



Transcript:

Building Strong Prevention Coalitions

Presenter: Dodi Swope & Erin Ficker
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PRESENTER: Hi, everybody, and welcome. We're just going to give people a minute or so to get in and get virtually settled, and we will get started. All right, we still have a couple of people coming in, but we just want to make sure that we get started on time.

So welcome. Welcome everyone to Building Strong Prevention Coalitions. Our speakers today are Dodi Swope and Erin Ficker. This webinar is brought to you today by the Great Lakes PTTC, and SAMHSA, the Great Lakes ATTC, MHTTC, and PTTC are funded by SAMHSA under the following cooperative agreements.

The opinions expressed in this webinar are the views of the speakers, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of DHHS or SAMHSA. The PTTC believes that language matters and uses affirming language to promote the application of evidence-based and culturally informed practices. We have some housekeeping details for you today. If you are having technical issues, please individually message Kristina Spannbauer or Stephanie Behlman in the chat section at the bottom of your screen, and they'll be able to-- they'll be happy to help you.

If you have questions for the speakers, please put it in the Q&A section also at the bottom of the screen, and we will respond to those during the presentation. If you put your questions in the chat, we may miss them because sometimes the chat goes pretty quickly, so it's best to put them in the Q&A.

We will be using automated transcriptions for today's webinar. And at the end of this webinar, you will be directed to a link. It's a very short survey, it's how we report back to SAMHSA. It takes about three minutes, and we really appreciate it if you could fill it out. And we are recording the session, and it will be available on our website in a couple of weeks.

And certificates of attendance will be sent to all who attend the full session, and they take about two weeks as well. If you would like to see what else we're doing, please follow us on social media. And again, we are extremely lucky to have both Dodi Swope and Erin Ficker as our presenters today, and I'm going to turn it over to them. You're still muted.



ERIN FICKER: Thank you so much. You would think at this point I could unmute. Thank you so much, Ann, for the introduction. Like she said, my name is Erin Ficker. I am a prevention manager at the Great Lakes PTTC, and have been working in prevention for quite a while. I have experience with coalitions at the local level and providing training and technical assistance to those coalitions as well as writing, and training, and providing training to those-- to coalitions. So I'm also really excited to introduce Dodi Swope, and we are incredibly, incredibly lucky to have Dodi with us.

Dodi is a public health consultant and has been in prevention for a very longer time than me, but she is truly an expert in coalitions, both through reviewing the literature and best practices, but also she has so much firsthand knowledge of how coalitions works. And she actually runs two coalitions in her own community, so she has so many stories to tell. So we're very lucky to have Dodi with us today.

So we want to start, though, with a little bit of a poll and ask you about your coalitions. So if we just go to-- there we go. So the first one, and you may have to scroll down to see both of them, but there are two questions here and one is-- what makes you proud of your coalition? And you can pick more than one for both of these.

One is we have a history of working together, we have the right people at the table, we have seen minor and major successes, or-- either/or-- we are working on an important issue in our community or others. And if it's other, we'd love to see what you have to say in the chat.

The second one, one concern I have about my coalition-- we are stalled out, we're losing members, we don't have a plan for financial stability, we can't get people invested in our issue, we haven't been successful so far, or other. And, again, we'd love to hear the other in the chat. So you may have to scroll down, and you will have to answer both questions before you can submit. So please take a minute to answer both questions, and then we will see-- wonderful.

So we're just taking some time to let people answer those questions. What makes you proud about your coalition? And what's one concern you have about your coalition? And, again, you can pick multiple-- do multiple choices, and if you do other, we'd love to hear in the chat what that other is.

OK, so here are our results. It's very, very interesting. We see we're working on an important issue as one of the number one reasons why you're proud. We also see we have the right people at the table as one of the lowest ones, so that's something we'll be sure to touch on about bringing people into the fold.

We also have in the one concern-- really, across the board we have really similar answers to everything-- we're losing members. So, again, this issue of



keeping people at the table, getting people to the table and keeping them there, so we'll talk about that today for sure.

And some of the other things I'm seeing in the chat, we're starting over, I'm just joining so I'm new to the area, the coalition is writing their goals and mission. So starting out can be really difficult, but also really exciting. We're working towards engaging youth in prevention, which is wonderful. And then someone else says our coalition has 100 students-- 150 students.

So I just want to make a point really quick to let you know that, if you are responding in the chat, the two line-- if you press the little down carrot, make sure you're responding to all panelists and attendees and not just all panelists. That way everyone and your peers can see it as well. OK. So we're going to move on, and I'm going to turn it over to Dodi to get us started.
DODI SWOPE: Well, thank you, Erin. Thanks so much. Welcome, everyone. It's great to be with you. I'm hoping that you're seeing the right screen, so I'm just going to check. OK, great, wonderful. So we're thrilled to have you all with us today. And we know it's a big group, but we do want to engage you as much as possible in the chat.

And I will pause at different parts during the presentation today to check in with Ann if there are questions, we can be responding to, and Erin's going to jump in here where she has a comment to add. So we're really hoping this will be, not only just me talking at you the entire time, but also a dialogue, and give you some real practical ideas and strategies for how to make your coalitions stronger.

So our learning objectives for today, we're going to talk about what are those key characteristics of effective coalitions. And even though I've been, as Erin said, in prevention since the dawn of time-- which is sort of true-- I am an older person, but I still need to go back to the basics when things in my coalitions aren't going well.

Sometimes I just need to take a deep breath and go back to the beginning, and think about-- what are those key characteristics? What are the basics? So you're never too old to review those and to put them into place, so that's really important.

We're going to do some research and tell you what the best practices are for building strong community coalitions, we're going to explore some of those together, and then we're going to get down to brass tacks and talk to you about how the heck you do that in your own community.

And we'd really love to do some problem-solving with you at the end with some question and discussion if folks want to share particular problems that they're having. So we hope you're in the right place, and we're going to dive right in.



So many of you may know this story, it's one of my favorites-- I still tell it to my grandchildren as a nighttime story because it's just a great story. So you may have heard the story of The Blind Men and the Elephant. It's an old story that comes out of India, where there were five men who were blind from birth, and they were brought to experience what an elephant is.

And the first man stood up, and he got a hold of the elephant's trunk, and he said, oh, this is kind of-- feels like a snake. And he dropped it very quickly, and he went away, he said, OK, an elephant is like a snake. And then the next gentleman stood up and he got a hold of the elephant's tusks, and he said, oh, this feels like a spear. A spear. A spear that can use as a weapon. And he went back and sat next to the other gentleman, and they started whispering, how can a spear be a snake? And they're whispering under the tree while the next gentleman comes up, and he gets a hold of the elephant's ear, and he says, oh, it feels like a fan. I can fan myself with it and take away some of the heat of this hot day.

And so he goes and sits down with his friends, and he goes, yeah, so elephants are fans. And they look at him like, what do you mean? I thought an elephant was a snake? And I thought an elephant was a spear? And the next-- you can continue to go on-- I won't tell you the whole story.

You can see in the picture one thinks it feels like a wall because he's got the entire side of the elephant. Another thinks it's a tree trunk because he's got the leg. And, finally, the guy who gets the tail thinks an elephant is a rope. And then they put all the gentlemen together under the tree, and say, OK, now, discuss elephants.

And only by sharing all of their perspectives and trying to figure out what's the truth in between each of their individual experiences do they come anywhere close to experiencing the whole of the elephant. That's why we work in coalitions, right? Because we really need to understand the whole of the elephant of the community problem that we're trying to solve.

So I don't know if you've heard that story. It's a great story for some of you I heard who were starting new coalitions, you can even find it at the public library. It's a children's book, it has beautiful illustrations. You can read it at your coalition meetings and say, what part of this elephant are we missing? It's a wonderful metaphor for coalition work, and you can use it as a way to sort of get to the tricky parts-- oh, I'm really thinking it looks like this, but your experience is so different-- to really help us start to build a more comprehensive understanding of the health issue we're trying to solve. So feel free to share The Blind Men and the Elephant.

