Sacramento’s Creating Community Solutions Network: Working Collaboratively for Collective Impact

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Goals for Today

- Understand foundational principles and skills for working together successfully
- Practice consensus decision-making and group process skills
- Begin to organize Action Teams in order to implement plan strategies


Part 2: Making Meetings Work
Issues are complex, negotiable and solutions are unknown

No one organization or entity has authority or power to solve issue alone

Multiple parties involved; buy-in needed

Parties are willing to participate

To develop shared vision, comprehensive/ integrated plans or resolve controversy

**Conditions for Collaboration & Consensus Seeking**
Principles of Collaborative Governance

Collaboration is a process to reach goals that cannot be achieved by any one entity acting alone or, at a minimum, cannot be reached as efficiently. Collaboration is a means to end, not an end in itself.

- Shared Goals
- Accountability
- Transparency: Clear, understandable methods
- Participation: Diverse, inclusive, equitable
- Consensus-based decision making
What is Collective Impact?

- Cross-sector partnerships driven by results and a desire to improve outcomes consistently over time.
  - “Partnerships move at the speed of trust”
- Data is used to improve, not just prove.
- The work is part of what you do every day rather than one more thing you have to fit in.
Conditions of Collective Impact

- **Shared Vision for Change**
  - Common understanding of issue/problems and clear goals

- **Shared Measurement and Data Collection**
  - Data used to inform activities and hold ourselves accountable
  - “Move the needle” 10% on a community-wide metric

- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
  - Each partner contributes separate but complementary activities based on its particular capabilities

- **Continuous Communication to Build Trust, Assure Common Goals and Share Lessons Learned**
  - Takes time, requires consistency

- **Backbone Support to Coordinate**
Structures for Successful Collaboration

**Clear written agreements/shared expectations**
- Ground rules
- Member roles and responsibilities
- Decision making rules
- Policy/guidelines for advocacy, media relations, conflict of interest, and funding decisions
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

**Group structure/roles**
- Membership/Consistent Participation
- Co-chairs/Facilitators
- Executive/Leadership Committee
- Action Teams/Workgroups
- Alternates
- Ad-hoc Committees
Group Decision-Making

- Process and skill needed for successful collaboration & community/strategic planning
- Frequently an underlying cause of group conflict
- Go slow to go fast – up front time investment “makes it easy” later on.
Planning for Group Decisions

Questions to Consider:

- Which agenda items require a decision?
- How will the group make decisions?
- Who will participate in decision making?
- What happens if we can’t decide?
- What happens if decision-makers and/or stakeholders are unhappy with the decision?
What happens if the decision-making process is unclear?

"Whew! That was close! We almost decided something!"
People hold on to rigid positions; stalemate.

Someone is assigned a vague idea.

New suggestion is made as time runs out.

Silence is assumed agreement

Discussion drags on...

“Decision-Making” Without a Rule

Decision made, but not clearly summarized.

Put off until next agenda.

Left hand does not know what right hand is doing.

Certain people always get their way.

“Closed door” decisions after the meeting with small group.

Person/entity with most at stake makes independent decision
What is a Consensus Decision?

- “To think and feel together;” “Collective opinion or agreement;” “Group solidarity in sentiment and belief.”
- A collaborative process in which all group members contribute to a shared decision that meets the concerns of all group members as much as possible.
- A decision that everyone can live with, reached by the group as a whole.
- Members may hold different levels of agreement.
- May not be everyone’s first or ideal choice, but there is common understanding and a commitment to move forward together.
# Levels of Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Hearted Support</td>
<td>Basic Support</td>
<td>Support with Reservations</td>
<td>Stand Aside</td>
<td>Major Concern</td>
<td>Strong Disagreement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unqualified</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Perfectly acceptable option</strong></td>
<td><strong>I can live with it</strong></td>
<td><strong>I don’t like this, but I don’t want to hold up the group</strong></td>
<td><strong>I don’t want to block the group but I have serious concerns; more work is needed</strong></td>
<td><strong>I do not support or agree with this option</strong></td>
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CCS Decision Making Guidelines

- **Consensus** as the Fundamental Principle

- **Definition of “Consensus”:** A decision that all can live with, reached by the group as a whole. Members may hold different levels of agreement.

