

ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY

A Toolkit For Partnership, Collaboration, and Action

Prepared by John Snow, Inc. (JSI)

This document was developed for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) with funds from contract number HHSP2332010000550G. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views of DHHS.

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INTRODUCTION

This Toolkit is intended to assist organizations in the adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting field with cultivating strategic partnerships, implementing innovative outreach strategies, and developing robust communications that target the diverse organizations and populations in their communities. The Toolkit offers guidance for performing self-assessments of current partnership and outreach strategies that organizations are using to collaborate with and engage agencies and individuals in their communities. The Toolkit also offers tools for building on these strategies to boost organizational capacity. Such strategies are vital in order for adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting organizations to improve the health and social outcomes for vulnerable adolescents, build support and capacity within their local communities for these adolescents, and foster increased awareness of the important services these organizations provide to vulnerable youths. Although many of the examples provided throughout the Toolkit focus on adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting organizations, the concepts in the Toolkit are applicable to a wide range of organizations that provide services to vulnerable adolescents.

The Toolkit provides information and resources that will enable your organization to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify opportunities for forming strategic partnerships with other organizations in your community;
- Identify priority target populations for outreach; and
- Develop action-oriented messages tailored to specific audiences that will help engage your community in your efforts.

By achieving these objectives, your organization will be able to attain the following long-term capacity-building goals:

- Stronger partnerships with other organizations working with vulnerable adolescents;
- Increased awareness of the services offered by your organization;
- Expanded access to a wider range of resources for adolescents and their families; and
- Enhanced support for vulnerable adolescents.

The Toolkit is modular, so that organizations may either consult portions of the Toolkit or use the Toolkit in its entirety. Following is a brief description of the information contained in each chapter:

Chapter I**,** Building Strategic Partnerships, focuses on strategies for negotiating, building, and maintaining partnerships with other organizations that are key organizations in the community that can assist you in achieving your goals. This chapter provides guidance on how to identify these key allies; negotiate, communicate, and build partnerships with these organizations; and maintain these partnerships in a way that is mutually beneficial to both parties. Chapter I also provides information to bolster understanding of the diverse types of partnerships that can be implemented so that your organization can determine which partnerships will be the most effective and meaningful for your organization to pursue.

Chapter II, Effective Outreach Strategies, focuses on utilizing outreach strategies that will enhance your relationships with community members. It provides a framework for devising strategies to engage the broader community in supporting your mission and enhancing their general awareness of your organization. Strategies for coordinating your outreach efforts, engaging your staff in the organization's outreach efforts, and setting objectives for your outreach strategies are also included in this section.

Chapter III, Crafting Clear Communications, focuses on a broader, general audience and guides organizations through the specific steps necessary to develop and disseminate key messages. This chapter will assist your organization with determining those key points that will help your audience clearly understand your mission, goals, and strategy. It will also provide steps that guide your organization through the process of creating and disseminating your message.

At the end of each chapter described above, tools and resources are provided in the form of templates, work plans, and assessment worksheets to serve as aids in partnership development, formulation of outreach strategies and communications. Each chapter includes an index that itemizes the content areas of the chapter and references the corresponding tools and resources.

Each chapter also includes a case study that draws on the information presented in the chapter. The case studies detail the collaboration and community engagement efforts of organizations in the field, and serve as a guide for how readers may themselves utilize the concepts and tools presented in this toolkit.

Chapter IV provides a summary of the key concepts put forth in the Toolkit.

Through use of the Toolkit, organizations will be better equipped with the information, tools, and resources needed for successfully engaging a broad range of organizations and individuals in their communities to address the health disparities that challenge vulnerable youth.

CHAPTER I: BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Introduction

Strategic partnerships with other organizations can be vital to the success of your organization's goals and initiatives. Partnerships with other organizations have the potential to concentrate the community's focus on a particular problem, create alliances among organizations that might not normally work together, and keep the community's approach to issues consistent. Most importantly, partners can advocate for your organization's goals while contributing their own contacts, skills, talents and assets, allowing your organization to broaden its impact while accessing new audiences.

Recognizing the importance of partnerships is not difficult, but understanding how to build those partnerships is critical. Partnerships with other organizations take time and effort, but if managed well, they can help your organization achieve its goals more effectively and with fewer resources. Remember, when forming partnerships your organization should strive for quality, not quantity. Not all partnerships result in accrued benefits for your organization or your clients. Partnerships should be formed strategically, based on the value the partnership brings to your organization and your clients. Working with organizations that do not have a mission or values that complement your own does not typically bring added value to your organization.

This chapter provides information to bolster your organization's understanding of the diverse types of partnerships. It also provides guidance on how to identify potential partner organizations, negotiate and build strategic partnerships, and maintain these partnerships in a way that is mutually beneficial to both parties. The tools and resources provided with this chapter will supply your organization with worksheets, assessment tools, and examples to facilitate your partnership building process.

The case study at the end of the chapter centers on a community based program that seeks to provide training and education to teenage mothers, with the goals of helping them obtain a high school diploma and preventing or delaying a second pregnancy. While the program was making a positive impact on the community, the presence of a nationwide recession was threatening the program's funding. The case study details the use of the tools in this chapter in forming a strategic partnership to pool resources, develop and use political clout to push their agenda, and create long-term community-level change that would lead to a decrease in teenage pregnancy.

At-a-Glance

This chapter provides information on how to:

- ***Bolster your organization's understanding of the diverse types of partnerships***
- ***Identify potential partner organizations, negotiate and build strategic partnerships***
- ***Maintain these partnerships in a way that is mutually beneficial to both parties***

The following index outlines the content of the chapter.

Defining Strategic Partnerships

Definition

The term ***partnership*** and related terms such as *collaboration, coalition, network, task group, work group, cooperation* and others, are used to describe a wide variety of relationships and structures. For purposes of this Toolkit, partnership refers to a group of organizations with a common interest who agree to work together toward a common goal. That goal could be as narrow as obtaining funding for a specific intervention, or as broad as trying to improve the overall quality of life for pregnant and parenting adolescents in the community. Likewise, the organizations involved might be drawn from a narrow area of interest, or might include representation from every segment of the community.[i]

Key Term: Partnership

A group of organizations with a common interest who agree to work together toward a common goal

A partnership is strategic when it provides your organization with the means and methods for advancing your mission. Strategic partnerships can later develop into stakeholder groups that can leverage greater influence in reaching elected officials and policymakers. Civic leaders, policymakers and other key influencers tend to have priorities that organizations can leverage to underscore the urgency of improving programs and services to adolescents including:

- Improving access to education to foster economic development and work skills;
- Enhancing public safety by preventing crime and reducing risk behaviors; and
- Encouraging civic engagement and service to a new generation.[ii]

Types of Partnerships

Partnerships may consist of loose associations in which member organizations work for a short time to achieve a specific goal. In contrast, they can be long-term, and may even become organizations in themselves, with governing bodies, particular community responsibilities, funding, and permanence. Partnerships may draw from a community, a region, a state, or even the nation as a whole. Regardless of their size and structure, they exist to create and/or support efforts to reach a particular set of goals.[iii] Some common types of partnerships are:

- *Community-based:* Look to organizations working alongside you on the front lines of your community. Local nonprofits may find that your values fit well with theirs, even if you are offering different types of services.
- *Government-based:* Local governmental institutions may also be an excellent partner organization to explore. In particular, schools and educational institutions may be excellent partners and provide access to the populations your organization serves. State-wide [Departments of Health and Education] partnerships are also important because of their data repositories.
- *Faith-based:* If their mission aligns with yours, partner with local religious institutions. Places of worship are often regarded as important resources for a community, and have diverse congregations with various skills.

Purpose of Forming Partnerships

There are a number of reasons why developing a partnership with other organizations might be beneficial. In general terms, partnerships can concentrate the community's focus on a particular problem, create alliances among those who might not normally work together, and keep the community's approach to issues consistent. Some more specific reasons for forming a partnership might be:

- *To bring about more effective and efficient delivery of programs and eliminate any unnecessary duplication of effort.* Gathering all the organizations involved in a particular issue can result in a more cohesive and comprehensive intervention. Rather than duplicating efforts, organizations can split up or coordinate responsibilities in ways that afford more participants access to programs and allow for a greater range of services.
- *To pool resources.* Many of organizations together may have the resources to accomplish a task that none of them could have accomplished independently. In general, organizations form partnerships to do just that - accomplish together what they cannot do alone.
- *To increase communication among groups and break down stereotypes.* Bringing together organizations from many sectors of the community can create alliances where there was little contact before. Working together toward common goals can help organizations break down barriers and misperceptions, and enable them to trust one another.
- *To build networks and friendships.* Partnerships result in social benefits for staff, volunteers and clients in that people can form networks and friendships through involvement with the organization.
- *To revitalize wilting energies of members of groups who are trying to do too much alone.* A partnership can help to bolster efforts around an issue. For organizations who have worked too long in a vacuum, the addition of other hands to the task can be a tremendous source of new energy and hope.
- *To plan and launch community-wide initiatives on a variety of issues.* In addition to addressing immediately pressing issues or promoting or providing services, partnerships can serve to unify efforts around long-term campaigns.
- *To develop and use political clout to gain services or other benefits for the community.* A unified community partnership can advocate more effectively than a number of disparate organizations working alone. In addition, a wide-ranging partnership can bring to bear pressure from all sectors of the community, and wield a large amount of power.
- *To create long-term, permanent social change.* Real change usually takes place over a period of time through the process of individuals gaining trust, sharing ideas, and getting past their preconceptions in order to understand the real issues underlying community needs. A partnership, with its structure of cooperation among diverse groups and its problem-solving focus, can ease and accelerate the process of change in a community.
- *To obtain or provide services.* It may take a partnership - either initially or over the long term - to design, obtain funding for, and/or run a needed intervention in the community.[iv]

The Partnership Continuum

Partnerships can range from informal, minimal work between two organizations to very formal, contractual arrangements with the exchange of funds. There is sometimes an evolution with specific partners that grows into an active relationship of exchange and support.

The continuum of steps that results in a partnership often starts with coordination, progresses to cooperation and collaboration, and ultimately results in partnerships. Each and every step is important and worth pursuing. Your organization will likely work with organizations in each stage of the continuum outlined below, but you will not necessarily work through all steps in the continuum to form a partnership with every organization you develop a relationship with.

Some of your efforts toward developing partnerships with other organizations will only progress through a couple of stages and result in cooperation among the organizations; whereas, others might result in a full partnership.

Coordination

At this level, organizations learn about the services and clients served by the other organizations. They also learn about each organization's motivation for participating in a partnership. There is a lot of organizational independence. Self-interests and resources are defined. Coordination may include an exchange of information and materials.

Cooperation

Cooperation among organizations brings increased understanding of target audiences and motivations to participate in a partnership. There might be a minimal agreement, and the organizations may still be defining their roles and contribution. There is usually a greater appreciation of resources and skills that the partnership can bring. Joint strategies start to emerge.

Collaboration

With collaboration, there is increased recognition of the values of each organization, trust, respect, a clear understanding of the benefits for each partner, and innovative ideas are presented to meet a common problem. There can be challenges, but they are usually well worth the effort to benefit a group of clients or the community. At this stage, organizations are able to work together on a specific project to reach clients, provide

education, or develop a marketing campaign. Often organizations in collaborative relationships start to put plans in writing.

Partnership

In a partnership, there is a high level of trust and communication. Roles and responsibilities of each organization are well-defined and developed. There is a feeling of "us." There might be shared space and staff, shared authority and decision making, and plans and agreements are in writing. Overall, there is a vision. Challenges continue especially in the area of funding streams and support. [iii]

It is important to note that the continuum process may sometimes be cyclical due to changes in the nature, type and extent of the partnership. For example, partnerships with school districts often require modification due to changing personnel at all levels and locations, as well as social and political factors influencing decision-making of administrators.

Building and Implementing Partnerships

Readiness for Partnering and Identifying Prospective Partners

The first step in pursuing a strategic partnership is to know your own organization's strengths and weaknesses. This will help you determine the type of partnership that will be the most beneficial. Once these have been identified, involve your staff in narrowing down a list of organizations within your community that may fill your needs (compliment your strengths and address your weaknesses). Aids such as the *Organizational Readiness Assessment* on page 17 and the *Barriers and Challenges to Partnerships* tool on page 18 in the Tools and Resources section can serve as a helpful guide for assessing your organizational readiness, defining your organization's goals, and identifying prospective partners.

The first step in pursuing a strategic partnership is to know your own organization's strengths and weaknesses.

Do not ignore the strengths of your organization. A partnership is a two-way street, and you have valuable resources to offer. Because you have a deep understanding of an adolescent's needs, your organization's greatest asset is the ability to help these adolescents deal with the challenging situation they find themselves in, and you bring these strengths to the partnership.

Before entering into a partnership, give some consideration to how you will evaluate the effectiveness of such a relationship in the future. Knowing what success will look like before you start will help you know when you achieve it. It is important to assess potential partnerships at the beginning to ensure that you will work well together and that you are striving for the same goal. The tool *Evaluating Potential Partners* on page 19 can guide your organization through this analysis.

