

# **Building Strong Coalitions**

**Northern Plains Tobacco Control Institute**

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# What is a Coalition?

A formal arrangement for cooperation and collaboration between groups or sectors of the community, in which each group retains its identity but all agree to work together toward a common goal of building a safe, healthy community.



# **What is the Purpose of Coalitions?**

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To bring individuals, organizations, and communities together in an atmosphere of support and respect to solve emerging problems too big for one group alone

# Coalitions Are Vehicles of Change

- Coalitions address community-wide problems with a public health approach—looking at the continuum of care (prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery).
- Local efforts to significantly reduce illegal drug abuse in African American communities will be more effective if delivered through a coalition model.



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- Build capacity



***“All happy families are alike;***



***“All happy families are alike;  
each unhappy family is unhappy***

***“All happy families are alike;  
each unhappy family is unhappy  
in its own way.”***

**--Leon Tolstoy observed in the famous book  
Anna Karenina**

***So...What Does This Mean?***

**Coalitions can fail for thousands of reasons  
but they all succeed for the same few.**

# **Essential Processes of a Coalition**

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1. Analyze Information About the Problem, Goals, and Factors Affecting Them
2. Establish Group Vision and Mission
3. Define Organizational Structure and Operating Mechanisms
4. Develop a Framework or Model of Change

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4. Develop a Framework or Model of Change
5. Develop and Use Action Plans

# Essential Processes

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6. Arrange for Community Mobilizers
7. Develop Leadership
8. Implement Effective Interventions
9. Assure Technical Assistance
10. Document Progress and Share Feedback
11. Make Outcomes Matter
12. Sustain the Work





# **Cultural Competence Is Central to Coalition Building**

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- Benefits of Organizational Cultural Competence:
  - Increase respect and mutual understanding among those involved
  - Increases civility in problem-solving through new perspectives, ideas, strategies
  - Decreases unwanted surprises that might slow progress



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*Source: Community Tool Box, Univ. of Kansas*

# What is the Difference Between A Coalition and A Program?

## 1. SCALE

- Coalitions measure success by examining community level indicators. This applies to all coalition outcomes (short and long term).

# Differences Between "Coalitions" and "Programs"

## 2. ADDRESSES MULTIPLE CAUSES

Coalitions seek to insure that all causes of identified problems are addressed.

## 3. ACTORS

Action in coalitions is diffused and taken by all members with staff playing a coordinating and supportive role.

# **Developing Coalitions**

# **The Importance of Relationships**

Based on trust and respect

# Who Should Be a Member?

- Brainstorm
- Inventory of current partners
- Individual members may be:
  - Community members
  - Community leaders
  - People who have direct experience with the problem
  - Those who can provide valuable advice and outreach from a different, and perhaps more personal, perspective

# Who Should Be a Member?

- Organization Representatives
  - Agency directors
    - More effective at making policy decisions
    - Establishes credibility
    - Wider network of connections in community
  - Line staff
    - More committed
    - Enthusiastic
    - More available
    - More in touch with the issues
  - Try to get agency directors to appoint their staff members to represent their organization.



# Who Should Be a Member?

- Depending on the subject area of your coalition, members could include:
  - Health Professionals
    - Physicians
    - Nurses
    - Health educators
    - Pharmacists
    - EMS workers
  - Community
    - Faith community leaders
    - Major employers

# How Many Do You Need?

- Membership Size

- A group larger than 12-18 people will require more resources and will sometimes take longer to develop group identity and a common purpose.
- At times, it is preferable to bring together a smaller group with more closely defined interests.
  - Often a good way to start
  - Expand if necessary

# Why do people get involved?

- National story
- Local event
- New funding
- Government official steps forward
- Concerned individual speaks out
- Organization highlights issue

# Where Do You Find Them?

- Voluntary Health Organizations
  - American Heart Association
  - American Cancer Society
  - American Lung Association
- Medical/Dental/Nurse Societies
  - Respiratory Therapists
- Community-Based Organizations
- Civic Organizations
- Neighborhood Associations

# How Do You Keep Them?

- Build a database
  - Take a sign-up sheet EVERYWHERE you go and think of ways you can get people to sign up (petitions, get copies of dining guides)
  - Ask supporters for specific commitments-follow up
  - Input names immediately

# How Do You Keep Them?

- Develop systems to mobilize your volunteers
  - Fax alerts
  - Phone trees
  - Mailings
- Keep in touch and keep them apprised

# How Do You Get Them Involve?

- Choose a unifying issue
- Understand and respect institutional self-interests
- Help organizations achieve their self-interests
- Develop a realistic budget
- Agree to disagree
- Celebrate significant victories
- Distribute credit fairly

# Partnership Building

- Coalition supporters
  - Grasstops
  - Grassroots
- Media
  - Determine appropriate messages
  - Messengers
  - Channels to persuade targets to support policy goal.
- Policymakers



# Partnership Building *cont.*

- Cultivate stronger relationships with key individuals and groups in the community
- Promote the partnership to key leaders and the community by highlighting successes and accountability to the community's issues.

# Coalition's Direction

- Use the mission statement as a guide to develop clear, attainable, short-term and long-term goals.
- Review the mission and plans to determine:
  - Is it Relevant?
  - How can they re-energize to better address community needs?

# Accountability

- Develop and implement ground rules/ agreements concerning expectations for how partners will work together.
- Ensure the group will remain accountable without duplicating efforts.
- Monitor and assess plan progress.
- Debrief events or “failures” and learning to future projects.

# Goal Accomplishment

- ◆ Remember to celebrate victories and achievements.
- ◆ Publicize accomplishment of its goals.

***“We can and do win issues  
when we mobilize the  
power we have”***

***QUESTIONS????***

# THANK YOU!!!

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