

# Family Involvement in Social Change

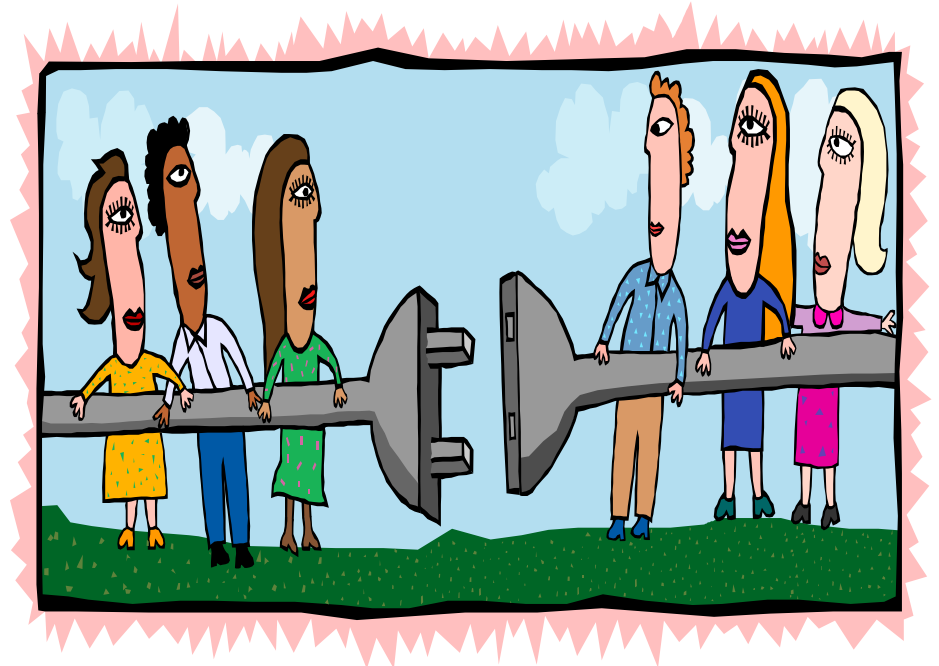


"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

*Margaret Mead*

# Advocacy:

- Asks something of others
- Puts the demands of people into systems
- Deals with issues and conflicts
- Involves people
- Creates a space for public discussion
- Finds solutions to problems



# Social Justice Advocacy

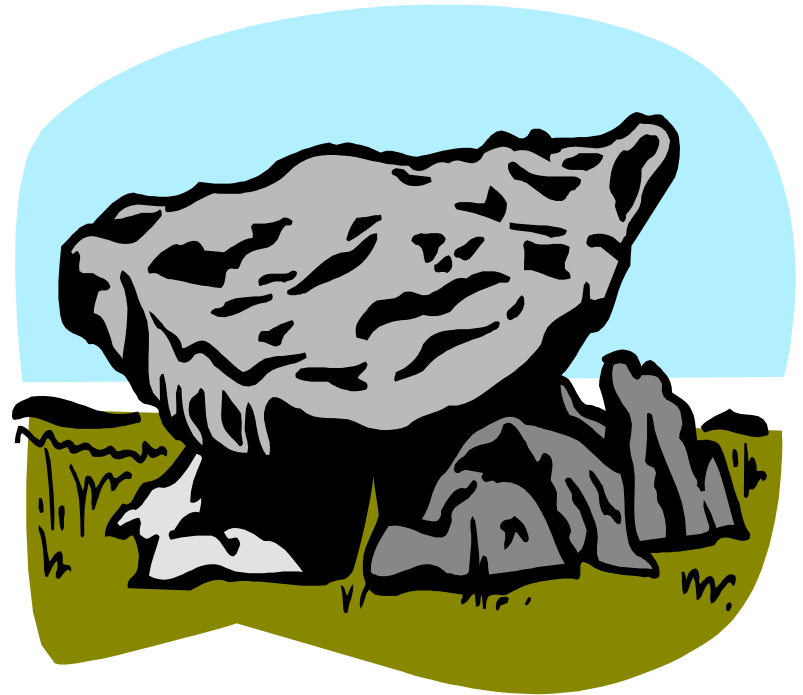


- Challenging power
- Assuming risks
- Telling stories
- Involving those affected
- Offering alternatives
- Principles vs. compromise
- Balancing the scales of justice and equity
- Holding ourselves accountable

# How Change Happens

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never will."