Negotiating a Partnership Agreement

Partnership negotiations should be oriented toward finding solutions or dealing with problems in a mutually beneficial way. Principled negotiation is founded on finding solutions for mutual gain.

Principled negotiation is founded on finding solutions for mutual gain

To ensure that organizations get what they need from a partnership, partners must come to the negotiation table with a sincere interest in working together and drawing from one another's strengths. Your organization should clearly articulate what they can bring to the partnership, as well as understand what potential partners offer. The *Collaborative Practices Inventory* on page 21 in the Tools and Resources is designed to help individuals or groups who are involved or about to be involved in collaborative efforts understand their practices and behaviors when working with others.

Negotiation is a skill that must be practiced. The following guidance can help advance partnership negotiations and produce desired results:

1. **Honor the relationship.** The negotiation process involves partners you may work with over many years. If, in addition to the process of negotiating, your priorities include developing the relationship with your partners—for example, developing honest communication and trust—it can be easier to know when bending on a particular point may yield short-term gains but long-term costs.

2. **Create a negotiation environment that encourages innovation.** Partners expand partnership options by engaging in brainstorming techniques and thinking "outside the box." If partners can respond to new ideas and be open to the unexpected, they will find unlimited opportunities to take a fresh look at their practices and beliefs about serving their clients.

3. **Be realistic and fair.** Partners are more likely to follow up on their commitments and less likely to circumvent the negotiation process if they feel the agreement is fair. Sometimes a neutral, external facilitator can help to ensure that the negotiations are realistic and fair to all. Partners should *always* consult with their programs' legal and financial advisors before finalizing an agreement.

4. **Recognize that each partnership is unique.** Each partnership needs to be structured to meet the needs of the organizations involved. Although you may know of an interesting and successful partnership in a nearby community, the partnership you are designing need not be the same.

5. **Engage in active listening.** Focus on what others say, both on their actual words and the underlying meaning. This will help you understand the interests upon which agreement can be based. When your response makes it clear that you have really been listening, your partners, too, may be more prepared to listen. Active listening can produce better, more long-lasting relationships.

6. **Know your bottom line.** We all enter negotiations knowing what we ideally want. Thinking through alternatives to the ideal outcome, however, allows you to understand your points of flexibility. Be clear about fallback positions and their consequences *before* you start to negotiate. Also, evaluate your partners' options beforehand. In negotiation, it is important to think several moves in advance and anticipate your partners' needs.

7. **Know the difference between "positions" and "interests."** When you focus on your organization's motivation for partnering and your potential partners' motivation, then you are looking at *interests*. When you get bogged down in achieving a particular goal, then you are distracted by *positions*. Interests form the building blocks of lasting agreements.

8. **Come prepared to commit resources.** Any request to take on greater responsibility must be accompanied by an offer of resources. Approach this issue with an earnest commitment to supporting the goals and the needed change. Resources can take the form of funding, staff, materials, supplies, transportation, and facilities, often in combination. An adequate commitment of funds and other resources demonstrates your commitment to, and full support of the partnership.

9. **Take a fresh look at practices and standards.** Use the negotiation process to address areas that need improvement, such as increased outreach activities and staff development activities. Challenge yourself to examine existing practice: Is this truly the practice that needs to be adopted by all, or is there a new way to meet standards? Set short-term, realistic goals, yet keep sight of where the partnership needs to be.

10. **Allow sufficient time for partners to work out details.** Remember that the negotiation process is not a one-time meeting that results in a partnership agreement. Partners often need several meetings to develop an agreement that reflects everyone's needs and capacities and provides sufficient detail to ensure success and enhanced services. [v]

Partnership agreements should be put in writing, and reviewed annually. The agreement should contain sufficient detail to guide the partnership and serve as a mechanism by which partners assess the fulfillment of their commitments and contributions. As a legal document, the agreement protects all partners' best interests. Many partnership agreements also include an addendum that describes how the partnership conducts business. This addendum might specify who does what, when, how, with whom, and for what purpose. It may also contain specific outcome goals and a plan to measure achievement.

Partnership agreements should be put in writing, and reviewed annually

The *Developing a Partnership Agreement* tool on page 25 in the Tools and Resources can serve as a guide for organizations to assist them in developing a comprehensive agreement that clearly addresses each partner's roles and responsibilities and many of the elements needed for the partnership to run smoothly. Included is a list of specifics that partners might include in a written agreement. While agreements can and should be reviewed and revised over time, a strong agreement forged early in the partnership lays the foundation for a strong and sustainable partnership.

Implementing and Maintaining Partnerships

Key steps to implementing a partnership include:

1. Identify and engage the stakeholders.
2. Establish personal relationships, and begin to build trust.
3. Clarify the goals and objectives each partner wants to accomplish
4. Choose and implement a partnership that is mutually beneficial.
5. Establish governance, procedures, ground rules, and decision-making structure.

When the right organizational partners are identified and established, start building the relationship slowly. A good idea would be to start working on small projects together instead of jumping into the big ones. These can be scaled over time once each organization understands its role. As noted in the partnership continuum described previously, collaborative relationships are the building blocks for the vast majority of partnerships. Organizations should strive to establish these collaborative relationships before they are needed and maintain these relationships, even if they are not immediately actionable.

One way to grow a relationship between partners is to involve them, where appropriate, in the culture of your organization. Help them understand what you have learned about the issues surrounding adolescent pregnancy and parenting and why your organization does the things it does. This may include client meetings or internal strategy meetings. Turn the tables and attend some of their meetings, as well. By understanding how each organization operates, you will foster a mutual understanding of the challenges each face.

Elements of Successful Partnerships

In summary, successful partnerships germinate from these common seeds:

A Shared Purpose

Carefully consider the compatibility of the purpose and goals of the partnering organizations, the value-added by partnering and expectations around each organization's participation. Make these clear in the partnership. Examine how each organization defines the partnership. Discuss your professional ethics. Developing a partnership is not unlike developing a personal relationship. Choose your partner with forethought and mutual understanding.

Flexibility and Willingness to Collaborate

Once partnership participants have been identified, it is important that the process be transparent reflecting the nature of the partnering organizations, appreciating the structures already in place and the development of new structures the partnership may require. The following efforts will help in creating any necessary new structures:

- Staff members need to be aware of their own organizational systems, management structures and work styles. By understanding their own organization, they are better able to help themselves and their partners appreciate and understand the value and expertise they bring to the partnership.
- Organizational charts, mission statements, job descriptions and other materials should be exchanged between partnering organizations, allowing all organizations to better understand each other's' goals and objectives, as well as the time and effort that goes into each other's jobs.
- A broadly defined structure often works best, providing guidance while permitting partners to make periodic adjustments, assess effectiveness, and allow for creativity and learning. Periodically review the partnership in relationship to where it's headed and what it will take to get there.

Complementary Strengths

All partners are accountable, and it is necessary to award equal opportunity and participation for all involved. Holding a preliminary information-sharing meeting for all participating staff is recommended. Expectations, roles and responsibilities, and available resources should be clarified and put in writing.

Agreed Upon Boundaries

Thinking through and negotiating differing work styles, organizations and management structures can be challenges faced by organizations attempting collaboration. A simple, written memorandum of understanding (MOU) may be helpful in articulating a partnership agreement.

CHAPTER I: TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Organizational Readiness Assessment (ORA)

This tool can serve as a helpful guide for assessing your organizational readiness for partnering, defining your organization's goals, and identifying prospective partners.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: There are 10 items making up the ORA that should be addressed as part of a discussion of key members of your organization who have responsibility for establishing and maintaining relationships with your program's partners. The items are designed to be an organizational self-assessment of perceived willingness and capacity to engage in a partnering relationship. For each item members are to consider, discuss and come to an agreement as to the current readiness of your organization to partner with a specific person, group or other organization. The items are grouped as follows: A- Organizational Importance, B- Organizational Negotiation and C- Organizational Responsibility. Each item is to be scored as YES (checked or '1') or NO (unchecked or '0') with a score range of A 0-2, B 0-4 and C 0-4. A simple majority score overall and within each group indicates your group level of readiness.

Assess your own readiness for partnering:

- ☐ We are willing to model the principles and values behind partnering. (C)
- ☐ We are open to learning new skills and behaviors such as decision-making and teamwork. (B)
- ☐ We will listen to others and work toward partnering communications. (B)
- ☐ We are open to people who have ideas that we might not agree with. (B)
- ☐ We are willing to check our own agenda and to do what is best for the partnership. (B)
- ☐ We are ready to identify common goals and objectives. (C)
- ☐ We have a strong group of people to bring to this partnership. (A)
- ☐ We understand what we can bring to this partnership. (A)
- ☐ We agree to be a partner and to learn our roles and responsibilities. (C)
- ☐ We agree to come with a sense of humor. (C)

Adapted from Community Initiatives, Inc., Facilitating Community Change (2000) - Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation by JSI staff and consultants.

Barriers and Challenges to Partnerships (BCP)

This tool provides a list of issues that could support the need for partnering with other organizations. Consider the dynamics of your organization and community. What are the issues you want to address for which you would need to partner with other organizations? Take a few minutes to answer these questions, and add other questions that come to mind. Share this with others. Assess the results and determine if partnering makes sense.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: There are six basic items in the BCP. Each item is to be scored as '1' (True) or '0' (False). If your answer is yes to most of these (i.e., you score of 4 or above), establishing partnerships to reach a target audience and to address a specific health issue may be a strategy for progress.

For your community, the dynamics are:	**True**	**False**
There are fewer public dollars available to address issues.		
Health problems and solutions are increasingly becoming the responsibility of our local community, meaning, it is up to us to take the lead.		
Collaboration and interdependence will be important in addressing these issues.		
New strategies and tools are needed to develop plans and to work together to address health issues.		
Community involvement is dependent on a few organizations.		
Our community is increasingly becoming diverse, ethnically, economically and racially.		

Adapted from Community Initiatives, Inc., Facilitating Community Change (2000)

Evaluating Potential Partners

There are many items to consider when strategically choosing partners in order to ensure that the potential partner will assist in supporting and advancing your mission. This worksheet asks questions to guide your thinking process when assessing potential partners.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: The Evaluating Potential Partners (EPP) worksheet is a qualitative measure of the perceived value and benefits of establishing and maintaining partnerships that should be addressed as part of a discussion of key members of your organization who have responsibility for establishing and maintaining relationships with your program's partners. The items are designed to be an organizational self-assessment of perceived willingness and capacity to engage in a partnering relationship. For each item members are to consider, discuss and come to an agreement as to an individual's, group or organization partnership potential specific to: a) type; b) audience targeted; c) compatibility of values; d) benefit and challenges; e) mutual goals and aims; f) purpose [intended outcomes]; g) quality; and h) resources. Members are to take time and engage in a discussion that allow for agreements and disagreements on each item to be aired. Your team members' answers (second column) should reflect a consensus (mutual agreement) for each item that would lead to an overall decision about the viability of a potential partner(s).

Questions	Your Answers
Think about what type of organization would be most beneficial to pursue. Is it a nonprofit? Is it religious in nature? Is it large or small? Describe the organization. (Organization Type)	
What audiences are you trying to reach and who would be most helpful in reaching that audience? (Target Audience)	
What benefits would this organization provide? What are the drawbacks? (Benefits and Challenges)	
Is this organization or individual well-regarded in the community? Connecting yourself with an organization that has a bad reputation may hurt your position in the community. (Benefits and Challenges)	
What does each organization want to accomplish by working together? (Goals, Aims and Outcomes)	

Which kind of organizational relationship is necessary to accomplish those goals? (Purpose)	
Is there sufficient trust and commitment to support these kinds of relationships? (Quality)	
Are there resources available for this kind of organizational relationship, such as time, skills, client understanding, financial resources, community support, commitment, health and human resources? If not, can those resources be accessed? (Resources)	

How do the organization's values fit with yours? You will find managing a partnership much more difficult if your mission and goals do not align with each other. List your organization's values and your potential partner's values and see where they align: (compatibility of values)

Your organization's values	**Your potential partner's values**

Collaborative Practices Inventory (CPI)

Agency Collaboration principles and practices can also be measured using the Visionary Focus (VF) (items 1-8) and People and Relationships (PR) (items 9-16) subscales of the Collaborative Practices Inventory (CPI) developed by Elder (1994) of the Carlson Learning Company. The modified CPI is presented below using a 4-point Likert-scale format ("Rarely" to "All or Almost all of the Time"). The VF (designed to assess the shared vision of collaboration of the program from the point view of its staff members and the overriding goals derived from this vision) and PR (designed to assess the degree to which the program from the point of view its staff members are aware of the unique differences of others in attempting to make collaboration work) subscales contain 8 items each.

The CPI was designed to help individuals or groups who are involved or about to be involved in collaborative efforts understand their practices and behaviors when working with others. The practices and behaviors listed in the CPI have been identified through research as those contributing to the success of collaborative leaders. Both the VF and PR subscales underwent rigorous psychometric testing as documented in previous work by the consultant with an overall scale alpha of .88 and subscales VF .91 and PR .85, respectively.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: The language of the items contained in the VF and PR subscales of the CPI were modified such that they were in the third person ("we try...") as opposed to the first person ("I try...) to reflect partner intent. The question each item addresses is listed below. Score ranges are 0 - 64 overall and 0 - 32 for each subscale. Scores of 33 and above overall and 17 and above per subscale are reflective of good collaborative practices.

