Facilitation Strategies

Twelve Winning Strategies for Managing Conflict Successfully

1 **Choose the time and place carefully**
It is not advisable to initiate a conflict in a public setting or when uninvolved people are present Be sensitive to the other person s circumstances

2 **Change behaviors, not people**
If you make it your goal in a conflict to change the other person s values you will accomplish very little Concentrate on fixing the problem

3 **Agree on something**
Restating agreement on the basic goals that you share is a great way to set a firm foundation for cooperation and problem solving

4 **Use I language**
I language means stating your case in terms of your own feelings Instead of You forgot to respond to my memo say I am concerned because I did not receive a response from you regarding my memo

5 **Figure out where you went wrong**
Look at how you may have contributed to the conflict and admit it Owning up to your mistakes is one of the most important aspects of conflict management

6 **Criticize with precision**
A great deal of conflict is the result of ambiguous and vague criticism Suggestions for change should be specific

7 **When someone attacks agree**
If someone s goal is to harm your reputation or embarrass you use some creative sidestepping For instance if someone says   Your shirt is an ugly color your response might be   Your right this shirt is an unusual color

8 **Bow out for a while**
A good rule of thumb in all conflicts is to give yourself time particularly in highly emotional situations Time allows you to cool down and think about the consequences of your response

9 **Have more conflicts**
It is better to bring up problems and annoyances as they occur rather than allowing them to fester and build resentment

10 **Find the third option**
The natural response to conflict is for both sides to lock into their positions and stand their ground The challenge is to break out of the win lose cycle

11 **Agree on the future**
Keep the solution focused on specific action that will be taken and then follow through

12 **Work it out on paper**
Make up your own conflict diary keeping track of the conflicts you are experiencing and map out a strategy for dealing with them

COMPARISON OF GROUP DECISION-MAKING FORMATS

CRITERIA	ORDINARY	BRAINSTORMING	NOMINAL
Number of ideas	Low	Moderate	High
Quality of ideas	Low	Moderate	High
Social pressure	High	Low	Moderate
Time/money costs	Moderate	Low	Low
Task orientation	Low	High	High
Potential for interpersonal conflict	High	Low	Moderate
Feelings of accomplishment	High to low	High	High
Commitment to solution	High	NA*	Moderate
Development of we feeling	High	High	Moderate

*NA = not applicable

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LEVELS OF CONSENSUS

1. **Everyone is enthusiastically in favor of the decision.**

2. **Everyone is okay with it.**

3. **Everyone can live with it.**

4. **Not everyone agrees but no one blocks it.**

5. **Those in disagreement block a decision.**

6. **There is no sense of unity.**

PROMOTING GROUP DISCUSSION

1   Ask open ended questions rather than questions that can be answered with a yes or a
no

2   Ask questions using the language of the participants

3   Encourage participants to link their personal experiences to the discussion of a topic

4   Use examples from your own experience to clarify your input

5   Make eye contact with those who are talking and summarize their points when they
conclude

6   Ask group members for reactions to others points

7   When appropriate involve other group members in answering a question addressed to
you

8   Keep in mind that effective leaders facilitate rather than dominate the group process

GUIDELINES FOR USING CONSENSUS

Tips for the Chair

1 **Summarize frequently**

This means restating the sense of the discussion including points of agreement shared concerns and points of disagreement

2 **Ask if your summary is accurate and captures critical issues**

3 **Ask for proposals (suggestions, solutions) that take into account the shared concerns and goals of the group**

Don t invite debate at this point but rather clarifying questions and discussion Try to generate as many alternative approaches as possible Encourage the group to be creative and not to assume that offered suggestions are mutually exclusive

4 **Try to summarize and articulate the sense of the group**

This is a time to try to blend and mesh the offered solutions and to articulate any apparent conflicts among them

5 **Ask if there are objections or concerns about specific suggestions, approaches or alternatives**