- **Participation:** Members must be in attendance at a meeting to participate in decisions made at that meeting. Decisions made in a meeting will not be revisited in the next.

- **Divergent Views/Unresolved Issues:** Request for participants to provide multiple options for consideration. The Project Support team will make a determination, taking into consideration all views, alignment with relevant policies, fiscal resources, time line and other significant factors.

- **Resolving Process Concerns:** First speak with the facilitator. If unresolved, Cheryl Raney (SCOE) project manager, the Council, then Matt Cervantes (SHF/The Center). The Center will have final responsibility for deciding how to proceed.
Surfacing Priorities to Make Decisions

Possible Methods

- Straw Poll/Show of Hands
  - Levels of Agreement
  - Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down
- Dot Voting
- Develop Criteria, then Rank Options

A way to work toward consensus by narrowing options. Conducting a “pulse check” to see where people stand.
Prioritize with Multi-Dot Voting

1. Clarify options
   - Decide in advance if dots may be used in any combination or limited to one dot per item

2. Provide each participant with 3, 5 or N/3 self-adhesive “sticker” dots
   - Participants stick dots next to items they think are most important.
   - Variation: Use different color dots to distinguish cautions (yellow) from priorities (green) or deal breakers (red)

3. Discuss results and how to proceed
   - Reasons for selecting top ranked items
   - Items that were not selected yet deserve further discussion/consideration.
Reaching Agreement & Negotiating Solutions

- Clarify issue, define problem & constraints; identify missing information
  - Separate the people from the problem
  - Break decision down into smaller, more manageable parts
- Focus on **interests**, not positions
  - Identify the underlying concern, need, desire, or fear; the reason why or why not
  - Identify your “100%.” Remember: Asking does not guarantee getting
- Brainstorm options that satisfy as many members’ criteria as possible.
  - Ask: How can we develop a win-win? Clarify ideas as needed.
- Generate objective, fair criteria to evaluate options
  - Identify pros/cons
  - Reflect on which alternatives offer the best possibility of success
- Eliminate options that are not a priority or don’t meet criteria; evaluate/rank remaining options
- Be open to new possibilities that will result in your desired outcome – or something even better!
Positions are...

- Something one has decided as a way to settle a problem, conflict or a difference.
- A pre-determined solution.

**EXAMPLE**

“We need a new housing development!”  
“We oppose a new housing development!”
Interests are...

- Desires, beliefs, needs and concerns/fears..
- Why something is important – the reason for the position

**EXAMPLE**

**Position**
Support development

**Interests**
- Increase tax revenue
- Create jobs
- Reduce sprawl

**Position**
Oppose development

**Interests**
- Preserve open space
- Maintain water quality
- Reduce sprawl
Why Focus on Interests?

- Behind opposed positions lie shared and compatible interests.
- Gets to heart of issue.
- Sets stage for mutual understanding.
- Leads to group cooperation.
- Increases our ability to think about the issue differently – i.e., re-framing.
- Helps establish a climate where we can generate creative options.
Addressing Cultural and Language Competency

Take a deeper look at Strategy 8...

- How can we be responsive to the diverse cultural needs of our community as we implement this plan over the next year?

