

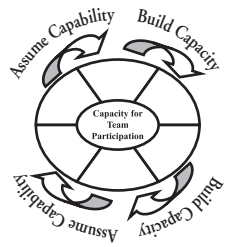
PART ONE:

Building Relationships!

Building Teams!

Building Community!





Introduction

This Tool Kit has evolved from the thinking, doing, reflecting and learning of many people. I hope that this first part – ***Building Relationships! Building Teams! Building Community!*** – is helpful as you continue to build your CRN team or as you think about community development or capacity building in a variety of other settings. Use it with others on your team as you continue to think, do, reflect and learn.

Chapter One introduces Community Response Networks, and places the discussion of CRN development within the context of community building.

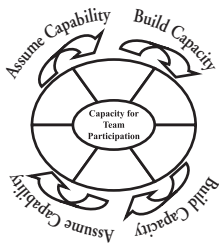
Chapter Two explores some of the words and concepts that we need to attend to as we create and implement our vision for CRNs.

Chapter Three begins the discussion about team building, exploring the diversity of people, organizations, skills and experience that are important to the CRN team.

Chapter Four addresses the ways in which individuals and organizations can contribute to the CRN team, exploring ways to support and facilitate meaningful participation among all members. This section also presents a Team Building Wheel – a simple model that can be used to explore capacity building in any community setting. It's especially important in the process to create CRNs, reminding us to start with principles, examine our experiences and beliefs, and build our capacity to create an environment for team participation. In that way we can create new experiences and beliefs, and move from principles to principled action.

Chapter Five rounds out the discussion with a summary of thoughts collected during the Think Tank on Inclusion and Participation. It shares a particularly sage piece of wisdom from a Think Tank participant. It closes with a simple checklist that supports us to reflect on the process and outcomes of community building.

Tam Lundy
Fall 2001



Chapter

1

Community Response Networks Are About Community Building

Community Response Networks: Creating A Coordinated Community Response to Adult Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect

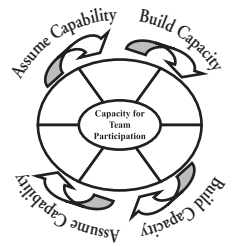
Community Response Networks (CRNs) are involved in developing a coordinated community response to adult abuse and neglect in local communities. A collaborative approach to coordinate the community’s response results in:

- ▶▶ increased community and professional awareness of adult abuse and neglect
- ▶▶ increased commitment to address abuse and neglect as:
 - ▶▶ an issue that affects individuals, and
 - ▶▶ an issue that affects communities
- ▶▶ increased understanding of the dynamics of abuse and neglect
- ▶▶ increased understanding of how to prevent, reduce and respond to abuse and neglect
- ▶▶ increased understanding of the legislated mandate of designated agencies, new tools for intervening, and offering support and assistance
- ▶▶ stronger relationships between the people and organizations that can provide support
- ▶▶ better coordination of supports and services, so that fewer people ‘fall through the cracks’

CRNs: Values in Action

The Public Guardian and Trustee’s work to support the development of Community Response Networks began approximately seven years ago. Since that time, much has been accomplished, and much has been learned. This work began with five communities participating in pilot projects. Today, up to seventy communities have been involved in developing CRNs. When the work began, the provincial Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect Planning Group created a set of principles to guide the way. Today, we remain committed to these principles:

- ▶▶ inclusion of everyone concerned about adult abuse and neglect and the work of the CRN
- ▶▶ participation that’s meaningful to all participants –this requires that everyone be willing to share power
- ▶▶ the people the CRN is intended to support lead the process to create the CRN



One of the biggest lessons we've learned is that, in order to put these principles into action, we must continue to pay attention to process as we go about our tasks. When we're paying attention to process, we're noticing how our values and beliefs, our relationships and interactions, actually organize our work and affect the results. We evaluate all of our actions, and the outcomes of our actions, according to these commonly agreed upon values.

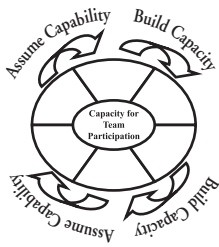
But even though we've talked a lot about the importance of values and process, we've discovered some tensions between 'maintaining the process' and 'getting things done.' We've noticed that our first tendency is often to look for practical solutions that produce tangible outcomes and results.

We know that the work to create a CRN requires lots of practical steps. Outreach activities, for example, encourage new people to get involved. Education helps to raise community awareness that abuse and neglect exists, and that something can be done about it. Community protocol development helps to coordinate the community's response to adult abuse and neglect of individuals. Taking on an advocacy role helps to ensure that adults' rights are protected, and that gaps that contribute to adults falling through the cracks are identified and addressed.

But to make sure that CRN development is carried out in agreement with the values developed by the Planning Group and the principles of the adult guardianship legislation, the practical aspects of CRN development need to be balanced with careful attention to process. It's not just *what* we accomplish, but *how* we do it.

With this in mind, the following thoughts are intended to support CRN development by addressing the *process* of building relationships, teams and, in the long run, our communities. The ideas that are shared here can be applied in many settings. We particularly hope that CRN participants will find them helpful as they work to:

- ▶▶ include all of the people in the community who have something to contribute
- ▶▶ build and strengthen relationships among CRN team members
- ▶▶ create a working environment of sharing, trust and respect
- ▶▶ build capacity for active and equal participation among all team members
- ▶▶ build alliances with others in the community who can support our work
- ▶▶ maintain a healthy balance between goals and principled action



CRN Development: A Great Example of Community Building

Ideas about ‘community building’ have changed over time. In the past few decades, we’ve tended to think about community building as the development of a service ‘infrastructure’ that provides services to people in need. And, when taking stock of our communities, we’ve had a tendency to measure our success by the number of organizations that exist, and the ways in which formal services are provided by government or community agencies.

Our ways of thinking about community building are evolving. We now measure our efforts by the degree to which people are able to choose and receive supports to meet their basic needs and wishes, and to become participating citizens in the community. Being a community member is not just about receiving; it’s also about making a contribution. So, community building is not about how we do things *for* people, but how we support *each other* to be full and active participants in the life of the community.

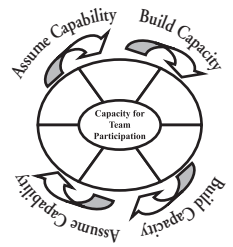
Community Response Networks are about community building. CRN members respond to adults who are experiencing abuse or neglect. But CRNs also address adult abuse and neglect as an issue that affects everyone in the community. To address this community issue, CRNs actively facilitate the participation of everyone who is affected by the issue of adult abuse and neglect.

Addressing Abuse and Neglect: Two Inter-Related Goals

One goal of CRNs is to improve the response to individuals experiencing abuse or neglect. Another goal is to involve the broader community in learning about, and preventing, the abuse and neglect of adults. In this way, the CRN responds to abuse and neglect as:

- a) an issue that affects individuals, and
- b) an issue that affects the community.

For example, if a CRN member hears about a senior who is experiencing financial abuse, they will offer support and assistance to that person. This is what we mean by responding to abuse and neglect as an *issue that affects individuals*.



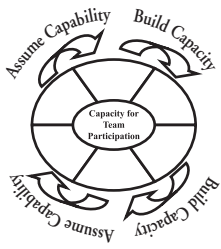
When CRN members become aware that several seniors in the community are experiencing financial abuse, they may decide that it's time to take the issue to the broader community. They might plan a campaign to raise general public awareness about financial abuse. And they may decide to offer training to staff at local banks, and to educate seniors about their rights. This is what we mean by responding to abuse and neglect as an *issue that affects the community*.