One of the reasons why that is so critical is that communities and community work is often divided into what we call silos, and especially the diverse sectors that we try to bring together when we do prevention work, law enforcement, education, public health, community members, all the substance abuse



prevention treatment providers, all of the various sectors that you've been told you must get at the table all work.

While they might look to others like they're all sort of in the same place like this picture of silos, they actually are very self-contained. And any one of you who have worked in coalitions know that that's true. That law enforcement has its own language, that education folks speak in their own language, and have their own ways of dialogue, and have their own ways of solving problems. Oftentimes those silos have been built because of funding, and that's something every coalition really needs to think about, is-- where's the funding in this batch of silos that I've got, and how do we make it safe to talk about it? Because there can be competition between members, and there can be a bit of a rub-- you get all the money, and we don't get any of the money.

If you hear that in your coalition, it's actually a good sign because it means people are starting to really be willing to talk about how do we resource share, but it can be difficult in the beginning. It can be a little anxiety provoking for the person who's leading the coalition.

But it is really, really important to understand that our work, when we put people around the table or we ask people to experience the elephant together, is really about breaking down those silos. So you're going to hear us talk a lot about how we get people to talk to each other across different cultures, different ways of doing business.

So the next set of slides, we're going to really look at what makes for effective coalitions. And really what you want is what's on this picture. What you want is a nice tight group in the middle with impact going out all over the community. And as you see, it's a circle, so there's no silos there. Everybody's in the same circle.

So one of the most important things to consider when you're doing coalition work is that it's kind of like a living entity. There's ebbs and flows to community work. And I think one of the mistakes I used to make as a newer coalition leader was I would get distressed when things would get quiet, or people would-- people's energy would ebb.

And then I finally learned over years of experience that that's a natural thing. That coalitions have ebb and flow, that they have fits and starts. And you're better off not worrying so much about whether or not everybody's at the table at every meeting as you are for the overview of the life of the coalition. And so I know there's a lot of funders who are like, well, you've got to show me that you've got membership at every-- but honestly, the best coalitions allow for people to sometimes take a break. They allow sometimes to-- they have everybody take a break. They allow for people to go off and do hard work on their own, and then come back to the group and share that, and let other people have a break.



One of the greatest metaphors for how really effective collaboratives and coalitions work are, if you've ever seen sparrows murmurate-- I love that word, it's one of my favorite words, but-- when they swoop and they fly together, and then a little group of them goes off on their own, and then they come back together.

That kind of dynamic is a much better picture of what a coalition should be than the sort of traditional round table with the little brown body heads and every seat is always filled. So the first thing I want to say to you about building effective coalitions is let it be a natural process, and give yourself a break if not everybody shows up at every meeting, or you're worried that you're having an ebb.

It's OK. Sometimes people need to fill up their gas tanks to be able to come back. I also think it's so important not to think about one table, right? We have been taught by many of our funders to think everybody needs to sit around one table and each chair needs to be filled by this particular sector.

I think we've grown in the field of prevention to understand that we need to have a much more dynamic understanding of how people work together. So it shouldn't threaten us if three members of our coalition say, you know what? We just need to go over here and talk about this issue, and then we're going to be able to be more effective members of the entire coalition. You should welcome that. That can be a really good thing to have happen and it shouldn't be a threat. Erin, anything you want to add in there?

ERIN FICKER: No, I really think you've got it. There's definitely a movement away from I have 12 people at the table who represent 12 sectors and morale at every meeting. And that, I think, has been good for coalitions and freeing to really think more naturally and dynamically about how coalitions evolve.

DODI SWOPE: Thanks, Erin. Great. So let's dive in a little bit more into what actually effective coalitions have. And I'm going to see if I can move my little toolbar here back to the bottom so it's not so distracting. How's that? That's a little better. All right.

So the key things that all coalitions have are people-- obviously, we need to have people. And we need to, either have some resource, or we need to be gathering around the lack of some resource that we don't have and working together to get that, and then there has to be some real and compelling community needs. So we're going to explore each of these a little bit further in the next couple slides.

So the people aspect. Oftentimes people in prevention will tell you it's all about the relationships and it's all about the trust, and that is critically important. So when you think about building your coalition, it's really important to think about things like group norms and group rules.



I don't really love the rules notion, but the idea that you have group agreements for how you're going to work together and you hold each other to those. It's also really important to think about power dynamics. So if you have the police chief sitting in one of your seats, and then you have a person with lived experience who has a background in recovery, you know the power dynamic between those two people may be very, very different. And it's important to take that into consideration, and to value that voice of lived experience.

One of the things that I have really learned in my coalition work is that we ask people with lived experience to come to our coalition, but we don't give them anything for doing it. We say, oh, just come and volunteer. Come and spend time with us, and tell us about your lived experience, and give us your advice. But every other person sitting at that table is getting paid for the time that they're spending there, whether they're the police chief, or a teacher, or someone else. Oftentimes they're coming as part of their job, but the person who's coming with lived experience is often not paid.

So I do want to encourage you to think about-- how do you help to make it worth that person's while? Whether it's helping them with resources, or connections, or something, or even paying them for their expert advice. We've really taken-- in one of the coalitions that I work in, which is a coalition called Together For Kids-- that we are paying parents for the time that they spend with us.

Because they're taking time away from their job, or their children, or something very important that they have to do in their life, and they're giving us their thoughts about parenting. It's really important that we value that, so that's really important. So value, value, value, and thinking about the power dynamics within the group.

The other thing that happens is that it's important to understand who's really leading at the community level. And oftentimes it's not the people in the position of power, it's someone underneath them. And so it is really important to think about, where is leadership actually happening? Who is actually passionate and at the point of the arrow around this issue? It might not be the person that looks like the person you would check off on your list.

So, for example, in my coalition, Together For Kids, we would love to have the mayor on our task force, but that's not the person who cares the most about early childhood. We have one of his deputies, who happens to be the father of young children, really engaged, understands the child care issues, understands all the issues around young children.

He's a much better steward for us for that seat than the mayor ever would be because the mayor would come every now and again, and he'd say some nice things, and he'd leave. But this person is rolling up their sleeves and they're engaged, and they're going back and telling the mayor everything he



needs to know. So be creative about thinking about who is representing for each leadership in each sector.

The other thing I think is really important is that oftentimes when we're in coalitions and we lose a member we lose the entire sector or the organization that member represented. And it's because we did a great job building a relationship with that person, but we didn't look behind them.

And we didn't think about who are you here to represent, and we didn't actually build it so that they could bring more of their organization or their sector into the coalition. Maybe that means sometimes they share the coalition seat with another member of their organization, so they have a backup, and then they have two voices that are at that coalition meeting. But it's really-- or that you sign a memorandum of understanding that that seat will be filled by someone else when they leave. Oftentimes we expect that to just be taken care of by goodwill, but it often isn't, so don't lose the entire organization or the sector just because one individual has decided to move on. I'm going to pause here. Any questions or thoughts? We're good? All right.

ERIN FICKER: Yeah, I think we're good.

PRESENTER: No, we do not have any questions at this time.

DODI SWOPE: Thank you so much, Ann.

ERIN FICKER: I would just like to underscore the importance of institutional relationships versus personal relationships. And oftentimes that personal relationship will get you to the institutional relationship, but you may leave too, right? So you have to build your institution's relationship with the other institution as well as just individuals.

So I can't underscore enough how important that is. I've seen coalitions just completely collapse because there's been staff turnover, and key personnel or key leaders from the coalition leave and there's no one to fill their shoes. So, yeah, Dodi makes an excellent point. I would really encourage you to think about how you do that.

DODI SWOPE: That's really critical. And, Erin, I think it's so important too to think about it in terms of sustainability of the work for the organization too, right? It's in their best interests as well. That is a benefit to them also that they're [INAUDIBLE] We don't have to struggle every time a staff person leaves.

ERIN FICKER: Great.

DODI SWOPE: So then let's look at resources, right? So effective coalitions really have an understanding and a pretty good map of what's going on in their community at the basic level when it comes to research. So where the



potential resources are, where the current resources are, and where the gaps in resources are.

