Building Community Coalitions
What (or who) is it good for?

Presentation to: Chronic Disease University Participants
Presented by: Cristina Gibson, Coastal Health District Health Promotion Coordinator
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Main Take Aways

• Differentiate between coalitions & other types of partnerships
• The challenges & benefits of coalition building
• Preparedness for individual & community factors on coalition building
Coalition Defined

• Union of people & organizations working to influence outcomes on a specific problem
• Organization of organizations united around a common issue & clear goals
• Group of concerned citizens working together to facilitate community change
Coalition Characteristics

- People with a common interest
- Purpose is specific, yet inclusive
- Focus: community system/policy change
- Diverse groups combining resources to create change
- Usually, formal structure exists
- Has a lifecycle
- Interest in evidence-based practices towards solutions
Coalitions vs. Partnerships/Committees/Task Forces

- Power distribution
- Community involvement
- Agenda – organic or from above
- Shared decision-making
- Membership
- Time-limited?
Barriers and Why Members Leave

- Lack of direction/focus
- Territoriality
- History
- Failure to plan/act
- Dominence by professionals
- Poor links to community
- Minimal organizational capacity

- Don’t feel included
- Disagree with leadership style
- Group personality
- Group productivity
- Conflict with individuals within the group
Benefits and Why Members Stay

• Strength in numbers
• Wider reach
• Resources
• Diversity of membership in experience & expertise
• Credibility/trust

• Feeling of inclusion
• Making valuable contributions
• Feeling comfortable with the coalition (members & leadership)
• Accomplishing goals
• Meeting shared personal goals
Coalition Membership Criteria

- Will attend meetings
- Agree to coalition mission
- Put coalition issues on personal agenda
- Commit personal resources – financial, time, in-kind services
Group Participation Model

3rd Tier Members
- Variable/Unreliable attendance
- Low level of participation
- Low interest in outcome
- No sense of personal responsibility for group actions
- Unlikely to volunteer for tasks
- Sometimes Gatekeepers!

2nd Tier Members
- Attend "somewhat" regularly
- Variable level of participation
- Interested in group outcome
- Decreased sense of personal responsibility for group actions
- Less likely to volunteer for tasks

Core Members
- Regular Attendance
- High level of participation
- Invested in Group outcome
- Feels personally responsible for group actions
- Likely to take on tasks

Members enter group at different levels, many fluctuate between levels
Healthy Savannah
The Good, the Bad & the Ugly

- Started strong in 2007, under the leadership of Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson
- Lots of passion
- Focused on chronic disease prevention through moving more, healthy eating and encouraging/creating smoke-free environments

- Lost membership because of early lack of action
- Leadership stuck in planning process
- Low visibility & community awareness of coalition
- Identity crisis
A Coalition Disguised as a Committee
Thank YOU!!!

Cristina Gibson, MPH
Coastal Health District
Chronic Disease Prevention
912.644.5818
Cristina.gibson@dph.ga.gov