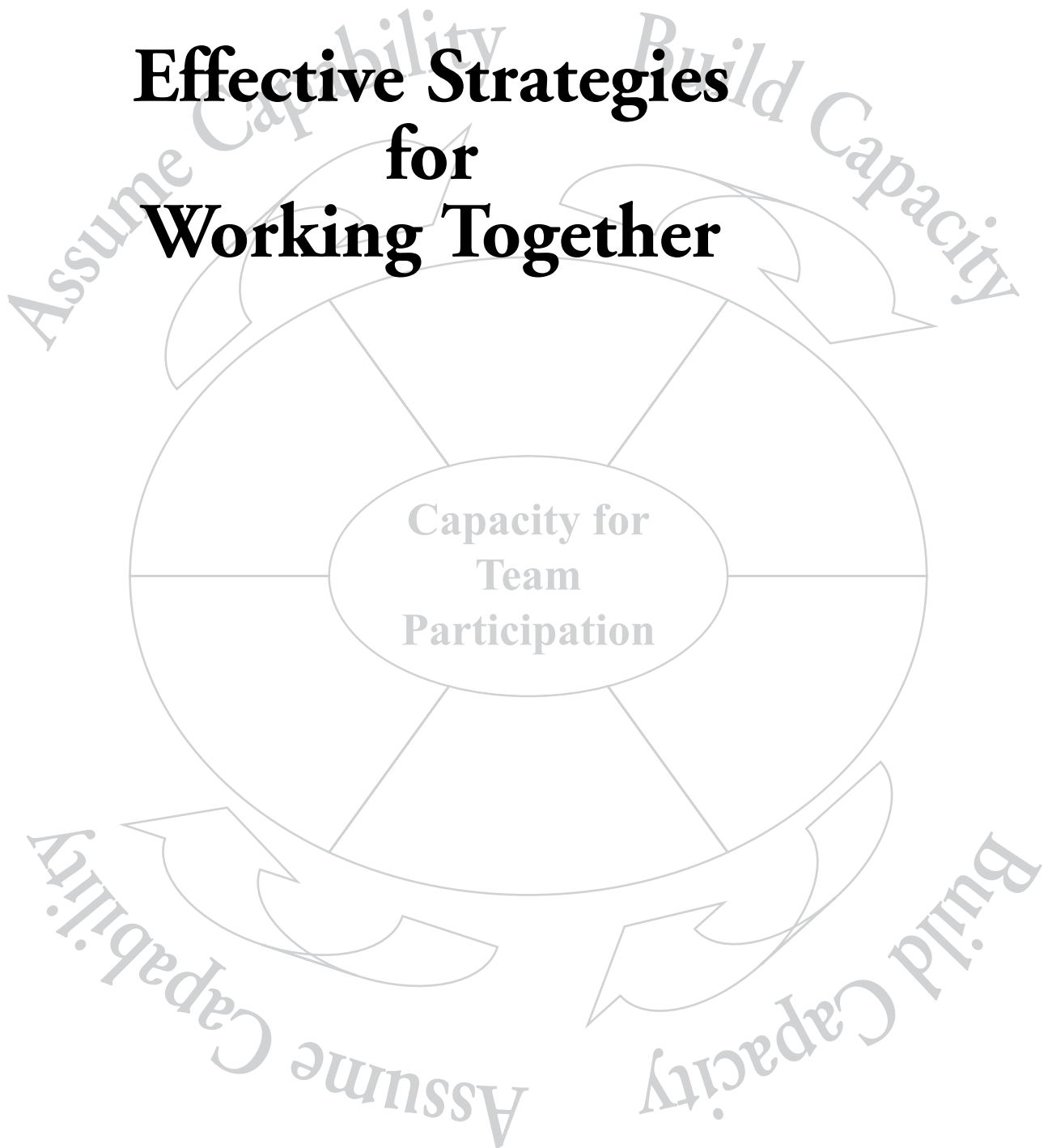
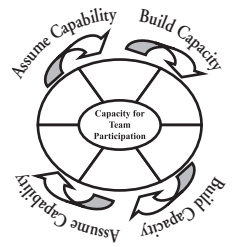


PART SIX:

Effective Strategies for Working Together





SUMMARY OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR WORKING TOGETHER

CRN teams have found the following strategies helpful for working efficiently and effectively to create a local Community Response Network:

1. strategies for effective, efficient meetings
2. strategies for getting and keeping people involved
3. other successful supportive strategies

They may support the relationship and team building approach, but do not replace the need to attend to the principles of inclusion, meaningful participation, power-sharing and assuming capability/building capacity.

1. Strategies for Effective, Efficient Meetings

▶▶ **Regularly Scheduled Gatherings - North Island**

People are more likely to attend if they can plan ahead. Meetings which are scheduled well ahead, or on a specific day of each month are popular with participants.

▶▶ **Schedule with Lots of Notice and Give Reminders**

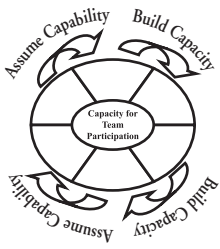
With people as busy as they are, giving plenty of notice and then calling, faxing or e-mailing reminders is one way to ensure maximum participation.

▶▶ **Chair Rotation - East Kootenay**

Rotating chairing duties takes the pressure off one individual and gives a different flavour to each meeting. Some groups prefer this way of operating.

▶▶ **One Meeting for Business, the Next for Education - Quesnel**

When the CRN needed to conduct its business and to become better educated, the Quesnel CRN divided the two needs evenly and let people know what to expect. It is a way to accomplish both tasks and not lose sight of one in pursuit of the other.