Any of you out there doing the SPIFF process know that this is a very critical part of the strategic prevention framework planning process. But it is really helpful to bring people together to talk about where are our current resources, how sustainable are they, what's coming down the pike, and where the big gaps.

And as you sort of bring up the entire coalition's capacity to understand that resource map, you also increase the capacity of everybody to talk about how resources are negotiated in their community. So you can often direct people to start to talk about how they can braid their funding together for greater impact.

You can talk about how they can look at those shared gaps and really activate together to advocate for greater resources in that particular area. You can help people really think about where their work comes together, where that snake and that spear are right next to each other, and how can they work together to help each other out and work towards that common goal-- that's really important.

And then the other thing that often happens is when new resources are available, and this is happening-- I've mentioned Together for Kids a lot, we're an early childhood coalition-- child care all of a sudden has become the thing everybody's talking about.

Now, for years, it was never anything anybody was talking about unless you had a young child. It was sort of just, oh, you have child care and it's out there, but now all of a sudden after the pandemic and we realized how critical child care was to all of our well-being, all of a sudden child care has become a huge thing. Well, that's a good thing, but it also means everybody wants a piece of it.

And so part of what you need to do in your coalition is establish those trusting relationships so that you can have really important real conversations about where resources should go when they do come into a community. Because that can be a bit of competition, and there can be a little bit of vying for it's my grant, or it's your grant, and really trying to break that down. This is the where the rubber meets the road when it comes down to silo breaking.

I know, for example, in my home community-- I'm from Worcester, Massachusetts, I grew up in Michigan though, so I am a Great Lakeser by heart and by upbringing-- so we had some money coming into our community from the state to do violence prevention work. And one of our key leaders of one of our youth serving organization said, we should bring everybody together around the table to talk about how we're going to access this money.



And it was the first time anybody had ever done that in our community, and so we had all the usual suspects-- the YM, the YW, the Boys & Girls Club, Girls Inc, Girl Scouts-- all the various youth-serving organizations for out-of-school time. And they all came to the table and it was a bit of a free for all, to be real in the beginning. It was like, no, this should be my grant, I should write this grant-- or, I'm going to write one anyway, and I'm going to compete with you. And we did have a very difficult, but really important conversation and agreed that we would only send in one grant proposal from our community that it wasn't a good idea for us to compete within our own community. And we spent three hours in a very hot little room one summer hammering out who's the lead, who's second, who gets to do this, who gets to do that. That now, 20 years later, has become an integrated program across multiple youth-serving organizations in our community called Youth Connect.

So kids now, when they enter the door of any one of our youth-serving organizations as a member, can also access any other youth-serving organization that's also a member. So if you want to play basketball with the Boys & Girls Club one night and you want to go swimming at the YW the next night, that's available to you. It has been transformative.

And what's happened in terms of the way that we're able to access resources for that program, it has gone exponentially higher than it ever could have gone if we have been trying to fight it out amongst ourselves. So I just encourage you not to be afraid of the resource conversation. Put it on the table and help people learn how to navigate. It's a really, really key thing that will make your coalition much more effective.

All right. And then, of course, we have to have real data, and we have to be able to prove a real community need. So this can be complicated, right? I know, I was just talking about Youth Connect and one of the things we had to do was negotiate getting our hands on the YRBS that our school systems did. That took a good five years of negotiating, that people were so afraid of what we were going to do with the data. We had to build that trust, and we had to show them that we were really doing it for everybody's benefit. And quantitative data, the data you can get from population levels like the YRBS are great and they can be very helpful, and they can tell you what's happening in your community, but they can't talk and tell you why.

And so you often want to really look at other diverse sources for your data, so don't get stuck into just looking at published data. You want to make sure that you have lots of quantitative data to help you get to that why is this a problem. So that can be anything from focus groups, informational interviews, there's a million different ways to do it-- your own kind of qualitative surveys, listening to folks in the affected population.

Again, an example from Together for Kids, we did a very brief set of focus groups with Latina moms during telehealth and tele-education. And we were so surprised at what they told us because we thought they were going to tell



us, oh, it's awful, we don't like it, it's terrible. These are all the things that are hard about it.

And one of the things that they said was such a positive was they were learning with their children in a way they never did when their children went off to school because they were sitting right next to them. And they were learning what their children were learning, and they felt that really increased the bonding between them and their child.

We would never have assumed that that was what was going on unless we had taken the time to really listen. So I really encourage you to spend some time doing that qualitative research and participatory research could be really helpful. Erin, did you want to jump in?

ERIN FICKER: Yeah, absolutely. I think the other thing that's really important-- and I've seen coalitions do time and time again-- is to get stuck on not having data. So we don't have data on this topic, we don't have access to data on this topic, no one will give it to us.

I guess we're just going to sit back and have lunch together for another year. And while that's not a bad thing always to spend time building those relationships, understanding community need is really important. So I would encourage you to think about, if you can't get your hands on that data, which may be the truth, think about using proxy data.

So sometimes if you don't have data for your community— your immediate town, for example-- you may have it for the county, or you may have it for the state, and then that's where that qualitative data fills in the gaps. So consider proxy data as a way to understand what's going on maybe at a larger level, but really helping you to give you an idea and then you use qualitative data to fill in the gaps. I wouldn't say that you should not use data, but I would say don't let not having access to perfect data stop you from moving forward.

DODI SWOPE: Really important, Erin.

ERIN FICKER: And I think I'm going to just throw a link in the chat here to the community to the County Health Rankings—

DODI SWOPE: Great.

ERIN FICKER: --as a great source for proxy data.

DODI SWOPE: Wonderful. And there are more and more-- I think over the time and, again, I'm a dinosaur, so I remember when you used to have to get it in hard copy. There's so much more data available to you now on the internet. And so we created and really walk around that elephant and think about what are all the different places where data might be collected that's related to my problem.



Wonderful. Thanks, Erin for that resource. And I'm going to post here, any questions? Because this one might be a place where some questions might come up.

PRESENTER: No questions currently.

ERIN FICKER: And as a reminder, please, if you do have a question, go ahead and put that in the Q&A as opposed to the chat so we don't lose it. And feel free to take advantage of having Dodi's expertise in front of us right now.

DODI SWOPE: That was a little tap-- please ask questions. I'm much more interesting when I'm answering questions [LAUGHS] All right, but let's keep going. So, as we said, there are these key characteristics for effective coalitions, and I like to think of them as the three S's.

So they share risk and protective factors, they understand where that line is between what they're concerned about and what you're concerned about. They take a systems approach to their work-- and we're going to explore that a little bit further in just a minute-- and they activate this wonderful word that I love called synergy. So we're going to dive into each of these just a little bit more in the coming slides.

So the first is one that should be pretty familiar for folks who are working in prevention, which is the concept of risk and protective factors. It's the building blocks of the work that we do in prevention, is to reduce risk factors and build protective factors.

But it's also important to think about, who else cares about those risk and protective factors? And what does it mean to them to care about them, right? So I think we-- some of the most comfortable places for us in prevention is we know schools care about shared risk and protective factors because the same kinds of things that we're worried about for prevention and substance use disorders are the same kind of things that impact academic achievement.

But sometimes it's harder, it's a little more distal to figure out why would this person care about this, but it's really important to sort of think about that. One of the places where I was really stretched in my prevention work was thinking about when we really shifted from doing what used to be known as primary prevention-- underage drinking prevention, tobacco prevention.

Sort of the really young adults, or young adolescents to young adults, and how do we keep them substance-free to being charged by SAMHSA and by the government to address opioid overdose-- unintentional overdose deaths? And all of a sudden the prevention field was really like, what? We don't know anything about that. How do we do that work? Those are not people we're talking to. We are not in those places.



But we went back to the basics, as I said before, and we went to, OK, what are the risk and protective factors around unintentional opioid overdose? And what are those? And who cares about those? And who's doing work around those? And we started to build new relationships.

One of the first relationships I built was with a woman who did a needle exchange program in my community. It was-- she took me in, she was wonderful. She said, yeah, come on down, and walk around, and see where we do it-- and let me talk to you about this, that, and the other thing.