Therefore, some CRN activities will enhance the response to adults in the community who are experiencing abuse or neglect. Other CRN activities will address the need to raise community awareness about abuse and neglect, and to find ways for the community to work together to address the issue.



Community Voices

- “Legislation alone doesn’t keep people safe. Communities keep people safe.”
- “Community Response Networks are more about citizenship than about systems and bureaucratic responsibilities.”
- “We need to heal from our disillusionment with all of the recent systems changes.”
- “It’s a process – it’s long, it takes patience, and you can’t assume that you know anything until you’ve really worked at it.”
- “Process is a constant moving ahead, not a beginning and an end.”



Chapter 2

“Just What Do You Mean By That?”

Talking and writing about ideas and concepts can be challenging, particularly when we use words or phrases that mean different things to different people. In an effort to foster shared understanding, this chapter describes what we mean when we use words and phrases such as:

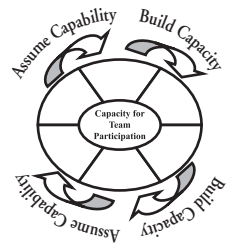
- ▶▶ the people affected by the issue of adult abuse and neglect
- ▶▶ labels, and
- ▶▶ the CRN team

People Affected by the Issue of Adult Abuse and Neglect

In our work to support the creation of CRNs, we’ve attempted to avoid the use of jargon. And yet, it’s sometimes hard to find the words that adequately describe what we mean. For example, it has been a challenge to describe the people in a community who have a role to play in the CRN without attaching ‘labels’ to them.

In some ways, we all wear labels. We are male or female. We are youth, and we are seniors. We are parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, daughters and sons. We are workers, students, service users, service providers and volunteers. These labels help to describe our experiences in the world, and the ways in which we are similar and different. We wear many labels at one time, each one filling in a little more detail about the multi-faceted and multi-experiential nature of ourselves as individuals, and in relation to others.

But there are some labels that are easier to wear than others. If I am labeled as a nurse, for example, people are likely to assume that I am caring and efficient. If I’m labeled as a teacher, people may assume that I am well educated and work well with people. But if I’m labeled as a senior, I may be assumed to be frail or easily confused. If I’m labeled as a mental health consumer, I may be assumed to exhibit unpredictable behaviour. If I’m labeled as a person living with a physical disability, people may fail to see my ability. If I’m labeled as a vulnerable adult, people may fail to see my strengths.



When we speak about the people who can play a role in local CRNs, we are mindful of the potential for labeling, and make every effort to avoid it. So, to be clear about the diversity of people who may have a role to play on the CRN, we have decided to use the phrase people affected by the issue of adult abuse and neglect. We intend these words to include:

▶ ***the adults the CRN is intended to support***

This could be any of us, depending on our circumstances at different times in our lives. But we know that the people who may be somewhat more at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect may include some seniors, or some people living with a developmental disability, a physical disability or a mental health diagnosis. Isolation, poverty, alcohol or drug issues may also contribute to our risk of experiencing abuse or neglect, ***and...***

▶ ***the people who are able to provide supports to adults in these situations***

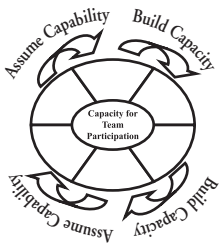
While we tend to think of these individuals as ‘helpers,’ they may also have been, or may be in the future, someone who the CRN is intended to support.

Each of these individuals can contribute important knowledge, experience and wisdom to the planning and implementation of a coordinated community response to adult abuse and neglect.

The CRN Team

We have discovered that the word ‘team’ can have many different meanings. The experience of working together on a CRN team is different than many of our previous experiences – as professionals and as community members – working in group settings.

When we use the word ‘team’ in the context of CRNs, we’re not referring to a structure. Structures tend to stay the same, even over time, and even when the circumstances change. For example, if we were talking about a baseball team, we would be talking about a structure – baseball teams are made up of a certain number of players, each playing specific roles, in specific positions that don’t change from game to game. Within the structure of a baseball team, certain individuals provide direction, and make final decisions about team strategy. While the individuals may come and go, the roles remain the same.



But, the unique thing about CRNs is that they cannot be described as structures – instead, they are sets of relationships. The CRN is *not*, for example, a structured organization with a formal membership, rules of order, and a leadership executive. And the CRN is not a ‘service delivery team’ – the CRN is not intended to become a new program or community organization.

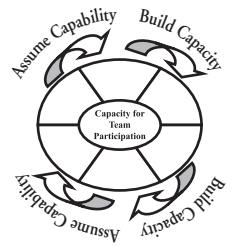
The CRN is also *not* a ‘case management team’, the whole CRN team *does not* discuss individual situations of abuse or neglect. Since confidentiality is such an important ethical concern, it wouldn’t be appropriate to discuss the specifics of an individual’s situation in such a public setting. Even when care is taken to mask identifying details it doesn’t take much guesswork, especially in a smaller community, to know exactly who is being discussed. So, during CRN meetings, CRN members do *not* discuss ‘cases,’ or an individual’s personal situation.

What, then, *is* a CRN team? The CRN team is a *network* – a loose connection of people and organizations who care about the issue of adult abuse and neglect, and who want to contribute to a coordinated community response. CRN members are community members who work together toward a common purpose. They work together as collegial and multidisciplinary partners from diverse community sectors. And, while the people or organizations involved may change from time to time, and in different situations, CRN members remain a team committed to the purpose of creating an effective community response to adult abuse and neglect.

The People Who Participate in the CRN Team

In every community there have always been people and organizations who, when they hear of a concern about abuse or neglect, look into the situation right away. Now, as members of the CRN, they will continue to do as they always have, responding to the situation in the best way they can, and collaborating with others who can also offer assistance.

By bringing together people and organizations that may not yet have a long history of working together, the CRN offers the opportunity to build increasingly collaborative relationships among individuals and organizations that can offer support to a person experiencing abuse or neglect. In doing so, the community’s ability to respond to abuse and neglect is strengthened.



The strength of the CRN is enhanced when the team is diverse, bringing together the individuals and organizations that can offer support, *and* the people that the CRN is intended to support. Such diversity increases team knowledge, experience and wisdom, and leads to a more effective community response to adult abuse and neglect.

Teams Within Teams

While the entire CRN is a team in its own right, other teams will emerge as the CRN engages in a variety of activities to carry out different purposes. Some examples:

1. A Team to Raise Public Awareness

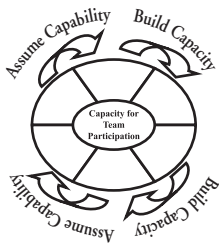
When the CRN team decides on a project to raise public awareness about adult abuse and neglect, a team of people may come together – to plan events, for example, or to develop and distribute print resources. Participants will come from different backgrounds and experiences. This ‘public awareness team’ may include existing CRN participants: a local church minister, a Continuing Care nurse, a member of the local health board, a staff person from the local women’s centre, a seniors’ peer counselor, and a retired teacher. The project may also attract newcomers – people with specific skills and interest in this particular project. But, as a result of their participation as a project team member, they may agree to become an ongoing participant in the CRN.

2. A Team to Address Advocacy Needs

Another team may come together to address advocacy needs in the community. This ‘advocacy needs team’ may be made up of people who have an interest and a contribution to make to this particular issue. Again, team members will be diverse, and may include a local advocacy organization, a long-term-care facility, community legal services, the police, Mental Health, a community volunteer and the Ministry for Children and Family Development.