- How will we organize ourselves to accomplish Strategy 8?
  - Should we establish a separate Action Team?
  - What benefits and drawbacks do we need to consider?
Part Two: Making Meetings Work

- Understand skills necessary for effective participation in collaborative meetings
- Gain practical tips for facilitating dialogue and recording meeting outcomes
Think of a positive meeting experience you’ve had – as a participant or facilitator. What made it such a great experience?
Ground Rules

- Create a foundation for respectful dialogue
- Provide guidelines for how the group will work together
- Agreed to by all meeting participants
- Tool facilitator and group members use to enlist people's best conduct in meetings
Facilitator Role

- Provide impartial consultation and leadership; remain neutral on content
- Manage meetings: Provide focus, structure and direction
- Encourage full, productive and respectful participation and dialogue; Promote creative thinking
- Help build consensus and move the group through decision-making processes
- Surface tension and help resolve conflict
- Record and summarize the group’s work
Key Skills for Effective Meetings

- Active Listening
- Summarizing
- Visual Recording
- Encouraging Dialogue & Participation
- Assist Group Decision Making
- Handle Group Conflict
- Time Management
Active Listening How To’s

- Seek first to understand!
- Maintain attention; Be patient and don’t interrupt
- Suspend judgment; Avoid making assumptions
- Listen for main ideas
- Ask probing and clarifying questions
- Check for understanding: Focus on the facts, and restate in your own words (paraphrase)
- Accept and understand opinions; empathize
- Be aware of non-verbal feedback
Seek to Understand & Clarify

- "These seem to be the main points..."
- "Let me see if I understand your points..."
- “Could you tell me more about that?”
- "Before we continue, I want to make sure we all understand what we’ve said so far..."
- “So far, we've discussed the following..."
- “It sounds like...”
- “If I’m hearing you correctly ...”
- “Listening to you it seems as if ...”
Brainstorm Guidelines

Rules
- Share any idea that comes to mind. “No idea is a bad idea.”
- Share one idea at a time.
- Build on a previous idea or add a new one.
- No discussion or evaluation of ideas (temporarily suspend judgment).
- Strive for quantity.
- Capture all ideas on flip chart or post-its.

Technique
- Write open-ended question/topic on the flip chart.
- Provide a few minutes for individual thinking before asking for comments.
- Ask each person to share one idea per turn.
- Individuals can “pass” during a turn, but assume continued participation.
- When a number of people start to pass, ask if anyone has additional ideas to add.
Creating Group Memory

- Recording visually captures discussion in real time
- Helps group develop common perception, track progress
- Helps facilitator/group:
  - focus discussion
  - summarize common themes
  - point out the range of opinion
  - show that speakers are heard; avoid redundancy
Meeting Documentation Purpose/Goals

- Accountability: maintain public record of the meeting
- Help build collective memory and trust in the process
- Assist participants in recalling decisions, discussions, and processes; reduce the amount of revisiting issues
- Help those unable to attend keep up with the process
- Acknowledge participant contributions
- Provide meeting planners with information to shape future meetings
- Document progress toward collective goals
Flip Chart Recording Tips

• Listen carefully & summarize in a few words
  ○ Listen for trends, what’s really being said
  ○ Record using participants’ own words

• Use color to relate, sort, emphasize or highlight

• Illustrate ideas to provide visual interest

• Circle or star key ideas or decisions

• Encourage corrections or clarifications

• Combine with electronic note-taking
More Flip Chart Recording Tips

- Use multiple charts
- Create categories and leave room to add
- Write large, with capitals
- Use bullets and alternate colors to separate ideas
- Keep all notes visible and orderly – number pages
- Don’t worry about spelling!
Ending the Meeting

- Summarize Key Points or Action Items
  - Review decisions or agreements
  - Outline next steps & assignments
  - Be specific: who will do what by when
- Check back: did we meet our goals?
  - Provide opportunity for reflection
  - Evaluate meeting process
- Acknowledge effort and thank people!!
- END ON TIME!!!
Brainstorm for Youth Engagement

1. At your tables, brainstorm and record ideas on flip chart:
   - What creative strategies can we use to engage young people in implementing the mental health action plan?
     - Teens 14-17
     - Transition Age Youth 18-24

2. Review ideas and select action items to write on post-it notes. Cluster on sticky wall:
   - What actions will we commit to taking?