

The background of the slide is a solid blue color. On the left side, there are several thin, white, curved lines that sweep across the frame from the top left towards the center, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Successful Collaborations- the secrets

Collaboration

- Requires blend of science & common sense
- 70% of US non profits engage in at least 1 collaborative activity
 - Advocacy on behalf of clients
 - Obtaining funding
 - Reducing program expenses
 - Sharing space
- More dependence on gov't funding more likely to collaborate with similar organizations

Definitions

- May be called partnerships
- Involve more or less formal structures, temporary or permanent, which bring together a group of people or organizations in a community to implement a new program, to change something that already exists, or to address a specific problem.
- Involves sharing goals, activities, responsibilities and resources.

Another definition

“ Collaboration has been defined as an unnatural act between non-consenting adults. We all say we want to collaborate, but what we really mean is that we want to continue doing things as we have always done them while others change to fit what we are doing.”

Former Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders

And one more...

- “And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, but the lamb won’t get much sleep.”
 - Woody Allen in his book *Without Feathers*

Strategies for Successful Collaboration

1. Systematic planning to develop mutual objectives
2. Addressing psychological factors (power differences, lack of trust)
3. Clearly identifying the strong core idea at the heart of the collaboration
4. Finding the needed financial & human resources for it to be successful

Strategies con'td

5. Incorporate learning's from other collaborations, successes and failures
6. Encourage the collaboration to evolve as needed to respond to changing environment
7. Look at long term costs and benefits
8. Planning for sustainability at the outset

Challenges to Collaboration

1. Not all collaborations work- evaluation of effectiveness of them still limited
2. Not all problems can be solved by collaboration
3. People come with “baggage” of failed relationships
4. Collaboration fatigue
5. Collaborations can sometimes be a tactic for delaying action or obscuring responsibility

Funders' Perspectives

- Push for more collaboration between grantees
- Examples of Vancouver Foundation collaborations:
 - Homelessness- StreetoHome Foundation
 - 2 levels of gov't
 - Corporate
 - Non profit service providers
 - philanthropists
 - Skilled Immigrant Employment
 - 3 levels of gov't
 - Non profit service providers
 - Employers
 - Funders

Other Thoughts

- Not all collaborations work
- Not everything can be solved by collaboration
- Takes time
- Takes resources
- Takes leadership/buy-in from the “top”
- Communication essential
- Expect some resistance from some quarters
- Flexibility from both sides essential
- Needs “connectors” (Malcom Gladwell- The Tipping Point)

Resources

- FSG Social Impact Advisors- “Multiplying Impact through Philanthropic Collaborations” Nov 2010
- Alliance Magazine- March 2011- considers the downside of collaborations
- “The Collaboration Challenge” –James E. Austin, Harvard Business School