

# Organizing

- Chapter Overview
- Using Events and Activities to Engage Your Community
- Partnering for Change
- An Open-Ended Discussion of Some Terms Used

CHAPTER ONE



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# Chapter Overview

Chapter One begins our discussions of Organizing. First is a compilation of some of the most creative awareness/educational events advocates have told us about. If you have organized or attended an event about which you would like to share the details (description and planning needs), please call or write us via the contact information listed on page vi or visit us at [www.nrcdv.org/dvam](http://www.nrcdv.org/dvam) and click on Materials for the form to post a description of the event.

Next, Kim Fountain offers some means of articulating and creating new, conscientious and deliberate frameworks for coalition-building. In her in-depth analysis, Kim examines how much of the work of building coalition is just as much about self-awareness, building trust, negotiating power, practicing ethical communications and transparency, as it is about workplans, deliverables and evaluations. All comes full circle, as Kim and Brenda, the author of our *Introduction*, both write about how change is as much a matter of the journey as it is the destination.

Each chapter draws upon the expertise of its authors – past and present members of our Advisory Group and independent community-based activists – and is intended to be dynamic and organic, meaning that as our collective bodies of knowledge evolve, so will this discussion. As befits the authors, you will find in these pages a tremendous array of perspectives, experience, approaches and analyses, but always from assets- and advocacy-based orientations. We hope it elicits rich discussions and many more contributions, and that you find it useful and inspiring. Please let us know what you think! You may call or write us via the contact information listed on page vi.



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## **Reader's Guide**

# **Using Events and Activities to Engage Your Community**

*By DeeDee Burnett*

*Formerly with the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence*

### ***Note to the Reader:***

Understanding that busy, underfunded programs often do not have time or resources to devote to inventing awareness activities from "scratch," we have collected ideas for events from a variety of programs and present them here with some suggestions about how community-based programs and advocates can adapt them to suit their particular needs. Some programs shared events they plan and present with no budget at all, other programs are able to work with budgets ranging from \$50.00 to \$1,000.00, and more. Although we do include examples of activities, our intention is not so much to present advocates with a list, as it is to provide advocates with a basic framework for thinking about the purpose of awareness activities and what they want to accomplish by presenting them in their communities.



# Using Events and Activities to Engage Your Community

By DeeDee Burnett

*Formerly with the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence*

Some of the most frequent questions and requests from advocates to the Domestic Violence Awareness Project (DVAP) are related to the pressure of adding event planning to already full workloads. We understand that harried advocates often do not have the time or resources to “invent” activities from scratch. In an effort to address these requests and hopefully ease advocates' burdens, the DVAP decided to solicit and share information about the activities and events you present to commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM).

The purpose of DVAM events and activities is to raise awareness that will open people's minds to the possibility of change and move them to action necessary to make the change happen. It is exceedingly difficult, however, to know what will have meaning from place to place. And yet it is probably safe to assume that events with memorable and lingering effects will inspire participants to become ambassadors of change for your program. With a little creativity and perhaps less money, organizations can adapt, organize and present events in ways that will be meaningful for people in their communities. Infusing your activities with elements unique to your community can help ensure that events will resonate with participants, potentially inspiring them to take up the work of your program.

**With a little creativity and perhaps less money, organizations can adapt, organize and present events in ways that will be meaningful for people in their communities.**

## Creative Variations to Traditional Themes

To begin with some of the simpler and more traditional observances, we have heard many creative variations on the candlelight vigil theme, such as this example from Cangleska, Inc.

The event begins with participants walking in from four corners of a designated area, such as a town square, ultimately meeting in the center. Once there, the walkers hold a candlelight vigil that includes offering prayers. After the vigil and prayers, people from a variety of community-based programs offer inspirational speeches while participants share a meal.

- Planning time: At least one month, but organizers recommend starting earlier.
- Event budget: Approximately \$1,000.00, shared between several organizations:
  - Cangleska, Inc. provided candles, ribbons, flyers and speakers
  - Drug and alcohol program provided speakers, drum groups and advertising
  - Oglala Sioux Tribe provided escorts, traffic control and information
  - Local merchants donated food

Some groups end their vigils by placing candles in simple paper luminaries and setting them in a centrally located decorative fountain in their communities, town square or courthouse steps. Another alternative is to use glow sticks, which can be purchased in craft or party stores, or many places online. These are especially popular with younger people and can also be handy in high winds or wet weather and they provide an alternative to the traditional, while staying within the basic parameters of “candlelight vigil.”

In another example, the Napa Emergency Women's Services and Family Violence Prevention Council merged elements of a vigil and a march, using candles and luminaria to map a walk through downtown Napa, California.

Concerned citizens and service providers in Napa County met at Veterans' Park at Third and Main Streets in downtown Napa with speakers, music and refreshments to commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month with the Family Violence Awareness Vigil, highlighted by a candlelight and luminaria-studded walk through the downtown area. This event is dedicated to heightening awareness of family violence and its myriad effects, as well as disseminating resource information for those impacted by domestic violence.

- Sponsored by: Napa Emergency Women's Services and Family Violence Prevention Council
- Event budget: \$1,000.00
- Planning time: 5 months
- Work group: 8 people
- Media Promotion: Newspapers, local business magazines, local radio and television

## **Culturally Relevant Adaptations to Popular Events**

Sacred Circle, the National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women, offers suggestions on ways to adapt popular DVAM events by incorporating cultural elements and artifacts that are more reflective of their participants and audiences. In one example, Native advocates begin with a display of Silent Witnesses – life-size wooden silhouettes of domestic violence murder victims. The advocates dress the Witnesses in pictures of tribal women (with the families' permission) and wrap them in traditional shawls. The pictures and shawls transform the Witnesses and imbue the display with added layers of personal and cultural meaning. In this context, the silhouettes represent the spirits of murdered tribal women, so advocates treat them with special reverence, praying with them, smudging them, etc. In another example, a collaboration of Native advocates created purple “warrior shawls” with large purple ribbon designs for participants to wear during a Domestic Violence Awareness Month walk (Hill, 2005).

## Utilizing Existing Community Infrastructures

No matter what your geographic location, there is likely to be some community and/or cultural infrastructure already in place – recreation centers, clubs, churches, etc. It is possible to organize DVAM activities within that infrastructure, so that you are using established community events and traditions to communicate DVAM messages. Advocates can, for example, offer to write, or collaborate on writing, a newsletter article for local faith groups, or a Chamber of Commerce. Another idea for engaging community members is to bring a presentation on domestic violence and local services to an informal meeting, such as a potluck dinner, which is a tradition in many churches and neighborhood organizations.

Schools and universities can be terrific allies where public awareness events are concerned. The Women's Law Group of Vermont Law School, for example, hosts an annual Domestic Violence Awareness Panel that is open to the public.

Our purpose is to highlight the issue of domestic violence in Vermont and the resource organizations available to persons in need. The three panelists are as follows:

1. A representative from Safeline Inc. Safeline is located in central Vermont and serves domestic and sexual violence victims and survivors in Orange and Upper Windsor Counties. Safeline runs a 24 hour 7 day a week hotline, that provides support, information and referrals as well as in-person court, police and hospital advocacy.
  2. A representative from Safespace. SafeSpace is a social change and social service organization working to end physical, sexual, and emotional violence in the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) people. Safespace provides information, support, referrals, and advocacy to LGBTQQ survivors of violence and offer education and outreach programs in the wider community.
  3. A representative from the Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The Network is a feminist organization committed to eradicating domestic and sexual violence through advocacy, empowerment and social change.
- Sponsored by: The Women's Law Group of Vermont Law School
  - Event budget: \$200.00
  - Planning time: 2 months
  - Work group: 10 people

## Accessing the Media

Because local media outlets are often anxious to provide a forum for community services, organizations can rely on opportunities for media coverage on their issue. A program in Texas, for example, collaborates with local television and radio stations to offer a call-in hotline during specific broadcasts in October. The stations sponsor and promote the event, during which there is an advocate available to answer questions related to domestic violence. No matter what the programming schedule, there are station breaks, which provide a good time to advertise local services and hotline numbers. This activity is not expensive and it can be easy to organize, if it is started early enough in the year. Contact local broadcast media outlets by late spring to inquire about logistics, such as scheduling, programming or the procedure for designating a call-in line. There are also opportunities in many local media outlets for guest appearances, either on call-in radio or local news programming. Call program directors to inquire about community-based talk shows, let them know about your program's activities, and offer to make an appearance.