This is the time in the discussion for debate Try to keep the group focused on its common goals concerns and agreements without minimizing the significance of the differences and conflicts in point of view Try to get at underlying concerns needs and interests that are the basis for any particular position

6 **Ask if there additional approaches suggestions or proposals that better handle the concerns and conflicts than those already being considered**

7 **If you can offer a summary of the discussion that captures what the group consensus seems to be**

This is the place in the discussion when it is important to identify elements of the discussion and various proposals that enjoy complete or wide spread agreement and to validate agreement on these points with the group If these points can be separated from the areas of disagreement then even if consensus cannot be reached on all points the group still has agreement on some things and can move forward

GUIDELINES FOR USING CONSENSUS

Tips for Facilitators

1   Make sure that everyone who wants to speak gets a chance to speak

2   Remember that you can use pairs and threes to increase "air" time for everyone

3   Remind people that when they fear the consequences of a decision because there is not enough information to reliably predict the outcome, that they can try something for a while to see of it works

4   When people cannot arrive at an agreement, encourage the group to make sure that "all the cards are on the table "

5   Encourage group members to voice concerns and different points of view

6   Make sure that the sense of the discussion is getting captured in writing in a way that everyone can see

> This reduces repetition and confusion

8   Offer a summary of areas of disagreement

Next it is important to try to capture the essential concerns or ideas that seem to be in conflict articulate the best thinking of the group so far as to how to proceed and ask if anyone feels strongly enough to block that approach if nothing better can be arrived at

If the answer is no   (in other words) no one is willing to block the proposed approach(es) ask if there is enough support to proceed now or if the preference of the group would be to give the issue a rest to see if anyone can come up with better alternatives   (This approach is completely driven by the urgency of the issue and how much time there is on the agenda for further consideration of this issue)

If there is strong enough dissent to block the decision review the areas of agreement again remind the group of what has already been decided and make a decision about whether to table the item for further discussion later or to ask for another round of proposals that address the concerns of the dissenters   Remember people can not block decisions simply on the basis of personal preference   Dissent must be based on belief that there is a conflict based on prior agreements values and/or goals or disagreement about the expected outcomes of a particular approach to a problem

If there is not time for further discussion and it is not possible for the decision to be postponed at least identify how the decision will be made and how the voice of dissent will be included in the outcome   Make sure there is general acceptance of the necessity and fairness of this approach to the conflict in the circumstance

9   Review decisions that have been made and clarify task assignments

This is often the place where disagreements really get handled   That is when people have to back up their points of view with commitment to act

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GUIDELINES FOR USING CONSENSUS

Tips for Group Members:

1   Make sure you understand what is needed for each agenda item

2   Listen, stay focused, and pay attention

> Don t beat yourself if your attention wanders but it really helps if everyone present pays attention to what is going on and what is being said

3   Think about your motive and purpose before you speak

> Are you Introducing a new idea? Raising or reinforcing a concern about the topic?
> Adding new facts?

4   Avoid repeating yourself

> Remember that just because someone disagrees with you it doesn t necessarily mean that they misunderstand your point of view If you think you are being misunderstood it will probably work better to ask someone else to paraphrase rather than to get repetitive

5   Don t be reluctant to state preferences or disagree but remember that your preference alone is not sufficient to block a decision

> Your silence will be taken as consent if you have a concern the group needs to hear it

6   It is okay for you to attempt to articulate the group consensus if you think you are hearing one emerge

7   Remember that even though you are smart and have good ideas they may not work for this group and the group may be able to generate even better ideas with your input

8   Don t be reluctant to ask questions

> Even if it looks like something is perfectly obvious to everyone else if it is not clear to you   ask Chances are someone else will benefit from the clarification and even if everyone else is completely clear you can t bring your best thinking to the process unless you understand what is being said

BUILDING CONSENSUS

Tips for All Participants:

Your silence will be taken as consent if you have a concern the group needs to hear it

Think about motive and purpose before you speak Are you
- Introducing a new idea?
- Raising or reinforcing a concern about a topic?
- Adding new facts?