She opened my eyes to a whole new set of ways we could be working together around those shared risk factors. And our wins were a little bit different, like, she wanted to make sure she got clean needles in the hands of people, I wanted to make sure people didn't die.

But we could find our common ground quite easily, and that was really, really important. So thinking about those shared risk and protective factors can be a wonderful way to educate each other, and also to engage together in prevention efforts.

And then-- I love this picture. I have a grandchild who is just over the moon, literally, about the universe and the solar system, so I just have to share this picture. But it is really important to think about what are the-- how do we have a systemic sort of approach? How do we have a systems approach to the work that we do?

Which means really thinking about all of the aspects that make that elephant an elephant? [LAUGHS] How do we bring together people who are all around the problem we're trying to solve and think together about how that system works or doesn't work?

Or where the gaps in the system are? And how can we help each other out to have a more unified, impactful system, and an approach to public health and prevention across the community? So this is where it's really important to break down the silos. Because if you're talking one language and I'm talking another language, we're not going to get to where our common work meets right? That's really, really critical.

But when we start to make that shift-- as I said, when we started to do unintentional opioid overdoses-- we really needed to think differently about how we worked in the continuum of care. We always were just like, we're in health promotion and prevention, and that's where we live, and we don't talk to people down through intervention, treatment, and recovery.

One of the most incredible things that we learn in that process is how wonderful the recovery community is, and how much they bring to the prevention efforts that we were engaged in. Because, you know what? It works for them too.



When we have a public health approach to substance misuse and substance use disorder, it makes it better for people coming out the other end of treatment and holding on to their recovery as much as it helps young people from getting involved in substance use to begin with. And so all of a sudden to me, that continuum became, not a bridge, it became a circle. And all of a sudden I understood how it all fit together, and that made my prevention efforts so much stronger.

So I really encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and see where prevention can be helpful when it comes to even thinking about interventions, even when it comes to thinking about treatment. What do we have to bring to the table for those folks can be really, really important.

ERIN FICKER: And just to-- this is where also making sure that you have developed institutional relationships comes in really handy. If it's just a personal relationship where Erin, the YMCA, really likes Dodi, the prevention organization, but we don't communicate or our organizations don't trust each other, then what we're doing won't be systemic.

It won't build from the system of my organization, and the system of Dodi's organization, and the system of law enforcement. And so this is where-- I mean, everything that we've talked about so far really comes together in setting the table for having a systemic approach.

If you have understanding of your shared risk and protective factors and are addressing them together, if you have brought people together in a way that honors the work that they do, and if you connect with them at an institutional level, then you can really truly be successful at moving towards a systems approach and really systemic change. So I just wanted to throw that out there that this is really where it starts to come together.

DODI SWOPE: Absolutely. This is Erin's favorite thing too. [LAUGHS] It's the way Erin thinks, so if you need [INAUDIBLE] talk to Erin.

ERIN FICKER: [LAUGHS]

PRESENTER: Erin and Dodi, there's a question that very much relates to this, so I just wanted to sort of get it out there in context. "What suggestions do you have for ADAMHS Boards who only want to really work with those organizations and those coalitions they do funding with, especially grants? Grassroots organizations are wanting to be part of the coalitions, but sometimes get pushed aside with collaboration."

ERIN FICKER: So just to clarify, ADAMHS Boards are in Ohio, and our county-- usually county or sometimes multi-county level organizations that receive funding too address prevention and other mental health issues. So I just wanted to clarify that, so that's what an ADAMHS Board is.



DODI SWOPE: We don't have those out here.

ERIN FICKER: But there are-- in different states, there are different models of that. So there's local coordinating councils in Indiana, and everyone has kind of a different approach to how that might work, but it's a really good question. And I think I'm going to let Dodi take that because I know you have worked with so many really diverse coalitions, and making sure that everyone's involved is key.

DODI SWOPE: Yeah. And I love the question too because you're absolutely right. Oftentimes those who are funding us or those who are encouraging us to have coalition, have ideas about exactly what that coalition is, and it may not match exactly what your community needs.

I'm going to not put too fine a point on it, there are those who benefit from the silence, and there are those who would like us all to stay in those silos because then they understand how to navigate. But if we really want to change, if we really want systems level change in the areas we're talking about-- and we're talking about a big hairy issue all of them up to substance use disorder, right?

We have to figure out how to make the case to those folks that these other voices should be included. This is sort of a different example, but I'm going to go ahead and share it anyway. So, many, many years ago, I was asked to facilitate a group that was trying to take women out of sexual exploitation and the prostitution trade.

And so in that group, I had the health center, I had the police, I had the courts, and then I had this group of survivors. And the police, and the hospital, and the health people, and the courts all wanted to talk to each other, and they didn't want to listen to the survivors because they thought, well, they're the people that are the trouble.

They're the problem and we don't want to hear from them. We want to solve our issue over here and create a system to handle them. Well, they didn't go away, and they kept finding a way to open that door, and open that door, and say, no, we can tell you stuff about the way your system works and doesn't work. That's going to make it better for everybody. And they just persisted. They persisted, and persisted, and they found lots of ways to communicate with those folks even away from the coalition table. They were offering to go have coffee with a particular law enforcement officer they thought might have a little bit of an opening to understand their experience.

And little bit by little bit, they created a trusting relationship with those organizations where there was no-- believe me, there was no trust before. That's now an organization in my hometown that's called LIFT, Living in



Freedom Together, and they are now leading legislation to change the way the laws are around prostituted women.

They've already changed the language-- everybody in my community now that would call them prostitutes, they call them prostituted women. It's systemic difference, right? And it took a long time, but supporting those voices and helping them be creative about where they can have influence and where the ability to impact is often a one-to-one relationship at the beginning. And little bit by little bit, you start to crack that door open.

Once the door cracks open and survivors or the voice of lived experience-- if it's folks who are managing a substance use disorder, those-- the people closest to the problem, understand it the best, and they can bring you parts of that elephant nobody understands. That's what happened with these women. And they have made such a huge difference in the way that our entire city handles the sex trade, so to speak, a similar kind of notion with what you're asking. Though it's not a quick fix.

ERIN FICKER: No. I think it's really important too to add that, as the leader of the coalition, if you are really the one who's the funding organization that's supporting the coalition or you're the one who's been put in a leadership position, you can find ways to facilitate meetings that really does bring everyone's voice forward.

So you can find ways, and activities, and approaches to having conversations that allow for more voices to be heard. And so, you know Dodi gave the example of setting up one-on-ones, there's also the example of using a nominal group process where everyone's voice gets heard because you do some silent thinking and then share those ideas with the entire group.

There's lots of different ways to facilitate a meeting and facilitate a group dynamic so that those voices are all heard. So I would just remind you that, as the leader, you may have more tools than you think to make sure that those grassroots organizations are being heard, and are being involved, and they aren't being pushed around by the public health authority, or the YMCA, or a recovery group if you want to make sure they're being heard.

DODI SWOPE: Yeah, absolutely. And I also think what Erin's saying that's so critical is you're the leader, right? You're the role model, so how you hold that is going to be instructive to everybody in your coalition. And so, when I was facilitating that group, I would say, I think these folks have something to offer. Let's find a way to hear what it is.

And maybe you're not comfortable with them in your little planning group over here where you're trying to figure out [INAUDIBLE] between your courts and your police officers. But where is a place that you could hear that voice? How can I get you to listen to that? And I was persistent too in supporting them, and so you do have a role to do that. I hope they have addressed it a little bit.



Great. We're going to keep on moving. Good. Wonderful. So synergies. Synergies, I said, one of those words that I love, but not everybody gets it. So it's one of those catchphrases people talk about a lot. Synergy literally means that the whole of us, the group of us, is more effective than the sum of our parts, so to speak.

So we can accomplish more together than we could accomplish individually, certainly, but even our individual efforts all added up are not as powerful as when we come together as a group because there's something that happens in the spaces in between and there's some power that is generated from that. And that's the sweet spot for coalitions, that's what you want to find. You want to find where people can have that experience of like, wow, that's rocket fuel for the thing I'm trying to do. And you can't have synergy if you don't understand each other.

