corporation or a government agency, there will always be many more requests than there are funds available.

The benefits of obtaining a grant, compared with how time could otherwise be spent, may not make it worthwhile to seek the funds.

Is the projected program realistically within the capability of the agency? Government funders, for example, might request that projects reduce delinquency by an unusually large percentage. Contracting with unrealistic expectations guarantees failure. The period for funding may not be conducive to the accomplishment of agency objectives.

The lure of funds has its price in conditions and restrictions. There may be limitations on client eligibility, constraints on the manner in which clients will be served, qualifications required of staff, prescribed methods of reporting agency activities, review or internal agency records, fiscal accounting review and the restraints on being able to criticize governmental bodies. There is always the potential for conflict between the funder's need for control and the organization's requirement for autonomy. What are the possible consequences of the program being ended after a designated period? What are the potential effects on staff and, more importantly, on clients if the project cannot continue to receive funds? An assessment must be made of the prospects for continuing the program, or the consequences of its discontinuance, before the proposal is submitted.

Cash flow is another problem related to reimbursement. Anticipate a time delay between the submission of the first invoice and the receipt of funds.

The clear message: know what you are getting into when you consider applying for funds.

Identifying Funding Sources

Hundreds of foundations exist in any large or even moderate-sized urban community. Find which ones are right for your coalition. The best approach is to identify initially a core of foundations that match your interest.

To learn about community, private and corporate foundations, write to the Foundation Center, 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10106. They provide a catalogue that describes major sources of information about foundations. The Center also has a cooperating network of 90 library reference collections in all 50 states, Mexico and Puerto Rico. Contact the Center, (212) 620-4230, in New York to find out the location of the branch in your state.

The federal government prints sources of information that can alert you to available program grants. One of the most significant of these is the Federal Register, published each weekday. The "Highlight" section in the front lists major topics. The "Notices" section describes grant availability. Announcements are made of rules governing programs, so that though money is not immediately available, you gain some idea of what grants are likely to be funded later. It is available at most major or public university libraries, or write to Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for subscription information.

Identifying In-Kind Services

For almost any cost, investigate the possibility of in-kind contributions. These often cover the entire cost of a service, staff person, etc., but they also can be used creatively with other funding. There are several types of in-kind services:

- Space, including maintenance and utilities
- Staffing
- Clerical assistance
- Equipment and furniture
- Construction and renovation
- Printing facilities
- Transportation
- Public relations and promotional activities
- Recreational activities

Sometimes this type of resource is also called a "non-cash" contribution. Sometimes with foundation or government grants, "in-kind" services need to be documented carefully for audits, while the requirements for "non-cash" contributions are less rigid.

Non-Funded Proposals

What if your proposal is not funded? In true problem-solving style, consider the options: resubmit a revised proposal, abandon the project or pursue other avenues that might solve the problem, though with fewer resources. If, on the other hand, you have the good fortune to be funded, you know that ahead possibly lie frustrations, crises, accountability for results and worries about refunding.

About Incorporating

Should your coalition or corporation incorporate or file as a tax-exempt organization? Often, many or all the member organizations of a group already have this status. Is it necessary to apply as a coalition? There are three basic considerations. The first is the time, effort and some cost in going through the process of incorporation, and possibly some ongoing cost for fiscal reporting. The coalition needs to designate someone to act on its behalf in this matter. If the group is seeking a startup grant, an agency can be designated to do this and the grant can cover the costs. The advantage of incorporation is a clear identity is established. The disadvantage is the need to stick to much more formal operating rules and procedures.

The second point to consider is that in many coalition, several "lead organizations" emerge who have the strongest interest in furthering the group's goals. Usually, there may be the possibility of working out collaborative programs with one or more agencies. These groups could be designated to receive funds and administer them for a program carried out to further the aims of the coalition. This can avoid many complexities of establishing a separate framework.

Finally, the legal structure of incorporation makes it necessary to have a formal "funeral" if for some reason the coalition expires or disbands. This involves additional effort, sometimes some costs, and can create some negative publicity for member organizations if the media interprets disbanding as a sign of failure in solving a problem or situation.

Thoughts On Funding For Coalitions

The funding source can have a profound influence on the structure of the coalition. If the coalition is formed in response to a funding initiative, much of its direction has been established. To qualify for certain grant and foundation funds, it may be necessary for the coalition to meet special conditions of membership, board structure and staffing.

Funding is available from many sources, both public and private. Multiple sources may be prefered to avoid total obligation or association with a single source. But it often means more administrative work and complying with a variety of rules and regulations. Multiple funding can stabilize an operation and ensure its survival, but securing this mix requires staff time and a well-developed coalition structure. Securing multiple funding usually requires a grant person on the staff, an established identity, documentation of organization history and data, credibility and leverage. Multiple funding to alleviate undue influence by a single funding source is most important for self-regulating and advocacy coalitions. It is least vital for information and resource sharing and for technical assistance coalitions.

Levels of funding influence structure because they rarely are sufficient to accomplish the desired objectives. Although there often is considerable donated time and resources, these cannot always make up for lack of physical facilities and sufficient staff. Despite their purpose, all coalitions can be more effective if they have a constant funding level and do not have to constantly search for program funds.

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Building Coalitions

The Ohio Center For Action On Coalition Development

Making a Difference

Needs Assessments for Building Coalitions

A collaborative effort is necessary to effectively impact the problems that face youth and families today. Ask: Are you making a real difference in the lives of young people and their families? Would it be easier to encourage a positive change if you worked with other community agencies and support groups who have a youth and family focus? Individually, you can't do everything, but collectively, something can be accomplished. By building coalitions in your community, neighborhoods or county, the lives of youth and their families can be positively affected.

Understanding Needs Assessment

Several questions frequently are asked about needs assessment.

What is meant by needs assessment? — Needs assessment is a process for identifying gaps in results and arranging them in priority order for resolution. These gaps are discrepancies between what should be and what are the current conditions. The most important ones are selected for action. In this definition it is important to note that need is used as a noun — a gap or discrepancy. This is different from the traditional definition and use of need as a verb — require or demand.

How can needs assessment be used? — Needs assessment can be used in several ways. Sometimes, the gap between "what is" and "what should be" establishes the objectives for programs. For example, in examining the teenage pregnancy rate, classes might be established to help these individuals adjust to their parental roles. Other options might be to present birth control information to young people or encourage them to abstain from sexual activity until after they marry. Any or all these objectives could result from conducting a needs assessment.

Needs assessment also will help select the strategy a program might use. Suppose the basic reading level of at-risk youth was found to be inadequate. One strategy would be to require that young people take more reading courses before they graduate from high school. Another would be to change the way current reading courses are taught in the elementary schools. You might reward at-risk students for the number of books they read from the library. Information about the perceptions students, teachers, parents and employers have of these strategies could help select an appropriate approach.

Sometimes needs assessment information is used for designing or modifying an instructional program. For example, unsatisfactory academic performance can be attributed to inappropriate teaching styles. Individuals who learn by concrete examples often find it difficult to comprehend ideas presented in an abstract manner. Determining the learning styles of students and comparing it with the teaching style of instructors can provide helpful information in this modification process.

Needs assessments also can be used to evaluate progress. By administering a needs assessment instrument again, it would be possible to check the headway made in reducing a discrepancy or gap. This is similar to the procedures used in administering pre- and post-tests.

What are the advantages of using needs assessment? — Conducting needs assessment provides many advantages to individuals planning collaborative efforts. A major advantage is the generation of new ideas and alternatives for dealing with needs. The saying, "two heads are better than one" is appropriate for individuals who together conduct a needs assessment.

It also provides an opportunity for job enrichment. Individuals can get bored with their jobs or burned-out. Needs assessment offers opportunities to deviate from their routine and revitalize themselves. Contact with other individuals concerned with similar conditions can provide a support group with stimulation and encouragement that is often absent when one is working alone.

When resources are scarce, it can be difficult to develop effective programs. Collaboration in conducting a needs assessment can help identify similar personnel, facilities, equipment and funds in other organizations and agencies. The pooling of these resources may allow collaborators to offer programs that none could have alone.

Another advantage is the strength there is in numbers. Individuals who choose to work together on important needs often find it easier to generate support for their cause. Collaborators also can benefit from their increased "clout" with potential funders and policy makers.

What problems can arise in a collaborative needs assessment? — Needs assessment can have problems for those planning collaborative efforts. Individuals may complain when additional meetings are scheduled. This is especially true for busy people. Potential collaborators need to be shown the benefits of working together in needs assessment. You even might suggest how time could be saved in the long-run.

The group also needs to decide who will be responsible for providing effective leadership. Designate one individual to chair the group. If everyone is responsible for leading, it generally turns out that no one is responsible and the effort becomes disjointed.

The channels for communication among group members present yet another challenge. When busy people are involved, much time can be wasted with "telephone ping-pong." The use of facsimile (fax) and answering machines is one way to simplify communication.

In the early stages of collaboration, the needed resources are difficult to obtain. When these resources can be identified, a list of the requirements should be shared with the group. This should help the committee see who is contributing what resources and encourage everyone to contribute their fair share.

