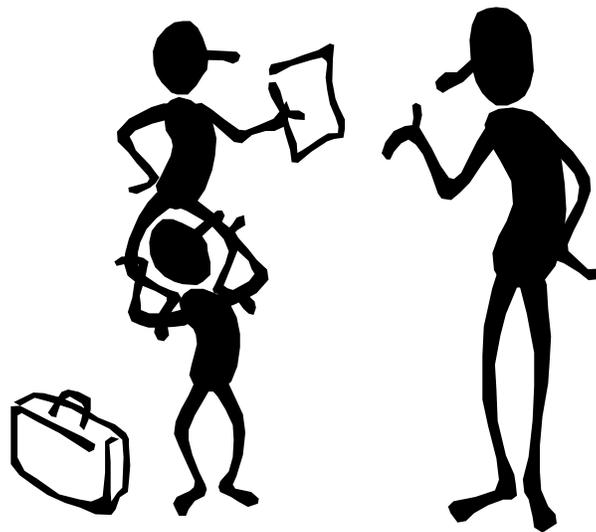# Working Together:
Communication for Partnerships

Conducted by

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Road Map

Desired Outcomes

Participants will understand:
1. The different degrees of partnership
2. How attitudes affect the way we view the people around us and the situations we face.
3. How partnerships are affected by the Spectrum of Negotiation
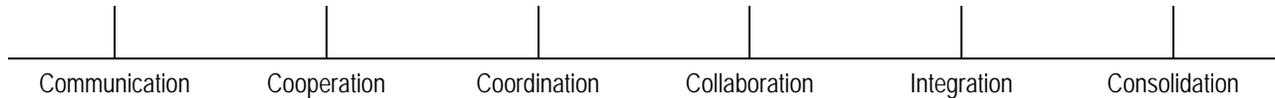4. Key communication skills that increase the effectiveness of partnerships

Agenda

I.   Welcome/Introductions/Overview
II.   The Partnership Continuum
III.   Attitudes About Partnerships
IV.   The Importance of Reframing
V.   Break
VI.   Key Communication Skills in Effective Partnerships
VII.   Closing and Evaluation

Group Agreements

1.   Listen before responding.
2.   Take turns speaking.
3.   Stretch your comfort zone.
4.   Start and end on time.
5.   Keep an open mind.
6.   Value different opinions and ideas.
7.   "Say your piece" in the room.
8.   Turn phones/pagers to silent or vibrate.

The Partnership Continuum

Communication	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration	Integration	Consolidation

Level	Characteristics
Communication	Clear, consistent and non-judgmental discussions; **giving or exchanging information** in order to maintain meaningful relationships. **Individual programs or causes are totally separate**.
Cooperation	**Assisting each other** with respective activities, giving general support, information and/or endorsement for each others' programs, services or objectives. **Policy and program decisions are often/usually autonomous** but agencies, groups or individuals can comfortably work together towards mutual gains.
Coordination	Joint activities and communication are more intensive and far reaching. Agencies or individuals engage in **joint planning and synchronization** of schedules, activities, goals, objectives and events. These efforts may be coordinated, but **policy and budget decisions are still relatively independent. Program or advocacy accountability and outcomes are distinct**, however, mutual gains are desirable and participants consider each other equal.
Collaboration	Agencies, individuals or groups willingly **relinquish some of their individuality or autonomy in the interest of mutual gains or outcomes.** True collaboration involves **actual changes** in agency, group or individual behavior, operations, policies, budgets and even staff or power resources in order to support the collective goals or ideals.
Integration	Relationships evolve from collaboration to **actual restructuring** of services, programs, memberships, budgets, missions, objectives and staff. Missions, target populations, functions and even power are shared so that the individual "parts" make up a stronger "whole." **More individuality and autonomy are surrendered.**
Consolidation	Agency, group or individual behavior, operations, policies, budgets, staff and power are united and harmonized. **Individual autonomy or gains have been fully relinquished** towards adopted common outcomes and identity.

Source: Unknown

> ✓ **Key Concept:** When opinions differ significantly, the "stakes" are high and emotions run strong, it becomes harder to move "up" the Partnership Continuum

Reframing Attitudes – Group Example

- Our attitudes (beliefs) affect the way we view the people around us and the situations we face.

- There is a fine line between describing a person's behavior and adopting an attitude (belief) about that person or situation.

- Negative attitudes keep us from being able to see the "whole picture" and limit our options for responding.   Reframing our attitudes allows us to better understand the whole picture and gives us more options for responding.