And so you will hear that Erin and I will talk a lot about coalitions are places for people to build bridges and relationships to understanding their perspectives, but also the work that they do in the community. You don't want to step out of your lane, you want to be strongly in your prevention lane, but you also want to understand how you can activate the people to the left and the right for a common impact.

ERIN FICKER: Yeah. I think a lot now we are hearing the term collective impact, and that's not exactly what prevention coalitions are always trying to do, but that's what synergy really is. It's the collective impact of the entire group.

Whether they're putting their resources towards work that your organization is doing, or whether they're using the work that they're doing to impact other parts of the problem, or other parts of the issue in the community, and then that's the collective impact. So I think often we now hear that term, which I find really similar to this concept of synergy on your coalition.

DODI SWOPE: Absolutely, Erin. So to go back to that Youth Connect coalition that I talked about, one of the outcomes-- one of the synergies that happened in our community as a result of that was many of our youth-serving organizations were in parts of our community that were under-resourced and considered the bad parts of town, so to speak.

But when we started moving kids around the city on the shuttle-- because one kid could start off in one organization and end up in another organization, and there was a shuttle that let them go-- all of a sudden, kids could move around the city in a safe way.

And they started to experience, not just their own little neighborhood, but the entire city. And they started to say, well, I want to be able to go from here to there safely. So it started a whole conversation about transportation, and how



you get around from here to there in a pretty big-- we're the second largest city in New England-- a pretty big city, right? And that was synergy.

We didn't start by wanting to transform transportation, but the fact that we started doing this work together, we got this collective impact. And we started to make safe spaces for kids to travel around the city, and that had a huge impact on the community at large-- and that's the kind of thing you're really looking for. It's great. Wonderful.

All right. So now we're going to dig in a little bit more to the nitty gritty of what are those practices that help you get to those big three S's that we just talked about, so we're going to take these one by one. So the first is-- and I just heard somebody in the chat was talking about, oh, we're just making our mission and our vision, and all that stuff-- that's a very exciting place for a coalition to be.

It is really critical to-- excuse me-- have a common vision, mission, and goals that everybody in your organization-- in your coalition, sorry, understands. And so, what happens is you start off like gangbusters with this stuff, right? You're ready to go, and everybody's on board, and you write a beautiful vision and mission and all that.

Two years later, you ask people around the coalition-- what's the what's the mission of this coalition? They're like, oh, yeah, well, we wrote something two years ago, I think. So the first thing is keep it active, keep it alive, articulate it. Help people-- help make sure every member of your coalition can say to somebody else why am I here and why is it important for us, for this coalition, to exist. We are going to be having a pitching prevention workshop and this will give you a lot more tips about sort of the how to do this, so we're not going to go into a lot of detail about that.

But it is important to have an active, living vision, mission, goals. Not every coalition has a vision. Oftentimes folks get mixed up about the difference between a vision and a mission, so I'm just going to do this really briefly. The vision is the point on the horizon where perfection lies. It's like what the world would look like if you were wildly successful-- that's your vision. And your mission is how you get there-- it's the roadmap, it's your slice of that.

So Nelson Mandela years ago had the vision end hunger, but nobody can do that all by themselves. Organizations need to take a path to help him get to that vision of ending hunger. And so mine might be I have a food pantry, or I'm providing food for kids in schools, or I'm feeding young children, or whatever that is. Everybody had a mission that lined up towards that common vision.

So I just want to make sure that you've got a clear understanding of what your mission as a coalition is and then your goals follow underneath that. So, Erin, I think we have a little poll to hear a little bit from the group about this.



ERIN FICKER: We do. So we're really curious about where you are with your coalition. So in my coalition-- and this is multiple choice-- in my coalition-- we have a compelling vision that we all believe in. We have a clear mission statement, up-to-date goals, a coalition structure that works well for us. We have these, but we haven't refreshed them in a very long time. Or-- yikes, I've got none of these.

So if you could just take a moment to vote or share-- I know, it's not really voting-- but to answer the question, and, again, you can pick multiple answers. We'd also love to hear in the chat what it is that you-- what is your mission? What is your vision? What are the goals you're working on? So feel free to write that in the chat as well. And I'm just going to give you a minute to think about those.

DODI SWOPE: We can sing the Jeopardy song.

ERIN FICKER: I know, I always—

DODI SWOPE: You can pick more than one. She said that, right?

ERIN FICKER: Yeah, more than one. So just take a moment and then, when we have some votes in, we will show the results.

DODI SWOPE: While we're-- we're waiting for-- nope, here we are. Let's just going to say.

ERIN FICKER: OK, let's get that. So we have 40% of folks who say we have a compelling mission we all believe in, that is fantastic. A clear mission statement, so I'm guessing those 40% are similar to the same 40% who have a clear mission statement. Up to date goals. Fewer say that their structure works for them.

And we have these, but we haven't refreshed them in a long time is also kind of up there in our top answers. So looks like you're doing a lot of good work and you have a lot of things you believe in, but maybe it's been a while since those have been refreshed. And then, yikes, none of these, is a very small 9%, so.

So just some comments from our chat. "We're a new formed coalition with our first meeting in July where we will be aligning our mission, vision, and structure." That's very exciting, good luck to you. "Our mission is to empower the Johnson County community to prevent and reduce youth substance use through advocacy, education, and enforcement." Awesome. Pathways from poverty to success is another one that was written in the chat.



So all kinds of good stuff happening, and all kinds of you really sharing with us what it is that you-- how it is that your coalition is functioning with this clear mission, vision, and goals.

DODI SWOPE: So that's terrific. And I do just want to say before I change the slides, when you have a slate of new coalition members-- if you've been in a long standing coalition and you're getting two or three new members, you want to stop, and you want to get everybody on board with your mission. You don't have to do that for every new member, but you do want to spend some one-on-one time with new members so that they're bought into your-- don't just assume that they're on board. You do want to be intentional about bringing people on board [AUDIO OUT]

And when you have new members-- especially you get two, three, four, or five at the same time-- it might be time to take a pause and say, let's just look at this together and refresh it, and bring everybody on board. I love the examples that you read, Erin, because they were small, short, and concise and I understood them. They weren't jargony.

So those are some of the tips. You want to stay away from prevention jargon-- and, believe me, we have a lot of that-- so that anybody can understand what you're talking about. I used to have it be my mama rule-- if I could make my mom understand it, then we'd be good.

I don't get to do that anymore, she's no longer with us-- but I figured if she could get it, then anybody could get it, and that's important. So you want to have those test people to look at that.

ERIN FICKER: And think about that, think about how you onboard folks. I'm on a coalition where, when I started, I got a binder and I got a buddy who helped me understand. And that binder included mission, vision, it also included all the background-- so this is where we've been, this is how long we've been doing things, this is what we've tried.

So really brought me up to speed pretty quickly so that I wouldn't be the one going, well, maybe we should try this, and be like, oh, yeah, we've already done that. So think about an onboarding process that has some structure so that those people feel ready to engage as soon as possible.

DODI SWOPE: That's great, Erin. So important. And that can be so many different ways-- you can do that in so many creative ways. You can give people coffee vouchers to go talk with a couple of other members of the coalition. You can be very informal, or you can be very formal in the way that Erin was handed-- almost like a board of directors kind of process.

But that leads us to this next best practice, which is have a clear process and make sure everybody understands what it is. I noticed in the poll some folks



were like, I don't know if our structure is really working for us-- well, this is another place where the rubber meets the road, right?

So writ large, prevention has this strategic prevention framework, but that's prevention jargon. A lot of people don't understand what the heck that is, and we have a whole-- we've built trainings, upon trainings, upon trainings to try to get people up to speed with what SPIFF means, right?

So don't assume a new community member understands what the heck we're talking about. And they may not be able to understand it all at once, so you want to put these little road-- you want to put a roadmap together. Like, now we're really talking about assessment, we're trying to take a fresh look at our problem.