As part of our Collaboration with Other agencies (the collaborative group)...	**Never/ NA 0**	**Rarely 1**	**Some of the Time 2**	**Most of the Time 3**	**All or Almost All the Time 4**
We try to emphasize to the collaborative group the needs of the clients over the needs of member agencies.	0	1	2	3	4
We relate everything that is done in the collaborative effort to the vision established by the group.	0	1	2	3	4
We keep the importance of the clients' needs before everyone during our collaborative discussions.	0	1	2	3	4

Collaborative Practices Inventory (continued)

We promote change required for collaboration by relating it to a shared vision.	0	1	2	3	4
When change is difficult, we help members see how it relates to our mission and goals.	0	1	2	3	4
We make sure the group stays on task to achieve its purpose.	0	1	2	3	4
We help the group evaluate the impact of our decisions on the clients.	0	1	2	3	4
We believe it is necessary to take risks to achieve our ultimate purpose.	0	1	2	3	4
We deal directly with conflict and encourage discussion to resolve it.	0	1	2	3	4
We let people know when we value their contributions to the collaborative effort.	0	1	2	3	4
We encourage diversity in the contributions of group members.	0	1	2	3	4
We look for different approaches to working with people.	0	1	2	3	4
We find it easier to work with people when we understand their needs and values.	0	1	2	3	4
We share credit with others for what we accomplish through collaboration.	0	1	2	3	4
We use humor to help people overcome their differences.	0	1	2	3	4
We help people work through differences in values and beliefs.	0	1	2	3	4
We think about what we bring to the table when working with a partner organization	0	1	2	3	4

COLLABORATION QUESTIONS		
A. Vision		
Information Collected	Scale	Questions Addressed
Try to emphasize need of client over program/ agency	Vision*	Measures provider effort to emphasize the needs of the client over those of the program/agency
Relate everything done to vision of group	Vision	Measures provider ability to relate everything done to vision of group
Keep importance of client needs before everyone during collaboration discussion	Vision	Measures provider ability to keep importance of client need before everyone during collaborative discussions
Promote change required for collaboration by relating to shared vision	Vision	Measures provider ability to promote change required for collaboration by relating to shared vision
Help members see how change relates to mission	Vision	Measures providers ability to help members see how change relates to mission
Make sure group stays on task	Vision	Measures provider ability to make sure group stays on task
Help group evaluate impact of decision on clients	Vision	Measures provider ability to help group evaluate impact of decision on clients
Believes necessary to take risks to achieve ultimate purpose	Vision	Measures provider belief that risk taking is necessary to achieve ultimate purpose

B. Relationship		
Information Collected	Scale	Questions Addressed
Deal directly with conflict and encourage discussion to resolve it	Relation*	Measures provider ability to deal directly with conflict and encourage discussion to resolve it
Let people know the value of their contribution to collaborative effort	Relation	Measures provider ability to let people know the value of their contribution to collaboration
Encourage diversity in contribution of group members	Relation	Measures provider ability to encourage diversity in contribution of group members
Look for different approaches to work with people	Relation	Measures provider ability to look for different approaches to working with people
Find easier to work with people when understand values/needs	Relation	Identifies if provider finds it easier to work with people when understand values/needs

Collaborative Practices Inventory (continued)

Share credit with other for what is accomplished through collaboration	Relation	Identifies if provider shares credit with others for what is accomplished thru collaboration
Use humor to help people overcome their differences	Relation	Measures provider use of humor in helping people overcome their differences
Help people work through differences in values and beliefs	Relation	Measures provider's ability to help people work through differences in values and beliefs

***Vision** - Scale measures the overall extent to which you and your team believe your partner or potential partner have a shared vision and set of goals for how the program/agency provides services.

***Relation** - Scale measures the overall extent to which the provider, your partner, or potential partner believe that attention should be paid to addressing and resolving differences .

Adapted from the Collaborative Practices Inventory, Elder, J.O. 1994, The Carlson Learning Company

Developing a Partnership Agreement - The Partnership Agreement Development Tool (PAD)

This worksheet can be used by organizations to assist in developing a comprehensive partnership agreement that clearly addresses each partner's roles and responsibilities and many of the elements needed for the partnership to run smoothly. While agreements can and should be reviewed and revised over time, a strong agreement forged early in the partnership lays the foundation for a strong and sustainable collaboration. Outlined below is a list that partners might include in a written agreement, although not every item needs to be addressed. Agreements vary, reflecting the uniqueness of the partnership.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: The Partnership Agreement Development Tool (PAD) is a qualitative instrument that is intended to be used for documentation of the process of developing agreements. For each section and set of items below, you and your partner/potential partner are to document (check and write-down) whether each was ADDRESSED, DISCUSSED or FINALIZED and what was done at each stage of the process (Action Steps). Use of the PAD is to be a progressive step-by-step building process that will allow you and your partners to discuss, negotiate and identify/decide upon the critical components of an agreement. The end product is a systematically developed and well-reviewed mutual agreement.

The **worksheet** which follows consists of the following five sections:

I. General Information
II. Partnership Services
III. Fiscal/ Resources
IV. Systems
    a. Planning and Decision-Making
    b. Communications
    c. Oversight
    d. Record-keeping and Documentation
V. General Administrative Elements

The Partnership Agreement Development Tool

	Not Yet Addressed	Under Discussion	Finalized	Action Steps
1. General Information (often introductory)				
General statement of the agreement's purpose				
Partner's affiliation and legal status				
Contractual Period				
Contract amendments, renewal, and termination procedures				

The Partnership Agreement Development Tool (continued)

Role of each partner's decision-making bodies in the contractual development and approval process				
Compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and policies				
Conflict of interest statements and prohibited activities				
Signatures of key parties and date of signing				
2. Partnership Services				
Location of services				
Each partner's role in service delivery				
Staff assigned to support the partnership; which entity/partner employs and supervises which staff				
Responsibilities of each partner's staff				
Staff schedules				
Supervision procedures				
Staff qualification requirements				
Professional development responsibilities (in-service, training, college courses)				
Staff selection procedures				
Annual performance appraisal procedures				
Provisions for substitutes				
3. Fiscal/Resources				
Funding and resource commitment of each partner				
Funding/resources accessed and by which partner				
Designated responsibilities for: facilities/space, maintenance, repairs, food service, and supplies and equipment (who will retain ownership of equipment when/if the agreement ends)				
In-kind services				
4. Systems				
A. Planning and Decision-Making				
Role of each entity's decision-making bodies in planning and decision making				
Community assessment process				

Collaborative, inclusive strategies involving partners' staffs and the community				
Items needing prior approval (items a partner reserves the right to approve)				
B. Communications				
Type, frequency of meetings; meeting participants				
Type and frequency of reports				
Information exchange (calendars, personnel policies, position openings, etc.)				
Other agencies, responsibility of each partner				
Use of technology, i.e., shared databases for tracking, e-mail communication, etc.				
Protocols for information sharing				
Communications				
Dispute resolution procedures				
C. Oversight				
Notification procedures/follow-up on local, state, and federal monitoring/assessment				
Ongoing observation of partnership operations, review of records, written feedback, follow-up				
Annual program self-assessments, other reviews				
Improvement initiatives (partners' obligations when partnership isn't progressing as envisioned)				
D. Record-keeping and Documentation				
Recruitment, enrollment application, and intake				
Storage of records and access				
Procedures for recording/tracking of services, follow-up				
Transfer of information, confidentiality				
5. General Administrative Elements				
Contact person for each organization involved				
Travel polices				
Liability/insurance				

Adapted from Community Initiatives, Inc., Facilitating Community Change (2000)

Case Study 1: Building Strategic Partnerships

Mary is the current director of the community based program Delivering Education, Leadership and Training Assistance (DELTA) 4 Girls, in Mississippi. The program, in existence for 9 years, seeks to provide training and education to teenage mothers, with the goals of helping them obtain a high school diploma and prevent or delay a second pregnancy. With a staff of seven and approximately ten volunteers, the program has been successful, with over 70% of girls graduating high school and preventing over 80% of girls from experiencing a repeat pregnancy during their high school years. This program appeared to be making a positive impact on the community.

The program itself was influenced by Mary's own childhood experiences, when she witnessed two of her sisters experience teenage parenthood and struggle to finish high school. Mary saw that two of the largest barriers to finishing high school for her sisters were childcare during school and lack of free time to study. The DELTA 4 Girls program offers free and reduced childcare for its program participants and an after school study room for them to use to complete their homework. Further, the program develops and hones the participants' business skills, offers résumé building assistance and tutoring, as well as other skills.

Unfortunately, consistent with many other community-based programs, the presence of a nationwide recession was threatening the program's funding. With 35% of the program's funds coming from government grants (federal and state funds) and 65% from private foundations and groups, it was likely that some of the funding would be eliminated.

To prepare for this possibility and build the best case for continued support, a member of Mary's staff suggested that DELTA 4 Girls consider partnering with other community based organizations and services to a) pool resources, b) develop and use political clout to push their agenda, and c) create long-term community-level change that would lead to a decrease in teenage pregnancy. During a special staff meeting devoted to brainstorming the possible partnerships, Mary used the *Organizational Readiness Assessment* and the *Barriers and Challenges to Partnerships* worksheets on page 17 and 18 to determine if a partnership was wise and if her organization was ready to engage. After group discussion about the pros and cons of such an endeavor, the organization decided to move forward with a plan to develop a new partnership.

The DELTA 4 Girls team brainstormed about their collective strengths, weaknesses and organizational values to identify which organizations would be best to partner with. Based on these findings, the biggest weakness identified for their program was its narrow focus on pregnant teens. It neglected addressing needs of other related at-risk groups such as the partners of teenage mothers, the parents of teenage mothers, or children living in abusive environments, thereby limiting the organization's understanding of the overall challenges in teenage pregnancy prevention. By the same token, the program's main strength was their ability to identify and obtain resources to run their program, as their funding had increased 300% over the previous seven years. Therefore, DELTA 4 Girls decided to identify programs, persons, and organizations that addressed other at-risk groups and who could also benefit from their expertise.

After this decision was made, Mary and her staff used the *List of Potential Partners* worksheets on page 19 to identify potential organizations to partner with. Based on their current program and identified strengths and weaknesses, DELTA 4 Girls identified high schools (specifically school counselors in the schools), the county health department, the social services administration, local business organizations, area religious organizations, the local Boys and Girls Club, and area prevention specialists as possible partners. Once complete, the team used the *Evaluating Potential Partners* worksheet on page 19 to conduct a preliminary analysis of how well each group would mesh with their organization. As part of this research, they examined the organizations' official mission/values statements, their past activities, and their personal experiences with the organization itself. Further, they surveyed their program's current and former clients about their experiences with each entity. Once the research was completed, two local religious organizations, a local school counselor, the social security administration and health department, the local Boys and Girls Club chapter, the Delta Business Administration and the local sexuality education coordinator, were chosen to be approached.

Mary began to set up meetings with identified leaders at each organization. This was done to 1) introduce the idea of collaboration to the organizations, 2) discuss what DELTA 4 Girls had to offer to a potential joint effort, 3) discuss the proposed goals of a collaboration and 4) determine if the other groups were able and willing to partner. All but one group agreed that teenage pregnancy prevention was a goal they shared and were willing to work collaboratively to affect teenage pregnancy in their community.

After the partner list was settled, Mary began the task of assessing where in the partnership continuum each group was, what the partnership's overall goal should be and, ultimately, Mary began developing a working agreement amongst the partners. A half-day introductory meeting was planned for the new partners to meet one another. Prior to the meeting, Mary asked each partner to brainstorm 1) the strengths and weaknesses of their organization, 2) the skills or resources they were willing to contribute, and 3) the goals or outcomes they would like to see achieved from the partnership. The results of each individual analysis were to be brought to the first team meeting.

At the start of the meeting, Mary asked each partner to introduce themselves and explain their program or organization to the group and discuss why the issue of teenage pregnancy prevention was important to them. After completion, the group discussed the results of the pre-meeting brainstorm exercise. Finally, Mary asked each partner to complete the *Collaborative Practices Inventory* on page 21 to determine where each group would fall in the partnership continuum and how to proceed with the work. Overall, the majority of individuals indicated they were at the cooperation stage, as many were comfortable working with other organizations and agencies to accomplish their goals, but were still protective of their own resources to ensure the viability of their programs.

The results of this exercise were used to inform the next phase of the project: Partnership Agreement. However, based on the majority of the partners being on in the cooperation stage, everyone agreed that they needed more time to get to know each other, better understand their respective programs and goals, and negotiate what could be accomplished. The items on *How to Negotiate a Partner Agreement* worksheet on page 12 were distributed for each individual organization to review in order to determine their position, interests, and the bottom line for each.

Armed with this task, Mary returned to DELTA 4 Girls and discussed each element with the staff. It was agreed that their primary *interests* were to prevent pregnancy (both first and repeat) among teenage girls and increase the graduation rate among teenage moms. However, their *bottom line* was that a commitment to developing and implementing effective educational strategies for teen moms must be included in the final mission of the partnership.