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence has this idea for using local radio during DVAM:

There are many wonderful songs that deal with the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. A list of songs has been compiled by Gerri Gribi and can be found on her web site [www.creativefolk.com/abusesongs.html](http://www.creativefolk.com/abusesongs.html). You could create a play list and work with the radio stations in your community to have them play some of these songs during October. They could, for example, play a song a day and mention program services during October. This is a good chance to develop or strengthen your relationships with local radio stations.

In a variation on the above idea, a program in New York has an annual tradition of working with local radio personalities and musicians on a month-long event called *Awareness Through Music*, in which advocates reach out to local radio stations and musicians, asking them to dedicate a song each day, during the month of October, to women and children whose lives have been impacted by domestic violence. At the time of each dedication, the artists and radio announcers share a brief message about domestic violence, including information about local services and hotline numbers.

As with many of these activities, after the first year, annual media events can be built in to a program's regular operations.

## New Beginnings/Events

Some communities start new traditions to acknowledge DVAM. In 1993, in the wake of three domestic violence homicides that occurred within three weeks of each other, a community-based shelter program in Pennsylvania, along with volunteers and friends and family of the murdered victims, worked together to devise a way to memorialize these and other victims and survivors of domestic violence. In their collaboration, they recalled 14 domestic violence homicides in their community over the previous four years. Focusing on those four years and 14 deaths, the organizers explored ways to memorialize the victims and call attention to the senseless loss brought about by domestic violence. Inspired by the Quilt Project, which honors people who have died from AIDS, and other examples of

transformative art, the group decided that the memorial – whatever form it took-would illustrate the social and personal impact of domestic violence. In their collaboration, the group decided to create an exhibit depicting a dinner table with personalized place settings for each of the 14 victims. They called the project *An Empty Place at the Table*, and within two months, in time for DVAM, it was on display in the county courthouse. In the years since the first exhibition, *An Empty Place at the Table* ([www.wrcnepa.org/community/empty.php](http://www.wrcnepa.org/community/empty.php)) has been duplicated and displayed in communities throughout the United States, and has inspired related projects, including an original watercolor painting by artist Julia Valenza (1995) and a documentary film, which premiered in October 2003.

*An Empty Place at the Table* carries out its goals through the organized and impassioned efforts of surviving family members and friends, advocates, and community members. Surviving family and friends create a table place setting to represent their loved one as a part of a public statement of loss and to seek changes. The exhibition and documentary film, *An Empty Place at the Table*, inspire community members to organize efforts to eradicate domestic and sexual violence within their own communities. Communities can replicate the exhibition to honor those who have been murdered in acts of domestic violence.

- **Planning time:** According to the original organizers, this event usually requires about 2-3 months planning. In their case, the domestic violence program collaborates with a local university women's center, dividing the work between four committees (Table, Public Relations, Vigil and Reception).
- **Publicity:** The event is advertised in the organization's newsletter and targeted mailings, as well as through flyers and posters, radio and television interviews, newspaper articles and a press release.
- **Event Budget:** Varies, depending upon a number of community factors, such as the strength of collaborative agreements between sponsoring organizations, and access to community support through monetary or in-kind donations.

In 2003, PCADV approached the organizers of *An Empty Place at the Table* with a request to use the original artwork within the design of a simple paper placemat that would be available to programs throughout the state. Many programs have since adopted and adapted the idea, so that every October, any number of restaurants and local programs around the US collaborate on placemat projects (placemats are offered for purchase in the *NRCDV Resource/Product Catalog* available at [www.nrcdv.org/dvam](http://www.nrcdv.org/dvam) under the Materials section).

In another community, a local domestic violence program worked with the local school district to organize an annual calendar art contest. The project was called "A Day Without Violence," which tied it thematically to DVAM. A local company printed the calendars free of charge, and each classroom in the school district got a free copy. Various groups and clubs also sell the calendars in the community, so the activity doubles as a fundraiser for the school district and local programs. In this particular example, the top 100 art entries are exhibited at the local mall throughout October. It is also possible to adapt this feature of the activity and display all of the entries as public art at various locations, or at a

community art association. It can be helpful to start early in the year, seeking sponsorships, in-kind donations and other forms of community support, because this event will require planning and collaboration, as well as an investment of time and possibly money, although this program had no budget and only one person organizing the event, and she pulled it off with three months planning time!

Given the turbulent times we live in, offering children and young people a creative outlet to express their dreams for a peaceful world is more important than ever. Perhaps that is why this year brought a record number of art and poetry entries in Betty Griffin House's annual "Day Without Violence" Calendar Art and Poetry Contest. This will be the seventh calendar featuring art by St. Johns County students ages 6-18. Out of 1,243 entries (970 works of art and 273 poems), thirteen winners have been chosen from each category to have their entries published in the "2006 Day Without Violence Calendar." These students will receive cash prizes and will be honored with a special reception and a public exhibit of their work on the first Friday in October, which is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The calendar will be distributed free to every classroom in St. Johns County, and sold by school groups as a fundraiser. In addition, the top 100 art entries will be exhibited at Ponce de Leon Mall all through the month of October.

- Sponsored by: Betty Griffin House
- Event budget: \$0
- Planning time: 3 months
- Work group: 1 person
- Media promotion: Program newsletter, newspaper, school announcements, radio

In 2007, a domestic violence program in Alaska collaborated with other community-based programs to adapt the Buddhist tradition of prayer flags, in which messages are handwritten onto brightly colored flags and hung outside so that, according to Tibetan tradition, the sentiments are channeled into all elements of nature as the flags fray in the breeze. This activity was part of an ongoing awareness campaign that urges men to take responsibility for ending violence against women. Men in domestic violence intervention and substance abuse programs, as well as boys from local middle and high schools created handwritten messages and designs on the flags. Local climbers were recruited to carry the flags and hang them at the base camp as they started their trek up the mountain, so that colorful streams waft in the breeze on Mount McKinley, sending wishes and promises from men in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to end domestic violence (Stoppa, 2007).

After inquiring as to town or tribal ordinances governing such an activity, advocates can work with support group members and school program participants to create the flags for the cost of some fabric and a few basic craft supplies. Creating and displaying the flags could be its own activity, or it could be woven into another event, such as a vigil or a march that ends with displaying the flags in a prominent, meaningful place.

Two other events include:

Banquet and awards ceremony to honor program volunteers, and their work to end domestic violence.

- Sponsored by: Coalition Against Domestic and Community Violence of Greater Chattanooga, Inc.
- Event budget: \$700.00
- Planning time: 6 months
- Work group: 5 people
- Media promotion: Program newsletter, newspaper, personal invitations

A Rally and Speak Out: "*Breaking the Silence of Violence!*"

Open microphone available for those who want to speak out against violence. We invite community members to bring their visions for the future and their commitment to bring about change in the world. Fire Engine will be there from the Conroe Fire Department with safety information for kids. We will also have a kids' coloring contest (with prizes), games and a free raffle (every half hour throughout the day). The sponsoring organization will sell t-shirts, bumper stickers and buttons, to raise funds for future activities and resources for victims/survivors.

- Hot dogs & pop at 1:30 p.m.
- Auction at 2:00 p.m.
- Candlelight Vigil at 5:30 p.m., honoring those who lost their lives from domestic abuse.
- Sponsored by: A Helping Hand for Healing Souls
- Event budget: limited, donations
- Planning time: 3 months
- Work group: Several
- Media promotion: Newspaper article, flyers

## A Few Reminders

A basic, but critical, point to remember about planning public events is the importance of setting realistic timelines, especially regarding the logistics of your activities. Public assemblies will sometimes require application or permit processes that involve town, county

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or state governments. Bureaucratic processes can be time-consuming, so it helps to be familiar with local policy and practice, and get started on that aspect of planning a few months in advance.

Funding is also important, especially if your program doesn't have a lot of extra money. If your activities will cost money to organize and present, develop relationships with supportive and altruistic people, organizations or businesses in your communities, and don't be afraid to ask them for money or in-kind support. For domestic violence organizations receiving community non-profit support (e.g.,

United Way, Volunteers of America, Red Cross), it is important to know the policies and regulations that govern their fund-raising activities. If programs are prohibited from raising funds in October, it may be helpful to hold an annual fund-raiser in another month, and earmark some of the money for a DVAM budget.

