



BUILDING AND SUSTAINING DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN (DEC) ALLIANCES



Drug Endangered Children

Children who suffer physical or emotional *risk* as a result of illegal drug *use, manufacturing, cultivation or distribution.*

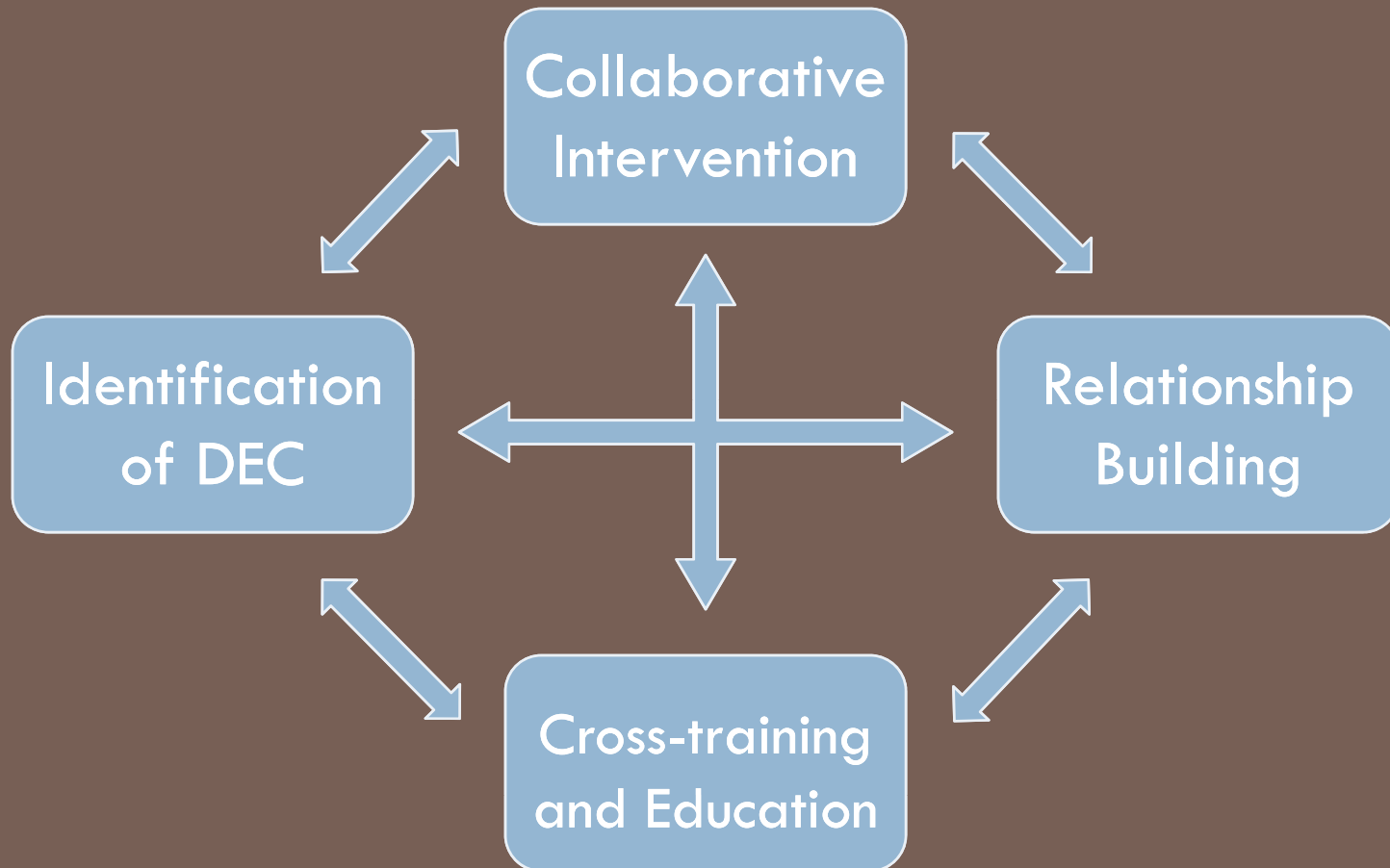


DEC Alliances

- A DEC Alliance exists to:
 - **identify** children living in or exposed to drug environments
 - **intervene on behalf of** drug endangered children
 - **unite and build relationships between** the multitude of community resources available
 - **share information, education and training** throughout the community

...to ultimately stop the cycle of addiction and substance abuse within a community.

Essential Components of DEC Alliances



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).

Step One: Stakeholder Identification

- Identifying Key Community Stakeholders (Wksht. 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.

Step One: Stakeholder Identification

- Identifying Key Community Stakeholders (Wksht. 1)
 - 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.

Step One: Stakeholder Identification

- 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.

Step One: Stakeholder Identification

- 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)

Step Three: Open Training

- 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.

Step Four: Protocol Development

- 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

Step Four: Protocol Development

- 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?
 - Can we track them and/or collect data to help improve our collaborative efforts in the future?
 - Have we effectively closed as many gaps as possible between resources? Which gaps remain open?
 - Does everyone who will play a role in the child's recovery and ongoing care have all of the information they'll require?