Over the next three months, the members of the newly developed partnership met several times. Each meeting was spent discussing what the primary goal of the partnership should be and how they would meet this goal. As the partners became more comfortable with one another, the group began to find new ways of compromising and combining resources to make their partnership a reality. In the course of negotiations, secondary pregnancy prevention became a back burner issue, with primary prevention becoming the focus of the partnership. However, the final mission did include the goal of providing mentoring and educational services to girls to help them graduate high school or obtain their GED. Further, the school counselor agreed to develop a program where high school students could get course credit by tutoring teenage mothers.

Finally, after three months of talks and negotiation, the partnership was comfortable with developing a partnership agreement. Mary, having already identified the *Developing a Partnership Agreement* tool on page 25, distributed it to the group. Over a day-long retreat at a local hotel, the group addressed each component of the tool to ensure each item was met, culminating in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to guide their current and future collaborations.

CHAPTER II: EFFECTIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Introduction

The focus of Chapter I of the Toolkit was to guide your organization through negotiating, forming, and maintaining partnerships with other organizations that are key allies. Chapter II of the Toolkit is designed to help your organization bolster your efforts on forming relationships with individuals in your community. To do so, this chapter will provide information, resources and tools that will assist your organization to first understand the dynamics of your community and subsequently develop effective strategies for community outreach and engagement.

For those who work in the adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting field, it is essential to have a robust understanding of the particular community you work with. Taking the time to get to know your community assets and deficiencies is crucial, because engaging the community in your efforts to improve services will require that you are familiar with the people, the issues, and the history of the community. This chapter will provide methodologies to help you increase your organization's understanding of the community you serve and conversely design strategies to enhance the community's general knowledge of your organization's mission and goals. Strategies for coordinating your outreach to community members, engaging your staff in outreach efforts, and setting objectives for your outreach efforts are also included. The tools and resources provided with this chapter will supply your organization with worksheets, assessment tools, and examples to enhance your understanding of your community and facilitate your implementation of effective outreach strategies to engage community members in support of your efforts.

The case study at the end of the chapter centers on a community-based organization that coordinates local teenage pregnancy prevention services. In spite of its wide range of members and diverse representation of local groups, the organization's community continued to experience a climbing teenage pregnancy rate. The program was also faced with issues stemming from their community's unemployment rate and low high school graduation rate. The case study details the organization's efforts to perform a community assessment in order to delve deeper into their community's issues, and describes the organization's subsequent campaign to leverage their community's assets and strengths.

At-a-Glance

This chapter provides strategies to:

- ***Increase your organization's understanding of the community you serve***
- ***Enhance the community's general knowledge of your organization's mission***
- ***Maintain these partnerships in a way that is mutually beneficial to both parties***
- ***Coordinate your outreach to community members***
- ***Set objectives for outreach efforts***
- ***Engage your staff in outreach efforts***

The following index outlines the content of the chapter:

Performing a Community Assessment to Support Outreach Efforts

Community Assessments

In order to enhance your outreach efforts, you should understand how community needs and trends affect your services. This information will contribute to the overall success of your outreach strategy. A community assessment process can also provide the baseline rationale for creating new programs and eliminating duplication of services and programs. Some of the following information can help your organization obtain more accurate insights into your community:

- Demographic data (e.g., age, race, socioeconomic and educational attainment data, family structure, and language use)Homelessness statistics
- Substance abuse trends
- Teen pregnancy statistics
- Other service providers' attitudes and policies about pregnant and parenting teens
- Geographic boundaries of the community
- Length of time the community has been in existence
- General history of the community
- Key people and leaders in the community
- Issues of most concern to the community
- Morale and involvement levels
- Key allies and rivals

A community assessment will help your organization's overall outreach efforts by mapping trends, getting to know key players in your neighborhood and community, and collecting information about other services that are available in the community. The assessment process can be a good opportunity to showcase your organization and its programs and services as well as build trust within the community. A community assessment will also be essential in understanding community strengths. For example, despite high adolescent pregnancy rates, the community may have low premature birth rates. A community assessment will aid in identifying and delineating these strengths in order to build on your organization's understanding of the community.

The formal approach to a community assessment entails review of data and statistics as well as potentially running your own survey of the community. While this can be costly, city and county health boards, school boards, and public health agencies often have some of this information publicly available. You can also search the federal government's website http://www.data.gov for useful health-related information, http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/ for 2010 Census Data, or the American Community Survey at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/. Assessing this information can help you target your own survey to fill in any gaps.

The informal approach to community assessments focuses on building relationships with other organizations in the community and pooling knowledge and insight. This includes connecting with those public agencies that have data publicly available as well as non-governmental organizations that have compiled their own statistics or could compare anecdotal information with you. Having a group of organizations pool information on their clients can result in a useful body of data that can guide coordinated program, funding, and outreach decisions.

Whether you do a formal or informal assessment, the community assessment will require your organization to engage in and maintain an ongoing dialogue with community members. The findings of the assessment can help you better build and frame awareness of your program and services. The *Preliminary Community Engagement Strategy* tool on page 38 guides you through the questions and priorities that your organization should be aware of in developing your community outreach strategies.

Leveraging Community Assets to Support Community Engagement

Community Assets

While a community assessment typically focuses on identifying gaps in services in the community, another key factor that will contribute to the development of successful outreach strategies for community engagement is gaining an understanding of your community's existing resources or assets and leveraging them to support your outreach efforts. The members of your organization can be more powerful community actors when they are not exclusively focused on needs, problems, and deficiencies.[vi]

> ***Key Term: Community Assets***
>
> Anything that is used to improve the quality of community life.

A community asset or resource is anything that is used to improve the quality of community life.[vii] Broadly defined, there are five different categories of community assets. These include:

1. *Local residents*: their skills, experiences, passions, capacities and willingness to contribute to the project.
2. *Local voluntary associations, clubs, and networks*: e.g., all of the athletic, cultural, social, faith-based, groups powered by volunteer members – which might contribute to the project.
3. *Local institutions*: e.g., public institutions such as schools, libraries, parks, police stations, along with local businesses and non-profits – which might contribute to the project.
4. *Physical assets*: e.g., the land, the buildings, the infrastructure, transportation, etc. which might contribute to the project.
5. *Economic assets:* e.g., what people produce and consume, businesses, informal economic exchanges, barter relationships[viii] – which might contribute to the project.

These assets can be used by your organization to meet community needs and improve community life. They are especially important when external resources (e.g., federal and state money) are not available or are not specifically targeted for the services you wish to implement or the population you wish to reach. Identifying and mobilizing community assets enables community residents to better influence, gain control and become active shapers of change. Improvement efforts are more effective and longer-lasting when they are from programs based on assessment efforts that focused on gaps between what a community has/d (assets) and what it needs/ed (deficits) to achieve the desired change. *Community Assets: Potential Uses and Engagement Strategies,* located on page 40 in the Tools and Resources, contains a list of potential ideas your organization can utilize to engage and mobilize your community's assets in order to further your efforts.

In summary, understanding community assets plays a critical role in outreach because: a) it allows your organization to better target gaps or factors that limit your capacity to be effective; b) it provides a means to cost-effectively enhance your efforts through the use of existing resources and c) by their very nature, community-assets are already being used to form and maintain efforts that increase the probability of your outreach strategies and tactics to be successfully implemented.

Implementing Community Outreach Strategies

An outreach strategy is a way in which your key messages are delivered. Every conversation about your organization is an opportunity to deliver these messages; if your outreach efforts can successfully incorporate your mission and goals into your communications, more people hear your messages over time and come to recognize your organization.

The term "strategic communications" encompasses the means – the plans, goals, practices, and tools – by which an organization delivers consistent messages about its mission and values to its key target audiences and partners. Community outreach is strategic when it is integrated, orchestrated, and ongoing. The various pieces of your outreach strategy should "fit" together, complement and reinforce each other; and not contradict or unnecessarily repeat each other.

Organizations sometimes struggle to clearly articulate values and mission in a way that enables distinct target audiences to relate to your mission, connect to your values, trust in your services, and take action to support your organization. It is important to remember that community outreach is not about sound bites, glitzy brochures, fancy annual reports, and animated websites. Your organization's outreach strategy should focus on advancing your mission, advancing support for your work, and increasing awareness in the community.

Strategic communications are critical to your outreach strategy because, if done right, they can help you strengthen your partnerships and increase awareness by: persuading, moving, and convincing your target audiences to help your organization achieve its mission.

Engage your Human Resources in your Outreach Strategies

As employees of a community organization dependent upon philanthropy and public funding, increasing awareness of and support for your program is part of every staff member's job, without exception. Strategic communications provides a framework that ensures every staff and board member is working from the same set of assumptions and understands how their work relates to your organization's core values and goals.

Your employees and Board members interact with current and potential clients, other organizations, funders, and the general public on a daily basis. Ensuring that they can communicate how important your work is to the community is vital to your success. They are already positioned to reach a number of your target audiences. Doing so will help you build public understanding, confidence, trust and can better prepare you to deal with routine challenges. In unexpected circumstances, it may even help your organization be better equipped to address and overcome a crisis.

Strategic communications can be employed across your organization with all staff to:

- *Help set priorities and provide future direction.* As strategic communications become integrated, the staff will be selective about developing projects that are within the scope of the strategic communications plan. Board members will begin to think more strategically about how they can integrate their other community ties into the organization's work.

- *Improve performance and stimulate creative thinking.* With everyone focused on the importance of certain audiences and what actions the organization wants from those audiences, it is easier to focus planning and creativity on common goals.
- *Build teamwork and expertise.* When highlighting the synergy of communications activity, staff and board begin to collaborate and share information in new ways. They look for ways to set priorities, coordinate resource allocation, and improve internal communications.

Your organization should strive for all staff and Board members to know the right message, use the right channels and ultimately be the right messengers. This will require you to equip your staff and Board members with the tools and skills to know the audience they are addressing, know the needs of the audience, know how to communicate with them and know the importance of their work as it relates to your organization's mission. In turn, your staff and Board will be more credible to the audience; they will feel that they know them and be more inclined to trust their message.

The worksheets *My Organization and its Community Outreach Activities* and *Priority Communities for My Outreach* on page 41 and 42, included in the Tools and Resources, guide you through the questions and priorities that your organization should be aware of in developing your community outreach strategies. It is essential to begin with outlining your purpose or goals for engaging the community, defining the optimal scope of your outreach and generating the objectives and strategies that will achieve your desired outcomes.

Set SMART Objectives for your Outreach Strategies

During the course of planning your outreach efforts you identify critical areas for strategic communication and define communication objectives that will result in the outcomes you desire as the objectives are operationalized. In order to increase the effectiveness of your objectives, it is important to make your objectives SMART. That is, objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound. Having SMART objectives makes it easier to clearly define what you are supposed to achieve through implementation of the objective, hence facilitating the monitoring and evaluation process. An example of a SMART communication objective can be "distribute outreach material to 70% of all women in the community between the age of 13 and 19 by the end of the next year."

Key Term: SMART Objectives

SMART Objectives are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-framed

Your communication objectives should address issues such as awareness, knowledge, attitude, practice, behavior and participation. Each of these represents a communication level, which needs to be dealt with separately. If for instance your objective is to induce change in behavior, first you need to make individuals aware that there is a problem with the previous behavior. You then take steps to ensure that the knowledge and the attitude necessary for the change to take place are present. It is only when all these prerequisites are met that you can hope to achieve your communication objectives. [ix]

The worksheet *Develop SMART Communications Objectives* on page 43 in the Tools and Resources can guide your organization through the brainstorming and development of SMART objectives.

CHAPTER II: TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Preliminary Community Engagement Strategy

This tool guides you through the questions and priorities that your organization should be aware of in developing your community outreach strategies. It is essential to begin with outlining your purpose or goals for engaging the community, defining the optimal scope of your outreach and generating the objectives and strategies that will achieve your desired outcomes. Consider these statements, questions and components as you begin planning for community outreach.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: Use of this tool should be a group process with your staff and your potential partners (if possible). Information for each item should be based on the outcome consensus agreement resulting from discussion. Information for some items may require a review of existing documents and/or consultation with clients or other persons with knowledge or expertise outside of that of you, your staff or partners. Interpretation of each item and overall should focus on providing key information that will guide decisions leading to the formulation of the framework for your outreach strategy.

What is your organization hoping to accomplish through its outreach efforts?

_____

_____

How effective are current programs and services that address the problem in your community/target area?

_____

_____

What were the results of education and outreach projects conducted in the past by your organization?

_____

_____

What has been done by other organizations that have conducted campaigns on this issue? How effective were the campaigns?

_____

_____

Who is the primary target audience – who is most affected, who has the most severe consequences?

_____

_____

Who are the target audience segments – who are the specific groups, sorted by behavior and other variables?

_____

_____

Preliminary Community Engagement Strategy (continued)

Who influences the behavior of the primary target audience?

_____

_____

Are there secondary sources of data about the target audience and the problem?

_____

What is the overall goal of your program?

_____

_____

What are your (SMART) program objectives? – Are they:

- **Specific –** linked to clear tasks and outcomes, Performance Measures
- **Measurable** (Process–Monitoring, Outcome–Evaluation)
- **Attainable –** Given Socio-Cultural, Political and Technical Reality and Capacity of Your and your partners'
- **Relevant -** Current and Planned Programs and Services
- **Time-Bound –** tasks to be accomplished within well thought out timeframes

_____

_____

Who are some of your potential partners?

