Coalitions:

Part I

Coalitions Defined & How to Form Them

Use in conjunction with:

Coalitions Part II: Establishing Effectiveness

&

Coalitions Part III: Evaluating Coalitions

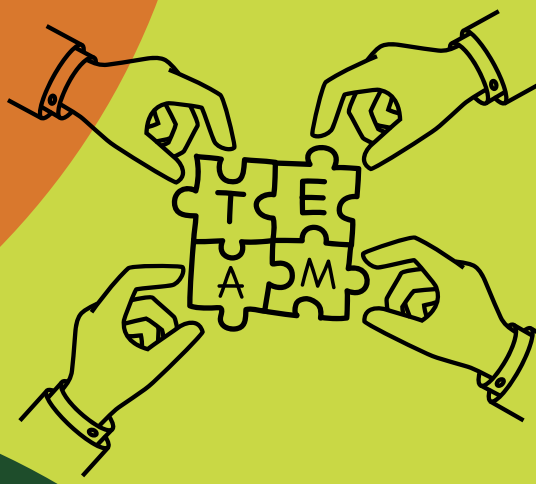
PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
Promoting Health & Wellness Throughout the Lifespan

COLORADO
Prevention Services Division
Department of Public Health & Environment

Adapted from: Butterfoss, F. (2007). Coalitions & partnerships in community health. Jossey-Bass.

Knowing what a coalition is and how to effectively form one is a critical step for any group hoping to achieve broad community impact.

If you or your team are thinking about starting a coalition, this is a great place to start!



Topics we'll cover:

1. What is a coalition?
2. When should a coalition be formed?
3. Who should be involved in a coalition?
4. How do I form a coalition?
5. Examples of Effective Coalitions

WHAT IS A COALITION?

A formal **alliance** of organizations who *pool* their *resources* to achieve a common goal.

An opportunity for **building prevention capacity** & **competence** among organizations & communities served.

An opportunity to **unite stakeholder voices** in *decision making & shared planning*.

When Should I Form One?

When you want to...

Establish community partnerships that empower the community towards a better future.

Implement effective & efficient program delivery & conserve resources by eliminating the duplication of individual efforts.

Acquire & sustain provision of resources, services, & programs.

Create consistency and equality in the way a community addresses needs.

Launch community-wide initiatives that unify many sectors of the political & general community to increase equality, campaign efforts, and political power.

Increase intergroup collaboration as a method for breaking down stereotypes and improving targeted services.

Overall, a coalition is formed to enact long-term social change by addressing current, ongoing, and urgent community health issues.

Who Should I Involve in a Coalition?

***All* stakeholders should be involved in coalition efforts. *Stakeholders* include any individuals concerned or involved with behavioral health and the success of coalition efforts.**

Stakeholders include **individuals most affected by the coalition's mission**, for example:

- Program Participants
- Citizens, including Underrepresented Community Members
- Those experiencing behavioral health conditions

And **individuals directly** or **indirectly involved** with the program, which may include:

- Local Business & Civic Leaders
- Government Officials & Political Leaders
- Policy Makers
- Public & Private Health & Human Service Agencies
- Educators & School Personnel
- Law Enforcement Agents
- Clergy & Other Religious Affiliates
- Media Campaigners

HOW DO I FORM A COALITION?

Steps 1 thru 3

1 Form a "core" group:

- The core group consists of members who lead the coalition.
- Core group members should be interested in the same cause and, together as a group, yield more influence, skills, & power.
- Consider the following when forming a core group:
  - Reflect on how to include diverse voices, especially those from disempowered groups & individuals most affected by coalition decision-making
  - Contact agencies & institutions working on similar issues
  - Connect with influential people in the community

2 Determine important people to include:

- Ask your core group members to think about who will help guide the coalition towards meeting its goals.
- Make a special effort to "court" individuals that the coalition cannot survive successfully without.
- Remember to be inclusive of *all* community members.

3 Recruit members to the coalition:

- Be as diverse & comprehensive as possible; coalitions rarely suffer from having too many members.
- Access members from the community most impacted by coalition activities.
- Offer something valuable, like opportunities, knowledge, or other compensation.
- Employ multiple recruitment methods, including, but not limited to, emails, flyers, media ads, etc.

HOW DO I FORM A COALITION?

Steps 4 thru 6

4

Host a strong first meeting:

- Utilize research-based team building activities to build trust & respect for diverse voices.
- The first meeting should be fun & upbeat to set the stage for member retention.
- First meeting agendas will vary according to your community & cause, but should include introductions & team building to set a positive tone for future meetings.

5

Follow-up consistently:

- Share first meeting notes with *all* members, even those not in attendance.
- Remind members about upcoming meetings.
- Check-in with members assigned to tasks prior to the next gathering & offer assistance if needed.
- Continually revisit lingering first meeting items to avoid negleting essential decisions.

6

Keep the coalition running smoothly:

- Gather as much information about the cause & community as possible
- Complete mission & vision statements, action plans, & designing the coalition's structure
- Coordinate a committee, or administrative structure
- Determine & acquire needed resources
- Consistently check for member burnout or staleness

What are examples of successful coalitions?

Below are a few examples of existing, effective coalitions for use as a jump start to get your team off the ground.
Note that the coalitions below are required to work with state agencies; however, this is not a requirement for all partnerships.

communities that care

Communities **t**hat **C**are (CTC) maintains a prevention science mindset by utilizing a five-phase change process model. CTC has effectively reduced youth's problem behaviors, improving long-term healthy youth development.

PROmoting **S**chool-community-university **P**artnerships to **E**nhance **R**esilience (PROSPER) is an evidence-based delivery system that connects university prevention researchers with program implementers to enable continuous delivery of quality youth development programs to reduce risky behaviors and strengthen family systems.

PROSPER PARTNERSHIPS

The **S**trategic **P**revention **F**ramework (SPF) is a five-step process with two guiding principles designed by SAMHSA to assist communities with understanding complex behavioral health issues and their affiliated environmental contexts. The SPF helps prevention planners comprehensively address substance misuse and associated health problems.