Step Four: Protocol Development

- Protocol development meeting
 - Protocol development question worksheets
 - Focus thinking on the vital components:
 - What are we currently doing? / What do we need to be doing?
 - What are we currently sharing? / What do we need to be sharing?
 - What else can we do to close gaps in resources for the children?
 - Build framework for protocols to be written
 - Draft basic protocols from worksheets by discipline
 - Discuss discipline protocols with the entire group to solicit feedback from others
 - “Stress test” protocols by thinking of DEC situations and seeing if indicated course of action is appropriate

Step Four: Protocol Development

- Post-protocol development meeting
 - ▣ Make necessary additions, subtractions and edits based on entire group feedback
 - ▣ Compile discipline-specific protocols into one overall set of protocols for dissemination
 - ▣ Disseminate protocols to all involved for review by leadership and other necessary approvals
 - ▣ Send edits via e-mail wherever possible to allow ongoing discourse and discussion
 - ▣ If necessary, setup personal meetings to address major sticking points prior to finalizing protocols

Step Four: Protocol Development

- Finalize protocols after all feedback
- Get final leadership approval
- Schedule protocol signing
 - ▣ Contact local media where possible
 - ▣ Prepare press release (examples are available)
- **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

Step Five: Regular Meetings

□ 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

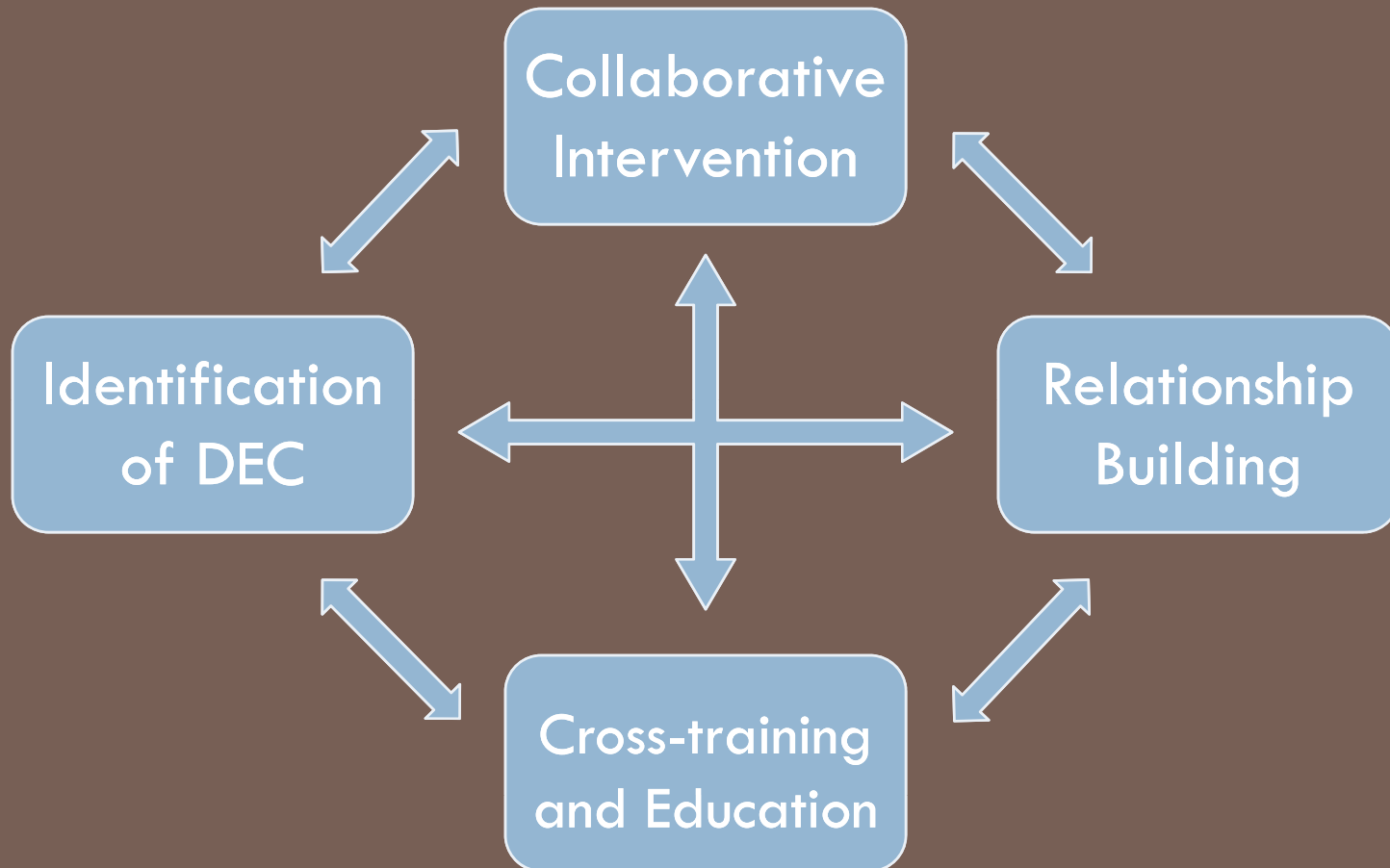
■ Opportunities for community training

- 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