

SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Often, those in need of our assistance present with compounding difficulties, such as economic problems, homelessness, drug and alcohol use, physical health problems, and more. Rarely does one program have the capacity to provide specific, inclusive services to meet all the varied needs of each individual. Building community and statewide collaborations is necessary if those in need are to be truly served.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION?

Partnerships and collaborations among community-based organizations addressing the issues of domestic violence and/or HIV/AIDS enhance the work of both HIV/AIDS and domestic violence service providers.

Collaboration **builds your knowledge base**. The more knowledge you possess and resources you are aware of, the more you will be able to help each individual.

Collaboration also results in **appropriate referrals**. When you collaborate with other professionals, and understand their programs and services, you are able to make more appropriate referrals.

By partnering with other organization we are able to bring a **more holistic approach** to meeting the needs of those we work with. We can improve quality and consistency of service through a holistic lens.

Collaborating should also **save time**. When an individual is referred to the appropriate program from the beginning, it frees up time to serve more people.

Collaboration is based on the respect for the knowledge each organization brings to the table. There is no expectation that the partnering organizations become experts in the content of their partner.

WHAT IS A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)?

MOUs are helpful in outlining partnerships and ensure that each program follows through on the actions to which they have committed. An MOU could address such areas as: (1) telephone assistance (while protecting confidentiality), (2) designated staff to provide telephone assistance, (3) referral process to/from each program, (4) a staff person going to the other program to meet a service participant, (5) documentation, and (6) sharing information within confidentiality constraints and with consent to release information. *See our MOU Template in the Positively Safe Toolkit.*

WHAT IS NEEDED TO COLLABORATE?

Beginning to collaborate can seem like a daunting task. “Will I have the time?” “What staff should be involved?” “Will this collaboration be successful?” The list of questions goes on. Below are some things to consider as you begin to foster your collaborative partnership(s).

- Define a target community
- Find common ground
- Develop a shared vision
- Provide cross-learning opportunities
- Share decision-making
- Understand each organization’s culture
- Commit to the long run
- Be willing to ask for information, resources, skills, and authority
- Support each other and give the other credit
- Be open to and accepting of change and adjustment
- Acknowledge and share in risk-taking
- Trust each other
- Engaging in open, honest, and ethical communication

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WAYS TO COLLABORATE

Domestic Violence organizations could invite the community HIV organization to join the Coordinate Community Response (CCR) Team.

HIV Organizations could host an advocate from the domestic violence organization on-site on a predetermined basis (ex. every Thursday and Friday).

Both organizations can share resources and materials with each other. You likely already have posters, brochures, and other materials on hand. HIV organizations may have condoms, lubricant packs, and dental dams to share so survivors have easy access,