



Network Coordinating Office

**PTTC**

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network  
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# The Six Elements of Effective Coalitions



This resource is part of a four-part webinar series discussing the Six Elements of Effective Coalitions, which has been developed for prevention practitioners and community coalition members by the Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network (<https://pttcnetwork.org/>).

The goal of this series is to provide information on the six elements that research suggests are critical for coalitions to operate effectively and increase their impact on substance misuse and its consequences for individuals and communities.

This resource is not meant to be exhaustive, but instead serve as a starting place for prevention practitioners and community coalition members who are in the building and maintenance phase of a healthy coalition. Based on a large and growing body of rigorous research, there are six elements that are characteristic of effective coalitions. Future installments in this series will provide tools to help practitioners assess, monitor, and implement these elements to enhance their coalition work.

### Acknowledgments

SAMSHA's Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network Community Coalitions and Collaborations Workgroup created this document. Contributing Network Workgroup members represented the Northwest, Central East, Southeast, Northeast and Caribbean, New England and the National American Indian & Alaska Native Prevention Technology Transfer Centers.

# Themes and Resources from the June 18 2020 PTTC Community Coalitions & Collaborators Webinar: Six Elements of Effective Coalitions – An Overview

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## Introduction

This online webinar offered national substance use prevention practitioners and coalitions an opportunity to learn and share around a coalition building model – the Six Elements of Effective Coalitions with presenter Dr. Kevin Haggerty.

The peer sharing nature of the webinar encouraged a rich discussion of innovative ways to continue coalition efforts, particularly during the virtual transition due to COVID-19. Participants shared strategies and tools they are using to remain engaged with their coalitions, and maintain engagement with each other. Participants also highlighted the pros and cons of remote interactions and suggestions of what has worked for their respective situations.

The information below is a compilation of participant responses to the central questions addressed in the session. Please note that many of the suggestions made by participants were not strictly evidence-based and should not be regarded as such. The overall purpose of this summary is to share the collective experience from the prevention field during this challenging time.

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." - Henry Ford

## Learning Objectives

- Introduce the six-part series for the “Effective Coalition”
- Define and introduce the 6 elements of an effective coalition
- Describe the relationship of the six elements to the adoption of science-based approach to prevention
- Provide knowledge and skills to increase the effectiveness of coalitions towards achieving outcomes

This webinar series is a product from the National PTTC Community Coalitions and Collaborators (3Cs) Work Group, which exists to develop training and technical assistance tools, products, and services on effective community coalitions and collaborations, to be deployed across the PTTC network to increase the capacity of prevention coalitions and collaborators to reduce substance misuse outcomes.



## Resources for Attendees

- [Six Elements of Effective Coalitions - Webinar Recording](#)
  - Presenter Bio: [Dr. Kevin Haggerty, MSW, PhD](#)
- [Six Elements of Effective Coalitions – Webinar Slides](#)
- [Six Elements of Effective Coalitions – Fact Sheet](#)
  - Overview of the six elements of effective coalitions in a [downloadable PDF](#).
- [Pandemic Response Resources](#) (collected by PTTC NCO)

## Inspiration and Challenges in Coalition Work

1. What have you found to be rewarding, inspiring or empowering in your coalition work?
2. What challenges have you experienced building or maintaining an effective coalition?

### Inspiration Key Themes

What have you found to be rewarding, inspiring or empowering in your coalition work?

- **Contributing to community change**
  - “I love it when you see a community realize they have contributed to real community change.”
  - “Bringing awareness to the community, particularly the parents, keeps me motivated.”
  - “Helping to create change and seeing the results of our work.”
  - “Watching all our hard work being implemented, executed and running successfully.”
- **People and Personal Connections**
  - “Working with youth has been so inspiring. With all they are going through right now, it is great to see how eager they are to make a change in their community.”
  - “Motivation of community volunteers.”
  - “Working with people passionate about their community.”
  - “Working with youth.”
- **Common/Collective Mission**
  - “Seeing different people coming together for a common cause. When you uncover people's strengths, they are more likely to be involved.”
  - “I love the concept of the various community sectors coming together to work on a common mission and vision.”
  - “Love maximizing outcomes by working together with our individual agency strengths.”
- **Creativity**
  - “Non-traditional ways to do prevention practices and programs.”

### Challenges Key Themes

What challenges have you experienced building or maintaining an effective coalition?