We have learned that the awareness of injustice can be quite powerful, bringing with it the potential to awaken passions for change in the world. When nurtured, these passions can seek expression in collective, transformative action (Freire, 1970; Mackie, 1980). Hill (2005) states "Awareness and educational campaigns are tools of social change." That sentiment is the basis upon which many of your authors and the members of the DVAP Advisory Group conceive of this project. (Please see page vi for more information about the DVAP.)

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# Reader's Guide

## Partnering for Change

By Kim Fountain, Ph.D

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

### Note to the Reader:

In "Partnering for Change," the author highlights different types of working agreements, factors to consider when deciding upon which agreements to enter and how, and the benefits of such agreements. After you read the article, it may be a helpful exercise to answer the following questions.

- What are some of the benefits, both internally and externally, of entering into a working relationship with another organization or group?
  - Can you identify areas within your group or organization that might benefit from help from another group or organization?
  - Are there promising practices that you have developed that you feel might benefit another group or organization?
  - Does your group or organization support collaborative work?
  - Does your group or organization have specific examples of past collaborations that might help you to form your own such agreements?
- What are some of the roadblocks or challenges to effective working partnerships?
  - What might your group or organization do to alleviate the potential of being responsible for some of these roadblocks?
- Can you name and describe some of the various types of ways to partner?
  - Why would you choose one way to partner over another?
  - Try to apply the different ways of partnering to a specific idea you have at your group or organization to see how the processes and outcomes potentially change according to the choice of type of partnership.
- Many people look toward partnerships as a way to increase the diversity of their 'cause' or to give them a sense of validation, that they are doing the right thing because they have diversity in the coalition. How might this approach to working in partnership hurt or help 'the cause'?
- What steps might be taken to help ensure that a working agreement is a true partnership? Similarly, what steps can be taken to help everyone feel welcomed to the table?
- What is the importance of good communication in a partnership?
  - What might effective communication look like?
  - What does ineffective communication look like?
  - What are some steps to trying to ensure effective communication?

- How does 'power' influence partnering for change? Give some examples of how power has been used in both constructive and destructive ways when you have tried to work with other groups.
- What are the differences between representing or speaking for a community or group in collaborative work and advocating for a community or group in collaborative work?

### **Other ideas to consider:**

- How might inter-agency partnerships affect how you do domestic violence work?
- What types of partnerships are possible in your region?
- How might your state DV coalition help make connections with other organizations?
- How might the NRCDV help with technical assistance in creating a collaborative effort around a social change agenda for your agency?
- After reading through the manual, how might the other chapters be used in highlighting the need for and formulating collaborative efforts?

# Partnering for Change

*By Kim Fountain, Ph.D*

*National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs*

In 2007, the United States House of Representatives passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), designed to ban discrimination against lesbians, gay men and bisexual people in the workplace. What many supporters did not expect as ENDA was set to be brought before the Senate was for over four hundred national, state and local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups to form United ENDA. The purpose of this quickly-formed coalition was to amend the bill to demand transgender inclusion to provide for protection of gender identity in the workplace.

Supporters of United ENDA put aside long-standing political and cultural differences and worked together to make tens of thousands of calls to their legislators to support transgender inclusion. While the bill did not pass in any form, the coalition did not view this as a loss. Rather, they consider it an historic win in which lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual (LGTB) groups and their allies realized the strength of standing and working together to make a difference on a large scale.

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), a coalition of LGTB and HIV/AIDS victim assistance, advocacy and documentation programs located throughout the country, was one of the first to sign on to United ENDA. A few months later, NCAVP found itself standing uncomfortably in opposition to many of these allies in its refusal to support the passage of The Matthew Shepard Act. This proposed legislation, named for a young gay man murdered by homophobes, is designed to help investigate and prosecute LGTB hate violence. It would seem like a natural bill for NCAVP to support, however, after having passed the House of Representatives as a stand-alone bill, once it reached the Senate, it was paired with the Department of Defense spending budget. NCAVP decided we could not support a bill attached to war spending. The talks among NCAVP members were difficult because passage of the Matthew Shepard Act would have benefitted those we are mission-driven to help and many of these people may have wanted us to sign on regardless of the Department of Defense spending. Though our opposition was important to our coalition, it was not easy to be the odd group out of the larger effort. Despite these differences, NCAVP remains committed to United ENDA.

These two examples illustrate some important aspects of working in unity:

- There is strength in unified diversity
- Working together takes a great deal of effort
- Change can be effected by coalition work but may take a long time
- Unity should not come at the expense of forfeiting a group's values
- Disagreements do not have to signal the end of working together

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located. Environmental activists Angela Bischoff and Tooker Gomberg (n.d.) offer the following, "If you go to one demonstration and then go home, that's something, but the people in power can live with that. What they can't live with is sustained pressure that keeps building, organizations that keep doing things, people that keep learning lessons from the last time and doing it better the next time." Working together in some capacity increases the ability to enact positive changes like those advocated by Bischoff and Gomberg, ones that truly trouble the status quo.

Early efforts to bring public attention to the issue of domestic violence included a great deal of cooperative organizing. While this may indeed be an effective strategy for creating change, working together in a more purposeful manner can also translate into a smoother, more trusting relationship with colleagues, leading to much more cooperative and productive

interactions which ultimately make the work easier and provide for more effective services for the survivor. It can also result in:

- Less stress for staff
- Greater potential for dynamic and creative solutions
- Increased ability to do legislative/community advocacy with allies
- Increased exposure to potential clients
- More access to the experiences and knowledge of those in various fields
- More access to "higher ups" through linkages
- Increased funding opportunities through linkages
- More efficient use of existing resources
- Stronger social networks
- The production of new information
- Greater influence

As noted in the *Coalition Building Little Black Book* (Goodspeed & Lechterman, n.d.), coalition-building also creates solidarity which in turn can translate into opening doors that were once closed. They write, "People often take notice when groups with very different purposes come together for a single cause. When [pro-] choice groups join with LGBT groups and environmental groups and fair trade groups... they unify their message, but they also expose individual members to different elements of progressive community."

As many activists who have worked with other activists and organizations can attest, collaboration is ideal in theory, a great deal of work in practice and, when done well, it is worth the effort. This chapter seeks to outline different types of working agreements, factors to consider when deciding upon which agreements to enter and how, and the benefits of such agreements.

## Working Together: Are There Options?

The process of building coalitions and fostering collaborative efforts can be either methodical and lengthy or quick and somewhat haphazard. Unfortunately, the formation of coalitions and collaborations is quite often the result of the need to react to a situation in a timely fashion. Thus, time restrictions can drive the process, and in this, many of the vital aspects of coalition building and collaboration are lost or disregarded for the purposes of expediency. If this is the case, perhaps once the issue has been addressed and if the coalition or collaboration is to continue, work might be done on strengthening ties. At times haste may prove inevitable, but for the best results for all involved, ideally, the process will be clear, not rushed, and productive. Ideally, coalitions or collaborations should begin, even if loosely, prior to any need to react to something. Regardless of how the partnership comes together, care should ultimately be taken to ensure that it benefits all equally or in an agreed-upon manner.

No one step-by-step outline is suitable for every attempt to build a coalition or to form a collaborative agreement. Building partnerships does, however, involve a number of measures ranging from establishing good communication and agreements on goals, to acknowledging and addressing differences in power, to learning how to negotiate and appreciate differences. Frequently, though, these measures are not identified or taken, leading to disastrous results, most often for those with the greatest amount to lose. What needs to be initially determined and revisited throughout is if the benefits of the collaborative effort outweigh the work needed to accomplish the goal.

The initial investment of collaborative work may feel as if it is actually detracting from your goals, but necessary groundwork must be done first in order to maximize the mutual benefit. In group work, "Organizations and community members share risks, responsibilities and rewards by working as partners. This requires a high level of trust and commitment to the collaborative process by decision makers and collaborative members" (Center for Civic Partnerships, n.d.). Stated another way, "collaboration flourishes in a climate of trust, allowing team members to stay problem focused, not personality focused, and promotes efficient and effective communication and coordination. Trust is produced in a climate that includes 4 elements: honesty, openness, consistency, and respect" (Brown et al, 2003).

