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Coalitions: Forming and Sustaining Community Collaborations

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Workshop Overview

- Purposes of Coalitions
- Key Elements for Forming and Sustaining Effective Coalitions
- Stages of Coalition Development
- Factors Influencing Coalition Effectiveness

A Coalition Is:

- The coming together of people and organizations to influence outcomes related to a specific problem or set of problems (Cohen, et. al.)
- A vehicle for structured, purposeful interaction among a set of organizations, groups and individuals

Advantages of a Coalition

- Create a synergy of joint actions
- Draw upon the wisdom of many
- Stay the course
- Mobilize and maximize power and influence
- Share responsibility and accountability
- Coordinate planning, strategy and action
- Pool resources and expertise
- Minimize duplication of effort

Key Elements for Forming and Sustaining Effective Coalitions

- Leadership
 - Development
 - Succession planning
- Infrastructure
- Key Stakeholders
- Focus on Specific Goals and Strategies

Key Elements for Forming and Sustaining Effective Coalitions

- Demonstrated Results
- Community Awareness
- Comprehensive Coalition Planning
- Diversified Funding, Resource Development

These elements demonstrate if a coalition is capable of sustaining and adapting to change – internally and externally

Stages of Development

- Researchers have identified four stages of coalition development:
 - Stage One: Getting to know your partners
 - Stage Two: Getting ready for action
 - Stage Three: Taking action
 - Stage Four: Continuing or ending

Factors Influencing Coalition Effectiveness

- Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of Coalition Building
 - Coalition structure and governance
 - Coalition strategy
 - Coalition processes

Internal Factors

- Coalition Structure and Governance
 - Organizational home
 - Mission
 - Membership
 - Structure as an organization
 - Staffing and funding

Internal Factors

- Coalition Strategy
 - Vision
 - Strategy
 - Plans and priorities
 - Capacity to learn from experience

Internal Factors

- Coalition Processes
 - Leadership
 - Decision making
 - Conflict identification, resolution and management
 - Communication
 - Internal
 - External

External Environment

- Community Attitudes Toward Coalition Goals
 - Level of community support
 - Priority in the community
- Opposition to the Coalition
- History of Collaboration

External Environment

- Barriers to Collaboration
 - Geography and climate
 - Cultural diversity
- Resources
 - Abundance verses scarcity

Trust Factor

- Most Critical Factor is TRUST
 - Within the coalition
 - Between the coalition and the community

Coalition Key Elements: Strengths and Challenges

- Leadership Development and Succession Planning
- Infrastructure
- Key Stakeholders
- Focus on Specific Goals and Strategies
- Demonstrated Results
- Community Awareness
- Comprehensive Coalition Planning
- Diversified Funding, Resource Development

Learning From Experience

- Specifying Measurable Objectives
 - Objectives that address your “means”
 - Objectives that address your “ends”
- Tracking Progress in Implementing Action Plans and Achieving Objectives
- Using the Information for Improvement
- Engaging Staff and Members

Learning From Experience

- Implementing a Coalition Survey
 - Assessing a coalition from the perspective of members
 - Collecting data and information about the key elements and factors influencing coalition effectiveness
 - Providing feedback to the coalition to support improvement efforts

Technical Assistance Opportunities

- Judi Cramer and Sondra Gardetto at The Southern Institute on Children and Families are available to provide
 - Customized training tailored to meet coalition needs
 - Coalition development training
 - Strategic planning assistance
 - Coalition self-assessment survey
 - Asset mapping and gap analysis
 - Conference call technical assistance

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