- **Internal Involvement**
  - Finding Coordinators/Committee Members
    - “Not every community that wants a coalition has a person who is willing and able to be the coordinator.”
    - “Constant turnover of coalition coordinator”
    - Filling volunteer roles like committee roles.
  - Turnover and Educating
    - “Keeping members involved in the coalition due to turnover.”
    - “We have struggled keeping people interested in topics if something we try doesn't work or just because they lose interest.”
    - “Consistently making sure that all Coalition members are aware of all activities and work without overwhelming them through emails or extra spending time during working meetings. Feel like we constantly have to reassess and educate or re-educate. Small wins help to raise awareness though”



- “Rigid thought processes and beliefs around substance use and what it looks like / who abuses substances”
- **External Engagement**
  - “I think our largest challenges have been actively engaging youth in meaningful ways and [gaining] volunteers from the community to assist with our efforts.”
  - Recruiting diverse populations
  - Engagement from:
    - Law Enforcement
    - Community members
    - Youth
    - Parents
    - Faith-based organizations
    - Schools/School Systems
      - Students
    - School Boards
      - “Schools have to pay for the school surveys and they have final say as to the implementation. They don't see the value in the data...so they don't conduct them.”
    - Encouraging Law enforcement to participate with our coalition
- **Silos**
  - “It has been challenging because each organization has its criteria, which causing us to be in "silos" instead of [being] flexible.”
  - Remote communities are isolated
  - “We need sustainability strategies for standalone community coalitions.”
- **Action**
  - We are having trouble getting people to "act" - everyone has ideas but one person is getting stuck with all the actions that need taken.
  - Keeping momentum going
  - Lots of great ideas, but one person stuck with pushing the ideas forward
  - “No meaningful movement on any meaningful project in FIVE YEARS”
- **Virtual Challenges**
  - Hard to achieve goals, such as our annual survey taken in schools. Now it is sent home through a link and participation is very low because the kids aren't a “captive” audience.
  - Learning how to implement EBP programs in a virtual way.
  - Our goals will now have to consider the effects of the pandemic on our community

## Questions from chat (for Panelists/Speaker)

- How do we engage populations in virtual life skills development?
- How do you engage youth who are very busy? We live in a homogeneous community where youth are highly engaged in activities and taking time away to focus on something like the coalition (or parents coming to coalition events when there are youth sports every night) is seen as low priority.
- What have coalitions done for fun in this virtual climate?

## Ideas and Resources from Chat

### New Virtual Ways of Connecting

- **Virtual Competitions**
  - Youth Video Challenge
  - High School Groups to create Facebook pages on Project Positivity for prizes



- Incentivize members by giving away giftcards
- Zoom/Facebook Talent Show
- PSA Contest
- Prize incentives... points for all interactions/participation in groups/discussions/activities/etc.
- Art competitions for logos and other things
- **Virtual Campaigns**
  - Prevention Blog
    - Posted on Instagram and Facebook
  - “How Are You Really” Campaign
  - Teens Talking to Teens videos
  - Quaran"Teen" Summer Bash - online workshop with online quizzes in Kahoot for cash prizes
- **Youth**
  - Wednesday Webinars for Teens
  - Staying open-minded – letting youth teach adults
- **Ground rules**
  - Step up, step back, and participation
- **Virtual Town Halls**
- **Online Surveys**
- **Local Channels**
  - Local Radio Stations
  - Featuring stories in local newspaper

## Virtual Tools and Suggestions

- **Zoom**
  - Meetings
  - Monthly Zoom Webinars
  - Zoom Parties
  - Zoom Sessions incorporating Kahoot! And JackBox Party Games
  - Movie Night
  - Family Feud game on health equity topics
  - Break Out Rooms with Ice Breakers
- **Social Media Activities**
  - Facebook – Live Streaming
  - YouTube – Channel, Videos, YouTube Live
  - TikTok
  - Twitter
  - Podcasts
  - Snapchat
- **Chat Apps** – keep members engaged and communicate in real time
  - GroupMe
  - Slack
- **Education and Meetings Apps**
  - Google Classroom
  - GoTo Meetings
  - Schoology
  - Doodle Poll to Schedule Meetings
  - Microsoft Teams
  - Google Drive
  - Trello Boards
  - Blue Jeans – Video Conferencing, Screen Sharing, Video Calls



- Flipgrid is a fun way to engage people... you ask a question or topic... and people can make a video response with various editing & fun tools to play with.
- Kahoot!
- JackBox Party Games

## Pros and cons to online engagement

- Pros
  - Finding that youth are more available online and easier to engage
  - Making virtual meetings as part of regular work hours has allowed for many more members to attend.
  - A lot more phone time
  - Going online helped youth who had transportation issues
- Cons
  - Technology and internet accessibility have been an issue
  - There are definitely equity and cultural and linguistic responsiveness gaps in a virtual environment
  - Especially when you have groups of 30 people and now.... you have 10% of those now virtually.