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(Center for Civic Partnerships, n.d.).

## Types of Working Relationships

There are various types of linkages that can be made to increase productivity and help with establishing clarity around expectations. The following is a preliminary list, meant only to offer an outline or suggestions:

- **Coordination.** Almost no depth of involvement between the agencies occurs. Coordination requires little more than communication about the work that people are doing so as to minimize overlap. It is meant to allow for greater productivity through opening up more options to get work done. The goal in this case remains constant and specific, basically, to not replicate efforts.
  - Domestic violence service providers in a similar geographic region may decide to hold their support groups at different times of the year so as to not overlap with each other. This will allow more options for survivors to be able to access a group at the beginning of a cycle.
  - Groups and organizations may want to coordinate outreach efforts to various marginalized communities so that more people are reached with less effort.
- **Cooperation.** In cooperative efforts, the parties involved work together to achieve a common, specific goal that remains constant. Groups and individuals agree to share their work, but do not greatly alter what they do. The activities tend to be informal; however, there must still be a level of trust that allows the work to be completed.
  - Groups may decide to work on a legislative awareness day together.
  - Domestic violence coalitions may host a regional LGTB awareness training or a discussion group.
- **Collaboration.** At times, community-based organizations, social service agencies, and other such groups have a need to work with one another in order to either achieve a goal that they could not accomplish alone or that they need to accomplish in a time or cost frame that they could not manage alone. From collaborative work, a new product or a new process meant to benefit all is created, while each group maintains its identity. Gray (1989) defines collaboration as an emergent, dynamic process “through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.” The goals of collaboration may shift and change over time.
  - An LGTB domestic violence service agency that does not have a shelter may work with a mainstream shelter to provide services to gay male survivors. The two agencies may establish an agreement so that the shelter receives trainings and technical assistance and the agency does the initial screening and their clients receive shelter.
- **Coalition.** A coalition is a structured arrangement for cooperation and collaboration between otherwise unrelated groups or organizations, in which each group retains its identity but all agree to work together toward a common, mutually agreed-upon goal. The coalition formed has its own identity, though it operates through the groups that comprise it. Success depends upon the willingness of those involved to create a meaningful working relationship. Different people look to coalitions for different reasons: some want only to accomplish a goal and then allow the coalition to fold, while others may feel like long standing coalitions are powerful forces for change on a broad level, and still others may come and go as the needs or opportunities arise.

No single type of working arrangement is suitable for all goals or for all people who might have something to contribute to the ultimately desired results, however, once the type of working relationship is decided upon, work to define the relationship should happen in an agreed-upon manner. Some decisions to work through will include:

- Why are you entering into a working agreement,
- How many others will be involved,
- Who decides whom is involved,
- What work is expected from whom,
- How long of a time commitment will be expected and
- How decisions are made.

Working toward as much clarity as possible early on will help to ensure a smoother working relationship in the future. As there are so many potential areas for tensions to arise, both within and outside the collaborative effort, it will help to have clarity about the structure so that the group is not working on structure and issues at once, which may lead the group to implode before achieving any goals. Note, however, that even if similar words are used to describe the relationship, different definitions may come into play, as in the case, for example, of a shelter that may claim to offer services to all women but not be culturally in the right place to work with an Orthodox Jewish woman or with a Deaf woman.

## Potential Pitfalls Early in the Process: Building Tension

Despite some of the best and most honorable intentions, there are instances in which things do not work out or in which the amount of work involved just to be in the same room is tremendous. Some of the drawbacks to working together are described below, not to discourage the practice, but to shed light on some potential issues and to encourage proactive and creative problem-solving. Working together is positive; the potential flaws arise in the implementation.

When concerns are disregarded, voices not heard, and only the powerful (even as defined within the small group) are represented, we risk duplicating the power structures we are trying to dismantle. A solid coalition or collaboration will value differences. Members will

**A solid coalition or collaboration will value differences.**

understand that negative framings of differences are commonly used against all of us by common oppressors. Author and activist Angela Davis, in discussing organizing, describes as a barrier the “problematic...degree to which nationalism has become a paradigm for our community-building processes. We need to move away from such arguments as ‘Well, she’s not really Black.’ ‘She comes from such-and-such a place.’ ‘Her hair is...’ ‘She doesn’t listen to ‘our’ music,’ and so forth. What counts as Black is not so important as our political coalition building commitment to engage in anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic work” (Center for Cultural Studies, n.d.). Author and activist Elizabeth Martinez reframes how groups can reconceptualize difference and enter into positive working relationships, “We have to fight together because there is a common enemy. Especially if you are up against an administration being divisive, I think everybody has to come together and form an alliance or a set of goals together” (Center for Cultural Studies, n.d.). Coalitions that allow some members use of oppressive tactics to silence differences in approach or desired outcomes are often as destructive as the forces that they are organizing against.

## Power and Practice

People come together over things that incite them to some sort of action or desire for action. They are often eager to “do something” and may feel that the immediacy takes precedence over the process. Indeed, at times, expediency is a key factor in a response, but there are still ways to be fast *and* effective. Groups and individuals quite often come to the table already formed and with certain ways of communicating and following certain structural procedures. These set ways can sometimes cause internal tensions at the table. In other instances, some people see themselves as natural leaders who take charge. When combined with very busy people who will sometimes feel the need to let other people take this control, the relationship may develop into a very top-down decision-making situation. For some who want to do collaborative work and not put in a great deal of effort while still reaping some of the benefits, this may be a fine option; for others, this may not suffice. In still other situations, groups with power may expect that their experience or wealth should translate into more control. They may approach the relationship with good intentions, saying they are seeking to “empower” those in the group with less power, or they may offer their resources as a way to get things done quickly without understanding that the quick fix may be damaging or offensive to others in the group. These types of assumptions may result in a replication of the very systems or similar systems that the coalition or collaborative effort is trying to dismantle.

**How power plays out in collaborative work will have to be examined in each situation.**

How power plays out in collaborative work will have to be examined in each situation. If communication breaks down or if power is abused, trust is eroded. Without trust, the end situation will be flawed, in some instances, beyond repair. An example of this type of mistrust occurred when the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project (AVP) was approached to conduct a series of trainings on LGTB and queer/questioning (Q) youth for a mainstream youth services provider. After the first training, AVP realized that the leadership of the organization had no

intentions of changing its policies regarding LGTBQ youth and brought AVP in mostly to demonstrate a commitment to LGTBQ youth because they were in the process of being sued for homophobic, heterosexist and transphobic practices. AVP pulled out of the trainings and agreed to resume them only when there was a demonstrated commitment by the leadership and staff of the agency to challenging and working to change their oppressive behavior. In communicating one thing while meaning another, the youth service provider was deceptive in their request to work with AVP and this nearly ruined the relationship between the two organizations. It was not until trust could be rebuilt that the collaboration could resume. This involved several face-to-face meetings, courage on behalf of the AVP staff to outline the issues while keeping in mind that there were LGTBQ youth at risk as time passed, and a willingness and commitment of the youth services provider to both work at change and to show the results.

Some other communication breakdowns and power imbalances that arise or get invoked during collaborative moments can include:

- People choosing to not share knowledge because they see policing information as a source of power.
- Large organizations calling smaller organizations to the table simply to be able to claim that they have community buy-in or for the sole purpose of demonstrating to a funder some form of community involvement. Members of community groups are asked to speak and tell their stories in ways that exploit them.
- A strong imbalance in participation where some groups make decisions while others are asked only for advice or “input” based upon a pre-determined agenda.
- Projects that fall apart due to lack of buy-in. Groups that engaged in collaborative work solely to ensure a funding stream may pull out once the funding stops, resulting in a sense of betrayal for those who may have been committed to and invested in the actual process of collaboration.
- A project focuses less on the constituents or communities targeted by the project, and more on the funding opportunity so that, for example, once the funds are received and spent, the product remains unfinished. The smaller agencies may have put in a great deal of work with no return, especially if the one with more power claims ownership of the idea, funds or collaboration.
- Those with more resources may become frustrated by those with fewer resources and so may try to run the process.
- Too often people go to those they know and this may result in not enough diversity among group members, not having the right players at the table and, worse, tokenization of groups called to the table for “diversity.”
- People are targeted for participation because they represent a demographic need. These people are often asked to only represent that one part of their identity and not their whole being.