3. A Team to Support an Individual Experiencing Abuse or Neglect

While the CRN as a whole does not deal with individual ‘cases,’ CRN members do offer support to an individual experiencing abuse or neglect. And as CRN members, they agree to offer those supports in collaboration with others in the community who can also offer support. The support, of course, will look different in each situation, depending on what seems to be most appropriate, effective and agreeable to the person being supported. So, it makes sense that the team that offers support



to one individual looks different than a team that comes together to offer support to another individual. But, regardless of the specifics of the situation, the support team's ability to come together quickly and to work collaboratively will be strengthened by the relationships that have been built through ongoing participation in the CRN.

So it's clear that, within the CRN context, a team will look different in different situations. But each of these teams is also part of the larger team, the CRN. CRNs are, in fact, teams within teams. And, no matter who comes together in any situation, the same team principles apply.

What makes a team a team?

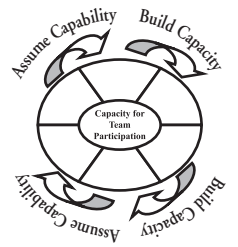
What is it that turns a collection of individuals into a team? We believe that it's not ***what*** people do together, ***but how they do it***. It says something about our deliberate and intentional process of working together. To be a team member means to act in a team-like way – collaboratively, as colleagues – whether playing on a baseball team, participating on a CRN team or even planning an outing with family members. (The Latin root of the word ***colleague*** means to ***choose together***.)

When we talk about CRN teams we're referring to the shared purpose that brings people together, and the process by which they carry out their activities. We never see CRN teams as a solid structure – it's a network, always in flux.

But whether we're using the word 'team' to describe a purpose or a process, it's always about how we work together. ***We always intend it to reflect relationships that are collaborative and collegial.***

Still curious?

If you're curious about some other words and phrases that are used throughout this document, see the Notes section on page 35. It provides you with some additional background on concepts like connectedness, difference, power, and 'systems thinking.' These concepts are important because they help us to understand how we can continue to build our capacity to create collaborative and collegial teams.



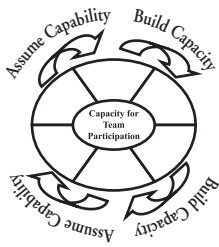
Community Voices

“Working together on the CRN has brought attention to current trust levels and cooperation between agencies in our community – it’s clarified how we need to build relationships.”

“When we think about relationships, we need to think about whole systems – not just individuals.”

“It’s divisive to see people as either consumers or providers, instead of all community members.”

“Forming real partnerships means sharing power.”



Chapter 3

Bringing the Team Together

Building a Balanced CRN Team: Who Needs to be Involved?

When thinking about the team, and who needs to be involved, it's helpful to pay attention to the diversity of people who live in the community, the people or organizations that provide support to adults, and the skills and experiences that participants might bring.

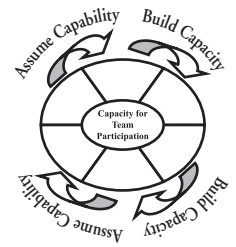
Community Diversity: Many different people make up a community. Our differences include age, ethnicity and culture, education, employment, gender, sexual orientation, ability, wellness, as well as our risk of experiencing adult abuse or neglect.

CRNs will be most effective when participants mirror the diversity of the community-at-large. They will also be most effective when they include all the people who are affected by the issue of adult abuse and neglect. This includes people that the CRN is intended to support, many of whom have historically been excluded from some parts of community life.

Diversity of Services and Supports: Communities have many different organizations that provide supports and services – some are formal, many are informal. When inviting participation in the CRN, it helps to think about including:

1. **people from each government or community agency that provides supports and services to adults**, especially those at increased risk of experiencing abuse and neglect. These supports and services include:
 - ▶▶ staff from regional health authorities such as those who work in Continuing Care, Mental Health, Community Care Facilities Licensing
 - ▶▶ staff from the Ministry for Children and Family Development – Community Living Services

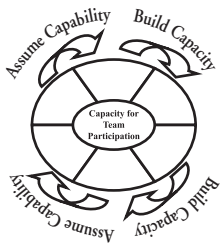
Regional health authorities and the Ministry of Children and Family Development are designated to fulfill specific responsibilities under Part 3 of the Adult Guardianship Act.



2. ***people from organizations that can provide emergency support***, including the police, ambulance and fire services, Ministry of Human Resources, crisis centres, transition houses, women's centres, and victim assistance programs
3. ***people from other government or community agencies that can provide support***, including: hospitals, home support agencies, alcohol and drug programs, care facilities, banks, credit unions, legal and court services
4. ***people who belong to formal and informal community organizations***, including: self-help or advocacy groups, wellness coordinators, community centres, churches, educational and youth services. This also includes groups that support people living with acquired brain injury, developmental disabilities, mental illness, Alzheimer's disease, physical disabilities, HIV/AIDS, etc., and their families
5. ***community gatekeepers*** – people whose jobs or interests give them a good idea about what's happening with folks on their 'beat'. Examples include senior peer counselors and senior citizen counselors, health and home support workers, postal workers, bank tellers, a member of Neighbourhood Watch

Diversity of Skills and Experience: You may want to take inventory of the skills and experiences on your CRN team. Ask people to identify the things they're good at, and what they're willing to offer. Make a list of the skills and experiences that would be helpful to the team. If some are missing, think about recruiting someone to fill the gaps. Or, plan to learn more about this skill as a team (using a consensus building process, for example). Some of the skills and experiences that will be helpful to the CRN team include:

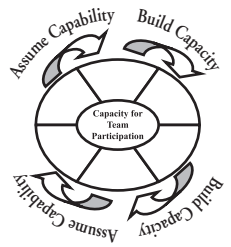
- ▶▶ Knowledge about abuse and neglect: definitions and dynamics of abuse and neglect, appropriate and effective responses, the ethics and dilemmas of support and intervention
- ▶▶ Knowledge of the community: history, how people reach out for support, how people unite around a community issue, how things get done, how conflict is addressed, etc.
- ▶▶ Personal characteristics or life experiences that may increase the likelihood of experiencing abuse and neglect. For example, a senior will have a closer connection to some of the risks faced by other seniors. (Note: a participating senior doesn't



need to have personally experienced abuse or neglect in order to provide an important perspective, nor do they need to disclose their personal situation if they have experienced abuse or neglect. They just need to be willing to participate on the team.)

Other helpful skills or experiences include:

- ▶▶ visioning
- ▶▶ creative thinking
- ▶▶ planning
- ▶▶ consensus-oriented decision making
- ▶▶ conflict resolution
- ▶▶ group facilitation
- ▶▶ organizing and coordinating
- ▶▶ providing support to people who don't communicate in ways with which we're familiar
- ▶▶ community education
- ▶▶ cross-cultural communication
- ▶▶ networking and alliance building
- ▶▶ advocacy
- ▶▶ outreach and publicity
- ▶▶ building and strengthening relationships with other organizations and decision makers
- ▶▶ experience with making change from 'inside' systems (for example, policy makers or decision makers in government or formal community organizations)
- ▶▶ experience with making change from 'outside' our systems (for example, community advocates, community development workers, community volunteers)
- ▶▶ leadership attitudes and skills that support team building, and meaningful participation by a diverse group of people



Questions for CRN teams:

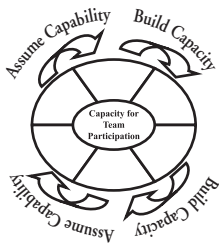
1. Are there people from population groups who may be more at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect? What attributes can contribute to making any of us more vulnerable to experiencing abuse, neglect or self-neglect?
2. Does your CRN team have participation from a wide range of the services and supports available in your community?
3. Do most participants represent an agency or formal organization? Are some folks participating as interested community volunteers?
4. Are family members or advocates involved?
5. Who's missing? What would it take to get them involved?
6. What skills and experiences are needed? What's missing? Who could provide them? Which skills can the team learn together?