Establishing a mission and clear objectives for the collaborative needs assessment also can provide obstacles. "Turf" battles sometimes emerge and individual agendas — both hidden and explicit — become problematic. Members of the group should concentrate their efforts on the intended results and minimize the struggles between individuals.

Individual client groups of the various collaborators can become alienated if they are not brought along as the needs assessment effort develops. Some clients will think their organization is being "short-changed" if the collaborative effort becomes too visible too soon.

Although several potential problems have been identified, all or most of the problems in any one situation can be resolved. Members of the collaborative group need to be alert to these types of problems and work to eliminate them before they block the needs assessment effort.

Involving Others

When it becomes apparent what others are doing to address youth and family issues, you can be better prepared to become involved in community networks, coalitions or collaborative efforts. Look beyond your organization for other agencies or groups who are also involved in the youth and family arena. Possibilities include:

Chambers of Commerce
Churches
Children's Services
Community service clubs
Extension Service
Human Services Department
School systems (public and private)
United Way
YMCA or YWCA

Who should be asked? — Coalition members need to be credible and trustworthy. They should be people in the community who share common goals and interest; people who are willing to compromise individual or agency gain for the coalition's aims and objectives.

How do you find these people? — Look through the telephone book. Check with your associates and staff members. Explore existing youth and family coalitions in the community. Get invited to service club functions. Attend parent-teacher and school board meetings. Become visible in the community. Be willing to serve on local boards and committees. Write articles for the local newspapers.

When should they be asked? — Do not become discouraged if success does not happen overnight. In building a coalition or getting involved in an existing one takes time. Get to know your community. Become familiar with local power structures. Seek others who have similar goals and are committed to making a difference in the community.

Planning and Designing A Needs Assessment

There is no agreed upon right way to conduct a needs assessment. (Witkin 1984) The methods for gathering the necessary information are almost unlimited. Be creative, efficient and effective. You may not have to "work harder" if you "work smarter" in gathering what you need. Here are some guidelines to help in planning and designing a needs assessment.

1. Determine the purpose for conducting the needs assessment. Among these purposes are: generating awareness, satisfying a mandate, aiding in decision-making or promoting action.
2. Define the goals and objectives for the needs assessment. Show what it is you want to find out about whom. What type of information do you want — demographic, awareness, attitudinal or behavioral? Who will be the target audience? Decide whether you are concerned about just those clients you currently serve or if you wish to broaden your client base to the total community. Be specific.
3. Select the approach you will take in collecting the information. Decide whether the information you need exists, if a new data co''ection effort is needed or if you will need to use a combination of approaches.

   Most agencies have some type of available information. For example, your organization might already have important information in a management information system (MIS) or document(s); or, you might have conducted surveys of your clients. Another potential source of information is the U.S. census. Much of that data is already summarized by county and state.

   If the type of information you want is not available, then it must be collected. One common method is to gather data by a mailed questionnaire. Valuable information also might be collected by interviews. Observation of conditions and situations is also a potential source. Other useful techniques include the use of focus groups, public hearings or forums.

   You may need to combine approaches. A limited amount of the information may be available, but other key data is missing.
4. Design the instrumentation and procedures. When designing them, "keep it simple." Long and complicated instruments discourage response. Additionally, short instruments are less expensive to produce, distribute, collect and analyze. Once you have prepared a draft of the instrument, check it against the original proposal(s), goals and objectives to make sure non-essential information has not been included.

   Check if it needs to be reviewed by a human subjects committee. Many universities and schools require such clearances.
5. Prepare an estimated time line and budget for the needs assessment. These activities will help keep the procedures on target. In addition, cooperating agencies will see how they can make "in-kind" contributions and help make the needs assessment more cost effective.
6. Conduct a pilot test of the instrumentation and procedures. Many mistakes can be identified and eliminated by trying them with a small group.
7. Collect the information. Limit the collection time to no more than six weeks. This will help develop a sense of urgency and keep the needs assessment targeted.
8. Analyze the data and information. If there is a large response, try to have access to a computer to conduct the statistical analyses. There are also software packages to analyze qualitative data.
9. Prepare a report of the findings. Ma'-̂ it as user-friendly as possible. Do not create a long document. It is probably better to divide the report into several brief documents than one long one. Consider using "white space" and figures to help communicate important points. Also, consider developing audio-visual reports. Videotapes, transparencies and slides can be effective in c ›mmunicating results.
10. Evaluate your efforts. Take time after the

needs assessment has been completed to judge its merit and worth. What worked well? What problems were encountered? How could you have done it better? Once the evaluation is complete, share it with others interested in needs assessments. This will provide an opportunity to learn from one another.

Reporting Information

Once the data collection portion of the community needs assessment process is complete, you have the components that will make, in essence, a "scouting report." Now you must be able to compress and present that data in a concise format, insuring also that it will be used. Consider:

- People differ on how they prefer to receive information. Prepare multiple reports using a variety of media.
- People rarely read reports cover to cover. Make the community needs assessment report readable, including an executive summary. Keep a logical sequence in mind, use an outline and language that is easily understandable. Start with the most important information.
- Do not be afraid to list or identify the limitations and alternative explanations. This should increase the credibility of your processes.
- Include oral reports as well as written documents. Remember an oral report requires the quick engagement of the audience with key points of interest. They allow for interaction, which could serve to generate new ideas and insights.
- Report only that which is important. Make sure the audience knows why the needs assessment was completed, what is now known that was not known before and how the new information will help you get where you are going. Keep information relevant, practical, applicable, credible and understandable.

Using Information

Three fundamental guidelines increase the likelihood that your community needs assessment results will be used.

1. Issues that users perceive as important must have been addressed.
2. The information must be communicated to the appropriate potential users.
3. The information must be transferred in a timely and understandable form.

Early in the process, identify who might have the most interest in the results. Keep in touch with the potential users and cultivate new ones. There is no real end to the process, and the community needs assessment will form the beginning of a coalition to address an issue or issues that will require future assessments.

The primary use of the community needs assessment will be to give form and direction to the coalition in addressing issues that pose threats to opportunities for youth in the community. The primary users of the information will be youth agencies, youth organizations and youth development managers. However, there also will be secondary users of such information, which would include other community organizations and agencies, parents and the public in general.

Once information is shared and the important players are familiar with the results of the assessment, someone must take the leadership to establish a working framework. The first decision will be whether a coalition should be initiated. This will depend not only upon the issues identified, but also upon the availability of resources to address those issues. The option of NOT forming a coalition should be appropriately considered.

Use the information identified through the needs assessment to determine the mission statement of the coalition, build the goals and objectives of the coalition, and outline the coalition's action plan. Use the original information as a benchmark as you proceed through the coalition's action plan, keeping in mind that it may need periodic updating.

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Building Coalitions

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Mobilizing the Community

Communities can mobilize to work for changes that will benefit the social, emotional, financial and physical needs of citizens.

Each community is a microcosm of a nation. It includes a dozen publics. It is the educational and professional groups, members of fraternal organizations, women's and garden clubs. It is business and industry, civic leaders, youth, media, labor and church leaders and the elderly. It is the community at large, which may react differently as a group than its members would as individuals. (White, 1)

Mobilizing the community begins when:

- Concerned citizens organize to take a stand.
- Needed community changes are determined.
- The public is concerned about the problems and need for collaboration among the community groups and individuals.
- The community at large is involved in the situation.
- Emerging community leaders are recognized and encouraged.
- The efforts for change are kept going after the coalition is ended. (Owen and Miller)

Prerequisite for Mobilization

When individuals and organizations come together to work on an issue, it is common to see them scramble over "turf" issues and for multiple, unrelated programs to result. The group needs to come to a consensus of moving toward collab ration. For this to happen, there needs to be time allowed for trust building. This is where the different individuals and organizations examine their capabilities and motivations. Ideas are exchanged, problems resolved and participants learn to give and take. (Dye and Wood 1981, 2)

For successful coalitions to happen, working relationships must be developed between each member of the coalition and the groups must put the plan into practice. Coordinating mechanisms can help.

In addition, it is necessary that any collaborative effort be as open as possible. Involve the broadest circle of agencies and organizations to encourage collaboration around the common issue. It is essential that any collaborative effort does not threaten or duplicate existing efforts on the same issue. The coalition also must recognize that the public will be pushing for action and results.

What is Needed to Mobilize a Community?

- **Concerned citizens** ready to take a stand, say they want something different and are willing to work to see it accomplished.
- **Emerging leadership** that inspires and guides the project.
- A common **community vision** of the results.
- **Involved people** who recognize that the means to achieve their goals will vary but who support the common goal.
- **Recognition and encouragement** of those who contribute to reaching the goal.
- **Specific plans and goals** to reduce impact of at-risk situations.
- **Leadership that encourages**, builds and finds strategies but doesn't become the focus of the situation.
- **Recognition** that human relationships are important.
- **Time.** (Owen and Miller, 7-8)

Who Needs to be Involved?

The natural allies for mobilization are those persons who have a common interest in an issue. This can include community-minded individuals and all persons and groups affected by the issue.

It is important that the group have linkages either by representation or delegation to the power structure, government agencies, key communicators, advisory boards, local businesses and educational institutions.