When work-based relationships develop in any of the ways described above, less-resourced and/or community-based organizations often experience *cooptation*. The result is the absorption of the work of smaller or less powerful groups into the work or identity of a larger or more powerful group. In collaborative work, this may take many forms:

- Some may become frustrated upon continually being told that their concerns need to be put off until the “big wins” occur. Those putting off a less powerful group’s ideas may have no intentions of offering full inclusion.
- When a “big win” occurs, the more powerful group may take the credit by virtue of its ability to communicate the win to press, etc. while less powerful groups might fear that to say anything in opposition might result in losing access to the group.
- Representatives of marginalized communities may feel forced to compromise their concerns or ideals in order to maintain a place at the table so that they can continue to try to fight for their community.

**Cooptation... is the absorption of the work of smaller or less powerful groups into the work or identity of a larger or more powerful group.**

- Various groups become angry or resentful of comparisons between communities and begin to create hierarchies of oppression.
- Common visions for success become biased toward the goals of those with power.

Competition for limited funding streams is often a site for intense cooptation. One example that seems to occur time and again is when large community-based organizations apply for government funds. The request for proposals (RFP) for these funds often contain sections that make clear that working with certain marginalized groups is to the advantage of the applicants. Quite often the intentions behind such suggestions are good. The result, however, when the funding is at the heart of the applicant's reaching out to what they feel are representatives of these marginalized groups, is too often disastrous or disheartening. This is further complicated, of course, when it is marginalized groups applying for funding and then exploiting other marginalized groups in their efforts to secure or justify the funding.

Cooptation is certain to lead to the demise of any good working relationship and serves to foster mistrust of the possibility to do real collaborative work as well as mistrust of the offending group or organization. Even if a group of people continues to meet regularly and to produce products, change or networks, if groups have been co-opted, the group may not be successful in terms of collaboration.

The misuse of power is often most clearly exposed when communication begins to break down. In these situations, people are often left frustrated and with little incentive to participate. Without participation, there is no use in partnering because little work can be accomplished. Establishing a solid line of communication is a fundamental aspect of developing a solid working relationship.

Communications can break down in the following ways:

- Too much destruction and not enough building are common examples of a lack of a clear direction or enough understanding of a project. When this happens, people tend to tear down ideas rather than suggesting solutions. It is often much easier to poke holes in a plan than to actually put alternatives in place, but this means little is changed.
- People form cliques in collaborative efforts and rather than bringing issues to the table, they may choose to only talk amongst each other and give each other support, not realizing that others may feel the same way or perhaps that the problem may be resolved through communication.
- More powerful factions may close down communications in order to keep their hold on the work.
- People may decide they cannot spend time educating those engaging in oppressive behavior and so may choose to leave the collaborative effort.
- People may feel that to have to bring a point of contention up more than once means that they are not being heard and so may harbor resentments, not unreasonably, around feeling silenced.
- Lack of a shared vision or mission or agreement about the problem or issue to be addressed.
- Lack of consistency in the messaging of the work of the group to the outside world may make the group appear disjointed or send the message that there is internal

conflict and allow people to dismiss the work. This may lead to more work for the group in having to 'clean up' the misinformation.

- No way to measure or evaluate success. This results in several types of problems such as not being able to develop messaging around successes, not understanding why some efforts did not succeed and not knowing how various strategies and tactics need to be adjusted to meet a goal. In more serious situations, the goal may even need to be adjusted. It also means that it is difficult to know if or when the group should disband.

Any of the above can be the downfall of a group and/or a phenomenal waste of time, energy and funds. When this occurs, the fallout is most difficult on those with the greatest investment in the community and in the project. This should not be confused with the group or organization that has invested the most money or the most time; it should be measured by who has the most to lose, relatively speaking. It is often community-based organizations staffed by and working with marginalized people who find themselves placed in a position in which they do a tremendous amount of work relative to their resources and yet are often denied decision making power, denied ownership, receive little or no return for their investments (in terms of services for their constituents) and held accountable to the standards of bigger organizations. What initially may look like a partnership may turn out to be exploitation. With a commitment to planning and communication, however, much of the above can be either prevented from happening or dealt with if it does happen.

## Easing the Tensions

In collaborative work, as in much of life, differences can translate into strength. Diversity within coalitions and collaborations formed to end domestic violence is important, and that diversity may include everything from regional location to race, class, gender expression, abilities, age, sexuality and immigration status, to types of agencies, budgets, government connections and much more. If partnering is approached through respect, this diversity will enhance the process of setting goals. It is useful to remember that in joining together diverse groups, there are going to be different sociocultural ways of addressing everything from forms of engagement and methods of communication to ways of setting goals and the formation of expectations. Most individuals from oppressed communities know when they are being used or taken advantage of or exploited. Still, there are questions that can be asked by all involved when working together:

- Is the arrangement working for you?
- Are you being heard?
- Are your concerns being taken seriously?
- Are only the same few people allowed to speak?
- Is work being divided equally amongst group members?
- Are all expected to make fair contributions?
- Does everyone have an equal say in decisions?
- Are you a part of creating the structure?
- Is your organization being asked to donate equally to others?
- Are groups that enter later given similar opportunities and expectations?
- Is credit given where it is deserved?

**...in joining together diverse groups, there are going to be different sociocultural ways of addressing everything from forms of engagement and methods of communication to ways of setting goals and the formation of expectations.**

## Self-Advocacy Within Coalition and Collaboration Building

Many service providers enter the field of social services because of a desire to help people in need. What quickly becomes apparent is that providing help is contingent on many factors such as the mission of the organization, rules and regulations around funding and legislation, training options and how much time a provider has in a day compared with the amount of work that needs to be accomplished. All these factors as well as fearing or refusing to acknowledge rather than celebrating differences in culture, language, religion, race, ethnicity, ability and sexuality or any number of other potential sites of difference, determine how well or effectively services are or can be provided, and, consequently, what also results as gaps in services for survivors. When work is done that is mindful of the ultimate goals of safe and effective outcomes for the communities and populations served, however, it expands the spheres of influence to include a far greater diversity of potentially helpful parties and greatly improves advocacy.

**Working together should increase our capacity to advocate for those who come to us for help, for our agencies and groups, and for ourselves.**

If parties that work together cannot, do not, or are stopped from advocating for themselves and the people who come to them for help, this leaves power imbalances in place which replicate and utilize many of the same imbalances used in other forms of violence and oppression. Working together should increase our capacity to advocate for those who come to us for help, for our agencies and groups, and for ourselves. Advocacy takes on numerous forms and meanings in collaborative work, including:

- Active promotion of a cause or principle
- Actions that lead to a selected goal
- Work by one organization or group to help address the wrong-doings of another

Advocacy within collaborative work must ultimately take into account the needs of the people that agencies are trying to help. Working together involves what trainer and advocate Pat Ferraioli terms “compassionate honesty,” or being honest with whomever you are connecting while also maintaining respect and caring for how you interact with that person. In doing so in the context of collaborative efforts and coalition building, it may help to ease some tensions that tend to arise, especially if there are a variety of different interests represented at the table.

Chuck Graham, a disabilities rights activist, offers a set of short guidelines that will help to ground a group effort in principles that will help to minimize conflicts. According to Graham (1991), coalition building should include:

- PRIDE** in who we are, what we stand for and what we can accomplish;
- OUTREACH** to other groups and individuals who share common goals;
- WISDOM** in knowing about changing what needs to be changed;
- ENERGY** to put into the effort -- not all organizations have a great deal of resources, but energy and enthusiasm are effective alternatives;
- RESPECT** for other coalition members -- must be willing to work at establishing and maintaining communication, both through listening and through making our opinions heard.

## Case Study

A clear example of strong and effective collaborative effort is the New York State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) Domestic Violence Network. The Network is a large, multidisciplinary group of direct service providers, community-based agencies, advocates, educators and policy makers who are working on behalf of LGBT communities affected by domestic violence. Representing an incredible degree of diversity, the efforts of the Network are often quite complicated, both with respect to its interactions with groups that do not understand LGBT domestic violence, as well as with one another. It has made a conscious effort to establish good communication, set realistic goals, and quite importantly, invite opinions and ideas, especially when matters become controversial.