Remember that time is extremely scarce The salary value alone of those present at an executive director meeting is in excess of $25 per minute

Side conversations are distracting

Tips for the Chair:

Reflecting your understanding of the discussion is a good way to ensure communication and move toward consensus

When you sense people are in agreement ask if there is consensus

It is okay to take an advisory vote of who supports or can live with a proposal

Then ask the nay sayers to elicit their concerns

Think of consensus as support for a motion with a list of concerns attached

Consider the ORID method of leading discussions It creates a nice flow

- Objective Establish the facts

- Reflective How do you feel about this?

- Interpretive What do you think this means?

- Decisional What do you want to do about this?

You can refocus the group by reminding them of the purpose of this agenda item What needs to be accomplished for this agenda item to be a success?

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FOR IMPROVING THE DISCUSSION

To Broaden Participation

Would anyone care to offer suggestions or facts we need to better our understanding of the problem or topic

Now that we have heard from a number of people would others who have not spoken like to add their ideas?

'How do the ideas presented thus far sound to the rest of you?

What do the rest of you think about that suggestion?

To Limit Participation

We appreciate your contributions In order to keep this discussion moving we need to hear from some of the others Would those of you who have not spoken like to make some remarks?

Does anyone have any comments in addition to those already covered?

Thank you for your input We have discussed this particular issue at length and to effectively come to a decision we need to move on to the matter of

To Focus Discussion and Gather Evidence

Getting back to the agenda let s focus our discussion of defining the problem and save the discussion on possible solutions until a little later

Let s summarize what has happened thus far to ensure that we all understand what has been agreed upon

What has happened specifically that has convinced you this is the best approach?

Has this solution worked for other groups or organizations?

Am I right in sensing agreement on these points   ?

To Help the Group Move Along

Have we spent enough time on this phase of the problem to allow us to move on?

Have we discussed this issue enough so that we can take a vote and shift our attention to the next item?

What have we accomplished in our discussion up to this point?

Since we cannot reach a decision at this meeting what are some of the points we need to take up at the next one?

What are some points that need further study before we convene again?

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TOOLS FOR USING CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING IN GROUPS

Brainstorming

When it s done well brainstorming produces some of the most creative and innovative opportunities for teams to follow up on and solutions to problems a group is facing

Brainstorming is a way of finding solutions that eliminate or minimize the defects of other ways to generate alternatives   It is based on three principles

1   Most problems have more than one solution

2   The step of generating alternatives should be separate from the step of evaluating and deciding

3   Ideas are generated in greater quantity and quality when a group works together to create them

The essential point about brainstorming is found in the second principle creating ideas must be kept separate from evaluating them   If we try to do both those activities at the same time we slam the door on creativity and censor ourselves into routine ordinary and uncreative ideas

Tip   Post the rules on newsprint and review them with the group before brainstorming The biggest pitfall in brainstorming is not keeping the rules!

Brainstorming Rules:

1   Bring up as many ideas as possible   Record them in view of all

2   No remarks criticism reactions! Everyone calls out ideas and no one judges them

3   Do not censor yourself Express your ideas even if they seem farfetched and even if you doubt them

4   Make it fun and keep it lively   It helps to set a time limit for the brainstorming   Often there is a short lull followed by renewed energy and a new burst of ideas

5   After all ideas have surfaced then evaluate combine and organize them

THE S-T-P MODEL OF PROBLEM SOLVING

The S T P model is designed to provide a framework to apply the available resources to the solution of an existing problem Usually, a problem exists before we are conscious of it or can define it We are aware of or sense conditions that evoke dissatisfaction frustration tension and other feelings to which we d like to react These are often called symptoms that give clues to the problem we face

We say that a problem exists when the situation is different than what we d like it to be even though we may not always be aware of what new condition we d like The S T P model can help to more clearly identify the problem and assist in its solution

