



## Building and Sustaining DEC Alliances Outline

### Overview

- Step One: Stakeholder Identification
- Step Two: Stakeholder Buy-in
- Step Three: Open Training
- Step Four: Protocol Development
- Step Five: Regular Meetings
- Step Six: Growth and Sustainability

### Step One: Stakeholder Identification

- Identifying Key Community Stakeholders (Wksht. 1)
  - Key stakeholders are those who:
    - Come into contact with DEC regularly
    - Provide access to resources that DEC require
    - Have the ability to affect change in their organization
  - One of the vital roles of a DEC alliance is to **identify DEC in the community**. By identifying places and situations in the community where we have a chance to discover DEC, we cast a wider net and close gaps through which a DEC may go unidentified (Question 1).
  - Secondary resources may not play a large role in the identification of a child as a DEC, but this does not mean they do not need to be included (Question 2).
    - Secondary refers to the relationship to the identification process, not importance to the child
    - Examples: drug court personnel, child advocates

- Effective and efficient intervention**, another key role of DEC alliances, necessitates that DEC receive access to *all* of the resources they may require in both the short- and long-term.
- Next, identify individuals from key organizations to invite to an initial meeting who: (Question 3)
  - Are “power players” in their organization
  - Have the ability to make decisions regarding protocols
  - Are key to the involvement of their organization but others as well (ex. District Attorney’s Office, Sherriff’s Office)
- As so much of a DEC alliance’s success depends on organizational support, this step is critical.
- Key organizational stakeholders must feel invested from day one – this is *their* alliance for *their* community.
- Making contact with identified stakeholders
  - Utilize all existing personal contacts.
  - Meet in person, begin to **build relationships**.
  - Keep the focus on the children and the community.
  - Explain the DEC effort and why it’s important.
    - Children exposed to drug environments face a wide variety of risks and require a wide variety of community resources.
    - Gaps in service between community resources exist which result in these children not receiving needed services.
    - By developing multidisciplinary protocols for dealing with drug endangered children, these gaps can be closed and the cycle of addiction in the community can be stopped.
- The invitation to an initial meeting
  - Invite to a short (1-2 hour) meeting that will consist of a short presentation followed by discussion.
  - Include free lunch (or breakfast) if at all possible.
  - Use confirmed attendees to secure others’ participation.
  - Continue to place the emphasis on the children and the health of the community as a whole.
  - Solicit opinions as to who else needs to be invited for the effort to be successful.
  - Follow up repeatedly after confirmation and before the meeting.

## Step Two: Stakeholder Buy-in

- The initial meeting
  - To this point, stakeholders just have a basic understanding of the issue and what can be done.
  - Present DEC 101 to attendees to emphasize the importance of community collaboration and highlight how no single discipline can do it alone.
  - Highlight some of the more tangible benefits to all involved:
    - Reduction in duplication of efforts through improved information sharing and trust between agencies
    - Faster response times to child care service needs and safe and efficient transfer of child care responsibilities between law enforcement and CPS at crime scenes
    - Enhanced prosecution through evidence collection and info sharing
  - Step Two: Stakeholder Buy-in
- Goals for the initial meeting
  - Get stakeholders on board with collaborating
  - Have stakeholders find people in their agencies or organizations that could be the point people for DEC (Worksheet 2)
    - Must be interested, passionate and available
    - Must be high enough in organization to affect change
    - Examples: CPS supervisors, patrol sergeants, program directors
  - Get contacts for those stakeholders not present that need to be plus follow up in person to get them to attend and/or send someone to the next training
  - Step Two: Stakeholder Buy-in
- Sample agenda for initial meeting
  - Introductions
  - What is DEC / Why is it important (DEC 101)
  - Identification of key stakeholders missing
  - Contact information for “point people” within stakeholder organizations and agencies **and backups**
  - Discussion of next steps

- Open Training for all involved, especially point people
- Explanation of protocols and protocol development after the open training takes place
- **Set date for the training and provide invitation to be disseminated ASAP**

