IOWA
HEALTH CARE

Foundations in Behavioral Health Prevention Webinar Series

Webinar 4: Building Collaboration for Behavioral Health Prevention Resource Guide

Iowa's Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health

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Summary

This resource document provides prevention professionals, behavioral health staff, and community stakeholders with tools to equip and guide them in conducting effective collaboration. It offers valuable insight to improve one's knowledge on building community partnerships. Materials are available to help explain the importance and value of collaboration. Found in the document are key principles of collaboration, strategies for partner engagement, and techniques for sustaining long-term relationships that support behavioral health prevention goals.

The Significance of Community Collaboration

Collaboration, or working in partnership with other individuals and organizations in the community is an essential part of prevention of any type. Specifically, collaboration between across the behavioral health spectrum enriches our work. Below are some key benefits of building collaborative relationships. Collaborative relationships:

- Can be built on individual, institutional, or organizational relationships,

- Increase access to resources and readiness,

- Expands reach into multiple domains, sectors, and areas,

- Enables community ownership of the issues and the solution; and

- Recognizes substance use is interrelated to other behavioral and physical health, as well as other social issues and determinates of health

Why Should We Collaborate

- This tool details why collaboration is vital to prevention success, helping practitioners communicate the value of collaboration to current and potential collaborators.

Beginning Your Collaboration

- This tip sheet provides tips to help prevention programs get their new collaborative workgroup off the ground and running.

Identifying Potential Partnerships

21st Century Partners in Prevention

- This tool offers a comprehensive list of community stakeholder groups, highlighting the ways that "non-traditional" partners can enhance prevention efforts

Collaboration Across SAMHSAs Network

- This tool presents opportunities for collaborating at each step of the SPF.

Taking a Health Equity Approach to Identifying New Partners

- This worksheet helps grantees identify and recruit new partners through a health equity lens.

Collaborating with Policy Makers to Inform Prevention Planning

- This tool identifies the types of policy makers prevention practitioners might engage, explores potential goals that can be achieved through collaboration with these partners, offers examples of potential collaborations, and presents tips for collaborating effectively.

Aligning Goals and Activities

- This tool can help teams assess the degree to which member activities align with the collaboration's overall purpose and goals.

Identifying Partnership Needs and Gaps

Identify the areas of behavioral health and partnership sectors and ask yourself:

- What roles are currently unfilled?
- Who in the community has the capacity?
- Who in the community has that specific talent/gift?

Use tools and an intentional planning process to determine who to recruit and how. Below are examples of two tools you could use in the is process.

Initial Partner Analysis Worksheet

Brainstorm a list of potential stakeholders and rank their priority/importance to your success. Complete a 'stakeholder analysis worksheet' for each stakeholder in the table below. Designate team members to pursue next steps to secure key stakeholders for your initiative.

Organization or individual	What is their motivation (political will) to engage and support the work?	What is their biggest concern?	What do we need to do to get their support?	Next Steps	Person responsible

Recruitment Action Plan

This sample action plan can help focus your partnership development and recruitment efforts and keep them on track.

Potential Partner	Connection	Skills Needed	Outreach Approach	Commitment Level	Level of Engagement
Who do you want to recruit?	Who will do the recruiting and why?	What do you want your potential partner to do?	What actions will you take to recruit?	What type of partner do you need – champions/ affiliates, leader, program level?	How engaged do you ultimately need/ want this partner to commit to?

Communication & Collaboration

Across the spectrum of behavioral health areas, it is likely that there are many opportunities for collaboration. Your work may have similar goals or be working towards shared risk and protective factors.

Prevention Collaboration in Action-Understanding the Basics

- This tool presents important principles of collaboration to help practitioners develop the relationships needed to plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain prevention efforts.

Focusing On Focus Groups - A Toolkit for Substance Misuse Prevention Practitioners

- This toolkit equips prevention practitioners with the tools and guidance needed to conduct effective focus groups, fostering open dialogue, and gathering valuable insights from diverse stakeholders. By integrating focus groups throughout the prevention process and developing clear protocols, practitioners can tailor discussions to address specific community needs and inform evidence-based strategies.

Tips for Ensuring a Culturally Competent Collaboration

- This resource presents a starting point for ensuring the cultural competence of grantee collaborative efforts.

Effective Social Media Planning

- This worksheet presents important questions to consider prior to establishing a professional social media presence.

How Are We Doing? Evaluating Your Collaboration

- This tool presents considerations for evaluating collaboration, common functions to evaluate, and examples of instruments that measure these functions.

Levels of Collaboration

- This tool provides a detailed chart describing four collaboration levels: networking, cooperation, coordination, and full collaboration showcasing how partners can work together in many ways, for many different reasons.

Partnership Outreach Approach

Once you have identified the potential partners, you need to develop a strategic outreach approach. For each partner you will need to go through the steps below.