*-Frederick  
Douglas*



# Change Agents



- Understand context, barriers to change, and stages of change
- Listen
- Respond
- Advocate
- Pursue change
- Intervene at the systems level
- Team with others
- Facilitate

# Leadership

- Inspire and help people work toward a goal
- Must be shared
- Differing roles:
  - *Visionaries*
  - *Strategists*
  - *Historians*
  - *Resource mobilizers*
  - *Statespersons*
  - *Communicators*
  - *Outside sparkplugs*
  - *Inside negotiators*
  - *Generalists*



# Key Leadership Qualities



- Effective communicators
- Good listeners
- Develop team spirit & cohesiveness
- Understanding & aware
- Recognize accomplishments of others
- Open to constructive criticism
- Encourage & motivate

# Key Leadership Qualities

- Facilitate resolution of disputes
- Delegate & build others
- Accept responsibility, take initiative
- Offer help, information
- Ask for help
- Make things happen, but don't have to be the center of attention





# Key Leadership Qualities



- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Consensus-building
- Problem-solving
- Conflict resolution
- Strategic planning
- Growing leadership
- Desire to balance the scales of justice for the people

# Leaders Know Themselves

- Who am I?
- What am I doing here
- What are my:
  - Goals, purposes
  - Expectations
  - Motivations?
- What strengths & challenges do I bring?
- How can I best use my leadership skills?
- How can I make space for others?



# Gaining Community Trust



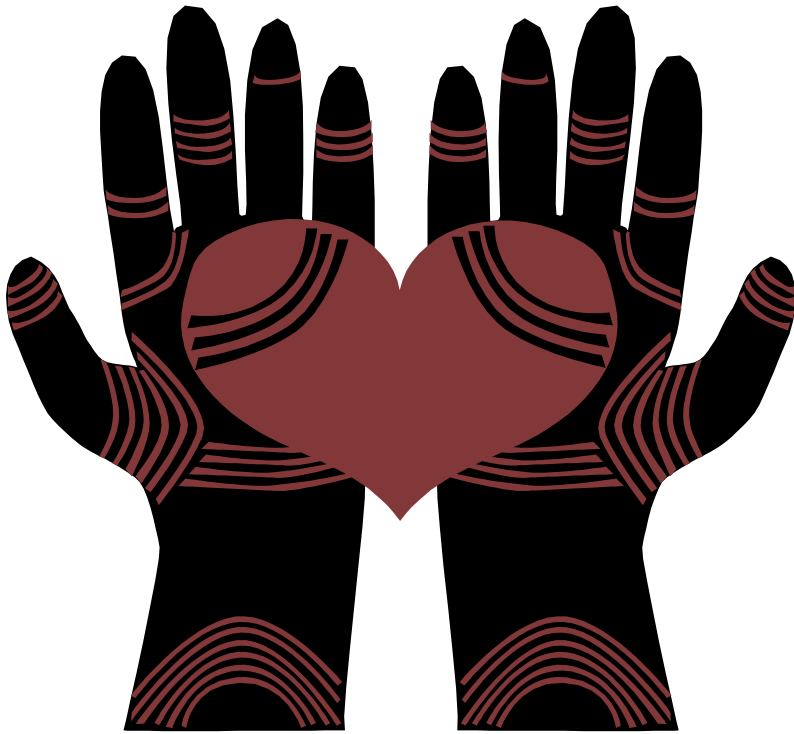
- Trust is not automatic; it must be earned and it can be lost.
- Trust must be two-way: those who are not trusted, do not trust.
- Trust leads to belief in each other and in a cause.

# Why do families get involved?

- They believe the issue is important to them and their family/ community
- They believe they have something to contribute
- They believe that they will be listened to and their contributions respected
- They believe that their participation will make a difference



# Developing Trust



- Be honest about the problems, the barriers, the potential negative consequences - as well as the potential benefit of action

# Developing Trust

- Be in it for the long haul. Don't abandon ship after the first disappointment or failure.
- Admit mistakes.
- Ask for help!!!
- LISTEN!!!
- Acknowledge others' contributions.



# Creating Community Vision



- Creating a vision requires:
  - Trust
  - Hope
  - Shared relationships
  - Honesty
  - Openness
  - Flexibility
  - Love

# Preparing for Visioning

- Discuss with leaders in advance:
  - Agreed on issues?
  - Differences among subgroups?
  - Gifts of each?
  - Stuff to give up?
  - Stuff to gain?
  - Anticipated conflicts & compromises?
  - Strategies to address conflicts?





# Preparing for Visioning



- Set up environment(s) comfortable for all potential participants & culturally appropriate
- Make conscious effort to involve all constituencies, especially women, racial/cultural subgroups, etc.
  - Leadership buy-in
  - Targeted outreach
  - Appropriate settings
  - Alternate ways to participate

# The Vision

- Visions are not abstract. They are based on people's hearts and souls, their experiences, and their belief that a better life is possible - and deserved.



