Driving Community Collaboration

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The Collaboration Mandate

• Problems are complex and multifaceted
• Problems require the efforts of many different systems working together to be resolved
• Collaboration extends your reach
• Other views help strengthen the end product
• Collaboration is more efficient
Puzzling This Out
# Lifecycle of Collaboration – Developing a Shared Meaning

(Gajda, 2004 & Frey, B. al., 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-existence</th>
<th>Networking</th>
<th>Cooperation</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Both groups exist but do not interact.</td>
<td>1. Aware of each other</td>
<td>1. Provide info. to each other</td>
<td>1. Share info. &amp; rsc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Loosely defined roles</td>
<td>2. Somewhat defined roles</td>
<td>2. Defined roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. All decisions made independently</td>
<td>4. All decisions made independently</td>
<td>4. Some shared decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coalition</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Share ideas</td>
<td>1. Members belong to one system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Share resources</td>
<td>2. Frequent communication characterized by mutual trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Frequent &amp; prioritized comm.</td>
<td>3. Consensus on all decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All members have a vote in decision making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Vision of Collaboration

Cartoon By Jordan Reck
Factors Promoting Collaboration – Structural Overview

• Structural Factors
  – Favorable political and social climate\(^1, 2\)
  – Appropriate cross-section of members \(^1, 2, 4, 5\)
    • Commitment/Involvement of High Level Leaders\(^1\)
      – Development of clear roles and policy guidelines\(^1, 2, 5\)
  – Concrete, attainable goals and objectives \(^2\)
  – Shared vision \(^2\) (this is on both structural and relational)
  – Sufficient time, staff, materials, and funds\(^2, 4, 5\)

\(^1\)=Chrislip & Larson, 1994; \(^2\)=Mattessich et al., 2008, \(^3\)=Peek 2007, \(^4\)=Gardner, 2007, \(^5\)=Lafasto & Larson, 2001
Factors Promoting Collaboration – Structural Overview

• Structural Factors (cont.)
  – Successes (quick and interim)
  – View that collaboration beneficial
  – Skilled Leadership
  – Credibility or Openness of Process
  – Shift to Broader Concerns
  – Effective Decision Making Process
  – Members share stake in both process and outcome

Factors Promoting Collaboration – Relational Overview

• Interpersonal Factors
  – Open and frequent communication \(^2,^5\)
  – Establish and maintain informal relationships and communication links \(^3\)
  – Shared vision
  – Flexibility/Willing to Compromise \(^2\)
  – Altruism \(^5\)
  – Appreciation of Organizational Culture \(^2,^3\)
  – Trust \(^1,^2,^3,^5\)
    • General Trust
    • Trust Have the Skill Set Needed

The Collaboration Literature

• Mostly retrospective
  – Groups perceived as effective based on results
  – Interviews after the group has dissolved (sometimes years later)

• More on Structural, Less on Interpersonal

• Global Measures
  – Mix structural and relational factors
  – Don’t identify individual factors between individuals
The Collaboration Literature

• While important factors are identified, little is provided about how you actually develop these factors within a group

• Some of the tools that exist are not specific enough to provide guidance for developing these factors
How Do We Drive Together?
Building Structural Factors
Credibility or Openness of Process

• Honest about the process
• Respectful discussion of views (this does not mean avoid conflict)
• If each agency/person does not have the same power or influence on the project- discuss this early on in the process
• If you ask for input or feedback, you need to use it or address why not
Success

• Quick Successes
• Interim Successes
• Celebrate milestones
• Develop rituals
• Leader must be intentional about this process
Shared Vision

• Initially get the group together and talk about your vision (Gadja, 2004)
  – What do you hope to get done as a result of working together?
  – How will decisions be made?
  – What are the strategies and tasks?

• Motivational Interviewing

• Group agrees on the goals
  – Work together to craft
  – Ownership over nuance

• Integration between individual goals and group goals
• Not about memorizing goals, but true ownership
• Revisit vision from time to time
Concrete, Attainable Goals and Objectives

• SMART goals
• Do not develop goals for group if they are unachievable
• Assign personal responsibility for goals to individuals
  – Identify responsibility by name
  – Responsibility agreed to publicly
  – Mutual accountability
Appropriate Cross-Section of Members

• Collaboration doesn’t float and it doesn’t trickle down (Gardner, 2007)

• Representatives from
  – Upper management
  – Middle management
  – Front-line workers
  – Consumers