Membership in a community coalition falls into three categories:

- **Activists** who take an active role and provide leadership, write grants and serve on subcommittees and steering committees.
- **Helpers** who work on a limited basis or on specific designated tasks such as letter writing, newsletter distribution, etc.
- **Communicators** who share the work of the coalition to the outside through educational sessions and coalitions with other groups. (Burghard)

Strategies to Use

Various strategies are used to form coalitions. It has worked successfully to form an organization of the diverse groups who have a common interest, identify and recruit potential members, and establish a governing board. The coordinator of the group facilitates the decision-making process and helps members work together. Due to coordinating effort and visibility, formal groups are able to carry out large projects. Unfortunately, this strategy requires more time and effort to develop and operate.

Another strategy is less formal and can be applied to a community of any size. It targets particular segments of the population through building informal networks.

Methods

Various methods for mobilization can be used, including a town meeting approach or speak-outs. Their common factors are they are process-oriented activities and include individual, follow-up and concrete portions.

The initial large meeting allows for education and suggests the democratic process. Sign-up sheets at this meeting will help with the next phase, which is done by subcommittees who follow through on assignments and issues. It is here the individual is recognized and appreciates the openness. Finally, there is the concrete work of the subcommittee that shows the community they are working for change. (Burghard 1986, 40)

Public Relations Plan

When launching a new program or mobilizing the public to action on a community need, an effective, comprehensive public relations plan must be developed. This generates greater support and involvement in programs and activities that address the need. A new program must be recognized and perceived as an asset to the community.

Barbara L. White, Ph.D., says an effective public relations plan will help those who are concerned contribute to the creation of positive attitudes where none exist. She also notes that it will intensify existing positive attitudes, convert existing negative attitudes and sometimes neutralize persistent negative attitudes. Sound public relations programs are planned for before, during and after a program's introduction. The objective is to sell the program, to gain support and to maximize involvement. The program must be visible, viewed as a necessity and appreciated for what it offers. (White, 2-3)

To add a competitive edge to the initiative, program publicity must go through the following stages:

1. Unveil the program — not once but literally hundreds of times.
2. Promote the ad campaign behind the program.
3. Tell the story of the people who developed it.
4. Report on community acceptance.
5. Report on the community's reactions.
6. Tell the story of the program's success.
7. Emphasize advantages to the community.
8. Report on trends.
9. Tell success stories of other states and other communities. (White, 3-4)

Guidelines for a local community public relations plan include:

1. Select members for a public relations task force who represent the groups involved.
2. Appoint a director of the task force.
3. Conduct an awareness opinion/attitude survey.
4. Analyze the survey.
5. Conduct workshops for all those involved in the public relations component of the program.
6. Develop a multiple-year mobilization plan. (White, 4-5)

A public relations task force reaches the public in two ways:

- By person-to-person contact through speeches, meetings with civic leaders, annual meetings, special events, personal letters, employee contacts, participation in civic affairs, support of education programs, religious assemblies, public service events, open houses and ceremonial affairs.
- By use of local media such as television, radio, newspapers, advertising in direct mail, newsletters, billboards, displays, films, brochures, exhibits, theater and sports programs, business signs, etc. (White, 4)

Developing a Mobilization Plan

A mobilization plan should raise the public's consciousness about the problem, garner the support of the citizens and involve an effective percentage of the population in active program participation. (White, 2)

The early focus of any public mobilization plan should:

- Determine attitudes toward the problem.
- Assess what the public expects.
- Provide adequate information about the far-reaching effects of the problem.
- Develop effective information that acts as a catalyst for community support and involvement. (White, 2)

Model Format of Mobilization Plan

Public Mobilization Plan	Implementation Schedule				
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
External Audiences					
A. Graphic presentation with brochure handout to representatives of:					
I. Business Community					
II. Educational Systems					
III. Low Enforcement					
IV. Human/Social Services					
V. Government					
VI. Churches					
VII. Other Groups As Determined By The Coalition					
B. Public Relations Packet to:					
I. Opinion Speakers					
II. Speakers bureaus in place at various businesses, organizations					
III. Public Service Announcements on radio and television					
IV. News items to newsletters of various businesses					
V. Bill Boards					
VI. Video/Slide Presentations					

S — Study E — Evaluate P — Plan PI — Pilot
I — Implement R — Recommendation ◆ — Budget Item O — Ongoing

White recommends that a mobilization plan have specific goals, objectives, activities and timeliness. A multiple-year plan should:

- Assess public awareness, opinions and attitudes.
- Evaluate programs and services being offered.
- Study programs and services to be offered.
- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program.
- Determine resources, both internal and external.
- Assess "environmental" factors:
  1) Legislature
  2) Public awareness/opinions/attitudes
- Determine campaign theme.
- Develop campaign print materials.
- Develop campaign visual materials.
- Develop packet of materials for the following:
  1) Local opinion makers
  2) Local speakers bureau
  3) Key communicators in the community (White, 9)

Continuing Mobilization in Established Groups

Established groups and coalitions have a different set of concerns to address.

Problems

The most common problems facing established grassroots groups are a self-satisfied inwardness that may over time breed marginality, a lack of outward growth and a leaning for elitist or undemocratic functioning. An easy way to identify the early signs of inwardness is the tendency for group members to use first names, abbreviations and shorthand words.

Helps

To prevent stagnation and continue group outreach, organizers must serve as role models and carefully, but consistently, intervene when abbreviations and shorthand words are used in the group. Once group outreach is dropped, it is difficult to reestablish. Subcommittee reports should always give brief information on why the committee was formed. The emphasis on procedural items for explanation, clarity in communication and clear terminology will speak to new people of the group's commitment to growth and their desire for newcomers.

Older members of established groups also have needs to be met. They may need to feel their work is worthwhile by public validation. Make certain that part of the group's activities include some form of education and development to keep members aware of larger group goals, concerns and issues.

A final issue for established groups to address initially is the nature of its leadership. The greater the shared decision-making, the greater the long-term benefits for both membership and group. One structural issue to work toward is limiting a person's position as lead of the organization to no more than two years. Also, no one in the group should be excused from performing all the tasks involved in the operation of the group. (Burghard 1986, 42-45)

Barriers to Mobilization

Some success of any community mobilization effort lies in how well opposition, criticism and other barriers are met. To sustain the mobilization effort, be honest, clear, factual and timely. Focus on the continuing assessment of communication needs, involving coalition members and community citizens on all levels. Make certain staff and public participants (those involved in publicly mobilizing the program) are still committed to its implementation. (White, 13)

Turf wars (who takes credit for program results) and pecking order can be principal roadblocks to successful collaboration and community mobilization. Best results come when all groups involved jointly take credit and share in the results of the mobilization. (Quick, Flashma and Gibeaux, 73)

A community must be approached cautiously to figure out centers of interaction and who the natural helpers and gatekeepers are to help facilitate awareness. Gottlieb (1974) emphasizes that natural helpers should not be "professionalized" through training or they may have less caring, concern and help. To be fully successful, mobilizers cannot afford to be insensitive to, or ignorant of, natural helping systems as they are at the heart of the sense of community. (Murray and Keller, 153-154)

Cultural differences in the community can be a barrier to mobilization bringing conflict and misunderstanding.

Another barrier can be the lack of quick adjustments to unforeseen problems.

Enhancing Mobilization

Much can be done to enhance community mobilization. Guidelines for beginning groups include: (White, 12)

- If a basic need is satisfied, the group, organization or individual will not be moved by an appeal to that need.
- If a basic need is not satisfied, that need will motivate the group, organization or individual, but only until it is satisfied.
- If a lower need is satisfied, a group, organization or individual will not be moved by an appeal to a higher need, though the higher need is also unsatisfied.
- A group, organization or individual is always open to a challenge to creativity, provided they feel secure about basic needs.

Know the groups, the organizations and the individuals you hope to activate. Do not treat individuals in a group as though they are all the same. Factors that guarantee success in motivation are: (White, 12)

- **Relevance** — The program is based on what the public cares about.
- **Convenience** — It easy for the public to participate.
- **Publicity** — Let people know what is planned.
- **Commitment** — A successful program demands time and commitment by the program and public relations staff, but there is always a clear purpose and goal directing the effort.

Other tips for enhancing community mobilization include:

- **Set priorities** for approaching various audiences for support and evaluate effectiveness with specific audiences. (Thomas 1989, 278)
- Actively **recruit key people**. (Thomas 1989, 281)
- **Develop aggressive public relations** programs.
- **Establish an identity** for the program.
- Realize that community acceptance increases considerably with **program longevity.** (Murray and Keller, 139)
- **Have a focused mission.** (Dye and Wood 1981, 8)
- **Respect the time commitments** involved by group members and audiences being mobilized. (Dye and Wood 1981, 11)
- **Develop linkage agents.** (Thomas, Hart and Smith 1989, 278)

Payoffs

Community mobilization through coalitions and groups can have high payoffs for communities in one or more ways:

- Organizations and programs at the community level improve services, move into creative new ventures, do things together they could not do alone and gain courage and support to take risks that they might hesitate on their own. (Dye and Wood 1981, 12, 13)
- Communities that have grown weary of trying to solve problems with outdated procedures can restore confidence and goodwill and be empowered to develop possibilities, resources and alternatives.
- Communities increase their ability to attract financial support from public and private sources.
- Communities acquire the distinct possibility of true prevention and early intervention. (Murray and Keller, 155)
- Community corporate planning produces programs that are cost effective, cuts down on duplications of services and creates integrated approaches to problem solving. (Dye and Wood 1981, 13)
- Community involvement generates commitment.