Building Team Relationships

CRN participants are people who have a variety of backgrounds, beliefs, attitudes, experiences, skills and knowledge. Each brings their own history and their own reasons for being involved. Some will have worked together before; others are meeting for the first time. Some are confident leaders; others are just beginning to find their voice. The challenge is to start with this diversity of experience and perspective, and take conscious steps to create a team.

A recent gathering of people engaged in CRN development stressed that the success of a team is not just in *what* they accomplish, but *how* they work together. To be effective, the team needs to build:

- ▶▶ safety and trust
- ▶▶ shared leadership
- ▶▶ an environment for shared learning
- ▶▶ an environment in which change can occur
- ▶▶ an environment in which decisions are shared
- ▶▶ a commitment to a shared future; a commitment to the 'long haul'
- ▶▶ accountability to each other



They suggested that team members can be recognized by certain traits. They are:

- ▶▶ willing to listen, without judgement
- ▶▶ willing to learn
- ▶▶ willing to be honest
- ▶▶ willing to trust
- ▶▶ willing to pay attention
- ▶▶ willing to discuss values
- ▶▶ willing to risk conflict
- ▶▶ willing to share power
- ▶▶ willing to share leadership
- ▶▶ willing to lead from the rear (for example, nurture and support others to discover their own leadership skills)
- ▶▶ willing to show respect, and to expect respect from others
- ▶▶ willing to 'hang in there'

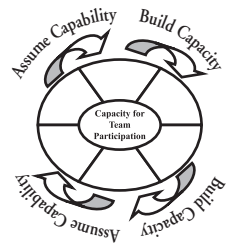


Questions for CRN teams:

1. Can we agree that these will be the traits to which our team members aspire?
2. Can we acknowledge that we'll all slip up from time to time?
3. Can we agree that we'll support each other in our efforts to work together?
Are we willing to support each other with gentle reminders when needed?

What supports team building?

- ▶▶ affirming and celebrating team diversity
- ▶▶ focusing on what we have in common, rather than differences
- ▶▶ sharing values and beliefs, hopes, vision, fears
- ▶▶ finding common language
- ▶▶ making complex issues understandable and accessible
- ▶▶ having no preconceived solutions or outcomes
- ▶▶ patience
- ▶▶ discussing ethics
- ▶▶ working together to build trust



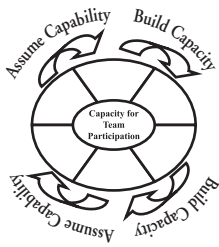
What gets in the way of team building?

- ▶▶ attitudes that keep people separate (for example, focussing on our differences rather than on the value of diversity)
- ▶▶ working without a shared vision, one that's grounded in shared values
- ▶▶ lack of a plan for dealing with disagreement or conflict
- ▶▶ lack of planning and shared decision making
- ▶▶ assumptions that some people have better knowledge or experience than others (for example, 'it's nice to hear from others, but professionals really have more understanding of the problems and solutions')
- ▶▶ competition (between people, organizations, ideas)
- ▶▶ seeing one another as whole people rather than focussing on the labeled difference

Building Relationships Among Team Members

When any group first comes together, we're a collection of individuals. We need to take some conscious steps to become a team. These are a few of the ways that we can strengthen and formalize our relationships:

- ▶▶ Take time to get to know each other – as 'whole people,' not just in certain roles
- ▶▶ Talk about leadership styles: our own, others, how we'd like things to be
- ▶▶ Talk about how we'll explore ideas
- ▶▶ Be clear about our purpose
- ▶▶ Develop a vision statement
- ▶▶ Develop guiding principles
- ▶▶ Set goals based on shared values
- ▶▶ Explore and affirm the capacities and strengths of each team member.
(What can I do well? What do I need to fully participate? How do I like to receive that support?)
- ▶▶ Develop a plan for how the team will work together to accomplish goals
- ▶▶ Plan how we'll be accountable to each other, and to the community
- ▶▶ Plan how we'll evaluate successes



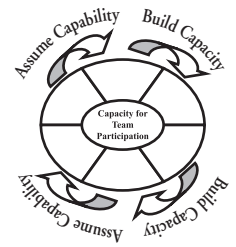
Questions for CRN teams:

1. How are we building trust and respect – among all members of the CRN team?
2. Is there a transparent decision making process?
3. Is all information shared, among all CRN members (except of course information of a confidential nature about an individual)?
4. Have we found a common language that everyone is comfortable with?
5. Are we honest about our feelings (for example, when things are going off track?)
6. How do we deal with differing perspectives or disagreement?
7. How do we share leadership within the CRN team?
8. Does our CRN team have a code of ethics?
9. Have we planned for accountability and evaluation?



Community Voices

- “Diversity means different perspectives.”
- “Avoid labels – for example, ‘consumer,’ ‘vulnerable adult,’ or ‘professional.’ You don’t need to wear a particular ‘hat’ to participate.”
- “We need to be honest about why we’re here. People sometimes don’t recognize their own agendas – this gets in the way of being inclusive.”
- “We must be prepared to have the difficult discussions, to risk conflict. Trust is built when we find positive ways to address conflict or different experiences and perspectives.”
- “Sometimes honesty is a revolutionary, and a revelatory, act.”
- “Challenge ourselves to change our attitudes about ‘progress’ – try not to see new members as impeding the work.”
- “Take the time for regular reflection on our progress. Evaluate our process, as well as task-oriented outcomes.”
- “Remember that nobody’s comfortable until everybody’s comfortable.”



Chapter 4

Increasing Team Participation

A Basic Principle for Building Participation: Assume Capability, and Build Capacity

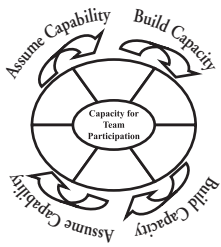
Sometimes the biggest barriers to meaningful and equal participation are the assumptions we hold -- about ourselves and others. We might assume that some people aren't willing to find ways to share power, for example, or that they're too focused on one problem to be able to see the big picture. We might assume that we don't know as much about adult abuse and neglect as other 'experts' in the group, so withhold our own very valuable experiences. We might even assume that government agencies are always 'bureaucratic,' or that only people with paid jobs can be 'leaders.'

If things aren't to forever remain the same, we need to deal with our assumptions by naming them and by actively addressing them. We need to acknowledge our capacity for learning and for change. And, we need to acknowledge that we *all* need a little support in order to learn and to grow.

One of the presumptions of the adult guardianship legislation is that 'adults are presumed capable' – capable to make decisions about things that affect them, and of choosing appropriate support in making those decisions. That presumption is an important part of team building, too, particularly in the context of CRNs. Working with the values of the legislation means:

1. assume capability, and
2. build capacity.

When we assume that each team member has the capability to participate, we acknowledge the potential of all team members to learn and to grow in a supportive environment. When we build capacity for participation, we're taking action to learn and grow together, to maximize the contribution of each team member.



Questions for CRN teams:

1. What can I learn from other team members?
2. What am I able, or willing, to teach?
3. What am I willing to change about myself? How am I willing to foster change in my organization?

Team building: Ingredients for Participation

Each team is a unique collection of people, who bring with them a great variety of backgrounds and abilities. And, while we all bring something to contribute, no participant arrives in a new team setting with all of the attributes needed on *this* team. We all have something to learn, and we all have something to teach.