▶▶ **Different Meetings for Different Groups - Vancouver/ Richmond, Parksville/Qualicum**

Sometimes it makes sense to divide the group into sub- committees or working groups for the purpose of getting more done in less time.

2. Strategies for Getting and Keeping People Involved

▶▶ **No One Recipe for Success - Ridge Meadows**

What may not work in one community can be a brilliant idea in another. There is no set way of doing this.

▶▶ **If You Feed Them, They Will Come - East Kootenay, North Island**

Everyone from Cranbrook to Kaslo to Port McNeil has realized that sharing even the simplest refreshments makes people feel valued and part of things.

▶▶ **Develop and Share a Vision - Tri-Cities, East Kootenay**

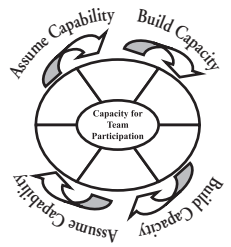
It is important to have a shared and articulated idea of what you are trying to accomplish as a team.

▶▶ **What Does Success Look Like? - Cariboo**

It can be important to identify very clearly what success means to the group. It can save a lot of time spent “wandering in the dark” and can be a way to clearly define roles and activities.

▶▶ **Clearly Defined Roles - North Okanagan, Smithers, Ridge Meadows**

In these communities, members of the CRN have very clear roles within the CRN, whether it be chairing, minute-taking, providing rides, doing personal outreach. These roles will differ from community to community but it is important that people understand and appreciate what everyone can contribute.



▶▶ **Buddy System for People Joining at Different Stages in the Process - North Okanagan**

In the North Okanagan, people coming into the process part way along were linked with a “buddy” who would bring them up-to-date, answer questions and introduce them to the group. This buddy system continued throughout for some participants – providing ongoing discussion, updates, etc.

▶▶ **Action Plan and Follow up - North Shore/Howe Sound/Powell River**

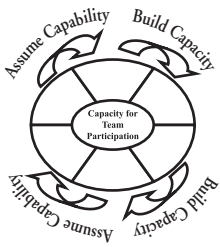
Some communities have found it useful to draw up an action plan, with follow-up as part of the process.

▶▶ **Balance re: Task and Process - West Kootenay**

For people to remain involved, interested and keen, there must be a balance between task and process. “Task” people often find it difficult to “not be doing anything”. For them this may mean that there is no concrete, tangible product to show for their time. For “process, or relationship” people, moving ahead with work before there are clear guidelines for how the group will function can be very uncomfortable. Finding a balance between the two can keep people of both persuasions involved.

▶▶ **Moving Sensitively Through Conflict Builds Trust – New Westminster**

It is human nature to avoid conflict, but it does not disappear if left unacknowledged. Differences of opinion need not lead to conflict but can be an opportunity to embrace the diversity in a group. Moving through conflict, with respect and maturity, leads to a safer, healthier working environment.



▶▶ **Personal Connection of Members – Kootenay Boundary**

In small communities, people often work without peer support, which is especially difficult, given the emotionally charged nature of the work. Once this issue was identified, the group created a “peer support” aspect of the CRN, whereby members traded phone numbers and made agreements about contact with each other. For some that meant a scheduled check in time, for others it meant a commitment to be available, day or night, for consultation. Members were very clear that the purpose was to discuss their own feelings, not the individual needing services.

▶▶ **Acknowledge Important Contribution to CRN Activities of Those Who Provide Informal Supports - Castlegar**

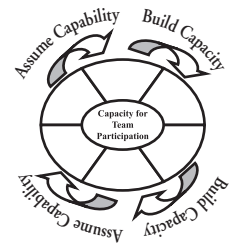
The group must recognize the importance and necessity of informal support if there is to be a good working relationship between all partners. The Salvation Army providing a meal or a bed, communities of faith offering assistance, volunteer advocates accompanying an individual to an appointment can all be things which keep people out of crisis and take some of the burden off people working in the more ‘formal’ system.

▶▶ **Minutes to Interested Non-Attendees - West Kootenay**

Sometimes people who are interested in the process cannot attend meetings. Sending them copies of minutes is one way to keep them “in the loop”.

▶▶ **Time Pledge Form - South Fraser**

In Langley, members were asked to commit to participation by filling out a “Participation Pledge”. (see **Part Nine - Community Stories - Langley** for a sample copy)



3. Other Successful Supportive Strategies

▶▶ **Paid Coordination - Cariboo, South Fraser**

Many groups feel that having a paid coordinator is important. Coordinators play different roles in different communities, but usually carry out some of the more time consuming activities, such as one-to-one outreach and administrative duties.

▶▶ **Neutral Lead Agency - North Okanagan, Castlegar, Campbell River**

Many people have mentioned the necessity of having an agency that is seen in the community as being “neutral” to lead the process. If an organization has historical issues with other agencies or members of the community, it may be a challenge to attract the broadest participation possible. By the same token, if an organization has a strong political mandate or supports an unpopular cause the result may be the same.

▶▶ **Regional Networking - West Kootenay, South Fraser, Keremeos**

In areas that are dependent upon regional services, it has been helpful to connect with other communities to come up with ways of working together to deal with common issues. Inviting other CRN members to participate in educational sessions, staying in contact about activities and just getting to know what is happening regionally has been of great benefit.

▶▶ **Cheerleading by Members, Mentors and the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC - Port Alberni, Kaslo, Delta**

Many times members of the CRN, and coordinators in particular, have felt like they were getting nowhere, headed in the wrong direction, should have done this or that, etc. Very often, all they need is to hear that they are doing exactly what everyone else has done or is doing. There is no template for this work; we are creating it as we go and that can be very frustrating. For people used to task oriented work, the message that “Process is a valid deliverable” is important. So, when you feel lost, pick up the phone!