Summary

When essential elements and conditions come together, a true sense of community evolves; one that inspires, energizes and rewards members of as they resolve joint problems. Leaders take a positive stand. The diversity is recognized and used as a strength.

"Community" becomes redefined as more than a place, and more than the elements that divide people. It becomes the way in which people live and work together. The result is what some would describe as a "mobilization of coalitions and collaboratives," that those who live in the community simply describe as "the way we do things in *our* community." (Own and Miller, 6)

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Structure —
Construction of a Coalition

Structure may refer to the form by which the collaboration accomplishes its mission. The people who lead, participate in and eventually implement the activities of interagency initiatives, affect the growth and development of joint efforts.

The coalition is essentially a mechanism for increasing the power or leverage of groups or individuals. The object is to get more out of the coalition than is put into it.

Situations, although difficult or impossible for the individual to overcome alone, can be dealt with simply and rapidly by acquiring the right allies. This is coalition building.

Begin by analyzing the problem: What do you want to achieve? Who can help (or hurt) your efforts? What are the rewards for becoming part of a coalition? What action is needed to meet the objectives?

A coalition should be structured to:

- Involve all key players.
- Choose a realistic strategy.
- Establish a shared vision.
- Agree to disagree in the process.
- Make promises that can be kept.
- Build ownership at all levels.
- Institutionalize change.
- Publicize successes.

Who Should Initiate a Coalition?

The initiating organization will experience success in effecting collaboration if it can show the credibility of the employees and their commitment to collaborative efforts. Those who form the coalition must develop a loyalty to the core group that is strong enough to cope with competing pressures from their organizations.

Obviously, no collaborative experience is identical with any other. The greater the functions complement (as contrasted to being similar) the collaborative venture and the individual members, the greater the likelihood of cooperative action.

Support for the Coalition

The social and political climate in a neighborhood or community is the first factor likely to influence an interagency initiative.

Bringing key decision makers into the coalition at the beginning gets them interested in the issue. It also helps keep it alive through constant visibility with community leadership and the press. Involving key decision makers gives credibility to the project.

Three fundamental items are needed by coalitions to develop enough political power to influence change — unless, of course, one has a lot of money with which to buy access and influence. The key ingredients are information, numbers of people and widespread coordinated activity. Coalitions need information — about what is or ought to be proposed, its implications, the alternatives, the forces on both sides of the issue, and so forth.

Ask policy-making boards locally or statewide to support your coalition efforts. You may want to:

- Obtain agreement on plans.
- Develop awareness of services within agencies within the local community.
- Involve officials in problem-solving.
- Seek advice and evaluation.
- Share planning, implementation and local support received.
- Ask elected officials to endorse policies and plans.

Who Should Belong to the Coalition?

Collaboration begins with the selection of resource people who have experience in dealing with the particular issue and understand the common goal. They have the authority and power to influence change and the energy and enthusiasm for keeping the momentum alive.

Initial contacts usually work best if they are between agency administrators. This follows protocol and allows the administrator to delegate the responsibility. It avoids the administrator hearing about the contact from someone lower in the agency, becoming suspicious and defensive, and scuttling the effort before it begins or initially putting it on bad footing.

Broad-based representation — including youth — is critical. Failure to establish mutual goals and objectives is a major reason collaborations fail. Collaboration rests upon the principle that each person has something to offer.

Traits like patience, persistence, initiative, flexibility, risk-taking, empathy, self-assurance and self-realization are critical to working in a collaborative relationship with others.

Begin by determining all the natural allies — individuals or groups who share the concern and support a similar position. Continue by seeking all types of persons, groups and social structures likely to be affected by the issue or position taken — both affirmatively or negatively. Do not forget to include all potentially interested and civic-minded groups who might stand to gain indirectly by supporting the issue or constituents.

How to Recruit Members

The first thing one must know to work with another agency is what it is and does. Face-to-face meetings can address the initial unknowns and allow staff from both agencies to get as much detailed information as necessary.

Building upon existing efforts saves time, resources and creates strong working relationships.

Develop a strategy for selling potential members on the idea of organizing a coalition around issues. The organizer must be clear about how the members of other organizations, their public image, their organizational goals, and so on will be enhanced by involvement in the coalition.

One must be prepared to discuss with each potential member organization the following issues:

- The relationship of this coalition to issues or activities already undertaken or contemplated by the organization.
- Evidence that the issue to be pursued by the coalition is best served through a coalition rather than through existing organizational efforts.
- The immediate and long-range consequences for the public, government, beneficiaries and so forth.
- The specific impact the organization is likely to experience because of the coalition effort and the effect it will have on the coalition.
- The major decisions that must be made about the coalition and its goals.
- An assessment of the resources (staff: financial, in-kind) available to and necessary for the coalition to function adequately.

If you are not familiar with or have a negative impression of another agency, the first step is to become acquainted. The main objective of an initial contact is to open communication.

Finally, another way of identifying groups is by administering a community information questionnaire. This also gathers data about the political, social, economic and power bases in the district. This information could serve as a starting point for determining the constituencies from which coalition members will be recruited.

Keeping the Momentum Alive

Formally-organized coalitions have a governing board that establishes policy and generates funds. To maintain credibility, the board's composition should represent all community segments the coalition wishes to embrace.

Once the board is established, a common practice is to form committees to oversee the coalition's projects. Tasks can be allocated among committees that enlist the help of additional participants.

There is yet to be a collaborative effort that functions perfectly, but there is encouragement. Collaboration is a new growth area that is stimulated the more it is practiced.

Formal Versus Informal Coalitions

Once agencies decide to work together, they also must agree on whether their coalition will be primarily cooperative or collaborative in nature.

A collaborative strategy is where the need and intent is to change the way services are designed and delivered throughout the system. In communities not yet ready for collaborative partnerships, initiatives to coordinate existing services offer a reasonable starting point for change.

Three types of collaborative missions exist: service-oriented, where direct services are provided; system-oriented, where efforts are targeted at improvement of the service delivery systems; and dual mission, which encompasses both service and system initiatives. Service and system collaborations differ radically.

Designed to address immediate needs and to improve tangible services, service collaborations chart more circumscribed, easily-accomplished tasks than those generally undertaken by system collaborations. Feedback is more immediate, gratification quicker and impact more visible. Conversely, the accomplishments of system collaborations tend to be longer in process, more abstract and less visible. Thus, evaluation needs to discern carefully among service, system and dual mission efforts, with attention to their differing challenges, timeliness, processes and outcomes.

Maintaining the Coalition

Flexibility is the essential condition of a successful collaboration. No matter how carefully goals are defined at the outset, they are routinely challenged, making goal reassessment an ongoing necessity. Early "fiascos" or "aborted efforts" demand flexibility in responding to failure and the recontouring of collaborative activities. The most effective collaborations appear to be strengthened, not defeated, by disappointments and challenges.

Coalitions need to exist only as long as it is useful to its members. But, when it disintegrates before achieving its goal, it usually has fallen victim to one of these defects:

- **Failure to keep members informed about the policies and actions of the organization.** Lack of information is a prime reason for believing the coalition has been ineffective and therefore for dropping out. To keep the information flowing, it is often necessary to publish newsletters, set up telephone networks or hold frequent discussion meetings — even when no decisions have to be made.
- **Lack of interim rewards for members.** The failure of a coalition to show some concrete results short of ultimate victory often discourages its members. To provide interim reinforcement, it may be necessary to sponsor social events: boat cruises, hayrides, cocktail parties and picnics. Important public figures, such as local office holders, may be asked to attend these activities to show support for the coalition's goals. Such gatherings are essentially surrogates for more tangible rewards, but may work well as stopgap measures.
- **Loss of key leaders.** An organization may develop a serious vulnerability if one dominant leader prevents others from sharing power. In a well-structured alliance, the leadership role is diffused so the loss of any one person would not be fatal.
- **Serious irreconcilable splits over the coalition's direction.** Such splits may suggest the coalition was weak to begin with, perhaps because it lacked requirements for cohesion, such as ideological ties. Splits tend to occur during moments of crisis when two seemingly attractive policy alternatives present themselves, or a frustrating defeat is suffered.
- **Change conditions.** When circumstances arise that were not present when the coalition was formed, it may be unable to adapt. It perishes because its members recalculate the costs and benefits in light of the new circumstances, and the results encourage defection.
- **Delay.** Unless a coalition is intended to be permanent, the members expect it to achieve its main objective within a reasonable time.

Recording Meetings

A decision should be made early in the planning to set up a mechanism for sending out notices of meetings and recording and distributing meeting minutes. Keeping meeting minutes is important to communicate key ideas that have been discussed, document resolutions and record other important actions.

It is not always possible for everyone to attend all the meetings, so minutes should always be sent to the members. Keeping everyone informed about how the coalition is developing will do a great deal to keep communication channels open.