To build a team in which everyone is able to participate, it's important to pay attention to the big picture, as well as our everyday challenges. If every team member is to feel like a full and active participant, we need to acknowledge the areas in which participation can be supported or hindered. What initially appears to be a problem can be turned into an opportunity if we're willing to change our awareness, our abilities, our attitudes, our relationships, the ways we do things, and the systems in which we do them.

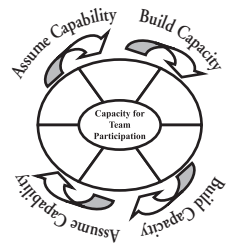
When we build capacity for participation, we agree to address our strengths and challenges in the following areas:

Knowledge, including:

- ▶▶ the dynamics of abuse and neglect
- ▶▶ the legislation
- ▶▶ the vision for the CRN
- ▶▶ how to nurture shared participation in the CRN
- ▶▶ the community and how it works

Skills, including:

- ▶▶ facilitation
- ▶▶ leadership
- ▶▶ group participation
- ▶▶ planning
- ▶▶ consensus decision making



Attitudes, including:

- ▶▶ attitudes about abuse and neglect
- ▶▶ attitudes about difference
- ▶▶ attitudes about connectedness
- ▶▶ attitudes about leadership
- ▶▶ attitudes about power
- ▶▶ attitudes about the balance of ‘process’ and ‘task’

Relationships, including:

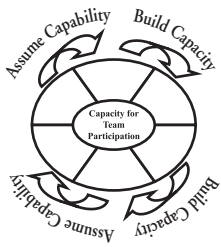
- ▶▶ relationships between individuals or organizations – CRN members, for example
- ▶▶ relationships between other community partners
- ▶▶ relationships between community institutions and government ministries
- ▶▶ relationships between service providers and those they serve

Processes, including:

- ▶▶ processes to ‘get things done’
- ▶▶ processes to create time and space for ‘people needs’ to be addressed
- ▶▶ processes to facilitate meaningful participation
- ▶▶ processes to build trust, safety and protect confidentiality
- ▶▶ processes to share power when we are making plans or making decisions

The ‘systems’ that we all belong to, including:

- ▶▶ seeing our interconnectedness within our organizations, our communities, our province
- ▶▶ seeing how our experiences in our families, our workplaces, and our communities shape our experiences and our behaviour
- ▶▶ seeing how the policies and practices of others can affect us (e.g. the policies and practices of government or other organizations)
- ▶▶ seeing how our policies and practices affect others
- ▶▶ systems thinking means “seeing interrelationships rather than issues, patterns rather than snapshots, and underlying structures rather than symptoms” (from Bellefeuille, Garrioch and Ricks, Breaking the rules: Transforming governance in social services)



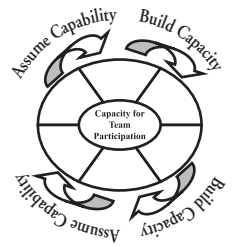
Questions for CRN teams:

Building team capacity requires that we look at our team from several perspectives, assessing our strengths and our challenges. By paying attention to our knowledge and skills, attitudes and relationships, processes and systems, we build the capacity of diverse team members to work together. The following questions will help your team to build capacity for full participation by all team members.

1. Have we had a discussion about the ways knowledge and skills, attitudes and relationships, processes and systems might affect our team's capacity for meaningful participation?
2. Which knowledge, skills, attitudes, relationships, processes and systems require our CRN team's attention?
3. How might our approaches to them support or prevent meaningful participation? For example, relationships based on the differences between service providers and those they serve rather than their similarities, might prevent meaningful participation. And processes that share power among participants, such as consensus decision making, can enhance meaningful participation.

The Team Building Wheel: A Framework for Building Capacity for Meaningful Participation

A team is much more than a group that shares an interest or a concern. Teams are made up of people who, in addition to their common vision and goals, share a commitment to work together in an inclusive and participatory manner. Teams don't just happen. They are created through our intentions and our actions – to include all of the people who are affected by the issue of abuse and neglect and to nurture everyone's capacity to participate.

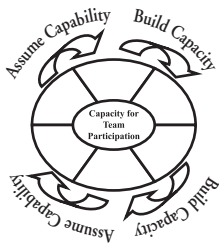


When we talk about building capacity for participation, we’re talking about the capacity of the team as a whole, and of each individual team member. In particular, we’re paying attention to the principles that ground CRN development work:

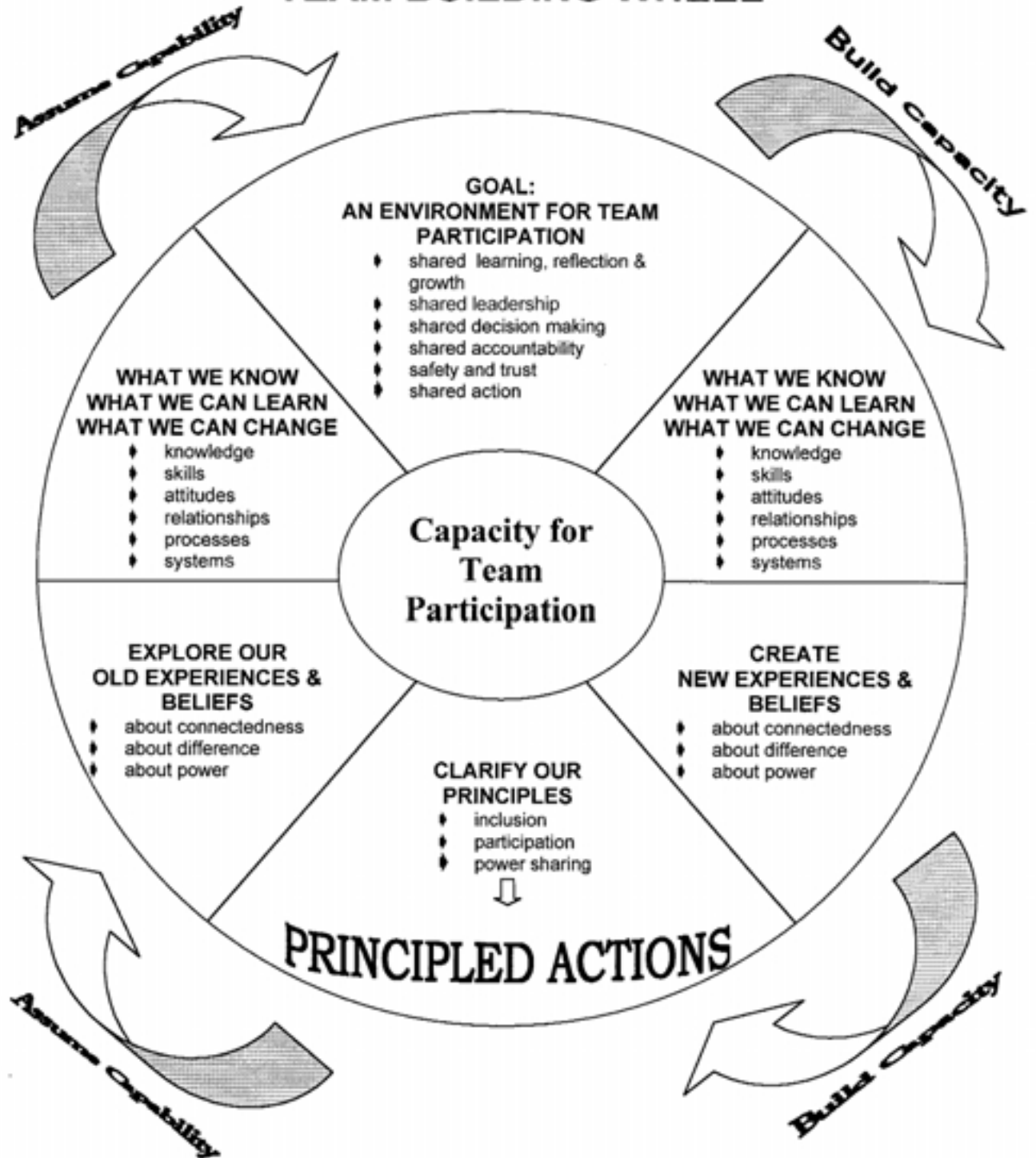
- ▶▶ Inclusion -- how people are included on the team
- ▶▶ Meaningful participation – how people find ways to contribute that are meaningful to themselves and to other team members
- ▶▶ Power sharing – how power and influence is shared among members of the team
- ▶▶ Assume capability, and build capacity – how we foster new abilities – of ourselves, and others. When this principle is put into action, everyone makes a contribution, or has something to teach other team members. Everyone can learn and change. Everyone needs support. Everyone can offer support.