"Difficult" Behavior/Quality	Negative Attitude	Reframed Attitude
	Your Attitude About the Partner(s) or Partnership:	**Your Attitude About the Partner(s) or Partnership:**
	Your Approach to Partnership: ❒ Concession ❒ Competition	**Your Approach to Partnership:** ❒ Collaboration
	Your Potential Reaction:	**Your Potential Response:**
	Their Potential Reaction:	**Their Potential Response:**
	Result over time:	**Result over time:**

Reframing Attitudes – Individual Example

Instructions: Think of a current, potential or past partnership that fits the description of a "Bad" or "Ugly" partnership. Write down the "difficult" behaviors or qualities that you see or experience in the partnership, then complete the rest of the worksheet.

"Difficult" Behavior/Quality	Negative Attitude	Reframed Attitude
	Your Attitude About the Partner(s) or Partnership:	**Your Attitude About the Partner(s) or Partnership:**
	Your Approach to Partnership: ❐ Concession ❐ Competition	**Your Approach to Partnership:** ❐ Collaboration
	Your Potential Reaction:	**Your Potential Response:**
	Their Potential Reaction:	**Their Potential Response:**
	Result over time:	**Result over time:**

The Spectrum of "Negotiation"

Concession I Lose – You Win		Competition I Win – You Lose
Mindset = What's In It for Them (WIIFT)		**Mindset** = What's In It For Me (WIIFM)
Sounds Like: ■ What can I do for this organization that will make **them** want to work with me? ■ How can I show this organization that I'm worth **their** time? ■ I'll go along with whatever **they** want just to avoid conflict.		**Sounds Like:** ■ What will **I** get out of this? ■ How will **my** organization benefit? ■ How will this meet **my** organization's needs? ■ I'll keep persisting until **I** get **my** way.

Discussion:

1. What will happen if one partner approaches partnership from Concession while the other partner approaches it from Competition?

2. What will happen if both partners approach partnership from Concession?

3. What will happen if both partners approach partnership from Competition?

The Middle of the Spectrum

Concession I Lose – You Win	Collaboration I Win – You Win	Competition I Win – You Lose
Mindset = What's In It for Them (WIIFT)	**Mindset** = What's In It For Us (WIIFU)	**Mindset** = What's In It For Me (WIIFM)
Sounds Like: ▪ What can I do for this organization that will make **them** want to work with me? ▪ How can I show this organization that I'm worth **their** time? ▪ I'll go along with whatever **they** want just to avoid conflict.	**Sounds Like:** ▪ What is the *purpose* of our partnership? ▪ What do we *each want* from the partnership? ▪ What is our *common goal?* ▪ What *values* do we need to share? ▪ How much can our values *differ* before it affects our ability to be partners? ▪ What *agreements* can we each live with (or not)? ▪ What do we *each have* that the other wants? ▪ What will we each need to *give up* in order to make this partnership work? ▪ What will we each *gain* from this partnership? ▪ How will we handle *differences* of opinion? ▪ What does it mean and what will we do if we *can't reach agreement*?	**Sounds Like:** ▪ What will **I** get out of this? ▪ How will **my** organization benefit? ▪ How will this meet **my** organization's needs? ▪ I'll keep persisting until **I** get **my** way.

Discussion:

1. What will happen if one partner approaches partnership from Concession or Competition while the other partner approaches it from Collaboration?

2. What will happen if both partners approach partnership from Collaboration?

Encouraging Helpful Meeting Behaviors

Even the best-laid plans (i.e. agendas) can get taken over by group dynamics that are not managed well. Good facilitators understand that each person in a meeting plays a role that either helps or hinders the group process. Great facilitators know how to manage the behaviors that arise in meetings to create more Helpers and minimize the impact of Hinderers.

Helpers	How to Model/Encourage This Behavior
Builder – extends, expands or elaborates on others' suggestions	"I think there's a lot of potential in that idea. Let's explore that further." "Yes, and…"
Clarifier – solicits additional information, gives examples, restates points to increase others' understanding	"Can you say more to help me understand what you mean by that?" "So for example…"
Compromiser – modifies his/her stance when necessary in order to move forward	"I think that could work if we also do…" "I would be willing to try that if we could also try…"
Encourager – praises and supports others, builds confidence of others to participate in meetings	"I like that idea." "That's a really valuable point to bring up."
Gate Keeper – keeps communication open, encourages participation, builds relationships	"Let's see if others have additional comments before we move on." "I think that Mary and James both have interesting points of view."
Harmonizer – mediates differences, helps others find common ground	"What I hear both of you saying is…" "Given these different perspectives, let's see if we can find one area we can agree on."
Initiator – proposes new or different ideas for discussion, focuses on solutions to problems	"Based on what I'm hearing, it sounds as though we may want to consider doing…"
Opinion Giver – shares <u>pertinent</u> beliefs about the discussion and others' suggestions	"My own thoughts/feelings about this issue are…"
Opinion Seeker – solicits <u>pertinent</u> beliefs about the discussion from others	"What do you think/feel about this issue?"
Summarizer – recaps important points of the discussion in a condensed way	"These are the main points (or agreements) that I've heard during our discussion…"
Tension Reliever – uses humor appropriately or other techniques to diffuse negative feelings	
Tester – raises questions to test whether the group is considering various perspectives and is ready to make a decision	"If we move forward with this suggestion, what do you think would happen if…" "Does everyone feel that we've had enough discussion about the possible impacts of this decision?"