_____

_____

Which media channels (Social, Web, etc.) does the target audience use?

_____

_____

How will you evaluate if your campaign is effective? (See Chapter 3 in this Tool kit)

_____

_____

Do you have the resources to fulfill this strategy? (Think about your current partnerships and alliances)

_____

_____

Community Assets: Potential Uses and Engagement Strategies

The list below contains a few possibilities and ideas (tactics) for how to utilize your community assets in support of your efforts.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: Determine which strategies might fit best for you, and which would have the greatest impact in your specific community.

- You can publish the assets identified and make them available to all community members. In doing so, you will stimulate public asset knowledge.
- You can target a particular neighborhood or other area for development, on the basis of the asset patterns you have found.
- You can use your knowledge of assets to tackle a new community project -- because now you may have more resources to work on that project than you originally thought.
- You can find new ways to bring groups and organizations together, to learn about each other's assets -- and perhaps to work collaboratively on projects such as the one above.
- You can publicize these assets, and attract new businesses and other opportunities to your community. In both this example and the one above, you are using existing assets to create new ones. (This is what makes community work exciting!)
- You can create a school curriculum to teach local students about these assets, thus enriching their knowledge of the community and building community pride.
- You can consider creating a "community coordinator," (or some other title), someone who would deal with assets every day. The coordinator's new job would be to find the right assets in the community to respond to any request or community concern. Assess whether this position would pay for itself.
- You (or the new coordinator) can keep records on how assets are used in the community, and use those records to generate ideas for improving asset exchange.
- You can set up structured programs for asset exchange, which can range from individual skill swaps to institutional cost-sharing.
- You can establish a process by which community assets keep getting reviewed on a regular basis. New assets are always coming on the scene; it is good to keep up to date on them. By so doing, the whole asset-identification process can become a regular part of community life.[x]

Worksheet: My Organization and its Community Outreach Activities

This worksheet provides a basic guide to frame the types of questions that your organization should be answering in developing your community outreach strategy.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: Use of this tool should be a group process with your staff. Information for each item should be based on the outcome consensus agreement resulting from discussion. Information for some items may require a review of existing documents and 'institutional' knowledge contained by you and your staff. Interpretation of each item and overall should focus on providing key information that will guide decisions leading to the formulation of your outreach activities.

The mission of my organization

Current outreach activities of my organization

1.
2.
3.

Future outreach activities of my organization

1.

2.

3.

Challenges and barriers to community outreach

Opportunities for increased community outreach

Primary purpose of my outreach activities:

Awareness Marketing Advocacy Community Engagement Other:_____

Worksheet: Priority Communities for My Outreach

Knowing your community makes it possible to tailor your communication appropriately. First, choose which key communities your message will focus on. You will need different messages for different groups and different channels and methods to reach each of those groups. Next, consider whether you should direct your communication to those whose behavior, knowledge, or condition you hope to affect, or whether your communication needs to be indirect. Sometimes, for instance, in order to influence a population, you have to aim your message at those to whom they listen – clergy, community leaders, politicians, etc. Sometimes policy makers are the appropriate target, rather than those who are directly affected. These are only a few of the many possible ways to identify your audience. Once you've done that, it will give your organization ideas about how to reach them.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: Keep in mind some information about communities, individuals and realistic engagement may require a review of existing documents and/or consultation with clients or other persons with knowledge outside of your own, your staff's or your partners. Use the following table to keep track of your findings.

TARGET COMMUNITIES	KEY INDIVIDUALS	IDEAS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Worksheet: Develop SMART Communications Objectives

Communications Objectives focus on the cycle of the communications process (to inform, engage, motivate to act and maintain relationships). Communications Objectives should have action verbs (e.g., educate, teach, inform, provide, conduct, enlist, mobilize, discuss, promote, build consensus). Remember that Communication Objectives should be linked to well-defined desired or expected outcomes. List your organization's top objectives below, and then apply the SMART test to each objective: think critically about whether your objectives are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: Use of this tool should be a group process with your staff. Information for each item should be based on the outcome consensus agreement resulting from discussion. Information for some items may require a review of existing documents and 'institutional' knowledge contained by you and your staff. Interpretation of each item and overall should focus on providing key information that will guide decisions leading to the formulation of your communications objectives.

Communications Objective				
Audience:				
Select One:	❑ Inform	❑ Engage	❑ Motivate	❑ Maintain
Desired Action:				
State Objective:				

State how your objectives are:

Specific: _____

Measureable: _____

Attainable: _____

Relevant: _____

Time-bound: _____

Case Study 2: Effective Outreach Strategies

Performing a Community Assessment

Robert is the director of a community-based organization in Franklin County that links and coordinates local teenage pregnancy prevention services. The organization, entitled F-CAPP (Franklin's Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention), has over 30 member organizations representing mental health, local faith organizations, the primary school system, university professors and students, teenage pregnancy prevention programs and family members. In spite of its wide range of members and diverse representation of local groups, the county continued to experience a climbing teenage pregnancy rate and ranked the third highest statewide. Additionally, the program was located in a southern county which had a higher than average unemployment rate and the high school graduation rate was below average, with current projections showing the rates worsening in coming years. Robert raised the issue of the county's increasing teen pregnancy rate at F-CAPP's monthly Board of Directors meeting. After much discussion, it was decided that F-CAPP needed to redirect its efforts and develop new outreach efforts so as to better prevent unplanned pregnancies from occurring.

Robert was tasked with completing a new, up-to-date community assessment. With his task in hand, Robert began gathering the most accessible data: community demographics, socioeconomic data, employment and graduation rates and teenage pregnancy data. Using several resources, including www.city-data.com, the Census Bureau's website, and state vital statistics, current information was gathered about the county's population. In addition, community members were surveyed to identify leaders and determine what issues were most important to them. Finally, to get a more in-depth look at teenage pregnancy, unemployment and graduation rates, Robert contacted the local health department's environmental health division and worked with them to conduct an analysis of the county's zip codes to determine the neighborhoods most at risk and using the Geographic Information System (GIS) display these neighborhoods on a county map.

Based on this assessment, Robert found that a disproportionate amount of teenage pregnancies were located in the central and eastern parts of the county. Not surprisingly, many of the neighborhoods with both high rates of unemployment rates and low rates of high school graduation also had the highest teenage pregnancy rates. The community survey found that people were most concerned about the lack of employment opportunities and teenage pregnancy. It also found that they were largely unaware of the teenage pregnancy prevention resources and services that existed. Through discussions with the local business administration, Robert was informed that there were two reasons why potential new businesses settled elsewhere: the high teenage pregnancy rate and low graduation rates.

Leveraging Community Assets

Armed with this new information, Robert presented the data to F-CAPP's Board of Directors at the next meeting. Disappointed but not surprised by the results, the Board decided that a coordinated effort to leverage and advertise current community assets was needed to address those areas of concern raised by the community.

To start their effort, the Board first began by defining what they were concerned with and what they wanted to accomplish. Using the *Preliminary Community Engagement Strategy* on page 38, the Board determined that their problem was that teenage pregnancy and low graduation rates were a part of a cyclical problem whereby increases in one created more negative results in the other. Therefore, an effective approach to addressing the

issue needed to include programs and services targeted at each aspect in the cycle. The Board found that current programs represented by their organization were mostly targeted at youth, with very few including components to raise awareness among adults about the resources offered by the community. They used the *Preliminary Community Engagement Strategy* tool to identify new potential partners who would benefit from a decrease in the community teenage pregnancy rate. Once complete, the final goal was to increase awareness around the linkage between education, employment and teenage pregnancy through both broad and targeted social marketing campaigns geared at adults and teenagers.

As part of this effort and recommended by the *Community Assets: Potential Uses and Engagement Strategies* on page 40, the Board decided to extend F-CAPP membership invitations to several potential partners whose assets could be leveraged in addressing the issue. These included members of the education, media and marketing and business communities as well as community leaders. Robert tasked the Board members with reaching out and educating these organizations about F-CAPP's mission and the linkage between teenage pregnancy and their area of interest. Finally, the Board developed talking points and reviewed the mission and goals of F-CAPP to ensure they were current and relevant to the organization's work.

Over the next month, four new individuals joined the Board of F-CAPP and seven more joined the organization. These individuals represented the education, marketing and business communities and assisted in bringing fresh perspective and more importantly resources to F-CAPP's activities. The first order of business was to develop possible outreach strategies to raise awareness about the linkages between education, employment and teenage pregnancy and get key stakeholders interested in developing a communitywide effort to combat the problem. Using the *Community Assets: Potential Uses and Engagement Strategies* worksheet, three different strategies were chosen. First, they developed a booklet to distribute that listed the available employment, education and teenage pregnancy prevention services and programs in the community. The completed booklet, entitled '*The Community Guide to Education and Pregnancy Prevention Services*' was provided to all member groups, all organizations identified within the booklet and to local doctor offices, community organizations and schools for use by their staffs. Further, an interactive website was established which contained the booklet's information with a visit counter to track the number of individuals accessing and using the site's resources.

Second, the new member of the Board that was from the social marketing firm agreed to donate their services towards a pregnancy prevention campaign. Prior to starting work, Robert and the firm sat down with the tool *Priority Communities for My Outreach* on page 42 to ensure the neighborhoods most at risk received targeted outreach efforts. Community leaders from these neighborhoods were invited to join the conversation to ensure efforts would be effective. They worked to develop commercials, radio ads, bus signs, and billboards with broad messages; however additional ads were run in the priority communities. Each ad included the website and a toll-free number to contact F-CAPP for more information on available resources. Finally, the local media and business were contacted and F-CAPP was able to negotiate reduced advertising and development rates for their ads.

Prior to the start of the campaign, the Board developed an evaluation plan to determine the number of people reached by the campaign and track program usage for one year prior to the campaign and one year following its launch. In order to effectively evaluate the program, Robert realized that objectives had to be developed to guide the project. Once complete, the Board used the worksheet *Develop SMART Communications Objectives* on page 43 and created five objectives for the campaign. These objectives were created to measure changes in education,

employment and teenage pregnancy trends within the community before and after the new efforts. A Board member, Stephen, from the local university, volunteered to develop and run the evaluation at a substantially reduced rate.

The result of the leveraging of community assets to support the campaign's efforts was substantial. Over the following year, local pregnancy prevention organizations saw a 40% increase in service uptake among the community, with a full 50% increase among the most at-risk populations. Further, fewer students dropped out of school due to pregnancy-related issues, leading to an increase in the graduation rate. It is projected that in the next five years, the local unemployment rate will decrease, some of which can be attributed to these efforts. Finally, business leaders are watching the results closely so that they can have a better package to present to prospective businesses when they consider Franklin County for their location.

CHAPTER III: CRAFTING CLEAR COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

The focus of Chapter I of the Toolkit was to guide your organization through negotiating, forming, and maintaining partnerships with other organizations in your community that are key allies. Chapter II of the Toolkit provided information and resources to help your organization bolster your efforts on engaging individuals in your community through outreach. Chapter III guides your organization through the process of crafting clear communications to engage your community partners as well as individuals in your community in support of your efforts. With so much information competing for our attention, your organization needs a clear and consistent message to communicate to your target audience. If your organization's message is clear, finding partners who share your goals will be much easier. A clear and consistent message is also critical in developing strategic communications for your community outreach strategies.

This chapter will assist your organization with determining those key points that will help your audience clearly understand your mission, goals, and strategies. It will also provide steps that guide your organization through the process of creating and disseminating your message. Tools and resources provided in this chapter will supply your organization with worksheets, assessment tools, and examples to facilitate crafting clear communications.

The case study presented at the end of this chapter describes the efforts of a teenage pregnancy prevention and education outreach program that is working to change the dynamics of unhealthy relationships in a Hispanic community. The case study details the organization's process of setting their goals, identifying their target audience, and crafting and tailoring their message to fit their target audience.

At-a-Glance

This chapter contains information to:

- ***Assist your organization with determining those key points that will help your audience clearly understand your mission, goals, and strategies.***
- ***Provide steps that guide your organization through the process of creating and disseminating your message.***

The following index outlines the content of the chapter.

Steps to Crafting Clear Communications

1. Identify your purpose.

What you want to say depends on your mission and what you are trying to accomplish with your communication strategy. There are some communication goals that may be ongoing – raising your profile in the community, informing people about your program – while others may vary, depending on circumstances. Most organizations develop several complementary but distinct messages based on target audience and purpose.

First, establish a framework for what you are trying to communicate – the "who, what, and why."

Who is your audience?

It is important to assess the audience you are trying to reach. Your key target audiences go hand in hand with your purpose: who needs to hear what you have to say in order for your organization to achieve its intent?

What are you offering to your audience?

Think about the community you serve. What are its needs and available resources? If you are trying to reach multiple audiences, realize that each will have different answers to this question. Learn what motivates them and determine what you want them to take away about your organization.

Why does your message matter to your audience?

This is a crucial part of your message: "why" your audience should care about what you have to say. Think again about the "what" and the benefits your audience may receive. There are different kinds of benefits you may want to highlight:

- A feeling: a sense of generosity when they donate their time or money;
- A material benefit: better community economy;
- An anticipated benefit: getting school credit for community service or volunteer hours.