Use of Volunteers

The greatest pool of unused resources for meeting human service needs is the pool of untapped volunteer time and energy. The Gallup Poll shows that the majority of Americans above the age of 14 are ready and willing to give volunteer time for community service.

Every day volunteers and other social practitioners and people-helpers develop innovative, creative and experimental ways to help their clients. Usually, however, they have no way to document their new practices. They simply exchange them verbally and informally, and nany get lost. It is estimated that thousands of inventive social practices are lost each year for lack of a good way to share them.

Organizations using volunteers need to develop methods for bringing these social inventions to light. A cross-agency conference could bring tc ther volunteers in a particular field, such as ose working with 16 to 21-year-olds. They can share what they have found to be successful in working with this age group. Someone can record each respondent's name and address and his or her successful practice, so it can be used by others. Such a conference is also a good way to begin or strengthen collaboration between agencies, as it demonstrates their interdependence and enriches them both.

Summary

The people or groups recruited into the coalition, the support for and where this support comes from in the community, and the design form the structure of the coalition. These need to be planned with purpose so the coalition can be a successful venture.

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Building Coalitions
The Ohio State University
The Ohio Center For Action On Coalition Development

Turf Issues

Organizations will join coalitions or collaborations because they see benefits of combining resources to work toward a common goal. Dealings between organizations are usually harmonious. On occasion, controversy develops. Sometimes it involves competition; occasionally it escalates into conflict. When left unresolved, this tension can often seriously damage the efforts of some or all the partners to reach the common goal.

This fact sheet will examine "turf issues" as one source of organizational tension. It will discuss what it is, how it happens and what to do. Suggestions will include situations where it is already noticeable, but also offer tips on how it can be avoided.

"Turf-ism" — What Is It?

"Turf-ism" is the non-cooperation or conflict between organizations with seemingly common goals or interests. They would normally be expected to work together in a given situation.

The term "turf issues" is borrowed from street gang terminology. Every gang has its neighborhood or "turf" in which it operates, and it defends this area against other gangs (usually violently). This idea has its parallel in animal behavior in the idea of "territoriality." In this version, individual animals have their "home base" around their mating, feeding or nesting grounds that they defend against other animals, even those of the same species.

In theory, each organization has its "domain" or field of operation. It also has human and material resources, goals and tasks related to the goals. When relationships are formed by community and educational organizations, they agree to exchange resources. This is often called the "exchange theory" of organizational relations. In the effort to secure needed resources and reach goals, organizations often develop overlapping "domains." This may make them unexpectedly reluctant to enter the expected exchange. (Levine and White 1961) When this happens, a "turf battle" can take place.

Why Does It Happen?

Conflict usually involves perceptions of incompatible goals or threats to relationships. (Ross and Ross, 172) These perceptions lead to "turf protection" as organizations decide to "defend" their domain rather than share with another organization. Every time two organizations interact, they establish boundaries through "exchange" relationships. (Zald 1969) The basic factor in triggering a "turf battle" is the degree of power surrendered or gained by the organizations involved. "Power" as used here is the ability to control or manage resources to accomplish a goal. If both organizations feel they will gain by working together or having access to an equal degree of power, cooperation continues. But if one organization feels it has too much to lose by continued cooperation, it begins to defend its "turf."

These "turf battles" can take place for three fundamental reasons, all related to the perceived effect on power:

1. If one organization perceives the other as a direct and regular competitor for resources that are not likely to be shared;
2. If one organization perceives a "marginal cost" to the proposed cooperation in money, time or energy greater than perceived benefits of collaboration;
3. The degree of which the organization feels it is flexible to change its current goals, tasks and philosophy to adopt the course of action being proposed.

According to Zald, another reason for turf battles is the lack of knowledge or mistrust of the other organizations. If the target group or constituencies of two groups seem to overlap to a high degree, there is more likely to be cooperation. If one organization feels it does not have much in common with the proposed partner, it is less likely to feel the mutual benefits of the proposed action.

Turf battles also can result if one party in a proposed relationship feels the exchange will be unequal. This could happen in one of two ways. One organization may feel the proposed course of action is unilateral, that they have no real voice in deciding what or how it will happen. An organization also can feel the exchange would be unequal. It might feel that it would cost them too much in resources compared with the proposed benefit, or that another party stands to gain more resources than other partners. (Levine and White 1961)

When Does It Happen?

The "domains" of organizations can overlap in several major ways:

Over Goals — Although general goals of participating organizations seem mutually dependent, a particular proposal for joint action is perceived to work against the interest of one of the intended partners or against another limited goal.

Example: A delinquency-prevention group declines to form a working relationship with a community center in a target neighborhood. They feel the center would be devoting too much attention to counseling other family members about other problems rather than counseling troubled youth. (Reid 1969)

Over Resources — Proposals, requests for public or private funds, shared staff, supplies, facilities, etc. from other organizations, etc. may be competing. Sometimes one intended party is denied totally. Sometimes distribution is to both parties, but on an unequal basis. In other situations, conflict over resources might result from how many resources should be put in to the joint effort, not from which gets more from a collaborative effort. (Reid 1969)

Example: Both 4-H and the Boy Scouts apply to a service club for funds to plant trees on Arbor Day.

Over Geography — One organization feels they provide some service to or represent interests of an area exclusively. To allow another organization to operate in the area may suggest that the first organization is not doing an adequate job. It also may be perceived as a duplication of effort, or a source of potential confusion to target audiences.

Example: Two organizations both propose to begin teen pregnancy prevention programs in the same neighborhood.

Over Methods — Organizations have a general agreement on goals, but one feels the approach proposed to reach goals would be ineffective or counterproductive to other interests of organization. In another form, one organization may feel a degree of "ownership" over an activity or technique that another organization plans to use.

Examples: One organization in a coalition proposes to work toward improving funding for new child care centers by writing proposals to local foundations. Another organization wants to endorse political candidates who favor increased state funding for establishing new centers.

An organization has held an annual "pancake breakfast" on Valentine's Day for the past five years to raise funds for its youth softball league. Another organization proposes that the coalition hold a county-wide pancake breakfast on Presidents' Day to raise money to purchase drug abuse prevention coloring books.

Over Identity or Public Perception — An organization feels that proposed cooperation would change how their organization is viewed by public (less powerful, more or less conservative, feels threatened by potential success of other partner).

Example: A school system with falling student reading achievement scores is asked to distribute flyers for collaboration tutoring program.

Over Personalities — A representative of one organization is personally disliked by staff of another or represents a political or organizational threat. Non-cooperation represents a chance for the first organization's representative to "win" or "damage" the other party.

Example: One organizational director is asked to serve on a coalition committee chaired by the director of another organization. He or she plans to run against that individual for chairperson of the group next year.

Each organization in a coalition or collaboration may have several goals and programs. The cooperative efforts may represent only a fraction of the total activity or domain of the organization.

How To Avoid "Turf Battles"

Long term it is better to avoid turf battles than to have to deal with them. Before initiating or becoming a member of a coalition, there are certain things to remember:

1. A group's goals are never 100 percent compatible with the goals of each organization or person involved. The "domains" are not likely to overlap totally. Accordingly, each member must be prepared to compromise or modify his or her commitment to specific goals and to help other members adjust as necessary.
2. Enough time should be spent at first to clarify coalition goals and develop each member's commitment to them. The group should establish a consensus on the "domain" of action for the coalition, and how the resources of members might relate. The higher the sense of common purpose, the higher the probability of harmonious relations between members.
3. Clearly relating the needs discussed to the potential available resources can help build early momentum and cooperation. It can avoid tackling a large, vague problem and create a positive climate by being capacity-centered or resource-centered rather than problem-centered. This can be especially important in coalitions designed to operate in a small geographic area. (McKinght and Kretmann 1991)
4. Knowing the relationship between the members' personal goals and the group's goals can suggest potential sources of agreement and disagreement and show results.

   Organizations should think twice before inviting groups that have only a partial or marginal relationship to the coalition mission to join the group. Doing homework by consulting newspaper files, and interviewing organizational representatives and residents can be good sources of basic information. (Cener 1988) It also can suggest future avenues of positive involvement for some members.
5. Large groups usually have an advantage in the information giving and "brainstorming" phases of problem solving. Still, they can be a potential disadvantage when consensus needs to be reached. Between-meeting communication before a proposed action with major parties helps avoid surprises and helps make meetings more productive.
6. Structured subgroups may eliminate the disadvantage of limited interaction time between members of large groups who might need more clarification of points.
7. Negative feedback (whether verbal, nonverbal, a combination of both or silence) should not be permissible, especially when there is no attempt to compromise or come to consensus. Effective listening and speaking skills will eliminate misunderstandings. Raising questions versus stating one's opinion(s) will help reduce disagreements. (Hague)

Organizational relationships are complex. We can almost never know all we need to know at the time a decision must be made. When working in coalitions or collaborations, differences in the goals, resources or fields of activity may arise between members. In a well-planned effort, the clarity of goals and benefits, open communication and a forum for discussion of differences can be the glue that holds things together and keeps momentum going.