## Step Three: Open Training

- Extended DEC 101 training for stakeholder agencies involved
  - Continue to work on getting missing stakeholders invested in the process, meet personally to “catch them up,” get them to attend the scheduled training
  - Training audience must include the point people for the respective disciplines as they play a vital role in protocol development and overall alliance activities
  - Offer where necessary:
    - Bring training to them (conducted by local representative)
    - Webinar broadcast to a training room (keep a “live” time as it better ensures participation)
- After training, discuss next steps, including
  - Discuss protocol development process
    - Hand out sample protocols, example from another DEC
    - If possible, utilize another DEC demographically or geographically similar to your area as an example
    - Explain the purpose of protocols as they relate to key DEC components (**effective intervention** and **information sharing**)
  - Schedule next meeting for protocol discussion and development (1-2 hours)
    - All present can take back sample protocols to leadership
    - Also, those present can solicit vital ground level input

## Step Four: Protocol Development

- Meeting to develop protocols
  - Protocols are developed in order to ensure that when intervening on behalf of a drug endangered child:
    - **necessary steps are taken, and**
    - **necessary information is collected**

- **and shared** with others involved who require it.
  - Steps taken should be as open-ended as possible while still remaining effective in helping the child.
    - Avoiding limiting language will help other agencies adopt the practices more easily.
    - Keep in mind that DEC cases are complicated and no two cases may be exactly alike.
- Question 1: As a \_\_\_\_\_, where would I come into contact with a drug endangered child?
  - For example, X, Y and Z are all ways a professional from that discipline could come into contact with a DEC
  - If X, what steps do I currently take?
  - If X, what steps should I take?
    - Who needs to be notified?
    - What information do I need to provide?
    - What are the next steps?
  - Repeat for Y, Z, etc. to determine the procedure and information sharing that need to be carried out for each case
    - Step Four: Protocol Development
- Question 2: What information do I need from other disciplines when a DEC case is referred to me that...
  - I'm currently receiving and want to continue receiving?
    - Opportunity to reinforce the importance of this information as it relates to DEC cases
    - May give insight into additional information that is similar and available but not previously provided
  - I'm currently not receiving and would like to receive?
    - Information that others collect but may not consider valuable and/or useful to share
    - Information that others could have access to but do not collect or inquire after
- Question 3: If the procedures to be carried out and the information to be shared determined from the answers to the questions above all take place...
  - Are the DEC in question properly identified?
    - Do they have easy, efficient access to the other resources they require?



- Schedule first meeting also**

## Step Five: Regular Meetings

- Identification of DEC
  - Additional organizations that need to be involved
    - Solicit ideas from alliance based on cases staffed, etc.
  - Ways to engage other segments of the community
    - Utilize agency connections to open lines of communication
- Collaborative Intervention
  - Case staffing
    - Focus on the collaboration – perceived positives, negatives and areas for improvement
    - Information needed, services needed
  - Data collection
    - Build accountability, demonstrate results, identify opportunities
    - All involved must play a role – not just a single discipline
- Relationship Building
  - Agency overviews
    - What they do and where they may come into contact w/ DEC
  - New agency programs or initiatives that may impact DEC
    - After-school programs, PD initiatives
- Cross-training and Education
  - Opportunities for community training
    - Teacher in-service days, community events
  - Opportunities for intra-alliance training
    - Areas for improvement/education from case staffing
    - Short trainings during staff meetings, roll call, etc.
    - New staff member training on DEC
  - Essential Components of DEC Alliances

## Step Six: Growth and Sustainability

- Keep the focus on:
  - The essential components of DEC
  - Stopping the cycle of addiction in the community
  - Rescuing, defending, sheltering and supporting DEC
- Widen the net
  - Ensure each meeting ends with concrete steps
  - Keep all members of the alliance engaged
  - Expand to include additional stakeholders
  - Continually train new staff and plan for turnover among core participants