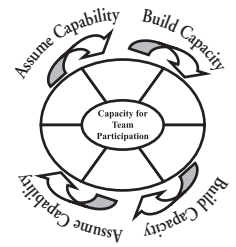
‘Capacity building’ gives us a way to think about building on our strengths, and learning together as individuals and as a team. Capacity building isn’t just a set of specific strategies that a team can follow. It’s more of a concept, or a ‘big picture,’ that helps to shape our thinking.

Pictures are often clearer and make more sense, once they are framed. The frame for a concept like capacity building should help to clarify the ‘big picture’ ideas, while illuminating some of the choices available to us as we work together. The following Team Building Wheel is an attempt to provide that frame, to clarify and shape the process of building capacity for meaningful participation.



TEAM BUILDING WHEEL





The Interconnectedness of the Team Building Wheel

The Team Building Wheel demonstrates the interconnectedness of our goals for team participation, the values we bring to the team, our beliefs and prior experiences, our strengths and challenges, and our willingness to learn and change.

The wheel also tells us that, to build team capacity for meaningful participation, we must pay attention to each part of the whole. True to the values embedded in the adult guardianship legislation, our intention is to *assume capability* and *build capacity* by addressing each sector within the wheel. In doing so, *guiding principles* become *principled actions* leading to *principled outcomes*.

The wheel provides a ‘systems thinking’ way of understanding the process of capacity building. It tells us that, to build capacity for team participation, we need to look beyond the goal of a functional team. We need to look to the roots of our beliefs and actions (the ways we’ve each experienced power and difference and connectedness). We need to be willing to change ourselves, our thinking and the way we do things.

Working with the Wheel

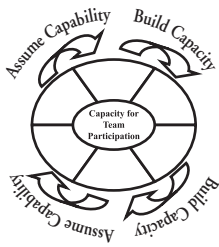
Building capacity for team participation is not a linear process. There’s no map to follow. We don’t start in one place, and move from step to step to step until we’re finished. It’s more like a ‘looping’ process that lets us spend as much time as we need in any section of the wheel, returning when and where we need to re-focus our attention.

But there are some places to start. In the work to create Community Response Networks, we always start with principles:

🌀 Starting with principles:

Our **goal** is team participation in an environment of:

- ▶▶ shared learning, reflection and growth
- ▶▶ shared leadership
- ▶▶ shared decision making
- ▶▶ shared accountability
- ▶▶ safety and trust
- ▶▶ shared action



To reach that goal, we start at the other side of the wheel, adopting principles of:

- ▶▶ inclusion
- ▶▶ participation
- ▶▶ power sharing

And the overarching principle of:

- ▶▶ assume capability, build capacity

🌀 ***Exploring experiences and beliefs about connectedness, difference and power***

Agreeing on the principles is a good starting point. Putting these principles into action may be harder than we think. It gets easier when we take time to talk and reflect on our experiences with, and our beliefs about,

- ▶▶ connectedness (dependence, independence, interdependence)
- ▶▶ difference
- ▶▶ power, and the process of empowerment

We begin by questioning how these experiences and beliefs affect our values, our viewpoints and our actions. **Note:** we're now moving clockwise, around the wheel. We acknowledge that each team participant has had personal experiences with connectedness, with difference and with power, and that these experiences inform their beliefs and their actions. We acknowledge that each participant has something to learn, and something to teach, about connectness, difference, and power. And we assume that learning together will strengthen our capacity to build a participatory team.

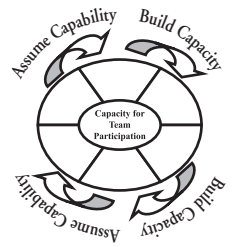
🌀 ***Building capacity for team participation:***

What we know, what we can learn, what we can change

Next, we work to build capacity for team participation, paying attention to each of the elements of capacity building: knowledge, skills, attitudes, relationships, processes and systems. In each of these areas we discover:

- ▶▶ what we know
- ▶▶ what we can learn
- ▶▶ what we can change

We assume that everyone can learn and change.



❁ ***Creating an environment for team participation***

When we take conscious, concrete steps to build our team’s capacity, we help to foster an environment of:

- ▶▶ shared learning, reflection and growth
- ▶▶ shared leadership
- ▶▶ shared decision making
- ▶▶ shared accountability
- ▶▶ safety and trust
- ▶▶ shared action

❁ ***Working as a team: Where are we now?***

When we are working in an environment of shared learning, reflection and growth, shared decision making, shared accountability, safety and trust, shared leadership, and shared action, we can ***continue to build capacity*** for team participation in increasingly collaborative ways. We can imagine something new and different because being involved in a participatory team provides us with new experiences and beliefs about connectedness, difference and power.

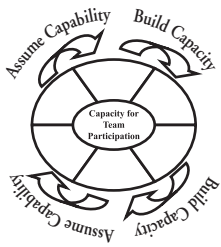
❁ ***From principles to principled action***

When our teamwork is grounded in respectful and trusting relationships, we develop new understandings of connectedness, difference and power.

These new understandings help us to choose actions that are grounded in the principles of inclusion, participation and power sharing. In the context of the CRN, what started out as a set of principles evolves into another goal -- principled action. It assumes that people have the capacity to participate in meaningful ways, and intentionally build capacity for full team participation.

Moving to the right hand side of the wheel, we see that when we choose actions to increase participation by all members of the team, we need to address:

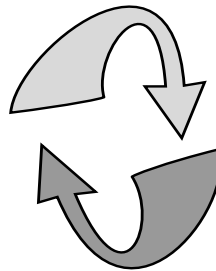
- ▶▶ knowledge
- ▶▶ skills
- ▶▶ attitudes
- ▶▶ relationships
- ▶▶ processes
- ▶▶ systems



☛ ***And around and around and around we go...***

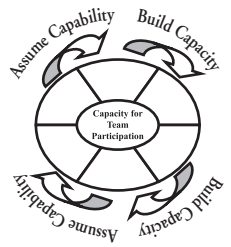
In each area, we're identifying what we know, what we can learn, and what we can change. When we're building team capacity, we assume that everyone has a contribution to make to the team. And that everyone has something to learn.

The wheel demonstrates that learning and working together is a circular and ongoing process. By changing the way we think, we change the way we act. By changing the way we act, we change the way we think. By changing the way we think and act, we create inclusive and participatory teams.