How to Solve a "Turf Battle"

For Harold Goetzkow and John Gyr, group conflict has two basic dimensions — substantive and affective. Substantive refers to conflicts primarily related to task. In the examples above, "turf battles" related to goals, methods, resources and geography would fall in this category. Affective conflicts relate to socio-emotional or interpersonal relations. (Ross and Ross, 139) Turf battles related to identity or personality as described above are conflicts of this type. Morton Deutsch also points out that affective disagreements may arise over preferences and nuisances, values, beliefs and the nature of relationships. (Ross and Ross, 138)

The first step in deciding how to best handle the disagreement within a coalition is to identify whether it is a substantive or affective conflict.

If the dispute is task-related, the coalition should use an orderly problem-solving process to focus and structure its efforts toward a solution. As Zald suggests, incorrect or incomplete information is often a major part of a turf dispute. To minimize or make amends for these gaps or misunderstandings, coalition leadership can use several techniques. Discussion at group meetings can include one or more information-seeking techniques built into agenda activities.

Group leaders also should be sensitive to improving communication and active listening during and between meetings. These could include questions from the chair, summary statements of what other members have just said and attempts to make sure questions from the floor are properly answered. Leadership might find it necessary to recommend certain items be clarified and reported on by the next meeting. Sometimes an ad hoc committee may be needed to recommend a course of action or work out a compromise.

For resolving psychological or affective disputes, Scheidel and Crowell suggest that coalitions have several avenues to attempt. The group should look for some way to translate or relate the conflict to a task issue. This defuses much of the emotional element. The coalition should try to keep the focus on the whole group arena rather than on organizations involved in the disagreement. Leaders should encourage members to remain tolerant and restrain emotions and language. Coalitions should have a conflict management procedure developed just in case. (Ross and Ross, 172)

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Building Coalitions

The Ohio Center For Action On Coalition Development

Understanding the Process

Tackling the problems of youth at risk must involve many people and organizations in communities. Developing coalitions of concerned individuals and groups can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts by combining strengths and resources.

Once the coalition is formed, training in areas such as group dynamics, methods of problem solving, dealing with conflict and controversy, public policy process, issue analysis and working with public officials may be beneficial. One task of a coalition might be to adapt, create or develop public policy.

Clearly, not all problems that affect you are public policy problems. Some may be readily resolved through the problem-solving process. The effectiveness of problem-solving can improve when the method is understood.

The Problem-Solving Method

Define the Problem

Compare how things are now and the way you would like them to be. How long has the problem existed? How frequently does it occur? Who is affected?

Determine the Cause(s)

This involves finding the cause of the gap between the present and the desired state.

Develop Alternative Approaches

List all possible solutions.

Assess the Consequences

Consider possible results of each alternative. Who is affected? Who pays?

Select a Solution

Choose one feasible alternative that is acceptable to the group.

Implement the Chosen Solution

Plan strategies for carrying out the plan. Most of the work is in this step.

Evaluate

Look back to review how things went. What was successful? What went wrong? Why?

These questions guide a coalition or individual through the policy analysis process.

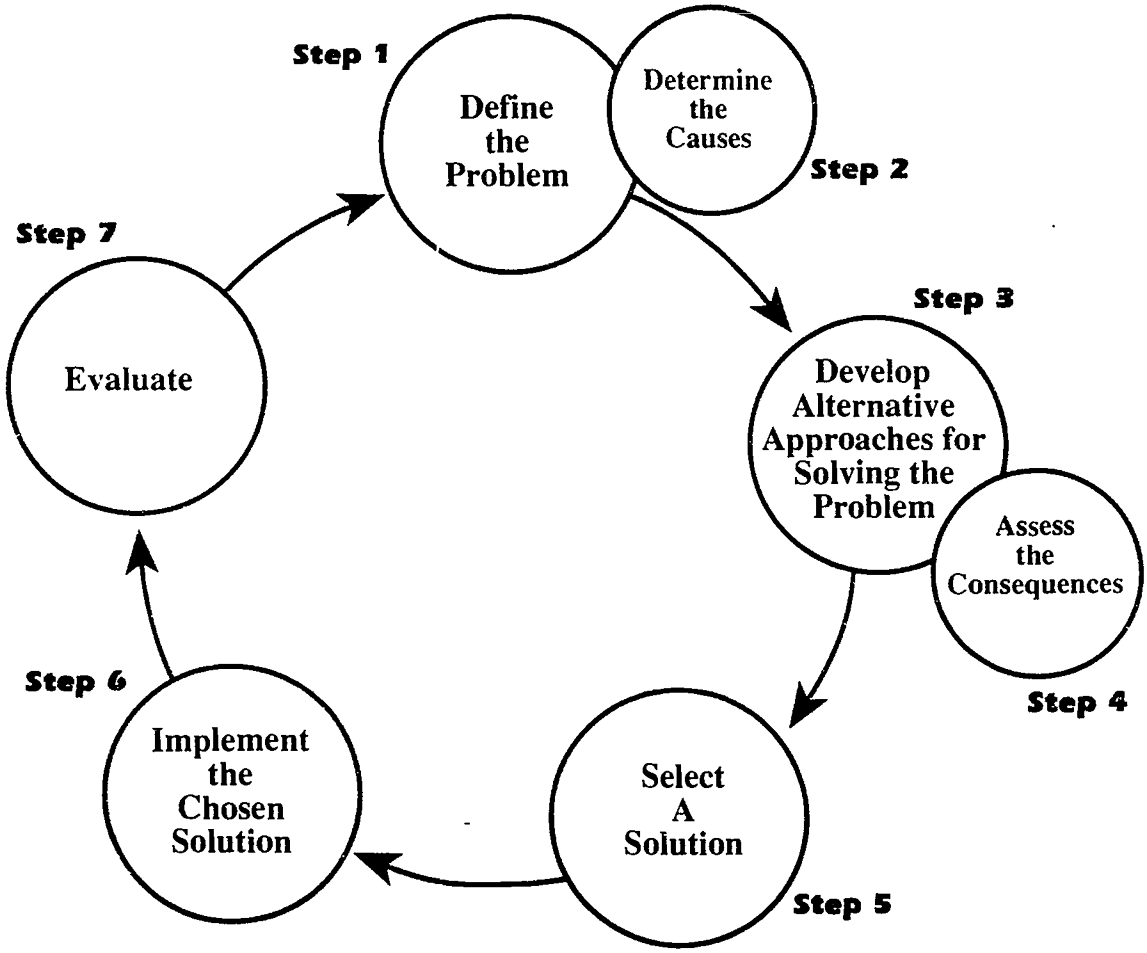
Selecting Issues For Analysis

- Is there a decision to be made by government?
- Can the analysis significantly influence the adoption of various alternatives?
- Does the issue involve large costs or major consequences for services?
- Is there substantial room for improving program performance?

Feasibility of Analysis

- Can the problem be handled by program analysis?
- Is there time for the analysis to be done before key decisions must be made?
- Are persc .nel and funds available to do the analysis?
- Does sufficient data exist to undertake the analysis?
- Can the needed data be gathered within the time available?

Systematic Problem Solving



Generic Critical Questions Regarding Policy Analysis

- What are the purposes of the policy?
- Why should it be adopted?
- What is to be changed by it in both the immediate future and long term?
- How would you know if the policy had the intended impact?
- What would be accepted as evidence of its success?
- Who or what is the target of the policy?
- Is the public as a whole affected? How. directly or indirectly?
- Who else will the policy effect?
- What are the possible side effects . . . immediate and long-run?
- What would the likely consequences be if the new policy were implemented or another discontinued?
- What would be the reaction of citizens in the community?
- Who would complain?
- Who would be glad? Why?

Criteria For Selecting Final Set of Measures

Importance

Does the measure provide useful and important information on the program that justifies the difficulties in collecting, analyzing or presenting the data?

Validity

Does the measure address the aspect of concern? Can changes in the value of the measure be clearly interpreted as desirable or undesirable? Can the changes be directly attributed to the program?

Uniqueness

Does the information provided by the measure duplicate or overlap with information provided by another measure?

Accuracy

Are the likely data sources sufficiently reliable or are there biases, exaggerations, omissions or errors that are likely to make the measure inaccurate or misleading?

Timeliness

Can the data be analyzed in time for the decision?

Privacy and Confidentiality

Are there concerns for privacy or confidentiality that would prevent analyst from obtaining the required information?

Costs of data collection

Can the resource or cost requirements for data collection be met?

Completeness

Does the final set of measures cover the major aspects of the concern?

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Working With Diverse Cultures

Culturally Diverse Coalitions

Brazzel defines diversity in terms of human differences that play an important role in the culture and operation of organizations. The culture of an organization includes the customs. assumptions, beliefs, values, rules, norms, practices, arts and skills that define and guide members about:

- The reasons for existence of the organization.
- How its "work" is to be done.
- The rules for membership.
- How to relate to others in the organization and to those outside.

Cox states that prejudices are negative personal attitudes toward a member(s) of a cultural group; discrimination is "observable adverse behavior" toward the group member(s).

Discrimination requires prejudice plus organizational or dominant-group power to lead to destructive denial of recognition, power and privilege.