S T P Defined This is a method of organizing information to define a problem and to resolve or manage conflict or other situations which occur as we create a solution Information is organized into three interrelated dimensions

The Situation Dimension:	Information about (1) the essential features of the current state or situation and (b) the forces or conditions that facilitate or impede moving to a solution
The Target Dimension	The desired target or state This includes what we want to accomplish and what we need to avoid Targets or goals are chosen because the individuals working on the problem value or desire them they are not imposed Requirements or conditions imposed that apply to the solution should be listed under the situation dimension Targets are always more general than posed solutions as the same target may be achieved by different proposals
The Proposed Plan Dimension:	Specific action proposals and steps aimed at changing the current situation aimed at solving the problem are listed Who will do what when becomes the focus of this part of the model

Here are some of the common conditions situations expressions and terms that fit into the three dimensions

Situation	Target	Proposal/Plan
Starting Point	Termination point	The path to get from the starting point to the termination point
Facts opinions explanations about the current conditions predictions about efforts to change	Goals aims ends values purposes and objectives	Means plan strategy implementation procedures
The situation or environment as the group perceived it	The outcome desired by the group	The group s behavior to get to that outcome

SYMPTOMS OF GROUPTHINK

SYMPTOM	EXPLANATION
Illusion of invulnerability	Members feel assured that the group s past success will continue
Shared stereotypes	Members dismiss disconfirming information by discrediting its source (lawyers are needlessly conservative)
Rationalization	Members rationalize away threats to an emerging consensus
Illusion of morality	Members believe that they as moral individuals are not likely to make bad decisions
Self censorship	Members keep silent about misgivings and try to minimize their doubts
Direct pressure	Sanctions are imposed on members who explore deviant viewpoints
Mind guarding	Members protect the group from being exposed to disturbing ideas
Illusion of unanimity	Members conclude that the group has reached a consensus because the most vocal members are in agreement

REMEDIES FOR GROUPTHINK

1   Leaders should assign the role of critical evaluator to every group member

2   Leaders should not state their preferences at the beginning of a meeting

3   Assign subgroups to independently develop proposals

4   Periodically have outside experts review the group s deliberations   Invite them to sit in on some meetings

5   During important deliberations assign one member of group to play the role of devil s advocate

6   After formulating a tentative proposal hold a second chance meeting   Invite all members to express any residual doubts

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PROCESS DECISION PROGRAM CHART (PDPC)

This activity tests plans for workability as well as providing a productive role for nay sayers and is useful as a way to gain the support of idea blockers

1   After developing an initial action plan for implementing a decision brainstorm all of the things that could go wrong with any element of the plan   (These can be depicted as clouds hanging over the plan)

2   Think through contingencies for dealing with these calamities if they occur

3   The group might want to do another round looking at things that could go wrong with the contingencies

4   When the group is generally satisfied that there are reasonable fall back plans for the difficulties that can be anticipated check for consensus about proceeding with the plan

NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS (NGP)

This is a structured brainstorming and prioritizing process that works efficiently involves all group members and promotes a sense of equality among them   Here are the steps which should take about an hour

1   Ask each group member to write down their 3 5 highest priority ideas about the subject facing the group No discussion! (3 5 minutes)

2   Go around the group asking each member to offer one idea and not to duplicate what another member has said Post each one without discussion Keep going around the circle until all their ideas are posted Leave some space on the newsprint to the left of each issue for the dots later (20 25 minutes)

3   Give everyone a chance to discuss the proposed ideas for clarification elaboration and combining similar issues Don t eliminate any ideas but consolidate the list if possible Rewrite a few if necessary (20 minutes max)

4   Give each person 1 2 or 3 sticky colored dots and ask each to note his/her 1 2 or 3 top priorities from the list (people may have two or just one) and then put the dots on the newsprint

   Emphasize that this helps to discover where the group s energy is and may suggest consensus but may also point out differences that still need to be explored Be sure everyone is ready to post the dots at the same time to avoid influencing each other (5 minutes)