Preventing or Managing Difficult Meeting Behaviors

People display "difficult" meeting behaviors for a variety of reasons. When faced with these behaviors, it's important for facilitators to maintain a level of neutrality and objectivity instead of taking the behaviors personally, getting caught up in power struggles or losing "control" of the meeting process.

Hinderers	Ways to Handle
Agenda Jumper – continually changes the subject, asks questions or raises issues that will be addressed later in agenda	■ Refer back to the agenda. "That's a good question. We will get to that later in the agenda, so let's hold off on answering that for now."
Aggressor – criticizes or heckles others, is argumentative, disagrees with others aggressively	■ Refer back to the Group Agreements. "This is an important discussion that can only happen if everyone feels free to share their opinions. I'd like us all to remember that we've agreed to keep an open mind and listen before responding."
Blocker – stubbornly disagrees, rejects others' suggestions or attempts to compromise	■ Use "Changing Ruts to Rivers": focus on the *Goal* vs the Problem, *How* things could work vs Why they don't work, *Possibilities* vs Limitations, *Feedback* vs Failure "I hear that you think this won't work. We've discussed the reasons why it might not work, and now I would like us to focus on *how* we can make this work."
Competitor – tries to "one up" others' ideas, turns issues into win/lose propositions	■ Neutralize the "playing field"; use "Changing Ruts to Rivers" "I can see the value in both comments. Let's refocus on the common *Goal* that we're all trying to accomplish."
Devilish Advocate – raises questions or doubts about an issue or person in a way that keeps the group stuck, does not typically offer solutions	■ Acknowledge the question/doubt and create a "Parking Lot" of issues to be addressed later. "I agree that's important to discuss. At this time, it would be most helpful for us to either focus on solutions to that issue, or put it on our Parking Lot and address it later."
Dominator – asserts authority verbally and/or non-verbally, tries to take over, manipulates group	■ Acknowledge power/decision-making structure, then refer back to agenda and/or purpose of discussion. "I know that ultimately, it's the management team's decision about whether this will happen. Since we're having this meeting to discuss this issue, let's take this opportunity to hear everyone's opinions and ideas."
Eager Beaver – speaks first even when not called on, interrupts others	■ Acknowledge person and let him/her know what you will be doing to give everyone a chance to speak. "Bill, I'm going to interrupt you for a second because I noticed that a few other people had their hands raised first. I'd like to give Sharon the chance to speak, then Michael, then Lucina and then we'll come back to you."

Preventing or Managing Difficult Meeting Behaviors, continued

Hinderers	Ways to Handle
Entertainer – wastes group's time by showing off and telling irrelevant stories or jokes	▪ Do a time/process check. "I want to do a quick time check. We have 10 minutes left to discuss this topic, and I am not hearing that we've made a decision. Can we agree to refocus on the discussion at hand?"
Nay-Sayer – automatically rejects others' ideas, provides explanations about why things "won't work"	▪ Use "Changing Ruts to Rivers": "I know that there are things we need to consider in order for this to be successful. Before we say it won't work, though, I'd like for us to think about what our overarching *Goal* is – what is it that we're trying to accomplish? Then we can think about *How* it could work. If we do this, we might find new *Possibilities* that we hadn't thought of before."
Self-Discloser – shares own feelings, insights and experiences when they are not relevant to topic	▪ Listen for an opening (pause) or create an opening with your body language, then calmly interrupt and redirect. "Sara, I hate to interrupt you. I can tell that these are really important things for you to share. I just want to make sure that we're able to cover all the questions we're supposed to discuss and that everyone has a chance to contribute. Can we agree to move on for now, and then come back to you if there's time?"
Spotlight Seeker – Talks excessively, focuses on own ideas, problems and successes, makes others aware of his/her status in the organization	▪ Acknowledge and move on. "That's great, Sylvia. I'm going to take us back to this agenda item to make sure we've covered it."
Withdrawer – doesn't participate, resists attempts to be included, holds side conversations	▪ Reflect back your observations and ask questions. ▪ Go around the room to request each person's input. "I'm noticing that there are several side conversations going on. Is there something that should be shared with the group that is important for this discussion?" "I'm noticing that we haven't heard from everyone in the group. I'd like to go around the table and give people who haven't spoken yet the opportunity to share their thoughts, starting with [someone who hasn't been participating]."

Notes

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