The dimensions of diversity in organizations include:

- Age
- Educational background
- Ethnicity
- Family status
- Gender
- Income
- Military experience

Definitions

Culturally Diverse Pluralism — A culture that promotes mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among people who are diverse in age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, class, religious beliefs, physical ability and other perceived differences.

Coalition — A unit composed of distinct elements of the population it serves.

Multicultural Organizations — Organizations that maintain a pluralistic culture promoting mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among diverse people. It reflects the interests and contributions of members of diverse groups in mission, operations and product or service.

Diverse coalitions are well represented in multicultural organizations at all levels, in all functions and in all work groups. Members of diverse groups have power and influence in the organization. They are included as full and influential participants in all aspects of the organization, especially where decisions are made and policies established. Discrimination is not tolerated within the organization and in its relationships with people, groups and organizations in its environment.

Discrimination — The systematic, intended or unintended denial of recognition, power and privilege to certain people based on the groups to which they belong.

Cultural Bias — Cox includes discrimination and prejudice as a part of cultural bias. He states that prejudice is a "judgement made about others that reinforces a superiority/inferiority belief system."

Stereotype — A fixed and distorted generalization made about all members of a particular group. (Loden and Rosener)

- National, regional or other geographical areas of origin
- Ownership of property and assets
- Physical and mental ability
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Social class
- Spiritual practice
- Work experience

These dimensions need to be considered when identifying, selecting and recruiting prospective coalition members. A heterogeneous group can work together effectively on mutual goals and objectives through consensus and cooperation.

For an example: a neighborhood in a midwestern city might contain several political subdivisions, a native American group, an African-American population, some small businesses, blue collar workers, a variety of religious groups and possibly some gang factions.

If a coalition is to be formed to obtain more housing, people from each or most of these groups must participate for the coalition to have power. If not participating, at least all cultural groups must be consulted for their opinions or beliefs. A culturally-diverse coalition is composed of representatives of the cultures living in an area or community. It is also critical to consider varied opinions or beliefs within a certain culture. Two people do not have the same opinions because they are both native Americans or from an Appalachian culture.

Making the Most of Diversity

Often, a culturally diverse youth/family coalition is viewed in the negative sense, rather than the positive. It is easy to identify the inherent obstacles and barriers associated with differences in religion, class, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, region of origination, educational level or even paid employees versus volunteer staff.

The first phase of making the most of diversity is to make a concerted effort to become aware of what dimensions of cultural diversity exist within an organization. Acknowledging there are differences between individuals and groups of people is an important initial phase.

When conflicts, ill feelings or stressful situations arise due to the sub-cultures involved, it is because of "differences." The second phase of making the most of diversity is for people to talk about their cultural differences. Two things must be remembered concerning cultural diversity:

- People should remember it is difficult to address cultural differences without resorting to stereotypes. In the purest form, there is no such thing as a stereotype. No person is exactly like another person and no individual is a clone of another member of a group.
- As diversity in an organization grows, so does the complexity of communication and the necessity to spend greater effort developing improved communication skills.

Awareness and discussion can cause a clearer picture of cultural diversity. Appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity means not just tolerating differences among individuals or groups, but supporting and nurturing them. A variety of ideas, talents, skills and knowledge is a desirable attribute to any youth or family coalition.

Providing a supporting and nurturing environment enhances other goals of the coalition by exposing group members to new issues, ideas, information and cultures. Diversity creates opportunities for character development by teaching tolerance and respect for people and by encouraging concern for equity. A culturally-diverse coalition that values and nurtures people from all backgrounds is worthy of active participation. Such an organization will flourish and perpetuate.

Making the most of diversity in a youth or family coalition requires the commitment of *all* involved. Changing prevailing attitudes and assumptions is not easy. Often the only hope is to change behaviors rather than deep-seated attitudes. Members of a diverse coalition must be committed to what they are doing and address issues related to cultural difference.

There may be resistance to disturbing the status quo, but it is no excuse for avoiding change.

Attention to cultural diversity may be the necessary catalyst for making things happen. Coalitions of youth or family agencies that strive to address specific community needs and issues have no chance of success, or even continued existence, unless they mirror, understand and make the most of their community's cultural diversity.

Enhancing the Dynamics

According to the traditional melting pot theory, immigrants who settled in America would shed the ways of the old countries and blend happily into one people. At least two essential fallacies are inherent in the melting pot theory. The first is that non-white Americans can (or should) become like white Americans. The second is that non-white people do not have cultural significance in the New World. Both ideas have met with controversy and rejection.

Since the 1960s, the idea of a single monoculture has begun to deteriorate. It has given way to a more pluralistic society that continues to evolve through cultural integration and influence. These changes are commonly evident in fashion, dietary habits, entertainment, music, literature and sports.

Within the framework of a youth and family coalition, diversity empowers its members to capitalize on unique skills and areas of expertise. Careful attention must be given to mutual understanding and appreciation of individual differences. Strengthening the sense of positive cultural identity is an important aspect of establishing a viable coalition.

Individuals may consciously or subconsciously interject ethnic values, attitudes or behaviors into the dynamics of the larger group.

Factors that impact the extent to which diverse cultures interact with existing cultures are:

- The reason for immigration: what was sought and what was left behind.
- The place of residence an ethnic or nonethnic neighborhood.
- The socioeconomic status, education and upward mobility.
- The political and religious ties to the ethnic group.
- The spoken languages.
- The extent of family intermarriage with or connection to other ethnic groups.
- The individual's attitude toward the ethnic group and its values.

The concern with diversity and related programming by Extension and other organizations is a result of changes in the workplace and general population. Brazzel cites that aspects of diversity are being incorporated into vision and mission statements of both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. To ignore its impact on profits and other bottom line measures affects performance. Organizations as well as individuals are exploring the impact of this diversity.

The result is a growing recognition that multiple perspectives can benefit an organization's approach to opportunities and problem-solving. Loden and Rosener say this approach assumes "we will be more successful as individuals, work teams, organizations and a society if we acknowledge, respect and work with . . . dimensions of difference."

So, the case for building a culturally diverse or multicultural coalition is without question. The drastic change in the status quo of the U.S. population, labor force, race and ethnicity, and citizen status demands adaptation.

All families in this country have experienced the stresses of immigration and migration. While ethnic heritage may have become dimmed or forgotten, it continues to influence outlook and interaction with others. Under the pressure of accommodating new situations, many groups have been forced to abandon much of their ethnic inheritance.

To understand ethnic identities, it is important to realize the impact immigration has on families over succeeding generations. Second generations are more likely to reject the "ethnic" values of their parents and to strive to become "Americanized." Third or fourth generations frequently reclaim aspects of their heritage that were sacrificed by previous generations as they sought to assimilate.

As the United States experiences the growing pains of becoming a citizenry of descendants of early forbearers, the challenges are apparent. Preserving our roots need not prohibit the effectiveness of diverse individuals or groups working together.

Managing Cultural Diversity

1. **Recruitment** — Try to include people or organizations within the youth or family coalition that are representative of the community.
2. **Diversity Training** — Become aware of the cultural diversity of the coalition. Try to understand all its dimensions and seek the commitment of those involved to nurture cultural diversity. Address the myths, stereotypes and cultural differences that interfere with the full contribution of members.
3. **Communications Within Coalitions** — Remove the major barriers that interfere with people from diverse cultures working together. The best method to do this is through understanding and practicing better communication:
   - Learn to listen. Listen for what is really being said, not what you want to hear.

- Invite others to be a part of the discussion.
- Learn to communicate clearly and fairly.
- Do not misjudge people because of accent or grammar.
- Test for understanding. Ask questions to be certain you are clear on what is being said.
- Adapt your communication style to fit the situation. The telephone causes problems in understanding between cultures. Be explicit. Individuals from different cultures may react differently. Know with whom you are communicating.
- Use language that fosters trust and alliance. Don't come on like "gangbusters." Each person wants to succeed in this venture. Be calm and positive.
- When conflicts arise, the problem may result from style rather than content — strive for understanding. Review, revise and revisit your main objective to be certain the content is clear. How you say something may be more important than what you say.

4. **Different, But the Same** — Men and women, whites and non-whites, volunteers and paid staff, middle-class and working class people are different, but much less different than they are the same. An appreciation and acceptance of both commonalities and differences are essential to effective working relationships.
5. **Maintain the Commitment** — Your coalition will become more connected with the community that it serves if it states publicly that having a diverse work force is a top priority. Continue to revisit the various components that address the awareness, understanding, communication and nurturing of a culturally-diverse organization.
6. **Provide Strong Leadership** — Loden and Rosener believe the following leadership behaviors foster coalitions of diversity:
   - Articulate pluralistic vision and values for the organization; show ways in which they are an integral part of the organization's mission and vision.
   - Encourage and support discussion among people throughout the organization about the meaning of diversity and pluralism; show how to implement programs that can accomplish those goals.
   - Demonstrate ethical commitment to fairness and to the elimination of discrimination in all its forms inside the coalition and in the coalition's relationships to other people, groups and organizations.
   - Understand the dimensions of diversity, use inclusive and valuing language, quote diverse sources, readily adapt to differences in communication styles of diverse people, display respect for human differences and be aware of and comfortable about dealing with diverse issues.
   - Value ongoing personal learning and change, solicit views and opinions of diverse people, invite feedback about personal behavior and blindspots and be open to belief modifications and actions based on feedback.
   - Mentor and empower diverse individuals and encourage others to do so as well. (Loden and Rosener)

Valuing Diversity

The Key to Success

Diverse coalitions will be more successful because of support from the community they represent. Goals must be established to encourage diversity in membership. Without diverse coalitions there is animosity produced within neighborhoods and communities regarding "us versus them."