5   Note the top ideas for the group and test for consensus around one or some of them

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Community Mobilization Tool Box   *Western Washington A d Health Education Cente*
                                                                      A ea Health Education Cente WSU Spokane

BRAINSTORMING AND NGP (ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES)

Brainstorming:

Advantages

- Generates a lot of ideas

- People can piggyback on others ideas

- Simulates creative thinking

- Encourages participation

- Allows for clarity of ideas

Disadvantages

- Doesn t allow gradual development of ideas

- Can allow some members to dominate

- Can inhibit expression of all ideas

- Can allow shallow quality

- Not well suited to complex ideas

NGP.

Advantages

- Promotes equality among members

- Involves all members

- Allows individual expression without pressure to conform

- Allows for clarity of ideas

- Allows time to think

Disadvantages

- Requires a more skilled leader

- Is a more rigid process than brainstorming

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MAKING DECISIONS. AN INTUITIVE APPROACH

As an alternative to the rational or classic problem solving model this intuitive method encourages a group to look at a problem in new ways acting on the group members hopes and dreams

1 Writing the issue as you understand it on a piece of newsprint and ask the group to focus on the issue clearing away distractions relaxing

2 Clarify and reach agreement on the issue   Ask the group if it fully captures the essence of the problem concern or situation

3 Give people the opportunity to step out of context   Ask them to imagine an ideal resolution to this issue

    • What would be happening?
    • What would that look like?
    • What would each of our roles be in making this happen?

4 Ask group members to write their ideas and perceptions on paper

5 Capture these individual visions on newsprint putting together a group vision (Use nominal group process for this part)

6 Use the group vision as the basis for setting priorities creating options focusing on results and moving into action planning

AFFINITY

This is an alternate way to sort and categorize items generated by NGP

1   Ask participants to write their items on a 3X5 or 5X7 post its in abbreviated form (just a few words per item and just one item per post it (5 15 minutes)

2   Collect the post its and stick them to a whiteboard or wall

3   Have 6 8 people go up to the wall and sort the post its moving them to columns of like items   The catch is that the sorting must be done silently without discussion Items can be moved several times

4   When this group is done have another group come up to the board and name the categories   This group can speak and discuss and can move post its if it seems necessary

5   Check with the whole group to reach final decisions on the sort and the naming of categories

This is another way to frame issues identify key problems or key strategies It provides anonymity in a way that NGP does not (How many different groups to use for these tasks depends on the size of the total group For example if the group is small everyone might participate in all of the tasks If the group is large you might have a second round of silent sorting just to involve more people in the process)

TEN COMMITTEE PITFALLS

- Mission Not Clear From Outset

- Sunset Date Not Established

- Issues Not Mature

- Success Criteria Not Established

- Important Options Not Considered

- No Conflict Resolution Mechanism

- Staff Support Not Provided

- Constituents Not Brought Along

- Agenda Not Used

- Meeting Decisions Not Summarized

Coalition Barriers and How to Overcome Them
(or Help¹ I'm trapped in a coalition and can't get out)

by Tom Wolff

Anyone who has been in a coalition will tell you that the path to success is a rocky one often marked by two steps forward and one step back This shouldn't surprise us! Many forces in communities and community helping systems are opposed to coalition building and community development We must then think about the path of coalition progress as a dynamic one one that is constantly changing with time New obstacles (and opportunities) always keep arising So let s look at some commonly encountered barriers to coalition success and outline some strategies that a coalition might develop to counteract them

Barrier 1 – Turf and Competition

A clear and explicit goal of coalitions is often to promote coordination cooperation and collaboration But it comes as no surprise that turf territoriality and competition among coalition members is a major barrier to coalition success The capacity of one organization to feel competitive with another often amazes outsid ers This competition can be just among health and human service agencies as they compete for clients and contracts but can also be between the private sector and the public sector between local government and state government or between local government and the community A new request to provide a service might be issued by the state and two or three different agencies – all members of the same coalition – might begin to compete for that contract seemingly undermining the coalition s goal of cooperation One would hope that having declared themselves wanting to be part of a coalition these turf battles would decline – but they often escalate instead