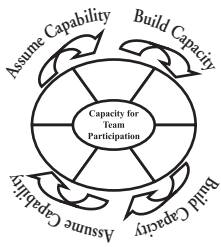
Questions for CRN teams:

1. How are we currently putting into practice the values of inclusion, participation and power sharing?
2. Do we assume that each member has something to contribute to the team, and something to learn? How do we put that assumption into action?
3. How do our personal beliefs about, or experiences with, connectedness, difference and power, influence our capacity to participate as team members? Are there ways in which they might limit anyone's participation?
4. Have we examined the ways in which our knowledge, skills, attitudes, and relationships, as well as the processes and systems we're part of, affect our team's capacity for participation?
5. How can we address knowledge, skills, attitudes, relationships, processes and systems to increase our capacity to be a participatory team?



Community Voices

- “In an inclusive group, we have a profound responsibility to each other to be fully participatory.”
- “We try to create an environment where power sharing and power equity for all members is a reality, rather than an ideal.”
- “We need to change our thinking about who can make changes happen – it’s not just highly placed people.”
- “We have to listen harder, and pay attention differently. We need to see things as a series of circles, not boxes.”
- “We need to be able to deal with ambiguity – process isn’t a straight line. Not one way of doing it – just jump in.”
- “We need to reassure each other that we’re all just learning – no one has to have all the answers. We need to remain teachable.”



Chapter

5

Community Building, Community Learning

Communities Talk About Inclusion and Participation

In the spring of 1999, the Adult Guardianship Implementation Project sponsored a Think Tank on Inclusion and Participation. This day-long working session brought together CRN coordinators from various parts of the province to explore inclusion and participation, particularly of the people the CRN is intended to support. Here is a summary of their thoughts:

About inclusion:

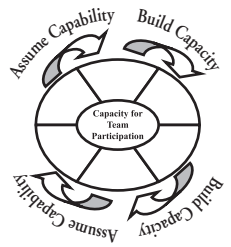
- ▶ The principles of inclusion and meaningful participation are congruent with the principles and presumptions of the adult guardianship legislation. For example, each CRN participant:
 - a) can choose how they wish to be involved
 - b) can get the least intrusive, and most effective, form of support to be involved
 - c) will be presumed to be capable of making a contribution, and making decisions
 - d) will have access to a method of communication that suits the person's needs.

They also said that:

- ▶ Participation is a way of being, not a set of strategies.
- ▶ Inclusion is different than representation; when you participate, you don't represent anyone other than yourself and your own experiences.
- ▶ There's no distinction between 'them and us' – there's only 'us'
- ▶ ...but, when we target people, wanting to make sure we include the people the CRN is intended to support, we label them, focusing on our differences rather than our similarities.

About meaningful participation:

- ▶ What is meaningful participation for one participant will be different for another – the important thing is that everyone chooses for themselves.
- ▶ Each person's contribution is valued by everyone, but is evaluated only by themselves.
- ▶ Everyone has the ability to change and influence outcomes and decisions.
- ▶ Everyone can 'see themselves in the project.'



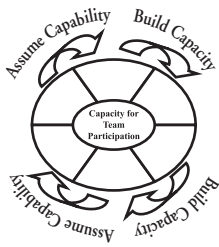
About furthering broad inclusion and meaningful participation:

- ▶▶ We need to get beyond strategies.
- ▶▶ We need everyone to ‘buy in’ to the principles right at the beginning.
- ▶▶ We need participants to learn more about community development principles and practices.
- ▶▶ The ultimate goal is power sharing –creating opportunities for each participant to change and influence things along the way.
- ▶▶ It’s about leading from the rear, as well as from the front (facilitating others finding and using their own voices, their own leadership abilities, etc.).
- ▶▶ It’s about learning together and teaching each other.
- ▶▶ It’s about being willing to be aware, willing to reflect, willing to change.

As one Think Tank participant said:

“The CRN process is challenging us to embrace a new understanding of leadership. We need to move away from the more traditional, hierarchical view of the ‘leader/follower,’ toward honouring the student and teacher that is part of us all. In the CRN process, we all have the potential to be learners, and to be teachers. Therefore we all have the potential to be leaders.”

Leila Dodd
CRN Coordinator,
Delta

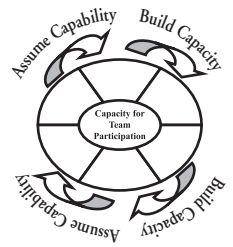


Chapter 6

Building Relationships, Building Teams, Building Communities – A CRN Checklist

The following checklist is a way to explore your CRN team’s experience with team building and community building. It provides a way to reflect on inclusion, participation and power sharing within your CRN team. It may also help to reveal areas where the group needs to build capacity.

- ▶▶ Everyone who wants to participate is included and welcomed.
- ▶▶ The people who are involved reflect the diversity of the community.
- ▶▶ All of the people who are affected by the issue are involved, and have opportunities to play a leadership role.
- ▶▶ We seek out people who aren’t normally included in this type of team. If they don’t get involved right away, we keep asking.
- ▶▶ Our team’s vision, goals, and action priorities were determined by all participants, after significant outreach to include everyone affected by the issue.
- ▶▶ Our team values and welcomes difference – of beliefs, attitudes, abilities and experiences.
- ▶▶ We see our separate parts – individuals and organizations -- as interdependent and synergistic (i.e. we are intrinsically connected, creating a whole that is greater than the sum of our parts.)
- ▶▶ Team members work together to identify and address barriers to empowerment and power sharing.
- ▶▶ Everyone understands how decisions are made, and are able to participate in the decision making process.
- ▶▶ Everyone participates as a team member. In the context of the CRN, no one person or organization has extra power because of the ‘hat’ they wear, or the role they play in the community.

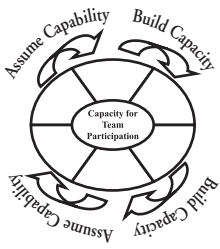


Outcomes of our team building process include:

- ▶▶ Agreed-upon principles to guide the team's actions.
- ▶▶ Shared awareness about how our experiences and beliefs affect the ways we work together.
- ▶▶ Shared commitment to choosing how we want to learn together and to work together.
- ▶▶ Shared commitment to building our capacity to work together most effectively, i.e. becoming more aware of what we know, what we can learn, and what we can change.
- ▶▶ A team that values and draws on diverse experiences and perspectives.
- ▶▶ A team that maximizes the participation and contribution of all its members.
- ▶▶ A team in which all participants have equal opportunity to influence how the work gets done, and the outcomes.
- ▶▶ Individual and team actions that are accountable to principles.

And, as a result of our attention to team building:

- ▶▶ More people in the community know about the CRN.
- ▶▶ More people in the community are concerned about adult abuse and neglect.
- ▶▶ More people will see the CRN as a community resource for addressing adult abuse and neglect.
- ▶▶ More people will know who to contact when they hear about a situation of adult abuse or neglect.



Notes: Talking About Connectedness, Difference, Power and Systems Thinking

A Few Words About Connectedness

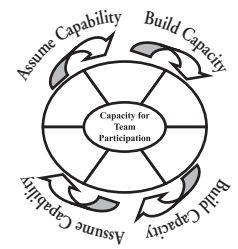
‘Connectedness’ is a concept that describes how we view our relationships with one another. When we think about ourselves as *separate* from others (for example, as individuals, or as organizations,) we tend to describe our relationships in terms of dependence or independence. Our society tends to place more value on independence than on dependence.

But there’s another way of being, one that acknowledges our *interconnectedness*. It’s true that individuals and organizations are sometimes dependent on others, while at different times they are quite independent. At the same time, however, we are forever interdependent. This is because we’re always connected to a larger ‘whole’ or a bigger ‘system’ – such as a family, a neighbourhood, a workplace, a community, or the world – relationships from which we’re never completely separate. Therefore, when we look at the bigger picture, we realize how interconnected and interdependent we really are.

