

# Building Your Partners' Capacity to Collaborate

Skills, Relationships, and the  
Creation of Future Leaders in  
Suicide Prevention

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## What Is Collaboration?

*Collaborating* is described as a “formal sustained commitment by several organizations to **enhance each other’s capacity** for a common mission by sharing risks, responsibilities, and rewards”. (p. 71, citing Himmelman 1996).

Coalitions might be considered a form of collaboration.

## **Collaborative Practice**

“Only by combining the knowledge, skills, and resources of a broad array of people and organizations can communities understand the underlying nature of these problems and develop effective and locally feasible solutions to address them.”

Lasker, RD & Weiss, ES. *Broadening Participation in Community Problem Solving: a Multidisciplinary Model to Support Collaborate Practice and Research*. 2003

## **Power of Collaboration**

“ The growing interest in using collaboration to deal with problems that affect [campus] health stems from the fact that many of these problems are complex; consequently, they go beyond the capacity, resources, or jurisdiction of any single person, program, organization, or sector to change or control. ”

Lasker, RD, Committee on Medicine and Public Health. *Medicine and Public Health: the Power of Collaboration*. 1997

## **Coalition Building**

- A process, not an intervention
- Strategic assessment & planning
- Relationship building
- Recognition of expertise, intersections and differences
- Establishing a common language and vision
- Identifies priorities & resource allocation
- Lays foundation for sustainability

## **Why are coalitions so widely used?**

Some of the most compelling reasons:

- They can “help mobilize more talents, resources and approaches to influence an issue than any single organization could achieve alone.”
- They can “maximize the power of individuals and groups through joint action.”
- They can “demonstrate and develop widespread public support for issues, actions or unmet needs.” (Butterfoss p 17)

## **Sample Phases of Coalition Building and Project Implementation & Capacity Building**

- 1) Engagement
- 2) Strategic Planning
- 3) Implementation
- 4) Evaluation
- 5) Maintenance
- 6) Sustainability



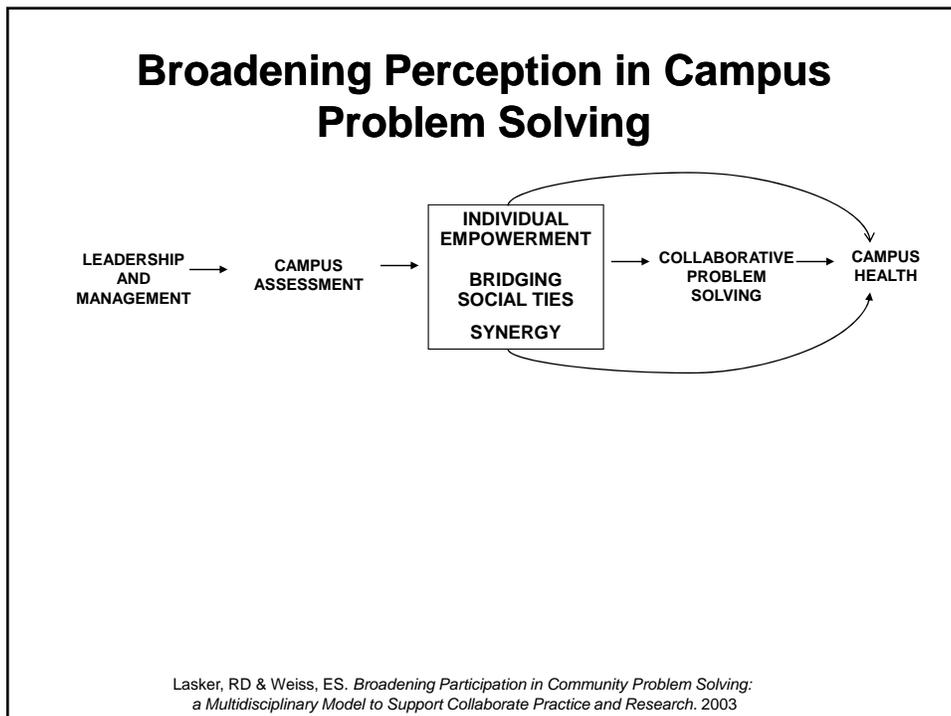
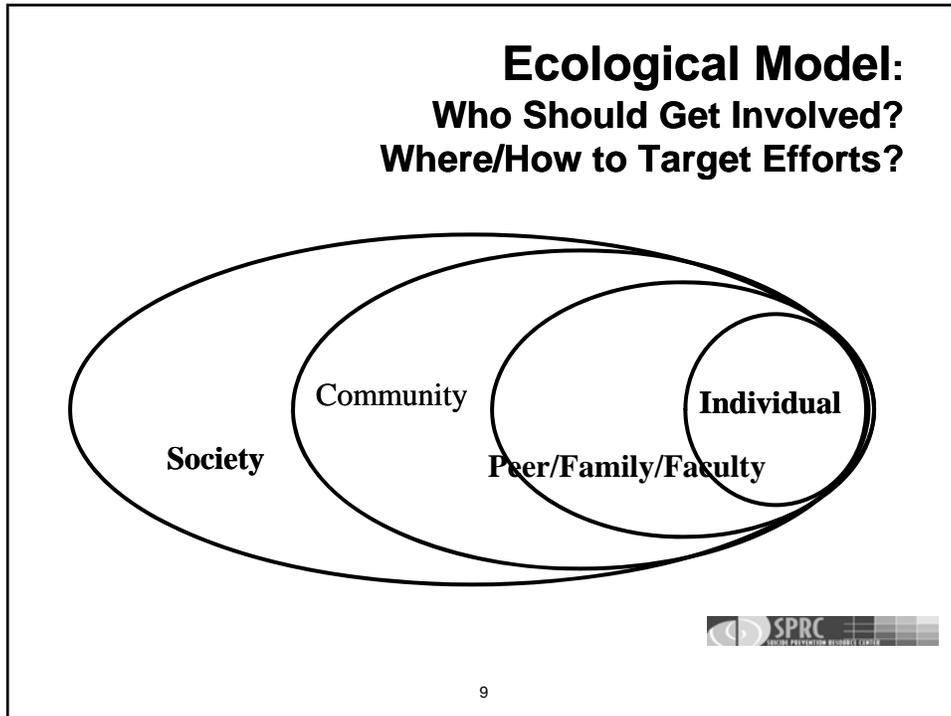
## **Campus Risk and Protective Factors: A Sample Assessment**