Since its inception, the Network has on numerous occasions successfully leveraged more effective services for LGBT survivors of domestic violence than if any of the agencies tried to do so on their own. For instance, as a Network, members have shared their resources, helped one another in working on policy issues, developed consistent language and strategies in providing excellence in services to LGBT survivors, and leveraged a significant amount of funding from the New York state and local governments for services to LGBT survivors of domestic violence. Members bring their expertise and interests in policy, law, service provision, community organizing, grass roots activism, and fundraising; their contacts; and decades of combined history in working to end domestic violence, all in the hopes of improving services and safety for LGBT people. Some of the ways that the Network maintains its smooth and inclusive functioning include:

- An annual meeting for training and business purposes is held in an area as accessible as possible to members from across the state.
- Technical assistance is offered to all members.
- A tiered set of membership guidelines allow for different levels of participation.
- Committees are responsible for setting and working toward, and in some cases, implementing the goals of the Network.
- Monthly calls are conducted for the entire Network and each committee.
  - Agendas are sent ahead of time and minutes are taken and distributed generally within 24-hours.
  - A moderator keeps the discussion focused.
- Decisions are put to the group, for consensus-based “I can live with the decision” approach and resolution.
- Members can access one another via a group email address.
- Co-production of events, trainings, advocacy efforts, and legislative visits are highly encouraged by group members.

- New members are contacted regularly to check in and an extra effort is made to help train them and their agencies on LGBT-related domestic violence services.
  - New members have a special breakfast at the annual meeting.

In addition to having to establish with the general public that domestic violence exists and is worth addressing, over the years, advocates have had to create a sense of legitimacy that allows them to access funding and legislative options. Added to all this is the need to provide a broad range of services to survivors, and working together quickly became imperative and remains so to this day. Much of this struggle to provide services has to do with the fact that those who are most often battered – women -- and those who make up the preponderance of domestic violence program staff – women -- must engage systems made up of mostly men in order to receive funding, introduce or change legislation, and to model change for other men. Those who support full and knowledgeable inclusion of LGBT people in domestic violence services push against all this as well as against those who are prejudiced against LGBT people.

Some arguments the Network hears are:

- We do not believe that women can batter or that men can be victims.
- We do not offer shelter to men, not even gay men.
- How am I supposed to know which one is the victim?
- We have no idea what transgender means and we just cannot deal with that right now.
- We do not care if he calls himself a woman, we cannot house him.
- We do not know what to do with a lesbian batterer.
- We have no referrals so even if we can serve the person, there are no more options.

Many from historically disenfranchised communities have heard similar types of resistance and excuses for not providing the full range of services to their communities. Within this set of odds, partnering for change means partnering for strength. Partnerships that are diverse tend to be stronger and more versatile in their strategizing. Working together can help these communities to have their voices heard within the larger DV movement. Working together to build a more inclusive and effective strategy will also help those in the DV movement to shape and work toward goals that do not revictimize survivors. In this work, LGBT DV Network members are all too familiar with the imperative to quickly and consistently establish good communication. The need for such communication comes down to the very basic fact that many providers either do not know the words Network members use or do not often connect words in the manner that Network members do. For instance, most LGBT DV Network members can relate stories about having to explain what is meant by “transgender” before they can even begin to discuss working with a mainstream shelter to house a transgender person.

## Establishing Good Communication

Sharing information is key to purposeful and productive collaboration and coalition building. Those involved directly in the collaboration or coalition must be able to communicate with one another, although not everyone has access to a computer, cell phone, or time to meet. Establish effective communication in a variety of directions and through a variety of mediums and forms. It is also important that all information, including agendas, meeting minutes, and calendars, should be shared openly and often. "This links individual and [coalition-based] activities to the big picture and how each member contributes to the overall functioning of the [coalition]" (Brown et al, 2003).

Good communication is critical, as the following reasons help to make clear:

- Communication keeps everyone in the loop about what is happening and allows them to deal with changes as they arise.
- The better the communication, the more quickly an organization can respond to crises or to good news.
- Communication means that more people and a greater diversity of opinions will be shared and heard.
- When people feel heard, they are often more invested in the process and the group.
- Problems and potential problems are more likely to be shared in the open rather than having them sit and turn into larger problems.
- Good communication helps to forestall rumors, which can tear a collaborative effort apart.
- When things are not working quite right or effectively, good communication helps address them quickly and efficiently.

(Rabinowitz, 2007)

In larger groups such as coalitions, the group will have to work a little harder throughout the process to ensure that communication is a priority. If the coalition is temporary and quickly assembled, it may help if those in attendance are able to make quick decisions for whatever group they represent. For coalitions that are longer term, there are several ways to establish and maintain good communication, some of which can be adapted and used for shorter term collaborations also.

- Establish the group process as early as possible, e.g.,
  - Outline how decisions are made,
  - Discuss ways to address tensions before they arise,
  - Encourage everyone to participate in the decisions so that they can feel as if they are a part of the group,
  - Decide upon expectations from group participants and remind people now and then what is expected from them.
- Face-to-face meetings help tremendously. One of the best ways to share information, produce new ideas and build group solidarity is to meet face-to-face, but this needs to be done thoughtfully.

- Meet face-to-face as often as possible, but not so much that meeting becomes the focus and the actions are lost.
- Create and distribute an agenda, preferably in advance. Make certain to include an open items section for anyone to add to during the meeting.
- Make certain minutes are taken and circulated to those in attendance as well as those who could not make it.
- Welcome new people to the meetings and give updates that summarize what is happening without taking up too much valuable time.
- Try not use short cuts, abbreviations, and jargon that only a few at the meeting will know, as this alienates participants.
- Rotate meeting leaders/facilitators to share what might be perceived as power.
- If members have access to computers and the internet, various internet-based forums (e.g., care2.com, idealist.org) allow people to create group-based accounts to post minutes, have a list serve, and post and store documents. If someone misses a meeting, wants to get caught up upon joining or if information needs to be shared, this is an excellent way to do it.
- Mentoring new members allows the coalition to operate smoothly. Mentorship communicates that the coalition is invested in its members and allows newer members to ask questions freely and in both the larger group and in one-on-one situations. This form of communication keeps the civil rights imperative “each one teach one” in mind. In this manner, mentorship provides for excellent capacity-building. Mentorship also helps develop a sense of fit into the coalition, in that they accommodate members’ different strengths, abilities, and levels of investment. In setting up the mentorship, pair those who know a great deal about the work with those who may not know as much. This will prove fruitful to both as it will allow for new insights and clear roadmaps.
  - If there are not enough people who can mentor, try to offer additional meetings on building skills related to the work that new members can attend. Depending on the goal(s), this may include details of the work from start to end, different jobs within the work and how to do them, letter writing campaign skills, the parameters of educating legislators and developing talking points with community members about issues.
- Establish committees. Dividing work up allows for a broader range of accomplishment and also attracts a more diverse group of participants who may feel that they relate more to the committee work. Committees also allow for smaller groups to meet and share information. The smaller size also tends to translate into more work done more quickly because communication is more contained.

Setting communication standards will go hand in hand with developing your goals and structure. Certainly you want good communication going into a working relationship, but the nuances will be added as the work begins. A solid understanding of the structure and goals may take time, but it is worth the effort. Once this is all established, however, it should not all be set in stone. Build in mechanisms for change as your group grows and changes. Foreclosing options may lead to stagnation or power imbalances.

## Setting Goals

There are several aspects to having and maintaining a coalition so that it moves in the direction(s) and timeframe agreed upon by the members. This section suggests some of the steps to consider.

How a coalition or collaboration is structured is up to the participants and their goals. Goals and objectives must be clearly defined and agreed upon, even if there is hope for room to grow and diversify in the future. Remember, it is imperative to try to turn goals into actions. A great deal of time, energy and commitment goes into a successful working agreement, and, ideally, the outcomes – reaching the group’s goals – will be well worth the effort placed in the initial groundwork. As goals are being identified, it is vital that the benefits to each group are also defined.

Too often, however, participants are not transparent as to why they are entering a relationship and what, even a few steps down the road, they expect to gain from such work. During the process of goal-setting, groups in collaboration or coalition must insist on principled collaboration, meaning they must “be insistent, persistent and consistent with collaboration partners around principles of respect, safety, support, and justice” for themselves and the communities they are trying to help (Ferraioli, n.d).