Our sense of connectedness influences how we interact in all of our relationships. It affects our notions of ‘them’ and ‘us,’ especially in situations where people have been labeled. It affects the ways we offer support to people, or include each other in community activities. It also affects how we view the potential of each participant to contribute to the team.

Our sense of connectedness is especially important when we try to imagine sharing decision making power. This is true of individuals, as well as organizations. When we view ourselves as *dependent* on others, for example, we often let others influence our decisions and actions. When we see ourselves as *independent*, we’re more likely to choose our own actions, and to influence others through such means as organizational policy and protocol, or through our personal leadership style, or our vote. When we see ourselves as *interdependent* we acknowledge our interconnectedness, seeing the importance of diverse participation and shared agreement.

Earlier, we talked about the need for teams to share power among participants of diverse abilities, and diverse experiences with dependence and independence. Power sharing requires that we let go of the idea that some people are dependent and others are independent: it can really only happen when we acknowledge our interdependence.



When each CRN member is fully empowered as a decision making partner, we're acknowledging that we're not simply a collection of 'target groups' (for example, service providers, family members, people living with a disability), but are citizens who are interdependently connected within the same community 'system.' Working together as citizens, we:

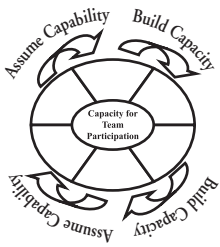
- ▶▶ acknowledge responsibility for ourselves, and to each other, knowing that everything we do affects everyone else in our environment
- ▶▶ attempt to become more accepting, and welcoming, of difference
- ▶▶ welcome everyone's contribution
- ▶▶ build on the things we have in common, our collective interests, preferences, attributes and gifts
- ▶▶ find ways to support everyone's participation, including a person who is perceived as 'different'. In other words, we build capacity for participation by each member of the team.

A Few Words About Difference

CRNs are made up of diverse people and organizations, many of whom may never have worked together before. Despite our good intentions, fostering the participation of such a diverse group of people may be outside our experience. We want our team to include all of the people in our community who can make a contribution to the CRN. We want to ensure that everyone feels like an equal participant. However, one of the biggest challenges that CRN groups have experienced is the inclusion of all of the people who are affected by the issue of abuse and neglect in all aspects of CRN development. To understand this better, and to learn more about including people who we may see as 'different' from us, we need to examine some common attitudes and experiences with difference – our own, and others.

Al Condeluci makes some interesting observations about difference. (See the References and Helpful Resources section at the end of this Part.)

- ▶▶ We all have *experiences* with difference. Sometimes we've been the person with a 'difference.' At other times, we've encountered others who we see as different than ourselves. In either situation, our past experiences affect our current response when we encounter people who we view as different. Our responses to difference include:



- ▶▶ our feelings (and how we deal with them)
- ▶▶ our beliefs and attitudes
- ▶▶ our decisions and actions

▶▶ In the past, people have held beliefs about difference that can continue to creep in if we aren't paying attention. These beliefs prevent people who are perceived as different from participating in the actions or decisions that directly affect them. If we share these beliefs, we may be tempted to exclude some folks -- to assume, for example, that 'clients' will be much more comfortable meeting separately from the rest of the group. Or we may believe that 'empowering' people with 'differences' means teaching them skills to participate in 'the ways we've always done things.' We might, for example, imagine what people with 'differences' will need in order to join 'us' in meetings or other community initiatives.

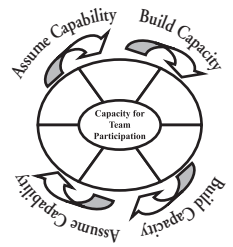
But the work of creating CRNs challenges us all to think about *what we need to change about ourselves and the ways we do things.*

Condeluci says that, to foster real participation, we need to pay attention to the ways in which some of us have been treated differently, and the ways in which we have lost power in many parts of our lives. If we are to include people with 'differences' in the work of the CRN, including planning and decision making, we need to examine our own perceptions and reactions.

A Few Words About Power

Power means different things to different people. The word comes from a Latin root, *posse*, that means *to be able*. When we use the word power we think about an individual's ability to participate, to take action, and to influence outcomes. Power affects our ability to influence things in our lives and in our environment, both now and in the future.

Because we are all able, we all hold power. But there are situations in which, because we're seen as 'different,' we're also seen as 'not able.' Our difference may be a personal characteristic, such as race or gender or physical ability. Or our difference may be more related to our paid work, our social position, or our



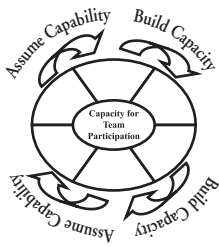
education. Sometimes, when others notice our ‘difference,’ they make assumptions about our ‘able-ness’, our ‘power.’ Sometimes, when we notice our own difference, we make assumptions about our able-ness, our power.

Power can influence the ways in which each of us participates in community life. It determines who is included, and how they are invited to participate. Power also influences our understanding of people’s capability to be full participants, and how we understand capacity building. And power sharing occurs only when we acknowledge that people can make a contribution even if they are different than we are. While we may have differences, we have many more similarities.

Here are a few things that we’ve learned about empowerment:

- ▶▶ empowerment is about increasing our capacity to participate, to take action, and to influence outcomes
- ▶▶ empowerment is a precondition for, and a product of, participation in community decision making processes
- ▶▶ empowerment doesn’t just happen – it’s a process to be created and nurtured
- ▶▶ empowerment takes place in an environment of power sharing; it’s an integral part of meaningful participation
- ▶▶ sharing power means being aware of, and addressing, all of the ways in which we use our own power
- ▶▶ sharing power means being aware of, and addressing, the ways in which power relationships can become invisible – especially when someone is viewed as ‘different’

In the context of the CRN, empowerment won’t necessarily mean that everyone is involved in every decision. But everyone will have an equal opportunity to influence outcomes. And the decision making process will be transparent to all participants. We’ll be clear about our own willingness to engage as equal participants in community planning and decision making processes. We will also work together to demystify and re-program our previous learnings about power, and support each participant to exercise their own power in collaboration with others.



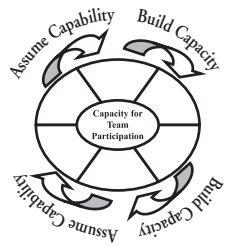
A Few Words About Systems

Everyone who is connected to others -- through a family, a friendship, an organization or a community -- is part of a *system*, or a *larger whole*. 'Systems thinking' is a holistic approach. When we *think systems*, it becomes impossible to separate ourselves as individuals from the ways in which we are connected with others. When we *think systems*, we look at the *big picture*. It helps us to see inter-relationships, not just issues. It guides us to look at patterns, rather than events. And it helps us focus our attention on the structures underlying the concern, not just the symptoms.

'Systems thinking' occurs when we understand how systems (which can include government, service agencies, community organizations, volunteer groups, self-help groups and families) affect us, and how we affect the systems we're part of. The CRN team becomes a 'system' that affects, and is affected by, each member. In turn, each CRN member is connected to, and affected by, many other systems (our workplace, for example, or a government policy) .

By understanding how the CRN team is affected by each member, and by other, seemingly separate, community systems, 'systems thinking' helps us to plan for team participation in a community setting.

If you'd like to read more about systems thinking, we've found a book that provides a good analysis of systems thinking applied to community services settings. It's called [Breaking the rules: Transforming governance in social services](#). Another interesting book that encourages systems thinking is [The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization](#). Both are included in the References and Helpful Resources list at the end of this Part.



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