Now we're trying to strategize about what we think the biggest part of that problem is, right? Now we want to see what kinds of strategy you might be able to have available to us to implement. So help people with road markers to show them where you are in your process so that they can play along. I have a colleague-- years ago, he's a very structured man, and he always used to say to me-- at every meeting, he raised his hand, and he'd say, I don't know what the rules are, so I don't know how to participate. Now, not everybody's that rule-based, and I get that, but it's true.

If we don't know the rules of the game, we don't engage. And so the quiet people in your coalition are the people that are just trying to-- they show up because they want to be a good doobie and they like you, but they don't ever really engage, you want to find out why.

And usually it's because they don't know how to jump in, and they don't know where they belong, and they're not sure how they can be helpful. They show up because they like you. Well, that's an indicator that you need to think a little bit more deeply about what kind of engagement do we need to make you feel comfortable doing. We-- Go ahead, Erin.

ERIN FICKER: I think the other thing-- so for years I did a training in which I asked the question of the group, tell me about a group you've been a part of, and what about that group made you want to stay, or made you leave, or made you frustrated. So we've talked about this exact thing.

And over the years, it was always the same thing. It was a lack of structure, a lack of understanding of what the process was and how to engage overwhelmingly was what I heard over the course of years of doing this training and hearing participants answer that question.

And in my own experience, if there's not a clear process for what we're doing it feels like a waste of my time, so I think it's important to remember that that process is going to keep people engaged in that structure, helps people



understand where they are in the process and where they belong so that they can continue to stay committed.

DODI SWOPE: The other thing I want to mention here when we're talking about processes is there are folks who are process-oriented and there are folks who are product-oriented, right? And so you don't want to drive your product-oriented people crazy with your process. You'd have to have kind of a balance between those two things.

And so, it's helpful sometimes to allow the people that need to process a lot to break off and do that without hanging everybody else in the group up. Law enforcement is classic for this. Make a decision and tell me what you want me to do and I'll do it, but don't talk to me about it for three meetings because I'll just stop coming. It's too much for me, it's not the way my part of the elephant works.

I'm given orders and I implement them. I don't want to think about, is it a good idea? Is it a bad idea? How do I feel about it? They don't want to do that, fine. Find a way to keep them engaged in a way that they're comfortable with and don't burden them with too much process. But if you go too fast to the product and don't bring the process people along, then they're not going to be bought in, so you have to find a way to balance those two things out.

And it's really good, as a coalition leader, if you start to have a little map in your head about who's who. You start to have an understanding of like, this person can tolerate this much process, and this person is going to go overboard with too much process, and I'm thinking about that in my facilitation and in how I'm structuring things. So you give the process people a little more room to do it, and you pull it back from the people that don't want to be bothered with it.

Great. So the other thing, and this is something that I think is hard. As a coalition leader, it's something I struggle with every week. I run two large coalitions, and I'm constantly feeling like, oh, I need to communicate with my members today. Oh, I need to communicate with their members today.

But I've learned how to habitualize it so that folks know when they're going to hear from me, and I do it regularly so they can kind of know when I need to pay attention to the coalition work, as opposed to, Dodi could be talking to me at any time. So you want to kind of structure it and you want to do it respectfully.

There are times when I only need to talk to three members of my group, but I might communicate the question to the whole group and say, here's something we're working on, and the three of us are going to go over here and do some work on it. We're going to report back to you at the coalition meeting. Keeps people in the loop, but it also lets them know they don't have to be involved in the decision-making.



So really thinking through, who needs to know what when, general things you want to communicate to everybody, but then you want to tailor communication to particular groups at times, you always want to be respectful. That power dynamic we talked about earlier is really important to consider here.

Sometimes, especially if you're doing more grassroots lived experience work, that can look a lot less formal. And you may have more formal members of your group, so you need to find a balance in how you communicate across that sort of informal formal access, but it's really important.

And then the other thing is everybody speaks a different language, right? And so utilizing your coalition members to be translators for each other is really effective. You don't have to know how to talk every sector language in the coalition-- that's why those members are there-- but give them an opportunity to have a moment to say, here's the view from where I sit. That's a wonderful thing to build into regular coalition meetings.

Maybe it's just somebody turn every meeting to have 10 minutes to say, here's what my week looked like when I'm standing in law enforcement, or when I'm standing as a school teacher, or for me as a parent, or for me as a liquor store owner, or for me as a needle exchange person, or for me in recovery.

And just keep sharing that so that people continue to see all the different lenses. And that's going to be a theme, you'll hear that from me a lot. And when there's-- and you guys also have to make the rule that it's OK to ask the question, right? I don't know what that acronym means, I don't know what that word means.

Oftentimes building a glossary for your coalition members, and then when you're onboarding them to say, here's just some of our language. It might be strange to you at first, but here's a piece of paper that tells you exactly what we mean when we say all of these things, can be really, really helpful. Just checking in, Ann. Any questions?

PRESENTER: We do, we have three of them. We have one that says "I am participating on this webinar from Africa. Can you connect me with any organization for further partnership and training on coalition building?"

DODI SWOPE: Oh, wow. Well, there are some resources at the end, and there's some great links to some big resources. So there'll be lots of resources we can share with you at the end. Welcome. We're thrilled you're with us.

ERIN FICKER: Yes, thank you.



PRESENTER: Awesome. The next one is, "I work as a regional coordinator, and one of the things I've thought about is creating an advisory board, and I'm having trouble finding resources on how to build that. Do you have any suggestions? "

DODI SWOPE: Well, and there are some in the resources at the end-- I don't mean to keep pointing to that. But there is-- I don't know if you're familiar with the community toolkit from the University of Kansas-- they've got a wonderful, just, plethora of coalition building tools, and one of them is specifically around building an advisory board.

The key to an advisory board is understanding their role, right? That's the most important thing because their role is to advise you not to decide, and sometimes that gets mixed up, so advisory boards feel like other kinds of boards. And you want to be sure that they really understand why they're there, and what they're offering, and what you're going to do with what they're offering so that they feel like they have value and legitimacy, but they're not over-- you don't have to overpromise to them about how much impact they're going to have, so that's really critical. Erin, any other thoughts on advisory boards?

ERIN FICKER: No, not at the moment. I am just really quickly, just for those of you who need things right away, and I know there are some of us, I am putting a couple of links in here-- oops, someone beat me to it-- the toolkit, and I'm also putting in the Prevention Collaboration in Action, which is a collaboration toolkit that I believe would help with a lot of that.

So there's a lot of great examples in there and a lot of great information. So I just wanted to throw those two things in the chat, and Deanne beat me to it, but those are the best places to go right now to look for those resources. And then, again, there'll be more at the end.

DODI SWOPE: Yeah, and they're very deep resources, so they're not just one website or one piece of paper, they're like layers, and layers, and layers, so feel free to really explore. A lot of them are tales from the field-- how Erin and I are telling a lot of stories-- that's the best way I learned, is from sort of hearing other people's opinions. One more, Ann?

PRESENTER: We do have one more. "How many individuals should be on your coalition representing all 12 sectors? Should we include additional members, and how many would be too many?"

DODI SWOPE: Oh, that's a great question. A Dodi answer, which is, well, it really depends. It depends on so many things. It depends on how well staffed you are-- I mean, the bigger the coalition, the more staff you're going to need. My Together for Kids coalition has 70 members, now, they don't all come to meetings, but they're all members of my coalition.



About 30 come to regular meetings once a month, and then we have committees of seven to eight that meet once a month, and we have our executive committee that meets-- that sort of steers the coalition. We have a pretty formal structure. But if you ask me how many people were on a coalition, I'd say 70 members because that shows our strength, but people engage in different ways.

So I think I've missed part of that question, which is-- so for the 12 sectors, you know, I don't want to get in trouble with drug-free communities, but drug-free communities called sectors sort of become an institution. I think it's really important to think outside the box because not every of those 12 sectors always is able to come.

I think, I've talked a little bit about how challenging it is for parents to show up, those are one of the sectors that always have to come. And it's really asking a lot of parents to come to yet one more meeting, often during the workday, or in the evening when they're trying to be home with their children.

