

Leadership Session Notes, July 16, 2018

'Getting Involved in My Community'

Workshop Objectives:

- Learn to work with others in the community
- Identify key principles to working effectively with others in groups
- Understand group dynamics
- Understand the stages of team formation and the importance of leadership
- Learn how to apply group principles to a community project
- Understand keys to working with volunteers
- Identify ways to get involved in the community

Kris Medic, Bartholomew County Extension, introduced the session with a short discussion on working together. Working in a group allows shared experiences and helps build capacity in your community. Working in a group can be great or it can be frustrating. Acquiring the skills to better work in a group, and /or facilitate a group discussion can make a difference in the success of the group project.

The group briefly discussed the video used in preparing for the class (homework). Committee members suggested that our county functions mainly due to the very dedicated non-governmental participants. The population of the county is small (only 15,000), so elected officials don't have the capacity or the revenue to do everything that needs to be done. There are over 250 nonprofits in Brown County, although many are inactive.

The group then discussed what makes an organization effective or ineffective.

Effective Practices:

- Create an awareness of issues through education
- Outreach to the public / community engagement
- A shared vision
- Continuity
- Putting egos aside
- Deep sustainability (most nonprofits in Brown County operate on fragile economic models)
- Realistic goals
- Heart
- Embrace and foster a diverse knowledge and experience base

- Compromise, collaborate, communicate

Ineffective Practices:

- Small pool of participants (same ten people)
- Lost opportunities
- Lack of acceptance of diverse thought
- Lack of heart
- Doing the same thing the same way and avoiding / preventing change
- Change for the sake of change
- Lack of communication / transparency

Tackling the issues to facilitate change takes persistence and the introduction of new ideas.

** Facilitation tips:

- Don't facilitate and attempt to record the discussion; involve another person, delegate a scribe
- The use of color is important – remove hot colored markers unless you are trying to tap into the creativity of the group; cool colors have a calming effect

Why We Work in Groups:

- The sum is greater than the parts / synergy / shared resources and skills
- To expand our mental capacities
- Identify problems
- Improve ideas, projects, etc.
- Diversity of thought and perspective
- To be representative
- To build consensus
- Delegate / share tasks
- Satisfaction
- Meaningful service

Behaviors That Build Group Relationships:

- Setting ground rules
- Recognition and acceptance of differing backgrounds and values
- Tolerance and respect for diversity of ideas
- Humility and adaptability
- Setting ground rules

- Drawing the ideas from each member and utilizing their skills
- Having a strong facilitator
- Stewardship / staying on task
- Clarifying the goals
- Compassion and empathy
- Encouragement and positive feedback
- Accountability

Behaviors That Help Groups Accomplish Goals:

- Identify the big picture / determine a shared vision
- Openness
- Studied approach
- Strong mandate
- Initiative and fortitude
- Taking a holistic approach (big picture thinking)
- Finding resources
- Setting realistic goals
- Adaptability
- Inclusiveness, collaboration, building consensus
- Neutral facilitation

Behaviors That Hinder Accomplishing Group Goals:

- Lack of ground rules
- Taking things too personally
- Unwillingness to change / close mindedness
- Judgement
- Lack of clear goals
- Lack of open communication
- Entitlement
- Aggression, personal attacks ('hate is a blockade')
- Fear / lack of self-awareness
- Burnout/ over-commitment
- Lack of transparency
- Personal agendas

The small group activity was the final group project of the day – ‘Initiating a Community Project – Renovating the City Park’s Ball Fields’. Each group went through the process of:

- What's the first step?
 - Form a group
 - Engage interested individuals
 - Determine the stakeholders
 - Find others with the passion
- Then what?
 - Assess problems
 - Define needs
 - Assess costs
 - Determine solutions and expectations
 - Raise money / seek donations
- How will you get others involved?
 - Advertise, brand
 - Build consensus
- What resources do you need and how will you go about getting them?
 - Money
 - People
 - Skilled people
 - Fundraise / seek donations
- What are your group's goals? What do you hope to achieve?
 - Restore the field
 - Have a plan for sustainability
 - Keep the community involved
- What is your plan of action? What is a realistic timeline?
 - Set short, mid-term and long-term goals
 - Before the next season

**Consider these things when involved in a volunteer group:

- Know why people are volunteering
- Limit people's time
- Keep volunteer's motivated (know why they are involved)
- Survey through conversation to determine people's skills and personality
- If and how you will provide training
- Provide training to protect youth and adults who work with youth
- How do you recognize and reward
- How do people find you to get involved