## Suggestions – What Has Worked In The Field

- **Meetings Times**
  - Before food, now making our meetings towards the end of the workday so that people can justify joining it as part of their sector and job.
  - 5pm
  - Having two dates/times if possible... with same discussions... focus... in order to give people two opportunities to attend... and then sending out a summarization of everything discussed via these two separate meetings.
  - Consistency with planning committee meetings and youth group meetings
- **Personalization**
  - Phone calls and personal invites
  - Checking in with partners individually- encouraging them to take part on presentations
  - Make sure members' voice, ideas, input matters. take it into consideration.
  - Meeting every now and again to chat...not work just chat like we would in person. Sharing self-care resources, good news, etc.
  - after a 1:1 with a member, connecting them to another member - encouraging and fostering relationships among members
  - During our monthly zoom meetings, we don't jump right into the agenda. We spend a few minutes going around the virtual room sharing anything they want to share.
  - Laughter! Our coalition focuses on the fact that all work and no play makes for a dull coalition! We utilize time within meetings just to be silly (silly icebreakers like Whisper Singing, What's In the Box).
- **New Community Connections**
  - We utilized local food distribution centers as a means to disseminate youth and parent resources.
  - Additionally, utilizing our faith-based sector members in creative ways ie: "back yard" ministries.
  - Students and parents burnt out from doing Zoom. Stronger outreach: snail mail, boosting Facebook posts.
  - Meetings with local students as key information interviews
- **New Skills and Products**
  - Stalled some of our action plan items so we have had to be creative - Virtual mapping
  - Creating videos to conduct prevention training



- Coalitions have needed to get up to speed on the change in therapeutic interventions and relaxed HIPPA regulations, so they can be effective partners in supporting the shift to telehealth
- We are making PowerPoint-type presentations for training so people who cannot attend live meetings can still benefit.
- Creating small sub-committees for individuals to run with
- **Trauma Focus**
  - Learning to incorporate a larger trauma focus than we have in the past
  - More education about recognizing.... anxiety/abuse/PTSD... etc. Due to increases in these various things due to the pandemic & constant exposure to toxic household environments.
- **Element-Specific Comments**
  - (Re: the efficiency goal) Often coalitions get so excited about their strategies targeting youth, families and communities, they neglect the organizational health of the coalition itself...
  - Some coalitions have created committees or subgroups to focus on the organizational health/functioning of the coalition (such as new member training, effective meetings, etc.) separate from WHAT the coalition does (programs, interventions, etc.). It's a good reminder to maintain equal focus on both.
  - Cohesion: Put the coalition's vision statement and current priorities in the footer of every meeting agenda
  - We started looking at data and updating our logic models as a whole group and in breakout rooms
  - Acknowledgment of the place every sector is. Highlighting different sectors at coalition meetings. Reviewing the mission and mission at every meeting. Attending other's virtual meetings, sharing tech knowledge with others.

## Online Resources from Chat

- [Community Tool Box](#)
  - The Community Tool Box is a free, online resource for those working to build healthier communities and bring about social change. Their mission is to promote community health and development by connecting people, ideas, and resources.
  - The Community Tool Box is a service of the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas (KU)
    - [Toolkits](#)
    - [Table of Contents](#)
    - [Rating Community Goals](#) (specific section recommended by webinar participant)
    - [WorkStations](#) (recommendation by webinar participant to advance efforts and decision making in coalition)
- [Prevention Plus Wellness, LLC](#)
  - Alcohol, e-cigarette, marijuana & opioid use Prevention Plus Wellness programs and online training for prevention specialists and youth leaders.
  - Prevention Plus Wellness is a education small business whose mission is to provide evidence-based and evidence-informed substance use prevention programs that promote protective wellness lifestyles and positive identities for youth and young adults in any setting in person and online. [Read more](#)
- [Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support](#)
  - Resources for supporting specific evidence-based preventions and community coalitions during COVID-19
  - Penn State College of Health and Human Development – Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center