
THINK REGIONALLY AND PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

No single organization can meet all of the public health challenges we face today. Building a network of committed organizations with fluid boundaries can greatly enhance the success of local public health efforts.

Principles of Boundary Crossing Networks *

The following Principles of Boundary Crossing Networks will help your area organization take advantage of the opportunities that only networks can provide.

Clarify Purpose

A clear purpose is the secret of successful boundary crossing. On a regular basis (at least once a year), your Steering Committee needs to go through a process to develop a shared view of the work to be done. Purpose is rarely completely defined to everyone's satisfaction. Nevertheless, it is the glue that binds heterogeneous people into a goal-oriented social organism. Articulate your purpose often within the Steering Committee and with the full network. Purpose needs continuous and varied expression to remain vital. Revisit the purpose regularly. If purpose remains static, energy wanes and goals die. Groups cohere through shared purpose.

Identify Members

A network gets off the ground because a certain group of people makes a commitment to an idea. They tie abstract purposes to their flesh and blood actions and decisions. It's that group of people- the members of a boundary-crossing network- who make it happen. The Steering Committee members are key to "making it happen" in your region.

Create Links

Every successful network has many internal communication pathways and multiple connections. Members of your region meet face-to-face once each month. This is a very important linkage. Use your area meetings to their full advantage to facilitate interaction and communication. Consider ways to facilitate communication and build linkages between meetings. Over time, these interactions will carve a pattern deep enough to forge relationships, the lifeblood of a network.

Multiple Leaders

There is a popular misconception that networks are leaderless. On the contrary, they are *leaderful*. The most effective way to run a boundary-crossing network is with many leaders. Individual expertise plays a critical role in boundary crossing. To be successful, the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy needs contractors from all modalities and program types to share the leadership and help maximize the area impact of our efforts.

Integrate Levels

The more "connected" any new initiative is to the larger universe, the more successful it will be. The more isolated it is, the more difficult it will be to obtain resources and accomplish goals. Encourage local program managers and staff to communicate about their initiatives with other community agencies, as well as internally with colleagues and subordinates. Making connections across organizational levels is also boundary crossing. It is a misconception that networks are

* Adapted from Lipnak, Jessica and Jeffrey Stamps, *The TeamNet Factor*, Oliver Wright Publications, Essex Junction, VT, 1993

flat. They are not. They are clustered, multi-level organizational forms.

One piece of good news about networks is that you already know much of what you need to know to be successful. Successful boundary crossing groups have many of the characteristics of any healthy team. They employ many of the same methods as any quality effort, and they follow the basic principles of any good change process. Apply the well-known fundamentals in these areas, and you will meet with success.

DEVELOPING A TOBACCO CONTROL AREA WORKPLAN

Each Tobacco Control Area Network Steering Committees will oversee the development of an 18 month area work plan. The Area Network Coordinator will ensure that the roll-up of work plans from each public health unit reflects subcommittee areas of focus (i.e. enforcement, youth/prevention, cessation, media and public relations and training. An area workplan template will be provided to assist with this integration.

The area work plan will be utilized to inform subcommittees in the development of joint action plans. By specifying common areas of health unit SFO activity and timing, the area work plan will inform Area-wide joint project planning and the coordination of programmatic activity across health units, and other member agencies.

Part I: Workplan Template Overview

Keep in mind the following guidelines as you prepare your area workplan:

Relate Plans to the Smoke-Free Ontario Mission and Goals: Program activities should reflect the Smoke-Free Ontario goals of reducing smoking, preventing youth initiation and habitual use of tobacco and eliminating involuntary exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

Integrate Plans with Provincial Initiatives, including Smoke-Free Ontario Media/Public Relations Initiatives: Programs are encouraged to plan joint activities that coincide with and connect with provincial initiatives and supports.

Organize Strategies and Actions under “Strategic Components” described in the Program Logic Models (PLMs): When writing the workplan, use these Strategic Components (e.g. “Public Education”) as sub-headings for all program activities. Attached is a list for each program type, taken from the PLM and scope of services.

Relate Strategies to Achievable and Measurable Results:

The joint actions proposed should lead to concrete and measurable results, described in terms of changes/impact on the specific population you have targeted.

Assistance with Area Workplan Development

The Program Training and Consultation Centre has assigned consultants to provide technical assistance to public health units in workplan development, including area workplan development. These consultants are available to attend monthly Tobacco Control Area Network (TCAN) meetings, offer email and telephone consultation, and on-site assistance, as scheduling allows.