Both leadership and staff should work together to develop a clear message. Staff at all levels will bring a unique perspective on your community's needs and resources.

You can engage your staff members by having them tackle important questions:

- What are the most important accomplishments of our organization? Can you describe in simple, short and clear terms what the organization does?
- How will funders/stakeholders/clients react to our message?
- How does your message help shape public perception on controversial issues?
- What statements and sound bites will be most memorable and persuasive to your key audiences?
- How does the message fit with your mission/vision and services?

Answering these questions will make it easier for your target audience to recognize your organization's unique message. With so much information competing for space, having a clearly branded message will make outreach efforts much easier. It helps to distinguish your organization from others. Once everyone in your organization understands what your message is, your organization can choose the appropriate audience and begin crafting the language in your message.

2. Choose Your Audience.

Knowing your audience makes it possible to plan your communication logically. First, choose which key audience your message will focus on. You'll need different messages for different groups and different channels and methods to reach each of those groups. Next, consider whether you should direct your communication to those whose behavior, knowledge, or condition you hope to affect, or whether your communication needs to be indirect. Sometimes, for instance, in order to influence a population, you have to aim your message at those to whom they listen – clergy, community leaders, politicians, etc. Sometimes policy makers are the appropriate target, rather than those who are directly affected. These are only a few of the many possible ways to identify your audience. Once you've done that, it will give your organization ideas about how to reach them.

Knowing your audience makes it possible to plan your communication logically

Persons who create policy, fund, develop and run programs and services for teen pregnancy prevention and pregnant and parenting adolescents each brings to the table their own approach and reason for their efforts that is a reflection of how they listen to, learn from and eventually act upon messages they hear. Attention to how and why your audience listens and learn is called "andragogy" and was introduced and advanced in the United States by Malcolm Knowles ('andragogical model of learning' a model of human learning, 1990). As noted by Lawson (2009) this model is based on five assumptions that should be considered as you plan and execute your communication strategy(ies):

The *first assumption* involves a change in self-concept from total dependency to increasing *self-directedness.* Because your partners are more likely to be self-directed, and would want to take responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating the message, you should establish that the information provided is a collaborative effort. Throughout the communication process, you should be engaged with partners in ongoing, two-way communication that will allow them to adopt and adapt the message that best fits them and their intended audience.

The *second assumption* addresses the role of *experience*. Each partner or audience member brings a wealth of experiences that provide a base for hearing and using a targeted communication. Finding out what your audience already knows and how your communication will be perceived to help them build on their experiences will facilitate adoption. Use of the tools *Identify Your Target Audience* and *Create a Profile for Your Target Audience* on page 56 and 57, as well as your own (your team's) experience can assist you in this discovery effort.

The *third assumption* is that your audience is ready to listen and learn when they perceive they *need to know or do something* in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of the execution of their work. That is, they are

more likely to listen and learn from the message if it is practical and realistic, problem-centered rather than subject-centered (e.g., just on pregnant and parenting teens or just on father involvement). The effective message helps your audience understand how integration of the message can lead to learning a particular skill or task that will help them be more successful in their work.

The *fourth assumption* is that your target audience(s) is most likely to listen to a message that has immediate, real-world applications. Practitioners are very much real time learners and users of information. They want information that can lead to obtaining skills and knowledge that will help them solve problems or complete tasks. People working in this field are motivated to listen and assimilate information when they see relevance to their real-life situations and are able to apply what they have learned as quickly as possible. Therefore, messages need to be clearly relevant to the immediate needs of the audience. Here both the *Crafting Clear Communications Checklist* on Page 58 and *Message Development* on Page 59 can be effective in assisting you in crafting just-in-time messages that emphasize how the message is going to make the audience member's jobs easier.

The *fifth and last assumption* is that audiences are motivated to listen and learn because of *internal factors* such as self-esteem, greater self-confidence in their own knowledge and skills and opportunities to improve their own worth. Messages must allow the audience member to perceive a personal benefit.

There are four types of learners: feelers, observers, thinkers, and doers.

In addition, in crafting and targeting your message it is critical that you have rudimentary understanding of your audience's learning style. Learning style refers to the way in which an audience member approaches and responds to a message and learning experience. Larson (2009), based on the work of Jacobs and Fuhrmann (1984), suggest there are **four types of learners**:

a) *Feelers* are very people-oriented, expressive and focus on feelings and emotions and gravitate toward learning experiences that explore people's attitudes and emotions so they are more likely to benefit from communications that give them the opportunity to interact, share opinions and experiences;

b) *Observers* are more likely to watch and listen, be reserved and quiet and will take their time before responding to or acting upon what they hear – however, when they do respond or act they are generally right on target. They are more likely to benefit from communication experiences that allow them to consider various ideas and opinions, and they seem to thrive on messages that are more open and allow them to learn through discovery;

c) *Thinkers* are persons who rely on logic and reason as well as the opportunity to share ideas and concepts and prefer messages that challenge them to analyze and evaluate what is being communicated, so like **Feelers** they appreciate interactive communication, especially an approach that allows them to question the rationale behind what is presented. They are more likely to challenge messages they perceive to be too general or without substance; and

d) *Doers* have a learning style that is very common in this field since they are likely to be persons who want to actively be involved in the message development and delivery process, they want to take charge of the message

and they are particularly interested in knowing how they are going to apply what is being communicated to their and other real world situations – so they like information that is presented clearly and concisely and will become impatient with messages that provide 'additional' or broad audience-focused information.

Keep in mind that no one learning style is right or even better than another. To be effective, you must design and target communication strategy to accommodate style differences.

Please note: These five assumptions and understanding of how your audience learns are also true as you plan your outreach strategy.[xi]

The worksheets titled *Learning Style Inventory* on page 60 can guide you through this process.

3. Craft Your Message.

Your message may be one of inspiration, pure information, education, persuasion, request, and/or explanation. It can vary in content, mood, language, and design. The possibilities are:

a) *Content*. Planning the content of your message is necessary to making it effective. Your message will be very different if you are recruiting participants than if you are trying to rally the public, or if you are trying to convince a population at risk to change their habits.

The *Suggested Messaging* tool on page 63 in the Tools and Resources can guide your organization through the process of crafting your message.

b) *Mood*. Consider what emotions do you want to appeal to? Your message may be upbeat – "Look at all the wonderful things our participants have accomplished!" Your message may be angry – "We're tired of seeing our community's educational attainment decline, and we're not going to stand for it anymore." Your message may be determined – "It's time to roll up our sleeves and make teen pregnancy a thing of the past in our community."

The mood of your message will determine how people react to it. In general, if the mood is too extreme (too negative, too frightening, or tries to make your audience feel too guilty), people will not pay much attention to it. It may take some experience to learn how to strike the right balance.

Recently, foundations, government agencies, and public officials have been making use of research and outcomes measurement to determine the effectiveness of programs. This has led to a shift in targeting funds and support toward effective programs and organizations that are measurably improving the communities they serve. Therefore, it would be prudent to include evidence-based goals and outcomes in your organization's messaging (i.e., "70% of program graduates complete their high school degree compared to 25% of adolescent mothers nationally.")

Focusing your message to potential funders, community influencers and other stakeholders on the negative perceptions related to adolescent pregnancy is risky. Rather, consider approaching your message from a positive angle and highlight solutions that such partners can help you achieve. Recognize the potential, capabilities, and

contributions of pregnant and parenting adolescents in the community instead of overemphasizing their liabilities, deficits and needs; this is a much more effective way to mobilize them into action.

Consider using personal stories, case studies and real-life examples. Support these with facts and data to help your intended audience see how you are making a difference in the community. Clients who have successfully completed your program can also be great communicators of your message. Training them with some basic public speaking skills can benefit you and also give them a leg up for the future.

c) *Language and styles of communication*. Different audiences will require different communication styles. It is important for your organization to consider your audience's perception of your motives.

There are two aspects to language: one is the actual language – English, Spanish, Korean, etc. – that your intended audience speaks; the other is the *kind* of language you use – formal or informal, simple or complex, referring to popular figures and ideas or to obscure ones. You can address the language people speak by presenting your communications in both the official language (English in the U.S.) and the spoken language(s) of the population(s) you are hoping to reach.

The second aspect, the *kind* of language you use in your messaging, can be more complicated. If your message is too informal, your audience might feel you are talking down to them, or, worse, that you are making an insincere attempt to get close to them by communicating in a way that is clearly not normal for you. If your message is too formal – too stiff, too many "educated" words – your audience might feel you are not really talking to them at all. You will usually do best by using plain, straightforward language that says what you want to say simply and clearly.[xii]

When developing your message, consider the following:

- What is the primary language of the community? If English is not the primary language, how is communication translated?
- How does your target audience receive its information (Internet, newspapers, radio)? Where do they access such information (libraries, schools, etc.)? How often is this information accessed?
- How do they share information with each other?
- How does the community discuss adolescent pregnancy issues? Do they discuss the issues at all?
- What are cultural norms that need to be considered? Would a certain phrase be offensive?

Language and communication styles are especially important to consider as your organization reaches out to increasingly diverse communities. Translating and pilot testing materials intended for non-English speakers is a good first step, but it is important that the staff also mirrors the population's cultural diversity. It is essential that your organization have staff members who understand the language and cultural environment of each ethnic group in your target population, as well as the cultural skills to relate to your audience. Especially as issues of sex and sexuality are considered taboo in many cultures, it is crucial that there are as few barriers between your organization and your intended audience as possible.

d) Consistency. To ensure a consistent message, review your organization's strategy and goals. If these are unclear, it will be more difficult to determine the right audience(s) to engage. Both leadership and staff should work together to develop a clear and consistent message.

Some tips on maintaining consistency:

- Select one or two messages and keep them simple (e.g., a message for clients and a message for funders). Make sure they do not contradict each other.
- If you tailor the message to a specific audience, ensure that staff, board members and others working with your organization are promoting the same messages.
- Use the messages in all materials including: e-mail signatures, web sites, printed materials, etc.[xiii]

4. Tailor Your Message According To Your Medium.

Channels of communication relate to the medium through which you convey your key messages. There are numerous channels to choose from in order to reach your target audience depending on what the members of your audience read, listen to, watch, and engage in. It is critical that your organization understand what works effectively with different audiences. The *Communications Channels* worksheet on page 64 will help you brainstorm and provide ideas for potential communications channels.

The individuals that can help you spread your message can vary and include community leaders, elected officials, CEOs of local businesses, clergy, community activists and ordinary people who are nonetheless respected and listened to by their neighbors. Institutions and organizations, such as colleges, hospitals, service clubs, faith communities, and other health and community organizations all have access to groups of community members who might need to hear your message.

As mentioned in Chapters I and II, developing ways of contacting and establishing relationships with influential individuals and institutions in the community and/or the population you are trying to reach is an important part of your outreach plan. You have to make personal contacts, give the media and others reasons to want to help you, and follow through over time to sustain those relationships in order to keep communication channels open.

The *Checklist for Effective Brochures* tool on page 65 and *Characteristics of Quality Educational and Promotional Materials* tools on page 68 will help your organization ensure that the materials being produced are effective. Remember that your organization offers a unique benefit to the community that no other organization can claim. If you keep this in the front of your mind as you develop your message, you will have great success in reaching those who can help you fulfill your mission.

5. Plan for Communications Emergencies.

Any number of things can happen in the course of a communication effort. Someone can forget to e-mail a press release, or can e-mail the wrong information. A crucial word on your posters or in your brochure can be misspelled, or the phone number or e-mail address of your organization might be incorrect. A reporter may misunderstand important information, or simply get it wrong. Worse, you might have to deal with a real disaster involving the organization that has the potential to discredit everything you do.

It is important to try to anticipate these kinds of problems, and to create a plan to deal with them. Crisis planning should be part of any communication plan, so you will know exactly what to do when a problem or crisis occurs. Crisis plans should include who takes responsibility for what – dealing with the media, correcting errors, deciding when something has to be redone rather than fixed. It should cover as many situations, and as many aspects of each situation, as you can think of, so that you will not be too surprised and upset to do the right thing when one of them comes up.[xiv]

Some tips for managing controversy include:

- Before taking action, define the real problem: Obtain copies of the article, television transcript, information from the state or federal agency or other documents that describe the situation. Follow-up with telephone calls to the original source to verify the facts and get more detailed information.
- Determine the scope of the problem: Assess whether the problem is a local, regional or national concern. This will entail anticipating the extent of the media coverage and evaluating whether an issue, such as an allegation about a policy, is national or confined to one area.
- Determine the potential impact on your organization: Assess if the problem can be isolated to one department or issue, or if it will affect your entire agency. Assess if the problem has "staying power" or is limited to a "one-time" story.
- Mobilize your issues management team: When a controversy develops, these individuals should be allowed to devote themselves entirely to the situation. An issues management plan should be in place and ready to go.
- Centralize the control of information: Make sure your messages are consistent and clear.

Appoint only one spokesperson, backed up by experts as appropriate.