• Need the buy-in from all levels to promote it
View that Collaboration Beneficial

- Discuss limits of what a single agency can do to address a situation
- Discuss experiences with past collaboration
- Identify times when collaboration lead to change
- “Collaboration makes me better at my job”
Sufficient Time, Staff, Materials, and Funds

• Truly collaborative groups will be able to develop these internally if they have ownership
• Collaboration requires time to build
• Dedicated staff is helpful, but not necessary
• Of these, money is the least necessary
Building Relational Factors
Open And Frequent Communication

• Check-in

• Not about the number of times you talk, it is about the quality of talk
  – Connect on personal level as well as work-related level
  – Activities to learn about person outside of work environment

• Helps establish trust
Establishing Relationships

• How
  – Stress Similarities
  – Keep To The Rules In A Conversation
  – Realize That Violating Someone’s Expectations Weigh Heavily
  – Get Others To Talk
    • Don’t start on time
  – Be Altruistic – Assisting Other
  – Recognize Other’s Contributions
Establishing Relationships

• Why
  – Needed For Trust & Having the Hard Conversations
Maintaining Relationships

• How
  – Be Reliable
  – Engage In Symbolic Contact
    • Call to check in
  – Celebrate Milestones
    • Leader needs to point out successes regularly
  – Rituals And Anti-rituals

• Why
Maintaining Relationships

• How fits in our model
  – Quick successes
  – Builds Trust
  – Communication
  – Builds Appreciation for Org Culture
Flexibility/Willingness To Compromise

• Open discussions about the differences between systems
  – Systemic rewards and punishments
  – Open discussions around needs

• Revisiting the vision and reminding that the group vision may take precedence over individuals goals
Appreciation of Organizational Culture

- Discuss structure of organization
  - World view
  - Goals
  - Decision making processes
  - Systemic rewards and punishers
- Discussion of services/product
- Identify when organizational culture is a barrier to collaborative efforts
Trust

- Trust is critical to the success of cross agency collaboration
- Trust necessary for sharing
  - Trust of individual
  - Confidence in skill set
- Many of the above factors help to build
  - Credibility and openness of process
  - Establishing and maintaining relationships
  - Shared Vision
  - Appreciation of Organizational Culture
Signs Things Are Going Well (or Not)
Conflict

• Why
  – You Will Have Conflict Because You Need Each Other
    • Real or perceived conflicting goals, scarce resources
  – It Is Okay Not To Agree On Everything. What Is Necessary To Move Forward
  – Shows investment
Conflict

• How to do it constructively
  – Address the conflict
  – Be flexible
  – State your view of reality and ask clarifying questions to understand theirs.
  – If make a complaint, focus on behavior (with “I” statements)
  – May need 3\textsuperscript{rd} party to help you step “outside” of the process and view the situation from a different view
  – Revisit common goals
Conflict

• How Fit In Our Model (if done well)
  – Communication
  – Trust
  – Altruism
  – Willingness to Compromise
Scan Your Environment

• The Incredible Shrinking Group
  – People stop coming
  – Delegation of representation

• They Won’t Go Home
  – Hang out after group to talk

• Collaboration Spin-Offs
  – Partners do mini collaborations
When Not To Collaborate

- One partner manipulates or dominates
- Lack of clear purpose
- Unrealistic Goals
- Fundamental differences in philosophy
- Lack of communication
- Unequal/unacceptable balance of power
- Key interests missing from partnership
- Hidden Agendas
- Financial/time commitments outweighs benefits
Take Home

• Understand that the term collaboration may mean something different for everyone
• Be intentional about balancing structure and relational pieces
• Remember that collaboration is a process -- it ebbs and flows. Work on maintaining structure and relational pieces.
• Be intentional when bringing in new members to provide background and work on relational piece with them
Take Home

• Be intentional when bringing in new members to provide background and work on relational piece with them
• If someone is resistant, find out goal and how being part of the group can help meet that goal
• Take time to understand other members’ organizational culture
• Come up with easy, early success
• Celebrate success
Testing Our Model

• Working on model since 2008
• Actively worked with communities to build collaboration
• Have collected prospective and retrospective data
  • Focus groups
  • Surveys
  • Phone calls with members
Testing Our Model

• Group types
  – Front-line staff from multiple systems
  – Supervisors from early childhood and public health
  – Providers from health clinics
  – Key decision makers from the state departments and nonprofits
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• Doherty (1995). The why’s and levels of collaborative family healthcare. *Family Systems Medicine, 13*


Reading List