# The Vision



- Creating a shared vision means letting go of the present to focus on what *could be*.
- “What would it look like, feel like, smell like, taste like, sound like, if it was good?”

# The Vision

- For many people, visioning a better future is more possible when they are focusing on their children, grandchildren, or the young of their community.



# The Vision



- "Close your eyes. Imagine you and your child are walking to school. Both of you are happy and excited, because you know when you get there, you will find the one thing you value most."
- "What do you find there?"

# The Vision

- Everyone's contribution is respected.
- Individual contributions are discussed among all participants.
- A common, shared vision is shaped through discussion and pieced together like a community quilt.



# Reaching Consensus



- Consensus is not reached when everyone is silent.
- Consensus is only reached when everyone assents.
- The "who" of consensus is based on your definition of your community.
- Consensus is not static

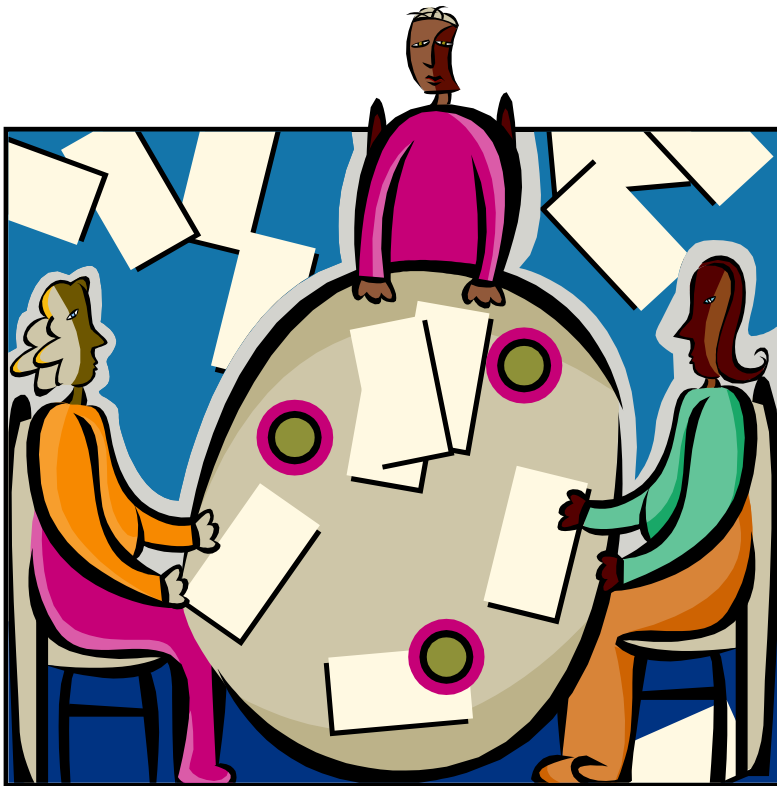
# Reaching Consensus

- Reaching consensus requires the involvement of diverse sectors of your community.
- Involving these diverse sectors requires specific attention to broadening your base.





# Diversity



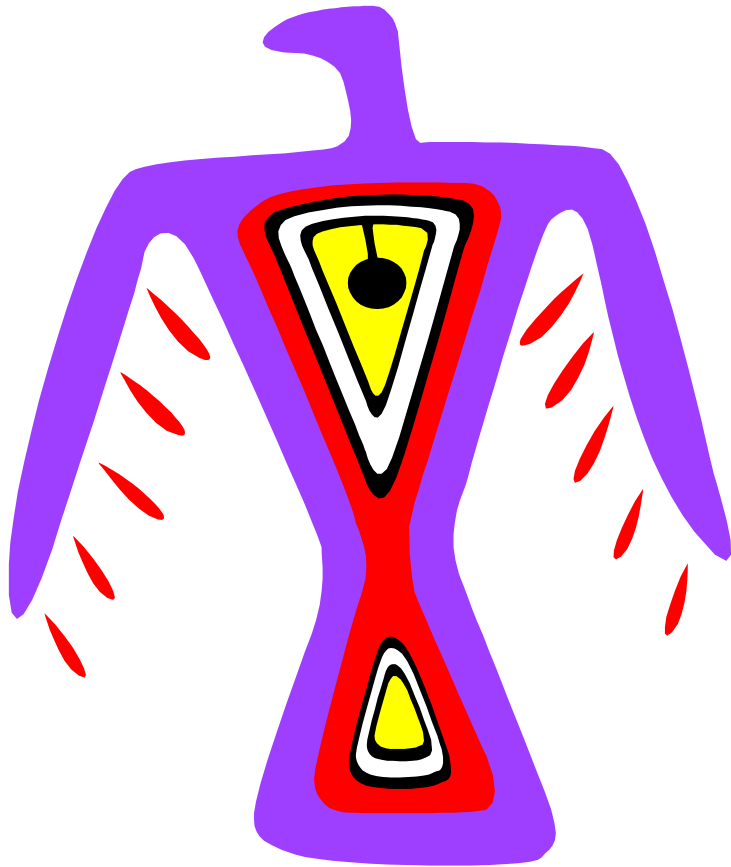
- Honor & express sincere interest in racial, ethnic, cultural, & socio-economic diversity.
- Communicate in diverse languages.
- Prepare existing leaders to hear and make space for new voices & new leaders.