What strengths exist on campus and/or  
between the campus and the community?

- Linkages
- Strong programs
- Champions

What “might be and should be” (AI)?

- Demographics
- Environmental
- Needs/resources/accessibility
- Qualitative and quantitative data



## [Campus] Health Governance

“Establishing locally tailored processes that enable a broad array of [key stakeholders ] to work together on an ongoing basis to :

- 1) talk to each other about [campus] health
- 2) define and assess the health of the [campus];
- 3) identify and understand the nature of problems that affect [campus] health; and
- 4) leverage their complementary strengths and capabilities to solve [campus] health problems. The work group calls this kind of broadly participatory collaborate process [campus] health governance (CHG).”

Baxter, R.J. *What Turning Point Tells Us: Implications for National Policy*. 2001  
Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health. *Turning Point Community Health Governance Workgroup: Creating Community-Driven Structures to Advance Community Health*. 2001

## Why Do Partners Get Involved?: “100 Cups Of Coffee”

- Suicide is at the end point of a continuum of risk factors
- Leverages and strengthens resources
- It makes their jobs easier
- They are passionate about the issue
- Provides tools; improves practices
- The “end” of the dead end
- Food

## Nurturing the Process

- **Create bridging social ties** that bring people together across society's dividing lines, build trust and a sense of community, and enable people to provide each other with various kinds of support
- **Create synergy** – the breakthroughs in thinking and action that are produced when a collaborative process successfully combines the knowledge, skills, and resources of a group of diverse participants
- **Empower individuals** by getting them directly and actively involved in addressing problems that affect their lives

## Cultivating Leadership

- “Because leadership is so critical to coalition success, and the tenure of many coalition leaders is relatively short, coalitions need to continually foster and build a cadre of emerging leaders.”
- “In a study of the intermediate outcomes that might lead to coalition success, Florin et al (2000) found that coalitions that had “done a better job...in making more extensive linkages with community organizations were more likely to be rated by community leaders as producing effects”

## **Why Do Partners Stay Involved?**

- Provide meaningful engagement
- Continue to keep linkages with the bigger picture
- Infuse learning and growth
- Evolving
- Evaluate and celebrate your successes

## **Sample Work Plan For A Campus: Engagement**

- Develop working agreements with key partners
- Initial assessment and systemic planning:  
Consultation with leadership team on campus regarding the strategy for implementation of *the Connect Project*.
- Key stakeholders on and off campus identified and engaged in collaborative process
- Campus Suicide Prevention Coalition (CSPC) established

### **What Can The Key Partners/Coalition Do? Strategic Assessment and Planning**

- CSPC works on identification of the campus' risk and protective factors; counseling referral patterns; highest areas of needs and strengths, and strategies for implementation of the *Connect* Project.
- *Connect* Prevention/Intervention & Postvention protocols drafted and prepared for implementation with correlated training materials and local evaluation instruments.
- Training Plan Formed

### **Coalition in Action: Implementation**

- Review existing protocols and adaptation of *Connect* protocols for campus setting and cultural effectiveness and linkage with local resources.
- Protocols drafted and prepared for implementation with correlated *Connect* training
- CSPC identified master trainers representing gatekeepers and disciplines that would be involved with campus suicide prevention.
- Trainers conduct trainings for gatekeepers and discipline specific groups

## **Coalition Fueling The Plan: Maintenance**

- CSPC and Leadership Team will review Prevention Protocols and Crisis Plan & referral patterns to ensure that any gaps in interface and services are addressed for correction and referral mechanisms are strengthened
- CSPC and Leadership Team will refine the Campus assessment that was conducted in first year

## **Coalition: Anchoring The Efforts: Sustainability**

- Booster trainings conducted as needed for Connect Prevention and Postvention
- Protocols are instituted across campus
- Coalition ensures cohesive response and linkages on and off campus
- Resources/funding to continue efforts explored
- Coalition Leadership & Sustainability plan developed for the continued efforts

## **Sustainability**

“Without the commitment that comes from having community [campus] members involved in the design of solutions, initiatives are often disbanded after external funding ends.”

Bruner C, Greenbert M, Guy C, Little M, Schoor L, Weiss H. *Funding What Works: Exploring the Role of Research on Effective Programs and Practices in Government Decision-Making*. 2001

## **Keep Moving Forward**

**New Adventures Lie  
Ahead!**

Dove Dark Chocolate

**Questions?**  
**Comments?**  
  
Next Steps?

## **References**

- Baxter, RJ.
- Bruner C, Greenbert M, Guy C, Little M, Schoor L, Weiss
- Butterfoss
- DeJong
- Dove Dark Chocolate
- Florin et al (RI Tobacco)
- Himmelman
- Hingson...DeJong
- Langford
- Lasker, RD & Weiss, ES
- The Connect Project, NAMI NH
- Zakocs