There are other ways maybe to engage parents that aren't coming to the meeting, so one piece is don't always think that it's 12 sectors at a meeting with an attendance sheet. You want to break that mold. The other thing is we miss really wonderful sectors that aren't ever engaged.

One of my most favorite sectors I work with all the times the public library. I don't think they're representative of 12 sectors from the traditional view-- maybe they would fall under the municipal. But sometimes, if there's something going on in your community where a survivor group like I talked about, or someone else is doing some amazing work, but they don't fit in the slot.

So absolutely I think we should think creatively about who are the best leaders in your community around that problem to get at that table less than being driven by the hard and fast guidance. Now, I don't want to get in trouble with your drug free community.

ERIN FICKER: And we actually have a comment in the chat that says, "Thank you. DFC structures can make it really difficult to engage certain sectors." That formal-- and we're going to get to that a little further on in the presentation-- we're going to talk a little bit about the levels of engagement and how to keep people engaged.

But I think it's important to stop thinking of our coalition as a round table that we come around and have coffee and pastries once a month, right? That model is not always functional and especially to get a lot of work done with a lot of different folks. So I think it's a great point, but again, we're going to get into a little bit more detail on that in the upcoming slides.



DODI SWOPE: So I'm going to move us along. I think we're good now, Ann, right?

ERIN FICKER: Wonderful.

PRESENTER: Yeah. We have one, but we can address it later.

ERIN FICKER: Right.

DODI SWOPE: Well, and so one of the ways you can build your coalition's strength, you're not necessarily everybody all together at the same time, is to help people go learn together. So shadowing each other at jobs, going off to a training together two or three members that might be interested in certain topic, figuring out how people can do a little learning together.

We just did a thing with my Together For Kids coalition where there was a whole bunch of new information around early childhood-- webinar, a video, or something else-- and we just broke it up and said, OK, everybody go do your homework. And we did it in pairs so even I went and watched one video, and Laurie and Chris went and did something else, and Beth and Tempe did something else.

And then we came back together in coalition and we did of a little homework review, and it was really great. So everybody got to learn a little bit about all those topics and two of us learned it more deeply. And that was really a helpful way to sort of strengthen our learning together. So it really does help when we start to learn together to build to that collective impact that Erin was talking about.

ERIN FICKER: And this definitely also helps to build those connections to build the understanding of shared risk and protective factors the more we understand our work. As you can see, this all builds on itself.

DODI SWOPE: Absolutely. So here's a tricky one, right? So figuring out how to do effective and equitable decision-making. And so, when I talked about having a common process earlier-- the earlier, you do this in your coalition work, the better off you will be, and it's also good to practice on low stakes decision-making.

I think one of the biggest challenges for coalitions is they wait until they have to make a big decision, and then they try to impose a process nobody's practiced before or nobody has any experience in, and then they kind of end up in a morass. And people get mad, and people walk away from the table, and they go, I don't like that decision.

So thinking about how you build the community norm of consensus decision-making from the very beginning is really critical. And around things that really



don't matter that much like, should we be in this room or that room, or should we have fruit or vegetables at our snack table-- you know I mean?

They can be goofy little things, but the more you practice with your group about how to make a decision, the better off you are later. And one of the things, the reason I use the sticky note picture here is this is my favorite way to make a decision.

Because oftentimes you'll find, particularly because of those power dynamics I talked about before, that you'll hear from some people and they will guide the decision-making process, but you'll never hear from other people. And they're just intimidated, or they're quiet, or they've already bought out, right? They're already like, I'm already gone because I know where this is going. Well, you don't want that to happen because that's going to undermine the coalition.

But if you give everybody sticky notes and the same color of pen, and you ask them to print, and you ask them to post, and then you sort, everybody's voice gets heard and seen, and then you don't necessarily know whose voice is who. Now, if you're a really close small coalition, they might be able to read each other's handwriting, but let's not get crazy.

ERIN FICKER: So this is a process that we teach in the Change Leader Academy, which is something that we do throughout the PTTCs in the Great Lakes region. We will be having another Change Leader Academy, I believe, in the fall that's specifically designed for prevention.

But we refer to this as the nominal group process, and we dive into that a little bit more about how to facilitate that process, and how to be a leader in a changing-- in an environment where you're seeking to make change. So I just wanted to make that plug to say, this is something that we dive deeper into how to do this and how to make sure voices are heard in the Change Leader Academy. And, hopefully, I believe we'll have one in the fall.

DODI SWOPE: That's great because this can be a webinar all by itself, right? There's a lot unpack here. But what you want to do is make it safe for everybody to have a role and a voice because also, if someone is left out of a decision, they're going to undermine it later. [LAUGHS] Or they're going to get you stuck in, oh, I wasn't here, I didn't get to make that-- I didn't get to say what I wanted to say.

So all of those things are really critical to be thinking about, but, yeah, there could be another whole piece on that. And this back into this next piece that we need to hold each other accountable at the coalition, and it isn't just the coalition leader's job to hold every member accountable. You want that accountability shared member to member to member to member. Much easier for you as a coalition, maybe, leader if you have that kind of dynamic going on.



So what are we talking about when we talk about holding each other accountable? Sounds so strict and it sounds kind of scary. Well, we mean things like all of us at the table have an equal voice in discussions, and we're going to hold each other accountable to that, to respecting that everybody has a voice.

So when you know you've been successful when a member to another member goes, but we didn't hear from you, Joe, I want to make sure we heard from you as well-- so that he's holding Joe accountable for speaking up at the meeting and saying what his point of view is.

Showing up, right? Showing up for when you say you're going to show up, boy, we really missed you at that meeting-- but it doesn't always want to be from the front of the table. It doesn't always want to be from the leader. You want other members of the coalition to hold each other to, we really missed your voice at the meeting last month.

If you say you're going to do something, right? Did you have trouble with that task? How can we help you to be successful? And finding ways to hold each other accountable in ways that are both supportive and engaging, but also don't let people just show up and do nothing because that's going to really stall your coalition out. There's nothing worse than meeting after meeting where nothing happens. You have something you want to say?

ERIN FICKER: Yeah, I was just going to say exactly what you were saying. There's nothing worse than having people commit to something and then not do it, come back, and say, oh, I didn't have time, I didn't get to it. So making sure that at the end of every meeting it's clear what the next steps are, the tasks are for everyone, and that everyone who's volunteering really has the time.

So following up in between those meetings and making sure, is there anything you need from me as the leader to move this forward? Is there any-- do you suspect there'll be any delays? How are things going? Just to make sure that you don't end up in this situation where every time you come to a meeting nothing's happened.

And that's how you, as a leader, can hold individuals accountable, but the group can as well. So if you say, hey, can you reach out to the police chief because I haven't heard from him about this thing that we were going to do, so could you just reach out to them? And you can have another member do that for you.

DODI SWOPE: That's great. Yep, that's wonderful. Thanks, Erin, for that. And over time, you're going to want to be holding each other accountable to actually work harder things like benchmarks, outcomes, all of that, right? But you have to build with the interpersonal pieces first, so it is really important that you do that.



And always offer help, right? Do you need a buddy to help you do that if you're having trouble doing that? There's always a way to offer support, that's important. And then celebrate those successes every time you get a chance. One of the things I think is really important in coalition relationship building is that you go out and you celebrate each other's successes.

So I showed up for LIFT when they got the grant to build their homeless shelter for women leaving the sex trade. I showed up, I put bells on and my pretty dress, and I gave them flowers, and it was a huge thing to be able to say, we really value your successes, not just my-- I don't want to just invite you to my successes, but I'm going to show up for yours too.

But also you want to build in a feeling of success all along the way, so every time you make a little step forward, celebrate the heck out of it. It's what draws people in, it's what makes people feel good. You want it to be kind of baked into your coalition process.

Congratulations. And giving people like the star of the day kind of thing, we do that in elementary school with kids, but oh, it's our coalition meeting, and we saw Joe had this really wonderful thing happen this week-- did everybody read the article about that in the newspaper? Here it is. Those kinds of things. Wonderful.