The following are a few suggestions to consider when setting goals and beginning the work of turning them into reality:

- Set different levels of goals, from dreaming big to more quickly attainable goals.
- Invite all potential stakeholders, key leaders, and change agents to participate, including people who:
  - Live with the problem/issue,
  - Have the power to change the problem and
  - Have the technical expertise to address the problem.
- Make certain the problem or problems are clearly defined and analyzed.
- Choose a way to make decisions, for example, consensus, majority vote, or two-thirds agreement.

**During the process of goal-setting, groups in collaboration or coalition must insist on principled collaboration, meaning they must “be insistent, persistent and consistent with collaboration partners around principles of respect, safety, support, and justice” for themselves and the communities they are trying to help.**

(Ferraioli, n.d)

- Create linkage agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities. These types of agreements set out the parameters of what each party can expect from the other(s) and generally include:
  - Agency names and brief description, such as the mission of each,
  - The issue to be addressed by the formation of the agreement,
  - What each group can expect to do for the other,
  - What each group can expect from the other and
  - Signatures and dates.

Beginning the work:

- Persist in efforts to explain distinctions and connections between privacy, confidentiality, and safety.
- Assign methods and responsibilities for action.
- Establish ways in which to make public statements. For example:
  - Who will make the statement,
  - How statements are to be released,
  - How statements are to be agreed upon and
  - What media outlets will be used.
- Designate point people for meeting with non-coalition members (if everyone is making contacts on their own, it may duplicate efforts).
- Decide upon ways in which to mobilize the group for action, for example, rallies, legislative visits, vigils, demonstrations.

Throughout the work:

- Resist cooptation, collusion and demands for information.
- Spend time to continually evaluate the workings of the partnership, but make certain that evaluating the process does not take away too much energy from accomplishing tasks.
- Make certain that you have agreed-upon methods to evaluate work:
  - Celebrate the successes and acknowledge the efforts that may not have resulted in the successes and
  - Learn from mistakes.
- Institutionalize change within the group or agency in order to ensure that the work does not fade away when the coalition either folds or moves on to other projects.
- Include short-term, achievable goals to provide success early on. Long-range goals will require more time and commitment.
- Check in with one another and work through all changes so that everyone is clear.

- Make certain to value the input of everyone at the table, though this does not mean that every suggestion can be realized.
- Give public acknowledgement to those involved.
- Encourage solidarity. It is helpful for coalition members to stand behind public statements outside the range of their turf as a means of reinforcing the message that perhaps impacts one member more than others. This can be done in many ways such as supporting or issuing public statements in times of crisis or tension.
- Mark important milestones. They help to keep track of where you are going and where you have been.
- Lasting social change requires collaboration, and collaboration is helped along greatly when participants bring what Gita Gulati-Pardee of OpenSource Leadership Strategies calls “confident humility.”

There are numerous ways to approach working in collaboration. And, while gathering as much of this type of information is extraordinarily useful along the lines of not reinventing the wheel, it is also important to remember that in a sense, each collaborative moment will be different because the participants will bring their own strengths and desires to the table. Each connection will require participants to be transparent enough to establish and maintain trust and committed enough to doing the work in a collaborative manner to reach the intended goals. When all this comes together, the results are truly transformative.

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# An Open-Ended Discussion of Some Terms Used

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The section of the manual is the record of a number of advocates' discussions of terms commonly used in the work to end domestic and sexual violence. The terms and the meanings given here are not meant to be definitive; rather, they are meant as a tool to help us talk about the work that we do as we continue to focus, refine and energize our efforts. Again, we hope that this section elicits rich discussions and contributes to your work, and hopefully you will be inspired to share with us what you learn.

- **Abuse** – Dictionary definition: “to use wrongly or improperly; misuse...; to treat in harmful, injurious, or offensive way.” Abuse occurs when one person’s behavior or words are intentionally aimed at hurting another.
- **Accountability** – begins with examination of our belief system, behaviors and relationships. We are responsible and accountable to women who are battered/raped for ending the violence. Though the vast majority of those who are battered/raped are women, we are also responsible to those men who are battered/raped and those who are gay, bisexual, transgendered or transsexual. Holding batterers and/or rapists accountable for their violence and providing safety to victims and survivors is part of our role as relatives and community members.

**Batterers' (and rapists') accountability** – means they takes responsibility for violence in all its forms. This requires honest self-examination, and directly, openly owning violent behaviors. It includes acknowledging the impact their violence has on partners or other victims, children and other relatives. True accountability requires accepting the consequences of their behavior, and making significant changes in their belief systems and behaviors based upon non-violence and respect for women and all other relatives.

**Systems' accountability** – means creating and enforcing laws, policies, procedures and protocols that provide safety and resources to those who are battered/raped and upholding batterer/rapist accountability. Laws, policies, procedures and protocols are a means to justice, safety and respecting the status of women and others who are disenfranchised, including those who are poor, differently-abled or gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. If the law, policies, procedures and protocols are utilized as an end in themselves (no real action beyond creating paperwork) or to support the offender's agenda, this amounts to collusion, resulting in revictimization. Collusion is the opposite of accountability.

- **Advocacy/Advocate** – Advocates recognize that battering and rape are gender-based crimes: the vast majority of victims of battering and rape are women, and the vast majority of batterers and rapists are heterosexual men. The patriarchal hierarchy that creates sexism also creates all other oppressions, so heterosexism, homophobia, etc., are part of advocates' pro-active agenda. The goal of advocacy is to help ensure victim/survivor's safety and status, as well as offender accountability. Our work is based on the understanding that the battering and rape is a result of oppression, and that ending violence requires social change and is personal and political.

The job description of an advocate is comprehensive: to pro-actively assist, support and provide resources to individual women and their children, and advocate within communities and political, legal, medical and social services programs to seek systemic and societal change so that all forms of oppression will end.

- **Anger management** – a mental health treatment that teaches people to become aware of their anger and its impact on their bodies, thinking, emotions and relationships. "Healthy expression" is generally the major goal of this approach. This approach assumes that anger itself is healthy and is the cause of violence. Often anger (an internal reaction, feeling) is not clearly distinguished from violent behavior.

Generally, issues of gender and culture are not addressed in anger management programs, nor is the fact that violence and tactics of violence are aimed almost exclusively at the intimate partner of the batterer. Acting angry, stomping around, slamming things, yelling, etc., are tactics batterers consciously use to send the message that everyone better be on guard and constantly pay attention, "or else." This is anger management in that the batterer has a specific purpose in managing his anger – power and control of his partner.

Anger management fails to recognize the importance of the fact that batterers choose the time, place, method and target for his violence. The batterer's anger and choice of violent behavior is rarely displayed at work, towards the boss, or other places where the "target" has more power and control than him. The issue is not loss of control, which is usually a subtopic in these groups: batterers choose their methods, body parts to hit where the bruising will be hidden by hair or clothing and their victims, who are their female partners, in most cases.

Anger management programs often fail to make the connection between beliefs, feelings and behavior. Changing beliefs about the nature of anger, men's right to control women and use violence will ultimately change their treatment of women, use of violence and emotional reactions.

- **Battering** – a system of ongoing tactics aimed at maintaining power and control over another. The tactics of battering include all forms of abuse and violence, including physical, sexual, emotional/mental, economic, using the children, ritual and cultural abuse, threats, intimidation and coercion. The element of fear for one's life is very real and constant as a result of these tactics.

Battering is not a mental health issue – it is a violent crime and violation of human rights. Communication skills work, stress and anger management approaches make the possibly lethal assumption that both parties have equal power and control. A batterer's goal in communication is establishment of power and control over his partner, not mutual understanding and caring.

- **Collusion** – any act that intentionally or unintentionally supports bad, deceitful or illegal behavior. In terms of battering, it is any act that discounts, condones or ignores any of the tactics that batterers use to maintain power and control over their partner. The results of colluding are increased danger to the woman/victim, her children, family and friends. Collusion means the woman must now protect herself, her children and relatives from the batterer and from those that collude with him. Those that collude are, in effect, revictimizing her.

Collusion makes batterers more powerful by reinforcing their use of abusive and violent tactics. The batterer is allowed to enlist other people and systems to assist him in controlling his partner. The result is the creation of more barriers and elimination of support, resources and safe places battered women need to access to escape the violence.

Colluding also prevents the batterer from being accountable for his violence. If not held accountable, batterers continue to do violence to their partner, relatives and own spiritual being.