- Communicate with internal audiences: Besides the media, be sure to communicate with your employees, local officials, service recipients and other government agencies throughout the controversy. By providing information quickly, it will be possible to speak "with one voice" and avoid confusion.
- Be flexible: Try to accommodate journalists, reporters and producers by providing timely and accurate information. Local media do not treat stories in the same way as national reporters. Make sure your spokesperson understands the different needs of these media and can anticipate the kinds of information they are seeking.[xv]

6. Evaluate the Effectiveness of Your Message.

As a health or community service organization, evaluation should be part of any initiatives undertaken. The evaluation methodology can employ focus groups, key informant interviews, SurveyMonkey and Facebook polls, surveys, and/or street interviews. The *Focusing Your Evaluation* tool on page 67 can guide your organization through an evaluation. If you evaluate your communication plan in terms of both how well you carry it out and how well it works, you will be able to make changes to improve it. It will keep getting more effective each time you implement it. No plan is ever perfect, but you can make yours as effective as possible if you monitor and evaluate it continually.

As with just about every phase of health and community work, your organization must continually adjust its communications plan. Memories are short and your organization must keep reminding the community of its key messages, that your organization performs important and successful work, and that the problems and issues in question have not gone away.[xvi]

CHAPTER III: TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR CRAFTING CLEAR COMMUNICATIONS

Identify Your Target Audience

Knowing who your audience is makes it possible to plan your communication logically. First, choose which key audience your message will focus on. You will need different messages for different groups and different channels and methods to reach each of those groups. Next, consider whether you should direct your communication to those whose behavior, knowledge, or condition you hope to affect, or whether your communication needs to be indirect. Sometimes, for instance, in order to influence a population, you have to aim your message at those to whom your audience listens to – clergy, community leaders, and politicians, etc.

> *Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation:* This tool will help your organization brainstorm a myriad of possible ways to identify your audiences and aid your organization in generating ideas about how to reach them.

Step 1: Review the list below and rank each "audience" in terms of their importance to your work (not applicable, somewhat important, and critically important).
Step 2: Decide whether you have been effective or not effective at reaching out to them.
Step 3: Rank the 5 most critical audiences. Check the appropriate boxes.

	STEP 1		STEP 2		STEP 3	
Category	N/A	Somewhat Important	Critical	Not Effective	Effective	Rank the Top 5
Health care providers						
Faith communities						
Workplace settings/Employers						
Recreational Clubs						
Private Business Owners						
Community/public officials						
Civic groups						
Funders (board members, local foundations)						
Public Institutions						
Internal Staff						
Other community organizations or groups						
Media						
Other						

Create a Profile for Your Target Audience

This tool will enable you to understand your audience so that your message can be tailored to their specific characteristics.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: Use of this tool should be a group process with your staff. Two key questions this tool can help you answer are: a) What are your audiences' concerns?; and b) What characteristics of your audience are important to your organization (e.g. their education levels, parenting skills; health issues)? Information for each question should be based on the outcome consensus agreement resulting from discussion by you, your staff and your partners (if possible). The answers should focus on providing key information that will guide decisions leading to the formulation of your outreach activities and better targeting your intended audience.

The questions are:

1. Why is your audience important to you?

2. Why should your audience care about your organization and its issues?

3. What do you want from this audience? What do they want/need from you?

4. How does this audience receive information?

5. Are there particular individuals who have credibility or power over the target audience? If so, identify them.

6. Are there other individuals that can help you better reach this target audience? Who?

7. How will you know if you have successfully reached this audience?

TIPS: Do not assume that you know the audience, even if you have worked with them for a while. Put yourself in their shoes and think about what they need and want from your organization. Remember, your audience is a subset of the general population.

Crafting Clear Communications Checklist

Your message will be very different if you are recruiting participants than if you are trying to rally the public, or if you are trying to convince a population at risk to change their habits. Planning the content of your message is necessary to making it effective.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: Use this checklist to ensure that your communications will be effective in engaging the audience. The design tips below provide tips and guiding principles for drafting, designing, and producing your communications material.

Elements of a communication plan often include:

- Identifying 3-5 key messages
- Identifying a credible spokesperson
- Identifying target audiences, internal and external

Key Messages should:

- Inform
- Promote
- Involve

Design Principles

- Think about how you will distribute the information – handout or display.
- What size do you want it to be? Something that individuals can put in their pockets? Consider a business card.
- Paper color and texture play an important role. Gloss paper with bold colors creates an upscale image. Plain copier paper creates a poor image.
- Are you going to print this or have a professional printer do this? Check with a printer while you are designing the information/ promotional piece. They can help with selecting color and paper and let you know if the size you are considering is standard or will require special cuts (more expensive).
- Check with your printer for the most economical paper size in the color, weight and texture of your choice. You might even consider papers that come pre-printed in a variety of colors and graphics.
- The content should be printed in black. Then use a second color to highlight your agency name, logo and borders.
- Cultural and ethnic considerations – know your audience. Test your materials with the target audience, and work with local organizations that also serve that audience for translation and interpretation services.

Message Development

Knowing who your audience makes it possible to plan your communication logically.
First, choose which key audiences your message will focus on. You'll need different messages for different groups and different channels and methods to reach each of those groups. Next, create a message for each of your priority audiences. It should identify the issue and desired action. Repeat this process for each target audience identified. Remember to make it relevant and worthwhile to the audience and provide an action step that they can take.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: Use of this tool should be a group process with your staff. Information for each item should be based on the outcome consensus agreement resulting from discussion by you, your staff and your partners (if possible). Interpretation of each item and overall should focus on providing key information that will guide decisions leading to the formulation of your outreach activities and better targeting your intended audience.

Fill in the items below:

TARGET AUDIENCE: _____

DESIRED ACTION: _____

PART 1. (THE ISSUE)

_____
_____
_____
_____

PART 2. (WHY YOUR AUDIENCE SHOULD CARE)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Learning Style Inventory

In crafting and targeting your message it is critical that you have rudimentary understanding of your audience's learning style. Learning style refers to the way in which an audience member approaches and responds to a message and learning experience.

Recommended data collection, analyses and interpretation: For each of the numbered items below, rank alternatives A through D by assigning 4 to the phrase that is most like you, 3 to the one that next describes you, 2 to the next, and finally, 1 to the ending that is least descriptive of you.

F= Feeling
O= Observer
T= Thinker
D= Doer

1. When solving a problem, I prefer to. . .
    a. take a step-by-step approach **(O)**
    b. take immediate action **(D)**
    c. consider the impact on others **(F)**
    d. make sure I have all the facts **(T)**
2. As a learner, I prefer to…
    a. listen to a lecture **(O)**
    b. work in small group **(F)**
    c. read articles and case studies **(T)**
    d. participate in role plays **(D)**
3. When the trainer asks a question to which I know the answer, I…
    a. let others answer first **(O)**
    b. offer an immediate response **(D)**
    c. consider whether my answer will be received favorably **(F)**
    d. think carefully about my answer before responding **(T)**
4. In a group discussion, I...
    a. encourage others to offer their opinions **(F)**
    b. question others' opinions **(T)**
    c. readily offer my opinion **(D)**
    d. listen to others before offering my opinion **(O)**
5. I learn best from activities in which I…
    a. can interact with others **(F)**
    b. remain uninvolved **(O)**
    c. take a leadership role **(D)**
    d. can take my time **(T)**
6. During a lecture, I listen for…
    a. practical how-to's **(D)**
    b. logical points **(T)**

   c. the main idea **(O)**
   d. stories and anecdotes **(F)**

7. I am impressed by a trainer's...
   a. knowledge and expertise **(T)**
   b. personality and style **(F)**
   c. use of methods and activities **(D)**
   d. organization and control **(O)**
8. I prefer information to be presented in the following way:
   a. a model such as a flow chart **(O)**
   b. bullet points **(D)**
   c. detailed explanation **(T)**
   d. accompanied by examples **(F)**
9. I learn best when I…
   a. see relationships among ideas, events, and situations **(T)**
   b. interact with others **(F)**
   c. receive practical tips **(D)**
   d. observe a demonstration or video **(O)**
10. Before attending a training program, I ask myself: "Will I...?"
    a. get practical tips to help me in my job **(D)**
    b. receive lots of information **(T)**
    c. have to participate **(O)**
    d. learn something new **(F)**
11. After attending a training session, I…
    a. tend to think about what I learned **(T)**
    b. am anxious to put my learning into action **(D)**
    c. reflect on the experience as a whole **(O)**
    d. tell others about my experience **(F)**
12. The training, method I dislike the most is…
    a. participating in small groups **(O)**
    b. listening to a lecture **(D)**
    c. reading and analyzing case studies **(F)**
    d. participating in role plays **(T)**

Scoring Sheet

Instructions: Record your responses on the appropriate spaces below, then total the columns. The higher the number, the more you prefer that particular style. Conversely, the lower the number, the less you prefer that style.

Feeler		Observer		Thinker		Doer	
1c		1a		1d		1b	
2b		2a		2c		2d	
3c		3a		3d		3b	
4a		4d		4b		4c	
5a		5b		5d		5c	
6d		6c		6b		6a	
7b		7d		7a		7c	
8d		8a		8c		8b	
9b		9d		9a		9c	
10d		10c		10b		10a	
11d		11c		11a		11b	
12c		12a		12d		12b	
Total		Total		Total		Total	

Adapted from Jacobs, R. T. & Fuhrmann, B.S. (1984).

Suggested Messaging

As a communicator in the adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting field you likely face common, usually negative, stereotypes of pregnant and parenting adolescents. These stereotypes, which focus on the failures or deficits of the adolescents themselves, have a negative impact on your clients. It can also inadvertently impact your service delivery if your clients become "problems" that must be addressed, rather than young and future parents whose potential and skills can lead to success for them and their children. When you develop your key messages, consider how your choice of words and your attitudes may reflect, even inadvertently, these stereotypes. Your organization is different because it embodies an opportunity for a new future for these adolescents and your community.

You know your community and your clients better than anyone. However, there are several key messages that are a good starting point. If these themes are incorporated into the messages you develop using this Toolkit, you are well on your way to communicating effectively. These elements may help frame a more positive set of messages to communicate to key audiences:

- **Adolescent parents are assets, not liabilities**. Teen parents have chosen to take a difficult, but life-affirming and rewarding, path in life. They are not a burden. So avoid, for example, discussing the "costs of teen pregnancy." Instead, talk about the opportunities to help kids and the need to treat teens equally.
- **Do not blame the individual; focus on the potential of the individual**. By noting the transformative nature of parenthood, including for teen parents (lives can be transformed and individuals can contribute to society), you point out the unique character strengths and life skills pregnant and parenting teens are acquiring. Sure, it is earlier than many would like, but these teens are learning to make responsible, unselfish decisions for themselves and their children. That should be encouraged and used to focus on the great things these teens and their children will accomplish with your support.
- **Celebrate the resilience of teens and their children**. Being positive does not mean ignoring the truth. Raising a child is difficult no matter how old you are. Pregnant and parenting teens are enduring hardships that most kids their age will not. As a result, their resilience and character should be recognized, celebrated and encouraged.
- **Promote the benefits to society of helping pregnant and parenting teens achieve their potential**. No one wants any teen to be left behind. Our society spends billions of dollars on education and other youth programs to act on that desire. Pregnant and parenting teens are no different – when they succeed, we all succeed.

Communications Channels

Channels of communication relate to the medium through which you convey your key messages. There are numerous channels to choose from in order to reach your target audience depending on what the members of your audience read, listen to, watch, and engage in. It is critical that your organization understand what works effectively with different audiences.

This tool contains ideas for communications channels your organization can utilize for outreach. The list is by no means exhaustive, but can provide ideas to help your organization start brainstorming.

- *Posters*. In appropriate locations, couched in simple language, and with tear-off phone numbers or other information, these can be very effective.
- *Fliers and brochures*. These can be more compelling in places where the issue is already in people's minds (doctors' offices for health issues, supermarkets for nutrition, etc).
- *Organizational and community newsletters*. These may range from church bulletins to the internal newsletters of corporations.
- *Promotional materials*. Imprinted items – caps, T-shirts, mugs – can serve as effective channels for your message.
- *Comic books or other reading material*. Reading matter that is intrinsically interesting to the target audience can be used to deliver a message through a story that readers are eager to follow, or simply through the compelling nature of the medium and its design.
- *Internet sites*. In addition to web pages, interactive sites like MySpace and Facebook, YouTube, and similar video sites have increased the possibilities for Internet communication.
- Letters to the Editor.
- *News stories, columns, and reports* (on TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines) that you suggest, are featured in, or contribute to.
- *Press releases and press conferences*. These may announce the kick-off or status of a campaign, provide information about your issue, or showcase new information that may help to change people's perceptions or behavior.
- Presentations or presence at local events and local and national conferences, fairs, and other gatherings.
- *Announcements and presentations at public and institutional or organizational gatherings*. This can include anything from a short presentation at a local church or school to a fleet of sound trucks blanketing a city with a social marketing message.
- *Community outreach or street work*. Having one or more staff members spreading your message in the community can be very effective if they have the right connections and networks.
- *Community or national events*. Community events can serve to convey a message and highlight an issue.
- *Public demonstrations*. A public demonstration on your issue does not have to be confrontational: it can be positive and upbeat, and still grab the public's attention.
- *Word of mouth*. If you can get to a few key influential people, they can help to extend a social marketing message to a whole target population simply through their networks and their day-to-day contacts.