All right, so that all sounds good, Dodi and Erin, but how do you really do it? So we're going to get down to brass tacks now, but a little bit deeper into brass tacks-- I already told you we were going to do that-- and I did see one question in the chat I didn't want to go too far.

PRESENTER: Karen says, "we have great interest and involvement in our coalition, which is child abuse and neglect prevention at meetings, but very little interest in doing committee work. Do you have any thoughts on that?"

DODI SWOPE: Well, so sometimes you do have a coalition that doesn't want to give any more time than they're giving to you in your meetings, which means you have to have working meetings. Means you have to change the structure of how your meetings work, and you need to build committee time into those meetings, and that can be really effective.

We do that in Together For Kids when we are stretched. We just say, OK, first half an hour's committee meeting, and then the rest is the rest of the coalition meeting-- so that would be my simple recommendation. Great. We're going to keep moving because I just looked up at the time and it always flies.

So we're going to talk about how the heck you apply those best practices. We've said this a million times, I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it-- establishing that common ground is essential. And helping everybody do the



elevator pitch, which you're going to learn about at the next webinar, so that they're very clear about what the coalition is and what the value is.

This is the one I wanted to make sure we had time for because I think it's really important. So Erin mentioned this earlier in terms of levels of involvement. So people in your coalition may be in very different places of levels of collaboration, and your job isn't to get everybody to the top of the staircase necessarily right away, it's to understand where they are and help them take the next step.

So one thing that's important is the stair steps don't just go up, they can also go down, right? So someone may be very involved in collaboration with you at the top, and then something changes in their job or their family life, and they may have to scoot back. So that's the ebb and flow I was talking about.

ERIN FICKER: It's also-- I mean, I also think there's sectors that you really need involved at certain times. And partners that you really need in coordination at the beginning of the process, like the professor who's bringing the community college data class who's doing all your data analysis for you, you need them in coordination at the beginning.

But once you get further in, maybe they can step down to networking or cooperation. And so, at different times in the coalition, different partners can be at different levels, and I think that's really this answer to like, how do I make sure people stay engaged and involved, is make sure that you're not wasting their time to be engaged in things if they don't have the time to stay involved at every level. So-- Dodi's running through—

DODI SWOPE: My little animation here. So you always want people to be involved at some level, so you want to get them from that first step into some place, right? So information sharing is there-- as Erin said, sometimes people don't have to come to a meeting, they just have to send you something and share that-- that's fine.

Cooperation can look like parallel play for kids, side by side-- let's show up at the same healthcare or whatever that is-- we're just building a relationship, we're working together the same, but we're not necessarily really doing something together.

Integrating activities, where you take a part of my thing and I take a part of your thing. That's really coordinated collaboration, and that can be in lots of different levels of depth. And then full collaboration is we really are working in that systems approach that Erin talked about earlier on.

But, again, I think it's so important to say break. Give people a break. If they've been really full-on integration and then they're done, the police chief doesn't need to come to the meetings anymore because you can establish the



policy or whenever that is, keep them informed. Keep them networked, have him come to your yearly event, and otherwise just keep him in the loop.

ERIN FICKER: And that's a great way to keep your 12 sectors engaged without having to fight with them to keep them at the table. So if you need someone to pass one-- to move either one through one part of this process, or you just need them for part of the implementation of a program.

DODI SWOPE: Yeah. Yeah, and letting people move in and out will keep them engaged with you because it's a respectful thing to do, to understand that ebbs and flows happen. So there's a lot more about these levels of collaboration in the collaboration toolkit that Ro-- Erin talked about.

I don't know why I want to call you Robin today, Erin. I don't know where that's coming from, but [LAUGHS] Sorry, I have Robin my brain. I know your name is Erin. [LAUGHS] Anyway-- I've done it twice now during this webinar, I don't know.

ERIN FICKER: That's OK.

DODI SWOPE: And also that's the other thing, acknowledge your mistakes as a coalition leader. [LAUGHS] When you miss somebody's name, just laugh and show your humanity, right? So we do have another little poll here for you. And this one is to just check in to see where you're at with your levels of collaboration with your members.

ERIN FICKER: Yeah, so thinking about your coalition, where do you think most of your members are at and the levels of collaboration? Information sharing, side-by-side collaboration, integrated activities for mutual benefit, a fully integrated system, I have members at each of these steps.

So if you want to take a minute to respond to that, we'll just take a minute to do-- too fast-- and then we will move forward. So where do you think most of your members are at?

DODI SWOPE: And this is a wonderful coalition activity too. To ask people to sort of identify themselves-- where are you? Where would you like to be? Where are you most comfortable? If you've got a good group of trust, you can get people to work together. Or when you're thinking about engaging a new member, where would we have them enter?

ERIN FICKER: Great. Can we see the results? Wonderful. So information sharing is the largest answer at 38% and our next closest one is I have people at every step with 24%. So that's a lot of people we have at information sharing, and that's kind of that most basic level of networking, and that's that first step.



DODI SWOPE: Yep. And so thinking about how do you move people from information sharing into side-by-side collaboration, into integrating activities. Just thinking about those bridges, and there's some great suggestions for how to do that in the collaboration toolkit. All right.

So, again, so this is the final thing, and I think I've said it a million times, so I won't say it more. But just give lots of time, energy, and intentionality to helping people understand the full component of the problem. That's what will keep them engaged with you. Those aha moments when people think, I didn't realize that, oh, that's so important-- then that really impacts the work that I do? That's why I'm here.

That's what you want to do. That's what makes for an active, alive, functioning coalition. And you don't always have to lead that, let people go do that on their own too, and really trust that that's OK. You don't have to be in control of all of it. This is great when your coalition members decide they're going to go off and have coffee together and talk to each other about something. That's a really good sign. That means you're being wildly successful, so don't be afraid of that.

ERIN FICKER: And then they can bring their ahas back to the whole group and share with them.

DODI SWOPE: Great. So I love this slide because it's animated. [LAUGHS] And you know this is really probably the most important slide, is you want to activate where people are interested. You want to meet them where they are with what matters to them, you want to adjust all the time to the dynamics within your group because groups are living things, and you want to adapt your process so that people feel comfortable with the levels of engagement that they have.

So when they're spending time with you, they feel valued, they feel they're contributing something of great value, and they feel like they're making a difference in the community about the [INAUDIBLE]. You just need to not let it get stale, that's the most important thing. Just that reinvigorating and re-energizing all the time.

And whenever you have a new member, it's so helpful to think about, how can this be an opportunity to re-engage every member? And there really are opportunities for every new member that comes to the table. Just stop, and readjust, and become a new elephant because of what you've done, but that new person's point of view is.

So any final thoughts on this, Erin? And then we're going to go to questions and discussion, and then resources.

ERIN FICKER: No, I think you covered it. Thanks.



DODI SWOPE: Awesome.

ERIN FICKER: And I did want to point out that I just took all of those links that are in the final slide and put them here for you in the chat. So you can see the collaboration toolkit, the CADCA coalition tools, and the community toolkit-- so those things we have all talked about, and those are at the end.

DODI SWOPE: Great. Wonderful. So anything interesting happening in the chat? Any final questions? This is your opportunity. We've got about five minutes left.

PRESENTER: We do not have any more questions, and we are pretty much at exactly 2:30. So I just wanted to quickly remind people that we are doing pitching prevention, so that the webinar on Thursday is pitching prevention-- explaining the importance of prevention through effective messages. I put the link to it in the chat.

ERIN FICKER: And that really does help, and take a lot of this and put it into action, especially for those of you who said the hardest thing was keeping people involved, or getting new people to come.

PRESENTER: So you have time to register for that. I want to thank everyone for their time, especially Dodi and Erin, and I'm excited to get to see you both again on Thursday. So we will see everyone again, thank you for your time. And if you want to, feel free to register for the event on Thursday.

DODI SWOPE: Wonderful.

ERIN FICKER: Thanks, everyone.

PRESENTER: Thanks, everyone.