- **Conflict** – Dictionary definition: “to come into collision or disagreement; be contradictory, at variance, or in opposition; clash.”

When two people disagree, or when our thoughts and behaviors are different, we have conflict. Conflict can be good. It can motivate us to think, grow or do things another way. Conflict is not the same as violence or abuse.

If one person’s intention is to “win,” rather than resolve their differences through dialogue and compromise, the conflict can move from a mutual disagreement to abuse or violence.

- **Coordinated community response (CCR)** – an interagency effort that prioritizes the safety and integrity of women (and their children) and batterer/rapist accountability. Within Native American communities, this effort promotes the spiritual and cultural traditions of the sacredness of women and children. An outcome of CCR is the establishment of policies, procedures and protocols that consistently promote the safety of women and the accountability of those who batter/rape and the systems involved in this response. This initiative also promotes and honors the leadership and expertise of women who have been battered/raped.
- **Cycle of violence** – a theory that was one of the first attempts to describe the dynamics of battering. It is an outgrowth of a mental health/medical model that recommends stress management and communication skills approaches and implies complicity by the victim, i.e., a form of victim-blaming. This theory postulates that battering occurs in three cyclical stages: tension-building, beating and honeymoon. Many women do see similarities between the reality of their experience and this theory, at least in the beginning of the relationship with their batterer.

In the past 25 years, however, much has been learned from the experts: the women who have experienced battering. The tension-building stage discounts the cause of violence as a matter of poor stress reduction and relaxation skills. The beating stage acknowledges only the physical form of violence and distorts its occurrence as an isolated event that happens every so often. The honeymoon stage is when the batterer attempts to “make up” and may show remorse or act nice, e.g., doing dishes, bringing groceries, and offering to watch the children. Sometimes it means having sex, ignoring the fact that the woman has been physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually

beaten, and is unable to safely say “no.” Less than 50% of battered women report having experienced anything resembling a honeymoon stage. Those that have say that over time this stage stops happening and the violence worsens.

Defining battering as a systematic pattern of continual violent and abusive behaviors aimed at maintaining power and control over the batterer’s partner helps assure realistic responses to ending the violence.

- **Disabilaphobia** – the fear of those who are differently-abled and the inability to acknowledge people whose needs are other than the accepted “norm.” (Contributed by Deborah Beck-Massey of Domestic Violence Initiatives for Women with Disabilities.)
- **Empowerment** – language sometimes used to describe the purpose of advocacy. Empowerment is about supporting women in a way that reflects respect and the belief that women are experts about themselves and their lives. They have the right to define what help they want, when they want it and whom they want to provide it. This concept is compatible with the understanding that violence against women is about power and control and avoids the mistaken notion that women who are battered cause or in some way contribute to the violence.
- **Internalized oppression** – the unjust exercise of authority and power by one group over another. It includes imposing one group’s belief system, values and life ways over another group. Oppression becomes INTERNALIZED when we come to believe and act as if the oppressor’s belief system, values and life way are reality.

The result of internalized oppression is shame and the disowning of our individual and cultural reality. Internalized oppression causes violence against women, children, elders, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or transsexual people and other relatives who are different from the “norm.” Oppression combined with internalized oppression results in alcoholism and other self-destructive behaviors.

Internalized oppression is an effective means for keeping entire groups and communities divided and under control. The oppressor no longer needs to exert physical control, because we now are violent and disrespectful to those in “our group,” to those in other groups and to ourselves. We resist internalized oppression by relearning respectful and non-violent belief systems.

Internalized oppression is also called “self-hate,” “internalized sexism,” “internalized homophobia,” “internalized racism” and “lateral” or “horizontal” violence.

- **Men’s re-education or batterers’ programs** – focus on the accountability of the batterer and safety of women through the examination of the batterer’s belief system and behaviors. For Native people, and actually all people, violence against women results from internalized oppression, i.e., colonization. This approach is therefore framed in an historical/cultural context. For instance, the term “re-education” acknowledges that violence against Native women can be unlearned, and non-violence and respect for women can be relearned as an integral part of Native life ways.

This approach was developed as an alternative to earlier programs such as anger management that did not identify violence against women as a crime resulting from colonization and oppression. This approach instead addresses battering as a system of tactics aimed at power and control.

- **Oppression** – the unjust exercise of authority and power by one group over another. Oppression includes forcibly denying people their individual, cultural and spiritual ways and imposes the oppressor’s values and belief system. Oppression includes, but is not limited to, sexism, racism, heterosexism, homophobia, classism, ageism, able-bodyism, anti-semitism/"religionism."
- **Personal sovereignty** – We are most familiar with the concept of tribal sovereignty, meaning all tribal nations possess or have a right to, 1) a land-base, 2) self-government, 3) an economic base and resources, 4) a distinct language and historical and cultural identity. The following definition was originally written for and by native women, but applies to all women, all people:

Native women’s personal sovereignty is defined as a woman’s possession of or right to:

- 1) their bodies and paths in life: to exist without fear, but with freedom;
  - 2) self-governance: the ability and authority to make decisions regarding all matters concerning themselves, without others’ approval or agreement;
  - 3) an economic base and resources: the control, use and development of resources, businesses or industries that women choose;
  - 4) a distinct identity, history and culture: each woman defines and describes her history, including the impact of colonization, racism and sexism, tribal women’s culture, worldview and traditions.
- **Power and control tactics of battering** – a system of on-going, purposeful behaviors used to take and maintain power and control over another. Power and control tactics may be emotional, psychological, physical, financial, sexual, etc., in nature. The tactics change according to the individual batterer but the goal is coercion to maintain power and control. (See “battering.”)
  - **Predominant aggressor** – for lack of a better term, is utilized in reference to mandatory domestic violence arrests to indicate that only one person should be arrested. It charges officers with the responsibility of determining who has the most potential for doing the most harm and what was done in self-defense, and refraining from “equalizing” the violence or “leaving it up to the judge.”
  - **Principle/primary aggressor** – language similar in intent to “predominant aggressor,” but allows the arrest of “secondary” aggressors, i.e., the victim, instead of making determinations about self-defense.
  - **Probable cause** – defined in Black’s Law Dictionary as “The existence of circumstances that would lead a reasonable and prudent person to believe in the guilt of the suspect.” The existence of probable cause is the determining factor in making a mandatory arrest. It does not require officers to find grounds to “convict” on the spot, but usually includes fear of imminent harm. The intent of probable cause is to prevent re-assaults and possible homicides.
  - **Safety** – being protected from violence in all forms. It means having power and control over one’s own life and body. It includes respectful support, access to resources, no barriers and being treated as a relative, not as “sick,” “crazy” or “co-dependent.” It means having one’s civil and human rights honored.

- **Shelter** – a place that provides safety and protection from violence, time and space to rest, advocacy and resources to create a non-violent life. Shelter includes advocates that are respectful and non-judgmental; defend women’s confidentiality; provide accurate information, transportation and accompaniment to court; and support women’s decisions and freedom to choose, including returning to the abuser, without giving up other rights.
- **Survivor** – a term many women who have been battered or raped use to describe themselves. It indicates a person who has experienced a violent, life-changing crime, but has regained power and control over her life. It is a life-affirming term.
- **Victim** – language that reflects a person who has had power and control taken from them, and has not yet been able to regain power and control over their life. The focus is on “loss” due to violence. Sometimes appropriately used, too often it ignores the strengths, gifts and other relationships a woman possesses.
- **Violence** – too often seen as physical harm resulting in blood and broken bones or actions leading to arrest. However, violence moves beyond physical abuse, instilling not just pain, but intense fear for your life. Violence impacts all levels of our existence – physical, emotional, spiritual and mental. Violence takes power and control over our lives and bodies away from us, at least momentarily.
- **Woman** – reflects the concept that a female is not defined by one particular experience or relationship. It reflects a dynamic female human being who possesses physical, mental, emotional and spiritual gifts. “Woman” acknowledges a powerful, whole human being.

Words like “client,” “lady,” “victim,” “patient” and even “survivor,” minimize or ignore the many aspects, gifts, experiences and relationships a woman has. These words emphasize an unequal relationship and negative experience.

When inappropriate to refer to someone by their name, using their “relative name” (sister, mother, grandmother, etc.) or the word “woman” reflects respect and honor.