



engaging new partners in sexual violence prevention

Every April, the sexual violence prevention movement recognizes Sexual Assault Awareness Month through community engagement and outreach. This year's theme, *Engaging New Voices*, strives to engage key community leaders whose influence is necessary in achieving cultural change. The campaign focuses on collaborating with faith leaders, fathers, coaches, and members of Greek life on college and university campuses this April and throughout the rest of the year. This resource discusses practical ways to collaborate with new community partners.

MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Interorganizational relationships exist on a continuum – collaboration is not a destination, but a way to conceptualize a shared goal. The continuum is not hierarchical; not one relationship is better than another. **Networking** offers organizations opportunities to confer with one another in an accessible and resource-efficient way. **Coordination** takes slightly more capacity, but allows us to maximize available resources. **Cooperation**, when feasible, gives organizations the chance to achieve long-term goals through resource-sharing. Finally, **collaboration** incorporates elements from each of these stages and includes an external goal: Building capacity to address sexual violence. Each stage brings growth and change. Groups may exist within a stage for years or for the entirety of their existence. **As with all projects, it is critical to match the dynamic to the goals of the collective group.**

| NETWORKING | COORDINATION | COOPERATION | COLLABORATION ¹ |
|--|---|---|---|
| Organizations share information about activities and plans to ensure everyone is on the same page. | Organizations modify activities to better accomplish individual and shared goals. | Organizations communicate, coordinate activities, and share resources with one another. | Organizations communicate, coordinate activities, share resources with one another, while also collectively working to address systemic and/or capacity issues. |

¹ KU Work Group for Community Health and Development. (2015). Chapter 24, Section 3. Promoting Coordination, Cooperative Agreements, and Collaborative Agreements Among Agencies. Retrieved from the Community Tool

EXPLORING PARTNERSHIP POSSIBILITIES

Cultivating mutually beneficial relationships requires thoughtful planning. Take some time to reflect on a few questions before reaching out to possible partners:

What does each organization want to accomplish by working together?

Setting goals helps give partnerships structure and focus. For example: “We want to create a faith-based support group curriculum and have it co-facilitated by someone from within the faith community.” This goal already has actionable steps that can be the foundation for a meaningful collaborative project.

Which kind of organizational relationship is necessary to accomplish those goals?

Looking across the continuum, where can you begin?

For example: Perhaps resources are already allocated to certain areas, so the group must start with regular informational meetings and technical assistance. This is a perfect opportunity to address capacity issues and engage in thoughtful dialogue.

Is there sufficient trust and commitment to support this kind of relationship?

Trust is key in establishing sustainable partnerships. Trust builds over time with consistency, humility, and accountability. Trust is also built when projects are a “two-way street” and benefit all partners involved. For example: “Fathers and parents are offered training on dismantling gender in spaces that also provide child-care.”

| NEW COMMUNITY PARTNER | SHARED GOALS OR MISSION | SAMPLE ACTIVITIES |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Faith communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety and peace for the congregation Deep sense of connection in community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assessment of policies and practices that support survivors Training for all leaders within a congregation |
| Coaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive youth development Team cohesion and unity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for coaches to address problematic behaviors and attitudes |
| Fathers or Parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and well-being of child(ren) Family (however that’s defined) cohesion and safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support group for adult survivors of child abuse who are parents |
| Greek Life on Campus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter values Connectedness and cohesion of the chapter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on gender norms and pro-social behaviors Peer educator program |

RESOURCES

[FaithTrust Institute](#) is a national, multifaith, multicultural training and education organization working to end sexual and domestic violence.

This edition of the [Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs' Connections publication](#) offers insights and perspectives across faiths to help communities inform partnerships focused on addressing sexual violence.

The Office for Victims of Crime [Building Victim Assistance Networks with Faith Communities](#) offers insights from a five-year project to improve victim services in two states in the U.S.

[Coaching Boys Into Men](#) trains and motivates high school coaches to teach their young male athletes healthy relationship skills and that violence never equals strength.