Strategies

In his community organizing work Saul Alinsky always paid attention to the self interest of all the parties believing that solutions had to include attention to the self interest of all Too often we expect self sacri fice from individuals and organizations as they move toward coalition solutions If we understand that personal and organizational self-interest is part of the reality and part of what motivates people then we can look for strategies that take self interest into account It is also possible to minimize the impact of turf territoriality and self interest by appealing to a larger good In our experience with coalitions the larger and common good that has most appeal is that of the community and neighborhood This is why coalition building often focuses on geographic areas
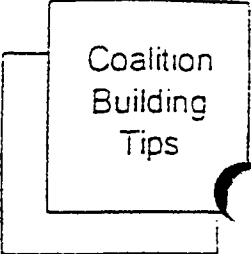
Barrier 2 – Bad History

The most frequent comment we get when we come into new communities and talk about building a new community coalition is "Oh we tried that once before here It doesn t work " Most communities have had unsuccessful attempts at building cooperation and forming coalitions in their past Most frequently these attempts were ill fated because they did not involve a carefully thought-out process did not have enough resources to succeed or were imposed from above as a mandate "You WILL cooperate

Conflictual histories also exist between agencies and different components in communities and one should never forget their impact Too often we enter communities without knowledge of context; thinking that history starts when we put our foot in the door We should never forget the power of history All we have to do is talk to an agency director and hear "We don t work with that other agency because 15 years ago they had a director who insulted our director at a public meeting" to realize how important it is

Coalition Barriers and How to Overcome Them Part II

by Tom Wolff

In our last tip sheet we began looking at the barriers and difficulties that can get in the way of a coalition reaching its goals There are many of them Here we continue this examination We then identify practical strategies your coalition can use to overcome barriers and difficulties you may face

☐Barrier #4 — Dominance by Professionals

Although key professionals in communities are often important members of coalitions and can be especially helpful assets they can also become barriers This happens when professionals dominate the process Most members might then be professionals the view of the community is generated only by professionals and the control of the coalition is in the hands of professional agencies Since many agencies view citizens and communities from a deficits point of view (see John McKnight s writings) they then bring this viewpoint to the coalition s work

We see this kind of barrier in action, for example when a group of adult service providers decides to deal with teen issues in the community by developing a teen center In one actual situation, providers went about designing and opening a teen center without any input from the teens themselves When no teens showed up in the first months the professionals perceived the teens as being apathetic and blamed the teens for the problem The providers did not recognize that only by consulting with teens and letting them decide how best to set up the teen center did they have any chance of success This happens much too frequently — and not only with individual agencies but with entire coalitions

Strategies

Active attempts to recruit citizens are critical to coalition success One should also respect the important role of citizen helpers These are people who have professional roles in communities but who are also active citizens of the community and therefore can wear both hats Having citizen helpers does not eliminate the need to have citizen members who are not in a professional formal helping role Often, to get citizen input requires the coalition to actively go out in the community talk to citizens and test out new ideas before they are implemented Unless the coalition is constantly asking the community what it wants and then responding to it, it will be hard to overcome the dominance of both professionals and professional deficit models

☐Barrier #5 — Lack of a Common Vision

Increasingly we are seeing examples of coalitions often funded coalitions where there is clear disharmony and disagreement around the coalition s goals When these are funded coalitions it is often the case that the original group that formed the coalition did so because they were attracted by the dollars not by a common vision This does not automatically rule out a common vision but certainly creates a barrier to that process In these situations it is often a matter of Take the money and run rather than We are here to create a joint vision and joint changes for our community The existence and failure of these coalitions because of a lack of common vision potentially threatens the success of the whole coalition movement

Strategies

Clearly the most helpful strategy would be to develop a common vision before the onset of the coalition Grassroots community coalitions typically have that for example the neighbors in the community all get together to make sure that th community playgrounds are safe Where the joint vision has not emerged at the start or dissolves quickly after the writin of the grant application then there needs to be a clear planning process which involves visioning revisiting the mission

What Is Inclusion?

