


Collaborative Networks
A mechanism for health system improvements

RTNA Water Cooler
March 10, 2010

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Health Systems and Workforce Research Unit



Moving from here...



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To here



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Collaboration

- **Process** through which individuals who see different aspects of a problem can constructively **explore** their differences and **search** for solutions that would not have been possible alone
- Involves **joint problem solving** and **shared decision making**
- Creates a temporary **forum** in which participants can **seek consensus**, develop mutually agreeable **solutions** and develop collective **actions** for implementation

(Stronger Together: Collaborations for System Wide Change; CIHC 2009)

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Networks

Various meanings and uses of the word:

- "...a set of autonomous organizations that come together to reach goals that none of them can reach separately" (Chisholm, 1998, p. xxi);
- "...a group of three or more autonomous organizations working together across structural, temporal and geographic boundaries..." (Huerta, Casebeer & VanderPlaat, 2006, p. 13)
- "...the structure of relationships between individuals or organizations...that [allow] greater ease of movement beyond professional, disciplinary, and organizational boundaries...context is the key to success" (CHSRF, n.d., p. 1).

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Types and Characteristics

1. **Information/Knowledge Management Networks**
 - Focus is on sharing information, resources, tools across departments
 - Evolves from collecting information about the expertise of individuals in an organization
 - May be either designed or emergent

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Types and Characteristics

2. Problem Solving Networks

- Focus is on solving existing complex problems rather than building relationships for future collaboration
- Often emerges from information networks
- Relationships may be temporary, to address a specific problem, and then become dormant after the problem is resolved
- May be either designed or emergent

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Types and Characteristics

3. Community Capacity Building Network

- Primary goal is to build social capital
- Network purpose is both current and future oriented (i.e., to build the capacity to address future community needs as they arise)
- May be created by participants (bottom-up) or by decision-makers (top-down)
- Often involves a wide range of departments & agencies with many sub-networks to address different needs that may arise

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Types and Characteristics

4. Service Implementation Networks

- Services are jointly produced by two or more organizations
- Collaboration is often between programs of larger organizations
- Key management tasks include encouraging cooperation, negotiating contracts, planning network expansion, etc

(Milward & Provan; 2006)

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Collaborative Networks

Bring collective wisdom together to tackle difficult problems with the intention of producing innovative solutions that reflect the needs and interests of participating members



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Characteristics of Collaboration

- Requires:
 - shared vision
 - diverse membership
 - time and resources
 - perseverance and courage
- Utilizes shared decision-making
- Develops lasting relationships

(Kerner, Watts, Frison; 2008)

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Challenges

1. Communication
 - Diverse members with fundamental differences
2. Shared decision-making
 - Reconcile competing interests



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Suggestions

Establish guiding principles that facilitate shared decision-making in meetings:


1. Take advantage of the diversity of the group
2. Make a commitment to effective listening
3. Manage the group's energy by providing a mixture of structured activities
4. Use a decision-making method that supports the group to reach agreement

(Kerner, Watts, Frison; 2008)

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Establishing Collaborative Networks

- Choose networks that will support your organization's vision
- Reflect on the common issues it makes sense to work on
- Focus on positive deviance – what is it about this "case" that makes it different
- Be clear about the supports you need
- Be prepared to invest in collaboration – takes time and energy



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It's Your Turn...



Please share your comments, struggles, suggestions with regards to collaboration

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So...How well do collaborative networks work?

Share 2 very successful examples:

Provincial Model



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National Model



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Communities of Practice (CoP)

“are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.”

(Wenger et al., 2002)

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COFFEE

Community
Of
Facilitators
For
Education &
Exchange












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COFFEE

- Began with a diverse group of professionals with knowledge and expertise
- Grounded in 4 key principles
- Membership of 100+

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Inter-Organizational Collaboration



when you get here you understand





Alberta Association of COLLEGES & TECHNICAL INSTITUTES





Health Workforce Research network of Alberta




health research transfer network of alberta

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Knowledge Sharing

- **Toolkit for CoP Facilitators**
 - Building your CoP
 - Role of the Facilitator
 - Facilitating Interactivity
 - Troubleshooting
 - Assessing Value
- **Webinar Series**
 - In conjunction with toolkit
 - Participation is free
 - Offered monthly
- **Community Wisdom**
 - Quarterly Newsletter
 - Highlight success across the province
 - Keep members up to date



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www.coffee-ab.ca

Community
COFFEE
Creating a more productive workplace through improved communication, collaboration and collective learning

COFFEE

Are you currently facilitating a group or community within a health care organization?

Are you looking for resources, tools, and/or best practices to help you in your role?

Are you looking to connect with other facilitators in your area, find mentors and build capacity?

WHAT'S NEW?

Need to create and implement change? Want to learn more about the process? Want to learn more about the process? Want to learn more about the process?

Facilitating Change
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Keys to Success

- Bound by our passion for collaboration, knowledge translation and the strategic use of CoPs to improve quality within our organizations (common goal)
- Strong level of trust and respect
- Sense of unity
- Flexibility
- High WIIFME
- Relaxed and fun “place”

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Western Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative

British Columbia Alberta Saskatchewan Manitoba

- Evolved from a world café session 2 ½ years ago
- Core research team representing policy, practice, academic and research sectors
- Bound together by our passion for continuous practice improvement and commitment to work together to establish a regional approach to influence system-wide integration of interprofessional education (IPE) and collaborative practice.

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Inter-Provincial, Inter-Sectoral Collaboration



Alberta Health Services



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Provincial Health Services Authority
Province-wide solutions. Better health.



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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Achievements

1. Established Research Priorities
 - Examine impact of interprofessional education and collaborative practice on health human resource outcomes
2. CIHR Funded Knowledge Synthesis
 - Additional funding received by:
 - TEKTIC
 - SHRF
 - National Stakeholders
 - CIHC
 - CHSRF
 - Health Canada
 - Western and Northern HHR Forum



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Achievements

3. Established an electronic CoP
 - TEKTIC
 - 70+ members from across the 4 western provinces
 - Link researchers, practitioners, educators and decision makers
 - Share information, resources, events, etc.



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Achievements



4. CIHR Evidence on Tap

- Qualified as one of the national expedited knowledge synthesis teams
- Produce high quality, timely and accessible evidence for provincial decision makers

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www.wcihc.ca



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Keys to Success

- Shared vision
- Strong core group
 - Worked together previously
 - Strong level of trust and respect
- Commitment – individuals and organizations
- Unique focus area - niche
- Opportunity to leverage our networks

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It's Your Turn...



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Thank You

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