Overview of Collaboration Science Frameworks

What is collaboration?
Two or more entities (organizations, organizational systems, programs, community groups, or individuals) working together for a common purpose.

Collaborations form the bedrock of public health work to address community needs.

Why collaborate?
To address complex issues, we need stakeholders from multiple sectors and levels of operation to work together toward a common vision and goal.

The Role: Engage with and build consensus among diverse organizations and individuals in a community to address a community-level issue or problem.

The Format: Collaborative partnerships vary by level of commitment, activities undertaken, membership composition, and intensity (e.g., meeting frequency).

What are the components of successful collaborative efforts? A systematic review of how to create successful partnerships identified the following critical success factors:

- Shared, mutually agreed on vision
- Clear, consistent communication
- Effective means of making decisions, ensuring accountability
- Focus on process and outcomes
- Leadership, especially in managing change
- Working across boundaries

How do you develop and implement strategies for collaboration and partnership?

- Determine the best strategy/approach
- Include multiple perspectives
- Delineate roles and responsibilities
- Have collaborative and partnership agreement with various stakeholders on specific projects
- Maintain open and clear communication
- Rely on collaborative and transformational leadership

Measuring collaboration:

To identify strengths and weaknesses in collaborative partnerships, networks or processes; to "unpack" the complexity of collaborations by identifying measurable components of collaborative structures, processes, and outcomes; to create a roadmap for improvement.

Tools to help measure collaboration include logic models, driver diagrams, and strategic plans.

Frameworks for measuring collaborations will get at different aspects of how collaborative partnerships work including the structures and processes in place and measures of progress and outcomes that are desired.

Measure structure and functioning: Are there components of the collaboration that are problematic and need attention? Are there enough people at appropriate levels doing their allocated work? Are training and finances properly allocated?

Measure processes: Are activities being carried out as planned? Establish and check in on roles and responsibilities of stakeholders; measure performance and list shared accountability; assess activities/ tasks that have been achieved and progress made on each.

Measure progress and outcomes: Use logic models to examine whether the collaboration is aiding in the achievement of program outcomes.

Examples of Measurements for Collaboration:

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What should you take from this resource?

- Measuring collaborations helps you to improve relationships and maximize effectiveness of efforts
- Measures of collaboration (structure and process) and measures of collaborative efforts (progress and outcomes) can come from tools like project logic models
- Use both qualitative and quantitative methods to improve credibility and confirmability of results

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