

# Resources for Learning Circle Five

## **Definition of Collaboration**

Adapted from: Collaboration Framework - Addressing Community Capacity: the national Network for Collaboration <http://crs.uvm.edu/ncco/collab/framework.html>

Collaboration is a process of participation through which people, groups, and organizations work together to achieve desired results. Collaborations accomplish shared vision, achieve positive outcomes for the audiences they serve, and build an interdependent system to address issues and opportunities. Collaborations also involved the sharing of resources and responsibilities to jointly plan, implement and evaluate programs to achieve common goals. Members of the collaboration must be willing to share vision, mission, power, resources and goals.

## **Goal of Community Collaboration:**

(Adapted from: Collaboration Framework - Addressing Community Capacity: the national Network for Collaboration <http://crs.uvm.edu/ncco/collab/framework.html>)

The goal of collaborations is to bring individuals, agencies, organizations and community members themselves together in an atmosphere of support to systematically solve existing and emerging problems that could not easily be solved by one group alone. Collaborations should focus on increasing capacity, communication and efficiency while improving outcomes.

## **Principles of Collaboration**

(adapted from Community Collaboration [http://www.communitycollaboration.net/id22\\_m.htm](http://www.communitycollaboration.net/id22_m.htm)) and Collaboration Framework - Addressing Community Capacity: the national Network for Collaboration <http://crs.uvm.edu/ncco/collab/framework.html>)

1. Start with a unifying purpose.
2. Create, maintain and revisit Mission and Vision statements. The vision represents a picture of the future and should be written in the present tense. The mission describes the purpose of the collaboration – it is the fundamental reason for the collaboration's existence.
3. Set measurable goals and objectives.
4. Set high expectations – expect the best from the people with whom you are working.
5. As a group, identify leaders for the collaboration who are open minded, willing to share leadership and empower others.
6. Show respect for members of the collaboration (consider people's time, transportation, child care needs, access and comfort, acknowledge the contributions of others, and be flexible.)
7. Foster open and honest communication – remember that everyone needs to be heard.
8. Obtain feedback and evaluate the efforts of the collaboration.
9. Stick with it, persevere and support each other!
10. Celebrate success.

## **Benefits and Barriers to Effective Collaborations**

Adapted from Ohio State University Fact Sheet (<http://ohioline.osu.edu/bc-fact/0001.html>)

**Benefits** of collaboration may be immediate or long term, direct or indirect. It is important to note that some members of the collaboration may benefit more than others. Benefits include:

- Improved delivery of programming;
- Opportunities for professional development;
- Improved communication and enhanced information;
- Increased use of programs and resources available in the community;
- Elimination of duplication;
- Come in many different shapes, sizes and are of varying duration – one size does not fit all;
- Increased availability of resources; and
- Improved public image.

**Barriers** to collaboration include:

- Turf issues and turf mentality;
- Lack of staff or time to participate in the collaboration;
- Conflicts with organizational focus and priorities between the collaboration and its members;
- Mistrust of other organizations;
- Slowed decision making;
- Limited resources or lack of willingness to share existing resources;
- Position statements that are inconsistent with policies of individual coalition members;
- Withdrawal of support as a result of outside pressures from individuals or groups;
- Decreased levels of cooperation among collaborators during a crisis.

### **State Agency Systems Collaboration at the Local Level: Gluing the Puzzle Together--The Staff Perspective**

[http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article\\_id=123](http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=123)

The Institute for Community Inclusion published this brief, which describes states' difficulties in making interagency collaboration work and gives an overview of tools that can help.

### **Strategy Tools for Community Problem-Solving**

<http://www.community-problem-solving.net/cms/>

These tools from The Community Problem-Solving Project @MIT provides a set of ideas already tested but constantly evolving to help you think about the A-Z of "problem-solving with others," from picking issues and winning attention for them to planning and implementing to get results, from bargaining to learning and back again.

### **Pathways to Collaboration: Factors That Help and Hinder Collaboration Between Substance Abuse and Child Welfare Fields**

[http://www.csulb.edu/projects/ccwrl/CalSWEC\\_curriculum\\_products.htm](http://www.csulb.edu/projects/ccwrl/CalSWEC_curriculum_products.htm)

This curriculum from the California Social Work Education Center at San Jose State University School of Social Work provides a review of key research literature related to cross-systems collaboration between substance abuse and child welfare fields as well as promising models for collaborative practice. The curriculum also provides a summary of findings and activities centered on factors that have helped and hindered collaborative practice in relation to developing effective collaborative relationships, structures, programming, and practices as well as operational innovations to improve collaboration in daily practice, such as written memorandum of understanding between systems as well as forms and procedures for obtaining releases of information and sharing information about client progress or changes.

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