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# Coalitions: Forming and Sustaining Community Collaborations

Judi Cramer and Sondra Gardetto  
*Covering Kids & Families* National Program Office  
The Southern Institute on Children and Families  
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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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