

# Intermediate Stage Partnerships: Effective Decision Making and Communication & Managing Conflicts

Give careful consideration to decision-making processes very early on in the development stages of your partnership

- \*Does everyone always need to be at the table?
- \* Who gets the final say? On which issues? (e.g., budget, staff, dissemination, etc)
- \*Are there differing levels of responsibility? (e.g., among funders, institutions, community members)
- \*How will we balance process and action?
- \*Consensus? Democratic? Autocratic?
- \*Will decision-making responsibilities be rotated over time? How?
- \*How long should it take to make a decision that affects the whole partnership?

# Collaborative Approaches to Decision-Making

- Consensus (including the "70% Rule" & "Consensus Plus")
- Democratic
- Straw polling
- Voting
- Delegation

Source: Center for Collaborative Planning, [www.connectccp.org](http://www.connectccp.org)

Exercise #1:

**Navigating through Difficult Decisions:  
Maintaining Transparency and  
Communication**

# Resolving Conflicts

- Discriminatory “isms” such as racism, sexism, ageism, etc.
- \*Contrasting goals, values, or priorities
- \*Conflicts between different members of the partnership
- \*Communication break-downs
- \*Power imbalances
- \*Commitment imbalances or unequal work loads
- \*Clashing organizational cultures
- \*Financial or budgetary losses or conflict about resource allocation

# When conflict arises, consider the following:

- Assume there is a legitimate reason
- Ask other thoughtful group members outside of the group setting
- Conflict evokes emotion
- Open, clear communication is the best prevention

# Steps for Resolving Conflict

- Be aware of differences between and among members of the partnership
- Discuss and resolve differences as they arise
- everyone has the right to bring up their feelings and get them resolved to their satisfaction
- Identify the probable cause of the conflict
- Negotiate solutions using a problem-solving approach
- Develop a written or verbal agreement and a process for checking progress

## **Exercise #2:**

**Anticipating and Resolving Conflicts  
Related to Roles, Responsibilities and  
Maintaining Accountability**