Jack Pearpoint & Marsha Forest

People genuinely ask us *What is Inclusion really?*

We have found a simple way to answer this question for groups and workshops We explain that we believe everyone already knows the answer In their hearts and from their life experience people really do understand the difference between *Inclusion* and *Exclusion* They just need to be reminded of what they already know Then we say

Think of a time when you felt really outside *excluded* What words come to mind?

Generally words like these flow from people s hearts awful lonely scared sad mad unhappy miserable depressed etc

Now think of a time you felt really welcomed really *included* How did you feel then?

Answers are usually words like happy terrific loved great wonderful important thrilled warm healthy etc

The responses are universal The answers are the same for children of all ages people of all lands tall & short young & old male & female When people are included they feel welcome they feel good they feel healthy

When people are excluded they feel bad

Inclusion is the precondition for learning happiness for healthy living

Exclusion is the precondition for misery loneliness and trouble

We know teenagers often choose to die rather than be alone We know kids join gangs rather than be seen as outside the mainstream Belonging is NOT incidental it is primary to our existence Thus for us *Exclusion kills* physically and/or spiritually Killing the pain of *Exclusion* is learned skill Adults often choose a living death by numbing the pain with alcohol drugs obsessions to override the anguish of Exclusion

Inclusion is the foundation of the house It is not a guarantee but rather a precondition for the growth and development of full and healthy human beings

That is how we define *Inclusion* Dictionaries also help Included as defined in the Random House College Dictionary is an adjective meaning contained in embraced

In Roget s Thesaurus (4th Edition) inclusive of means with

Inclusion is a wonderful word It is about embracing humanity and figuring out how we are going to live WITH one another in the challenging years to come

1

Inclusivity Checklist

Instructions
Use this Inclusivity Checklist to measure how prepared your coalition is for multicultural work, and to identify areas for improvement Place a check mark in the box next to each statement that applies to your group If you cannot put a check in the box this may indicate an area for change

☐ The leadership of our coalition is multiracial and multicultural

☐ We make special efforts to cultivate new leaders particularly women and people of color

☐ Our mission operations and products reflect the contributions of diverse cultural and social groups

☐ We are committed to fighting social oppression within the coalition and in our work with the community

☐ Members of diverse cultural and social groups are full participants in all aspects of our coalition s work

☐ Meetings are not dominated by speakers from any one group

☐ All segments of our community are represented in decision making

☐ There is sensitivity and awareness regarding different religious and cultural holidays customs recreational and food preferences

☐ We communicate clearly and people of different cultures feel comfortable sharing their opinions and participating in meetings

☐ We prohibit the use of stereotypes and prejudicial comments

☐ Ethnic racial and sexual slurs or jokes are not welcome

By R Rosenthal in G Kaye and T Wolff Coalition Building from the Ground Up Amherst MA AHEC/Community Partners 1995
[Reprinting in M Minkler (Editor) Community Organizing and Community Building for Health Rutgers (in press)]

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How to Build Effective Multicultural Coalitions

Cultural differences can either enrich or impede coalition functioning. Creating multicultural coalitions challenges us to deal with differences and use them to strengthen our common work. Awareness of sensitive issues and dynamics can help you to detect potential obstacles and develop approaches to address them — either before problems arise or after they occur.