Do Your Homework

- Find out "who's who" in the organization,
- With whom do they currently partner?
- What populations do they currently work with?
- What is their history addressing substance use and misuse or related behaviors?

Develop a pitch

- Take your time.
- Attend meetings/events they host.
- Get on their mailing list.
- Add them to your mailing list.
- Make a personal connection.
- Use your "natural networkers" to reach out.

Choose your approach

Decide how you will make your "ask":

- Send an email.
- Set up a meeting.
- Identify the best person to reach out.
- Select the delivery approach based on what learned from your homework.

Establish a relationship

- Take your time.
- Attend meetings/events they host.
- Get on their mailing list.
- Add them to your mailing list.
- Make a personal connection.
- Use your "natural networkers" to reach out.

Develop and provide concrete written materials:

- Write a short convincing message
- Describe you and your organization
- Clearly describe your hopes for partnership
- Highlight the benefits of working together

Measuring Collaboration Impact

It is essential to regularly evaluate the impact and effectiveness of your partnerships and collaborations. Measuring the following will give you the information to understand the quality and impact of your work:

1. Collaboration Quality and Function Indicators and measures

There are indicators and tools that will help to measure your effectiveness and impact. Some can be found listed below.

Indicators	Tools
• Level of trust among partners	• Collaboration Factors Inventory
• Frequency and quality of communication	• Collaboration Assessment Tool (CADCA)
• Shared goals and vision	• Coalition Effectiveness Inventory
• Role clarity and decision-making processes	
• Member participation and satisfaction	

2. Collaborative Capacity and Sustainability

Regularly review your partnerships to determine if the collaboration is working and has the potential for sustainability.

- Resource sharing (e.g., funds, data, personnel)
- New partnerships formed
- In-kind support received
- Joint funding applications or grants secured
- Integration of prevention into partner systems (e.g., school curricula, healthcare protocols)

3. Community- or Systems-Level Changes

It is essential to review and assess progress towards community and systems level change. Consider:

- Policy or systems change (e.g., smoke-free zones, SBIRT integration)
- Increased service coordination across agencies
- New programs implemented as a result of joint decision-making
- Community readiness and/or capacity assessments

Additional Helpful Resources

Prevention Science Foundation: Shared Risk and Protective Factors

Prevention Collaboration in Action Toolkit

Statewide Partnerships Virtual Learning Lab

Prevention Collaboration in Action | Understanding the Basics

Principles of Collaboration

Understanding the principles of collaboration will help you develop the relationships you need to plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain your prevention efforts, and to deepen these relationships over time.

This tool presents some important principles of collaboration.

- **Successful collaboration is intentional.** Engaging new partners, and keeping them engaged, requires deliberate and strategic planning. You will want to be clear on the purpose of the collaboration, determine how you plan to achieve that purpose, and establish clear roles and responsibilities for all involved. Over time, you will also want to check in regularly with partners to ensure that the relationship continues to meet their needs. Even those collaborative relationships that begin easily and organically need to be nourished to stay healthy.

- **Collaboration requires flexibility.** Partnering with new stakeholders sometimes means working in new ways. You may need to hold meetings at different times to accommodate the schedules of your new partners, communicate in different ways, or approach decision-making with an eye toward ensuring that all points of view (particularly those of your new partners) are considered. Though change may feel scary (or at least disruptive) at first, considering and accommodating the needs of new partners shows that you value your partners and their contributions.

- **For collaboration to thrive, all parties must benefit.** You may know why you want a specific stakeholder on your team, but unless *they* see the benefit of collaborating with you, the partnership is likely to be short-lived. Can you provide them with access to data? Specialized prevention knowledge? Increased credibility? When reaching out to new partners, be explicit about what resources you have to offer and be ready to communicate how, by working together, you can more effectively address shared prevention priorities.

- **Collaboration is not one size fits all.** Each collaboration is unique, driven by purpose, need, and the readiness of partners to engage. Moreover, collaborative relationships—like all relationships—are likely to evolve and change over time. There's no "right" way to collaborate. What's most important is that all partners understand and agree on the level of involvement expected of them and how they are expected to contribute.

- **Collaboration takes time.** Great relationships are built on trust—and trust takes time to establish. Be prepared to invest the time needed to build strong relationships. Rushing this process can lead to partner disengagement or prevention activities that miss the mark.

- **Collaboration is a journey, not a destination.** Like many journeys we take, collaboration may not be a straight road from Point A to Point B. More likely, it will contain some unexpected detours, a traffic jam or two, and a long drive that provokes the question, "Are we there yet?" Taking "shortcuts" may save on time and gas (i.e., energy), but won't necessarily get you where you want to go. What's important to remember is that it's the journey itself that builds the relationship and trust between partners—so take your time and enjoy the ride!