

REFLECTIONS ON COLLABORATION

Tackling Wicked Problems

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EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES/CONDITIONS FAVORABLE TO COLLABORATION

- Wide group of participants to draw from
- Problems are growing
- Awareness of social issues is increasing in many cases
- Increasing emphasis on prevention
- Growing funding opportunities for collaborative efforts
- Increased competition
- Reduced government funding
- New leaders
- Consolidation of agencies
- Opportunity to build on existing collaborations (Heroin Task Force, Weight of the Fox Valley, STEP/Nova/Mooring, etc.)

ROLE OF LEADERS IN COLLABORATION

- Glue – brings groups together/integration
- Grease – makes things happen
- Willingness to take risks
- Vision
- Look across geographies because problems are regional – “It’s not just our problem”

CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATION

- Turf issues/competition - \$ and mission
- Lack of trust/not knowing enough about “others”
- Working in silos
- Lack of adequate capacity/resources – collaboration feels “extra”
- Coming up with shared goal/vision
- Focusing on the short-term; funding tied to short-term activities (ex. medical reimbursement)
- Misinformation
- Funder-generated issues
- Lack of awareness/knowledge of what true collaboration looks like
- Quantitative vs. qualitative measurement

LESSONS LEARNED

- Can’t force collaboration; need to be patient and honest
- Uneven commitment from partners can hamper collaboration
- Commitment/buy-in from the top is critical
- Need to grow our tolerance for risk-taking
- Sometimes we don’t even know if all partners are at the table who should be; we need to broaden our networks
- Importance of thinking outside of our comfort zones and remembering the big picture
- All partners will benefit from true collaboration
- Funders can change the rules of the game in the middle of the process