Building effective multicultural coalitions involves

   Articulating a vision

   Conducting strategic outreach and membership development

   Setting ground rules that maintain a safe and nurturing atmosphere

   Establishing a structure and operating procedures that reinforce equity

   Practicing new modes of communication

   Creating leadership opportunities for everyone, especially people of color and women

   Engaging in activities that are culturally sensitive or which directly fight oppression

By R. Rosenthal in G. Kaye and T. Wolff <u>Coalition Building from the Ground Up</u> Amherst MA AHEC/Community Partners 1995
[Reprinting in M. Minkler (Editor) <u>Community Organizing and Community Building for Health</u> Rutgers (in press)]

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QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT CULTURE

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of questions but a beginning As you answer each one you will be preparing yourself to do a better job of planning and implementing your prevention or treatment program Please keep in mind that the various aspects of culture do not have the same relative importance across ethnic groups   what is valued? is perhaps the first question that needs to be answered

FAMILY
1   Who is in a family?
2   Does the family have a hierarchical structure?
3   What place does the family have in the community?
4   What are children taught by the family and about the family?
5   How do family members communicate?
6   What are the rights and responsibilities of each family member?

COMMUNICATION
1   What language do your community (for prevention) and clients (for treatment) speak?
2   What is the value of verbal vs non verbal communication for your target population?
3   What roles attitudes or personality traits are associated with particular ways of communicating?
4   What forms of communicating bring pride to your target population?
5   Who ma communicate with whom? when? and how?
6   What are the significant characteristics of the non verbal communication used by your target population?

LEARNING
1   How does your target population learn?   through speech?   visual?   hearing? story telling?
2   Who does your target population learn from?

RELIGION
1   What role does religion play in the community (for prevention) and with the client (for treatment)?
2   Does the religious belief dictate authority and learning processes?
3   For treatment how will the concept if Higher Power be understood and accepted by the client?
4   What should an outsider know or not acknowledge knowing?
5   Does the concept of powerlessness have meaning?

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HEALTH

1   What does illness and disease mean?
2   Who controls health? healing?
3   To what extent are Western methods of healing accepted?
4   What are the acceptable methods of healing?
5   What does abuse addiction and alcoholism mean?

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

1   With whom is it OK to relate to as a friend? as a teach? as a healer?
2   How is acceptance by others gained?
3   Are there innate prejudices towards others as a result of long time repression?
4   How do people greet one another? How do they show agreement? disagreement? respect?
5   What are the boundaries for touching? speaking intimately?

HISTORY VALUES, TRADITIONS, AND CELEBRATIONS

1   What is valued? Who are valued?
2   How is history passed from generation to generation?
3   What traditions are upheld?
4   What celebrations are observed? Who participates? What are the purposes of the celebrations?

NATURE

1   What is the relationship between person and nature?
2   Who or what is responsible for natural phenomena?
3   Are traditional beliefs stronger than scientific facts?
4   Are there taboos associated with natural phenomena?

EXPRESSION

1   Through what methods do your clients express themselves most effectively? music? art? dance?
2   Are such methods taboo for certain people?

WORK AND PLAY

1   What is the meaning of work? of play?
2   How does one play?
3   Why does one play? work?

The basis for these questions has been taken from my personal experience and from numerous readings about cultural awareness   Please call if you would like to suggest additional questions or to discuss any that are presented above

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EXAMPLES OF "CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS"

Immerse yourself in a culture i e   spend an extended period of time in a foreign country living with the native people speaking/learning their language eating their food visiting their special places of importance and participating in their cultural or religious events

Travel to a foreign country

See a foreign film with subtitles

Study a foreign language

See a gay/lesbian movie or play

Go to an ethnic restaurant and try out dishes you never have before

Read a book or story written by an author from a different culture

Read a book that was original written in a language other than English

Read a local ethnic newspaper

Listen to music from different countries

Visit a museum that exhibits art from around the world

Shop at a local ethnic grocery store

Trv out recipes from different cultures

Go to an ethnic festival such as Bonadori (Japanese) or Sundiata (African American)

Volunteer at a refugee center a literacy program an AIDS service organization etc

Become a Big Brother or Big Sister

Go to a town community or neighborhood meeting

Gc to multi cultural conferences or workshops

Watch for community events that foster cross cultural communication

(Example Inter generational Fair recently held in Seattle s Central District)

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