#2   COALITION FORMATION STAGE

What to Expect

In this stage, the coalition is young and must generate commitment. The first step in organizing the coalition is to identify potential member organizations from each priority sector: Schools, worksites, healthcare, community-based institutions and the community at large. As each organization/agency is recruited, they begin to explore their motivations for joining the coalition, as well as potential costs and benefits of participating. Each organization should help define/refine the community issue(s) to be addressed by the coalition and share what they will need to get from/contribute to the group. As they move forward, members must balance the needs for joint action and independence. When recruiting organizations to the coalition, consider their: activities and accomplishments; contributions (power, time, talent, resources); self-interests (personal and organizational gains); and potential conflicts.

Structure

The structure of your coalition will depend on the current political, economic and social realities, as well as existing efforts and groups that are already working on related community health issues. The coalition leadership team builds the commitment of others by identifying community assets/needs and seeking feasible strategies to solve community issues. The structure of the coalition will vary, but it should use funding and coalition member resources most efficiently and effectively.

Tasks

- Initiate collaboration, cultivate allies and begin to develop its purpose
- Identify potential member organizations' common, complementary and competing goals
- Identify core group of members based on community issue, needed expertise and resources
- Recruit & meet with members to discuss perceptions, hopes & concerns about coalition; solicit advice about how to address community issue
- Hold first coalition meeting and reach consensus on coalition mission
- Create ground rules for coalition functioning & etiquette
- Develop coalition goals and objectives
- Develop member criteria and participation agreements; verify members' ability to decide/take action on behalf of their organizations
- Decide who will speak for/represent coalition and criteria for acknowledging members publicly
- Develop communication and feedback mechanisms with member organizations

Products or Outcomes

- Recruitment plan
- Member roster
- Ground rules or meeting etiquette
- Membership agreements
- Mission statement (purpose)
- Coalition goals & objectives
- Logo & publicity materials (stationery, banner)