Checklist for Effective Brochures

It is critical that your organization understand what works effectively with different audiences. Remember that each audience is unique, and that messages that engage some audiences do not necessarily engage all audiences.

Use this checklist to determine whether your brochures will be effective in engaging their audience.

☐ "Selling message" is on the cover (4 out of 5 people will not read beyond the cover page – just the name of your agency may not tell the reader much).

☐ Brand: consistent look to all your marketing and informational materials.

☐ Photos, graphics, pictures are all captioned – most people will read captions.

☐ No clichés, acronyms, initials, jargon.

☐ Tells the person what they need to know (long version is okay once you get them to start reading).

☐ Most important facts are highlighted for those not going to read much.

☐ There is a clear call to action – what do you want the person to do?

☐ Testimonials are included – this adds credibility.

☐ It is as personable as possible – write in conversational words.

Characteristics of Quality Educational and Promotional Materials

Your message will be very different if you are recruiting participants than if you are trying to rally the public, or if you are trying to convince a population at risk to change their habits. Planning the content and layout of your promotional materials is necessary to making them effective.

Use this checklist to determine whether your brochures will be effective in engaging their audience.

- ❑ The brochure is distinctive
  The cover page stands out (e.g., attractive and appealing design)
  Headlines are fresh and reflect the content
  Logos are used consistently
  Themes are carried throughout all promotional materials

- ❑ The material targets its market audience
  The content is relevant and appealing to the target audience
  The headline attracts the attention of the desired audience

- ❑ The layout is simple*
  The text is logically presented and easy to read
  Separate services/ products/ features are noted by boxes, headings, lines and white spaces

- ❑ There is a dominant element
  One message that you want the individuals to take, an action
  Illustrations capture attention
  Illustrations are useful and must relate to the content
  Photographs are effective

- ❑ Use of color is important

  * Layout for an adolescent audience can be busy.

Adapted from Interpretive Signage: Principles and Practice, www.interpretivesigns.qut.edu.au/brochures.html

Focusing Your Evaluation

As you decide on your outreach message and method for communicating, it is critical that you develop and implement an evaluation of the effort. All successful communication efforts incorporate methods of evaluation to help determine what worked or did not work, what to modify and what to keep or discard. Such evaluation efforts involve administrative indicators (such as, fiscal and personnel resources), implementation indicators (such as, reach-breath-scope, level of receptivity, and level of comprehension) and outcome indicators (such as, demonstration of utility or use, count of individuals or programs reached). Evaluation can assist with determining the efficacy of your communication effort and inform partnership engagement decisions.

Keep in mind, if your intent is to determine whether your outreach efforts are being carried out as planned, then your focus is on **Monitoring**. If your intent is to determine whether your efforts result in a change of behavior or attitude, then your focus is on **Evaluation**. Both are critical to gauging the success of your outreach efforts. The following provides a review of steps you should consider in your monitoring and evaluation activities.

The monitoring/evaluation assessment should be carried out in three stages – Pre-Assessment, Implementation and Post-Assessment.

Pre-Assessment involves development, testing and refinement of your outreach goals, objectives and methods using a sample from your intended audience(es). Pre-assessment will allow you to address the following questions:

- Who is your targeted audience?
- What is the message you are you trying to communicate?
- How is the intended message best communicated?
- What factors will influence levels of comprehension and outreach success?
- What strategies will enable you to address the challenges you've identified?
- What resources do you have to work with, including funds, personnel (paid and volunteer), and in-kind contribution of facilities and equipment?
- Given the level of resources available to you, which of the possible strategies can you implement well?

The pre-assessment effort will allow you to utilize a communication approach that is well tested and better targeted for your intended audience(es).

Next, **Implementation** involves the actual construction and conducting of your assessment through the testing and documentation of your communication effort's Goal(s), Objective(s), Program Measurement Plan, Task(s)/Outreach Elements, Indicator(s), Target(s), Measure(s), Outcome(s)/Expected Result(s). The best approach for implementing your evaluation is to lay out your activities in a Work Matrix (see example below).

Focusing Your Evaluation (continued)

Name of Your Program:						
Program Contact Personnel: Data Contact Personnel: Contact Personnel: Timeframe for Monitoring/Evaluation Effort:						
Goals	**Objectives**	**Tasks**	**Expected Outcomes**	**Measures (Indicators)**	**Final Outcomes**	**Data Source**
Insert overall goals of the outreach effort	Insert objectives correspondin g to each goal	Insert all tasks corresponding to each objective	Insert expected outcomes for the objective	Insert measures to indicate completion of task	Insert final outcomes as a result of the completed task	Insert data source used to record the task
Increase awareness about father involvement through community outreach and professional education	Educate professionals about the factors that challenge and promote involvement of fathers intervention efforts	Provide written educational information to targeted professionals in southwestern Ohio Provide educational in-services to potential partners in Ohio	Information packets sent to 200 professionals 10 in-services in year 1, 15 in year 2 and 20 in year 3	Number of packets sent Number of in-services per year	225 information packets were sent to providers 7 in-services in year 1	Logs Logs

The matrix serves as your operations plan and allows for documentation of the progress of your implementation efforts.

Last, **Post-Assessment** involves a review of the evidence from the implementation phase. You should carry out a post assessment with the intent of using the findings to inform decisions for next steps and to determine the overall and objective-specific success of your outreach activities. The post-assessment requires a focus on the results, effects or impact (expected or unexpected, intended or unintended) that can be reasonably attributed to the activities or actions of your efforts.

Overall, this systematic approach to assessing your outreach efforts will provide you with a means of increasing the probability of their short and long-term success.

Worksheet developed by Dr. Joseph Telfair and Dr. Virginia Brown at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Center for Social Community and Health Research and Evaluation

Case Study 3: Crafting Clear Communications

Selena is the director of the Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices teenage pregnancy prevention and education outreach program in San Diego County, California. Targeted at young adolescent and teenage Hispanic girls, the goal of Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices is to prevent unwanted teenage pregnancy, delay the onset of sexual activity, and if pregnancy occurs, to provide linkages to services to assist clients in caring for their child. Finally, vouchers for free or reduced cost medical services, free condoms and birth control are made available to teens who want them.

Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices has been in existence for eight years, with Selena as its founder and director. With the heavy migration of Hispanic individuals into the area, the demand for services has increased. With this influx of new clients, Selena noticed that the girls who sought assistance were often three or more years younger than their sexual partners and that a traditional male-dominated culture assisted in fostering unhealthy relationships. To make matters worse, these unhealthy relationships, which at times included physical, mental and/or emotional abuse, appeared to be reinforced by the girls' friends, families and the greater community. Conversations with young girls found that they were often afraid of losing or upsetting their boyfriend, causing them to consent to sex at younger ages or that their desire to have unconditional love and support made them want to have a child. Concerned by this, Selena decided that she would work to change the dynamics of these unhealthy relationships in her community.

Identifying the Purpose

The first thing Selena did was meet with her staff and identify the exact campaign message needed. A conversation was started around what the overall purpose and goal(s) were. Selena engaged the group in an exercise to clearly lay out Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices' values and goals and what the organization tries to accomplish. The following questions were posed to the staff:

- What are the most important accomplishments of our organization? Can you describe in simple, short and clear terms what the organization does?
- How do funders/stakeholders/clients react to our message?
- How does our message help shape public perception of controversial issues?
- What statements and sound bites will be most memorable and persuasive to our key audiences?
- How does the message fit with our mission/vision and services?

During discussion, the group realized that the current model for male-dominant relationships was being taught and reinforced by the following groups: faith organizations, media, peers and family. The staff became aware that some of their potential funders were community leaders with traditional viewpoints, which could affect the overall success of the campaign and that open discussion about sexual relationships was still taboo in their community. The issue appeared to be ingrained in the community, making Selena realize that several different audiences needed to be targeted. Because of this, they decided a more positive approach to the issue would be beneficial, where they would focus on the benefits of a healthy relationship, including communication and respect between partners. Therefore, staff decided that the official purpose of the message would be to promote the benefits of healthy relationships in their community.

Choosing Your Audience

Once the purpose was chosen, Selena began work to identify which audiences needed to be included in their campaign. Using the *Identify Your Target Audience* worksheet on page 56, the Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices staff discussed the importance of targeting a range of audiences and how effective they had been in the past. While the majority of the audiences were deemed as being "somewhat important", because of the community's cultural norms and values and by virtue of who the girls interacted with the most, the following audiences were ranked as the most important: health care providers, faith communities, recreational clubs, public institutions and media.

Upon completing the worksheet, Selena set out to better understand each audience through use of the *Create a Profile for Your Target Audience* worksheet on page 57. The tool proved to be very useful, as she realized that in order to be effective, each audience would require a different strategy and approach. For instance, health care providers would be interested in healthy relationships as it contributes to better physical, emotional and mental health outcomes both now and in later life while faith communities would be interested in delaying sexual debut, which has been found to be influenced by healthy relationships.

Crafting the Message

Now that the purpose was identified and the audiences profiled, Selena worked on crafting her messages. In order to ensure that each message was appropriate, Selena focused on their content. First, Selena used the *Crafting Clear Communications Checklist* on page 58 for each audience to ensure the message(s) addressed the principles described. Keeping the *Crafting Clear Communications Checklist* on hand, she used the *Message Development* worksheet on page 59 to clarify the issue, why each audience needed to care about the issue, and what she wanted them to do about the issue. Finally, she used the *Suggested Messaging* tool on page 63 to ensure that the language and content would be appropriate for the targeted group.

While crafting the messages, Selena made sure that the mood of the messages appealed to the emotions she was attempting to elicit from each audience. Because the overall goal was to promote healthy relationships and their benefits, she decided to stay away from an angry tone and rather use one of determination and hope. For the faith community, the link was made between healthy relationships and decreased sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. For recreational clubs, personal stories and messages from clients and teens were used to address the issue. Finally, for public institutions, the cost differences/savings of promoting healthy relationships over ignoring negative ones was addressed.

After the messages were reviewed and edits made, Selena and her group examined the language and chosen style of communication for each. To determine the most effective promotion language and communication styles for each, Selena did research into what had worked previously and engaged in discussions with members of the target audience to gauge their preferences. During this research phase, Selena set out to answer the following questions:

- What is the primary language of the community? If English is not the primary language, how is communication translated?

- How does the target audience receive its information (Internet, newspapers, radio)? Where do they access such information (libraries, schools, etc.)? How often is this information accessed?
- How does the audience share information with each other?
- How does the community discuss adolescent pregnancy issues, if at all?
- What are cultural norms that need to be considered? Would a certain phrase be offensive?

Based on their findings, the decision was made to make the messages available in both English and Spanish, as much of the community was bilingual. Further, Selena found that groups preferred different modes of communication, all of which necessitated unique approaches. Finally, each group had varying cultural norms which led to different wordings of the same message. For instance, discussion of contraception was removed from messages targeted at religious institutions so members would not be offended.

Once the messages were developed, Selena set about ensuring that while different, each message was consistent with the overall purpose of promoting healthy relationships in the community. Both Selena and her staff reviewed the messages to make sure they did not contradict one another. A master list of each message and its target audience was developed for everyone to refer to in case questions were asked. All materials were reviewed to ensure the appropriate message was on the appropriate item based on the audience set to receive it. Finally, an informal focus group was held with a couple of members from each target audience to ensure the message was read and interpreted the way it was intended.

Tailor Your Message According to Your Medium

After crafting the messages, Selena set out to choose the appropriate medium for each. Using the *Communication Channels* on page 64, different approaches were chosen for each audience and for some audiences, multiple mediums were selected. Once selected, Selena approached members of each audience to ensure their leaders would assist Healthy Lives, Healthy Choices in delivering the message. Selena drew on resources leveraged from Healthy Lives' business partnerships to develop brochures for physicians to pass out to patients, brochures and posters for the recreational clubs and public institutions, an internet website, presentations at faith institutions, press releases and community events to inform the greater population. The tools *Checklist for Effective Brochures* and *Characteristics of Quality Educational and Promotional Materials* on page 68 were used to develop the brochures. Finally, members of each community were asked to review the tailored message to ensure that it appealed to the group for which it was intended.

CONCLUSION

This Toolkit is designed to be utilized by organizations that serve adolescents in their continued efforts to promote, implement, and evaluate innovative programs in the field of adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting.

The objectives of this toolkit are to aid your organization in identifying opportunities for increasing strategic partnerships and community outreach, conducting an audience profile that identifies priority communities and target populations for outreach, and developing action-oriented messages tailored to specific audiences. Indicators for success include:

- Stronger partnerships with other organizations working in the adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting field
- Raised awareness in your community of the services offered by your organization
- Expanded access to a wider range of resources for teen pregnancy prevention and for pregnant and parenting adolescents and their families
- Enhanced support for teen pregnancy prevention, and pregnant and parenting adolescents

Through the partnership-building process and implementation of outreach strategies that engage your community, your organization will be empowered to bring about more effective and efficient delivery of programs, to increase communication among groups and break down stereotypes, and create long-term, permanent social change. Ultimately, the end goal of transforming communities to promote healthy adolescents can be achieved in large part through collaborative processes with local organizations and community members who share your interest and passion for change.

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