#2 COALITION FORMATION STAGE

What to Expect

In this stage, the coalition is young and must generate commitment. The first step in organizing the coalition is to identify potential member organizations from each priority sector: Schools, worksites, healthcare, community-based institutions and the community at large. As each organization/agency is recruited, they begin to explore their motivations for joining the coalition, as well as potential costs and benefits of participating. Each organization should help define/refine the community issue(s) to be addressed by the coalition and share what they will need to get from/contribute to the group. As they move forward, members must balance the needs for joint action and independence. When recruiting organizations to the coalition, consider their: activities and accomplishments; contributions (power, time, talent, resources); self-interests (personal/organizational gains); and potential conflicts.

Structure

The structure of your coalition will depend on the current political, economic and social realities, as well as existing efforts and groups that are already working on related community health issues. The coalition leadership team builds the commitment of others by identifying community assets/needs and seeking feasible strategies to solve community issues. The structure of the coalition will vary, but it should use funding and coalition member resources most efficiently and effectively.

Tasks

- Initiate collaboration and cultivate allies
- Identify potential member organizations' common, complementary and competing goals
- Recruit core group of members based on community issue, organizational expertise and available resources
- Meet with potential members to discuss expectations/concerns about coalition and perspectives on key community issues
- Hold first coalition meeting and reach consensus on structure and mission
- Create ground rules for coalition functioning and meeting etiquette
- Have members complete commitment Form
- Decide how member organizations will be acknowledged publicly (e.g., use of logos)
- Develop communication and feedback mechanisms with member organizations

Products or Outcomes

- Recruitment plan
- Member roster
- Ground rules or meeting etiquette
- Membership agreements
- Mission statement (purpose)
- Coalition goals and objectives

Resources

- Potential partners list
- Invitation letter for members
- Member Commitment Letter
- Leader responsibilities
- Member responsibilities
- Stages of Team Building
- Recruiting and building a strong coalition

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