# Diversity

- Adapt collaborative models to diverse cultures.
- Manage changing distribution of power & responsibility.



# Ensuring Diversity



- Ensure broad representation among groups based on the communities in question.
- Be particularly careful to include members of traditionally underserved groups.
- Avoid any appearance of tokenism.

# Making room for new voices

- Multiple opportunities for participation, from a small contribution of time to progressively larger contributions of time and effort
- The level of participation varies depending on life circumstances.
- Specific support for the involvement of women.



# Making room for new voices



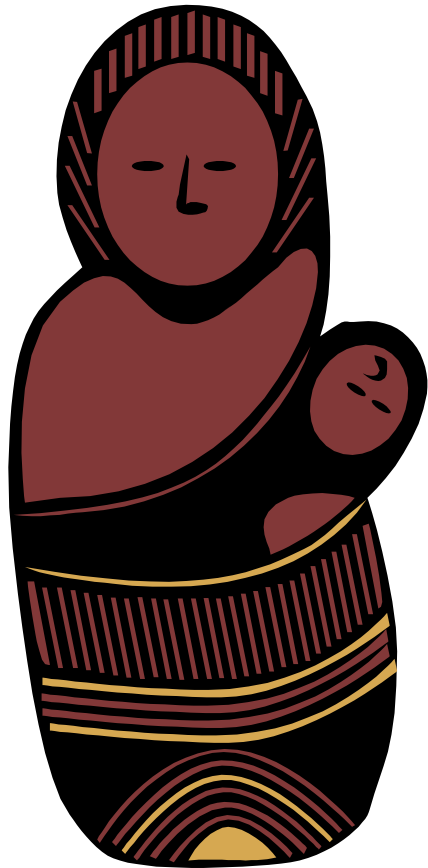
- Community members are listened to; their ideas are supported and respected.
- Community members do not experience retribution as a result of their participation, or receive support if there is retribution.

# Making room for new voices

- Community member participation has an impact - it makes an appreciable difference.
- Community member participation is appreciated; that appreciation is acknowledged.



# Gathering Community Knowledge



- Communities know:
  - Their history: where they have been
  - Their culture: who they are
  - Sacred places
  - Dangerous places
  - What is important to them

# Gathering community knowledge

- Encourage and support community members to find their voice.
- Be ready to hear what community members say.
- Respect the passion of the community for change.





# Gathering community knowledge



- Ensure that diverse community member perspectives are not considered a separate component, but are infused throughout.
- Always consider an individual community member's story as valid.

# Sharing Community Knowledge

- Tell stories within the community to build shared knowledge
- Tell stories that others bring to policymakers
- Tell stories directly to policymakers



# Making Change



- Committed Leadership
- Maintaining a strong organization with good communication, clear decision-making, & specific responsibilities

# Making Change

- Quality information:
  - Document problems and solutions
  - Develop accurate "map" of systems - how they work, who's important, relationships
    - Formal
    - Informal
  - Know how other groups have solved problems



# Making Change



- Effective strategies:
  - Ongoing:
    - Planning
    - Implementation
    - Evaluation
    - Revision of plan
- Persistent focus on key systems & central issues
- Understand specific changes needed

# Making Change

- Multiple levels
- Multiple tactics
  - Negotiations
  - Demonstrations
  - Filing complaints
  - Using the media
  - Testifying
  - Writing, calling, visiting potential allies & policymakers
- Continue direct pressure
- Persistence!



# Making Change



- Bring about changes
- Monitor implementation to make sure improvements take place

# Remember:

- *Empowering family members to participate in advocacy for their children, their community, the larger society, is its own victory, regardless of the specific outcome of any particular effort.*
- *Democracy is not a spectator sport!*