Within a culturally diverse group new ideas are produced, communications are improved and bridges are built to the people needing services.

There are numerous benefits when coalitions value diversity:

- Culturally diverse coalitions could be viewed as legitimate advocates for the greater community by political, business and industry "power-brokers." Jackson, Holvino and Cox state: "Multicultural organizations ... human differences are valued and seen as a competitive advantage for the organization."
- Coalition membership recognizes that no one set of cultural values is inherently better than another.
- People are not required (expressed or

implied) to relinquish their cultural heritage as a condition of coalition membership.

- Appropriate communication and working relationships among coalition members of different cultures require mutual respect and some understanding of one another's culture.
- Coalition members should have the opportunity to hear directly from others regarding one another's culture and values: by doing so members will tend to be more respectful of them, especially if the exchange takes place among personal acquaintances.
- Opportunities for personal acquaintance and communication over time will usually increase trust among the coalition membership.
- Careful facilitation and sensitivity must occur when coalition members of different cultures are brought together. This ensures cross-cultural understanding, coalition productivity and effectiveness.
- Cross-cultural learning among coalition members will involve making mistakes and learning from them. Avoidance of or reluctance to initiate or participate in a cultually diverse coalition, due to fear of mistakes, competition or conflict must be overcome.
- Gaining personal and cultural respect for coalition members from different cultures will contribute to more frequent and effective working relationships among those who have mutual interests.

Developing a Coalition Which Values Diversity

Look intensively at the community (or communities) being served by the coalition. Look at the makeup of various groups or agencies currently or projected to be represented in the coalition. Do they match?

Coalition membership needs to reflect specific cultures represented in the community. If cultures are "lumped" together, true diversity will not be achieved. For example, to say a coalition needs an Oriental representative does not take into account the numerous Eastern cultures such as Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and others. The other critical concern should be the amount of "Americanization" which has influenced communities. First generation Vietnamese will normally have stronger cultural ties than a fifth generation Chinese population.

Be certain the coalition is not only composed of agencies saying they represent various cultures. Individuals who are representative of diverse cultures must be a part of any successful coalition.

Coalitions serving diverse cultures must be representative of these cultures.

Summary

Coalitions which are truly culturally diverse and serve diverse populations must:

- Be representative of their target community.
- Communicate clearly.
- Emphasize the advantages of their cultural diversity.
- Celebrate the contributions of each culture.
- Encourage the positive outcome of interacting with these cultures.

In building coalitions, it is important that neither prejudice or discrimination be tolerated, with consequences outlined in the constitution and bylaws or operational agreement. Self-awareness and sensitivity training should be a prerequisite for coalition membership as well as initial and subsequent orientation and training.

Coalition leaders should help members understand cultural diversity, realize such diversity can strengthen the coalition and acquaint them with specific roles they can play in developing a diverse group.

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Building Coalitions

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Ohio Center For Action On Coalition Development

Networking

In today's world of constant change individuals need to know where to go, who to contact, how to obtain information and resources to achieve a specific goal. This can be done through networks and coalitions.

Networks

A network consists of individuals or organizations who share information, ideas, resources or goals to accomplish individual or group goals. (Jackson 1991) Networking is a process of acquiring resources and building power by using or creating linkages between two or more individuals, groups, or organizations. It provides a valuable tool for getting things done. (Wells 1989) Information and resources are obtained from others and it is the lack of information and resources that hinders us.

Getting Started

We network everyday of our lives whether it's informal or formal. If one individual lacks the information you are seeking he or she can refer you to another individual. The more individuals you know the more individuals will know you, the greater the probability of accomplishing your goals. Your visibility increases and your network of individuals increases. The aim is to meet as many individuals as possible.

As you network with individuals you will need some basic tools such as (1) an address book or rolodex to record and keep track of contact's addresses, notes of meetings, commitments and any detail information, (2) an appointment calendar to set up meetings, (3) business cards that contains fax number and electronic mail address.

Using and Expanding Networks

Decide whether your current goal is money, power or social. Examine your list and contact the most powerful and influential individual to help achieve your goal. During your networking discuss what you have in common, your skills, type of information you are seeking and available resources. The more you share ideas, the more you will increase your potential clout.

Another aspect of networking is involvement in professional associations that can provide a wide range of contacts. Attend as many association meetings and conferences as possible. Make yourself visible and establish a reputation. Circulate at the meetings and exchange business cards, talk to everyone you know and meet new contacts. Afterward, follow-up with a phone call or note. Also participate in organizations other than professional associations where you can develop a wide range of contacts with people who share your ideas and concerns. Remember it's a two way street.

You may want to establish a formal network with a specific interest or field. This can provide opportunities to meet individuals with a broad range of experiences and expertise, obtain current information, meet specialists in the field and develop friendship.

Conclusion

We can have a greater impact on our goals by using networks and coalitions as major tools to multiply our power and efforts. If you network with ten individuals and those ten network with ten more, you have increased the number of individuals with whom you can exchange information and resources from ten to one hundred. We can do a great deal when we join our efforts with those of other individuals.

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Tapping Private Sector Resources

Today's private sector is more involved with nonprofit groups than ever before. They realize the shortage of resources available from government sources at every level and are interested in helping communities to be healthy vibrant places in which to raise families.

A big key to using the private sector effectively is to make them an integral part of your program. For example, does your board of directors have members of industry, private citizens and representatives from small business? Are your programs using volunteers from the private sector? Does your group offer services that would be valuable to employees at the local factory?

There are many resources available in the private sector. To get them excited about what you do, involve individuals from their company in your programs. Start by looking at yourself.

Self Examination

Examine your organization. Figure out who you are, where you are, where you want to be and what you need to get there.

This evaluation should be done regularly, at least once a year. It should include receiving direction from both external and internal sources and involve feedback from everyone connected with the organization. There will be difficult questions and answers. It is important that you are honest.

Identify Total Resources

Successful groups should be able to manage a variety of resources. Start within the organization, determine your needs, then identify available resources. Begin within your organization and work outward into the community. There are renewable resources such as staff, directors, volunteers, members and consumers of your services, others who share your cause and everyone who benefits from your service, directly or indirectly.

You will discover that resources are available from a variety of sources. These may offer multiple resources that would be valuable. You will discover that these sources will be interconnected. Four major resource groups — money, people, goods and services — work together and independently to meet community needs.

Money

The importance of money to service organizations is obvious. Everyone has money. Eighty-six percent of Americans give to one or more charitable organizations. They represent all ages, incomes, occupations and education levels.

Ninety percent of donations come from individuals. The remaining 10 percent comes from foundations and corporations. The key is to look for total resources. While corporations and foundations may be the source of some big single donations, individual giving will add staying power. Corporations are more likely to give money if they know the community at large is also supportive of your efforts.

Donations aren't the only source of money. There are others — investment income; membership dues; earned income from businesses, goods and services; government grants and contracts; and program-related investments.

People

In most service-oriented nonprofit groups, people are the key to all resources — money, more people, goods and services. People resources are persons giving their time free of charge, for a small fee, or for payment by a third party on a nonprofit's behalf. People resources are not only volunteers. People do volunteer their services, but employers may give release time to employees to work on worthwhile community efforts.

Because people are everywhere, know everyone and do everything, their resource potential is unlimited. The challenge is to discover how to use the most people, in the best combination, to the organization's greatest advantage.

Goods

Any personal property, excluding money and securities, is a good. Goods are a vital non-cash resource for any organization. It is often called a money substitute. Successful groups use goods as complements to their other resources for a total resource package.

Some best examples of goods are office furniture, equipment and supplies. Goods, like money, are everywhere, in homes, businesses, governments, civic groups, etc. Some possible arrangements for using goods are used or surplus goods, new products and merchandise, loaned goods and goods purchased cooperatively with another group.

Services

Services are often grouped with goods as in-kind gifts. Many overlook services because, with few exceptions, services are not tax deductible as a charitable contribution. Some companies deduct the time used in performing a charitable service as a normal business expense. Others consider community service a business function and keep no record of its performance. Yet, services are a major source of support to successful nonprofit groups.

Corporations are the best known contributors, but the giving of services in undoubtedly a community affair. Small businesses, vendors, colleges, other nonprofits, individual professionals and tradespeople. Everyone providing services for a fee are probably also providing it free, or at a discount, for some worthy cause.

Summary

Nonprofit groups today are facing more complex problems than ever before, and it often seems that resources are decreasing. The private sector offers many resources that are limited only by the imagination of the stakeholders involved.

The complex problems of today require the input of a more diverse group of problem solvers. To get this involvement in your organization, seek help from the private sector and make its members a part of your organization. It could prove rewarding to everyone involved.

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