Resources for Collaboration and Power Sharing Between Government Agencies and Community Power-Building Organizations

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power-sharing-guide

CHAPTER 3

How to Conduct a One-to-One

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One-to-Ones are a core part of building an internal organizing strategy to advance health and racial equity within a health department, and also an important foundational step in building more authentic and trusting relationships with grassroots community organizers.

This chapter builds the capacity of public health department practitioners to set-up and approach having a One-to-One.

What is Relationship Building and Why Does it Matter to Community Organizing?

The University of Denver's Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning has a useful resource on one-to-ones. They write:

In organizing, relationships are based on shared values and interests, rather than issues. Relationships are built by sharing our stories with one another, exploring the intersections of our interests, exchanging resources and cultivating a collective commitment to act...Community organizers believe that building relationships is the best way to develop community partnerships and to do substantive public work. Authentic relationships are the glue in organizing; through them, we build our community, develop leaders, and build our collective power to create lasting change. Relationships lead to real commitment and accountability.

What is a One-to-One?

One-to-Ones are strategic meetings used to figure out another person's self-interest, ideas, motivations, and visions, and where they intersect with your own...One-to-Ones are an art that requires curiosity, a genuine interest in others, and emphasis on focused, probing (though not prying) questions aimed at understanding the roots of another.

As you ask 'what' and 'why' questions, answers provided by the person with whom you are conversing may shed some light onto the problems and issues they care about and what pressures they may face, as well as what their values and interests may be. One-to-ones are the initial step in creating a shared vision and commitment to act.

Types of One-to-Ones

One-to-Ones with internal colleagues and co-workers will look very different than those that are externally facing. This chapter primarily focuses on doing One-to-Ones with a person or contact from a community organization or non-profit outside the health department.

Who should I meet with?

Identify individuals (community leaders, community organization or union organizers/ staff, etc.) who may be working on your project issue, or whose organization you want to learn more about for future health equity work.

How do I conduct a One-to-One?

Scheduling your meeting:

- Call people directly:
  a. introduce yourself
  b. inform them of why you want to meet with them
  c. begin with a little "small talk" to get acquainted
  d. schedule a time to meet for lunch or coffee
  e. keep it short, no longer than 30 to 60 minutes
- Email introductions are effective as well, though we encourage a follow-up call

One-to-Ones have three basic parts:

1. **Breaking the ice and establishing your "credential"**
   a. Start with some simple questions: How are you? How has the new year been? etc.
   b. Share your goals and re-establish your "credential": Remind them why you are meeting, and what you hope to learn. Share a bit about yourself, how and why you are doing the work that you do. This is an opportunity to show vulnerability and connect.

2. **Learning about the other person/organization's self interest**
   a. This will be the bulk of your meeting—the "what and why"" questions: What issues are they concerned with? What are they currently working on? Who is their constituency? Why do they do the work they do?
   b. Ask questions to learn about the other person
      - What are their values?
      - What are their interests?
      - What are their resources and connections?
      - What is their story? (Professional and or personal)
   c. In turn, be willing to answer questions and share your own experiences, motivations, visions and ideas for if/how your health department can support their work.

3. **Thank you and establishing next-steps**
   a. Always thank them for their time
   b. Establish next-steps. This could involve sharing resources, connecting each other with new contacts, or meeting again (as individuals, or supporting each other's work)

c. Consider:
    - Do they have any upcoming events or actions you could attend to learn more about their campaigns?
    - Is there any data/research support they need?
    - Do they know other people/orgs working on the issues you are interested in that they can connect to?
    - Which activities from the list of potential DPH activities could be most useful to them?

One-to-One Best Practices:

- Begin with curiosity and courage.
- Provide clarity and transparency about motivation for the conversation. Goals can include getting to know someone, learning more about their work, building your understanding of someone's work and organization, and building new partnerships.
- Be willing to listen, not just hear. Practice active listening by following the 70/30 rule: listen 70% of the time and speak just 30%.
- The One-to-One is a two way street. Give as much information as you get. Be open to sharing about yourself.
- Try not to take notes unless you have to. You want to give the other person your undivided attention. Taking notes can make you appear to not be listening.
- Focus on the other person's words and body language.
- Follow-up: Be sure to keep track of who you have talked to and any next-steps you establish

Learn More:

Much of the content and ideas in this resource are adapted from existing resources. Check them out to learn more:

- City of Kansas City, Missouri Health Department: One-To-One Manual *(available by request)*
- Training for Change handout: One-on-One Meetings
- 350.org Training: How to Build a Base: Using One-On-Ones
- University of Denver, Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL): Community Organizing Handbook, 3rd Edition, 2014

About Human Impact Partners

Human Impact Partners transforms the field of public health to center equity and builds collective power with social justice movements.

For more information about this resource, please contact info@humanimpact.org. To learn more about building relationships between CPBOs and health departments, please contact Megan Gaydos at megan@humanimpact.org.

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