

## Recruiting New Partners and Stakeholders

A healing-centered response to children and youth exposed to violence will require the training and talent of various professionals, and it will be sustained and more relevant to survivors when it is informed by and integrated with the communities from which survivors and their families come. Linked systems of care depend on increasing communication, collaboration, and coordination among families and service providers. This process begins with engaging community stakeholders in honest, focused conversations around the needs in their community, the potential impact of projects that link systems of care, and the myriad helpful roles that community leaders and organizations can play in designing and implementing the project.

***LSC Guiding Principle 2:*** *All systems of care are connected and aspire to maximize collective impact through communication, collaboration, and coordination.*

Collaboration and partnership allow groups to engage other perspectives and experiences in problem solving, policy and protocol development, and expertise-based decision-making. In addition, the diversity of your stakeholders will strengthen your ability to identify gaps in service, challenges to identifying victim needs and linking systems, and creative and/or research-based strategies for family healing.

In many communities, collaboration takes the form of a composite of representatives from various community agencies and organizations. In establishing such groups, who is invited to the table? It is important to approach those who will impact and be impacted by the project. Consider having experts (as professionals or survivors) in the following areas:

- Child abuse and neglect
- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence
- Mental health
- Counseling
- Law enforcement
- Child protection
- Juvenile justice
- Local and state units of government

- Culturally-specific organizations
- Early education
- Survivor groups: gun violence, domestic violence, community violence, etc.
- Health care systems
- Faith institutions

Clare Anderson, Policy Fellow at Chapin Hall, discusses the importance of system integration: [Recruiting New Partners and Stakeholders](#)

Be clear with partners in reaching clarity about:

- The problem or goal to address;
- How each participant's work or experience informs this problem or goal;
- Why creating a collaborative partnership can help solve the problem or accomplish the project's goals;
- Consider who is missing and who will invite them;
- Develop and communicate the project vision; and
- Recruit and plan together

At the initial gathering:

1. Ask who is missing;
2. Consider what each stakeholder expects in return for its time and commitment; and
3. Consider how to adjust the approach to the project to be collaborative with the stakeholders.

As Karen Ray reminds us in her book, *The Nimble Collaboration*, “when your organization becomes partner in collaboration, you expect to change some other organization, or some system or problem other than your own organization. But when you create a nimble collaboration you change your operations, programs, and services. You stop thinking of the people you serve in terms of their experience with you; instead, you think of them in terms of their experience with the system.”<sup>1</sup>

The stakeholder group may find that it is useful to have routine conversations about project goals and to gauge the partnership's status or well-being. Is there networking, coordinating, and cooperating, or are you truly collaborating?

The project and the community it serves can be greatly impacted by an optimized and well-functioning collaborative group.

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<sup>1</sup> Ray, *The Nimble Collaboration: Fine Tuning Your Collaboration for lasting Success*, 2002.

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