

Six Steps to Take in Forming an Alliance

- 1. Decide on the purpose of the alliance, keeping in mind what members ideally would like to accomplish and also what is realistic and practical. Examples include:**

Increase awareness of the extent of domestic violence within specific communities.

Lobby government officials to allocate more funding for outreach to and resources for underserved communities, such as building a network of bilingual or multilingual translators.

Develop an action/education campaign to prevent violence and promote the formation of healthy relationships.

Develop and implement plans for strengthening community-specific advocacy for battered women and their children.

Alert community members and government officials to the need for services for underserved groups in the local community.

- 2. Create a plan and a strategy to achieve your objectives, asking questions such as:**

What are the primary problems to be addressed?

Why does the problem exist? What supports or sustains it?

How does the problem manifest itself in the community?

What steps can be taken to produce change?

Who can be enlisted to help produce maximum, positive changes?

- 3. Create frequent opportunities for breaking down barriers among group members regarding cultural differences by:**

Inviting each alliance member to tell the story of what motivated them to participate in the work of ending violence against women.

Identifying and recognizing the experience and assets each person brings to the alliance.

Having each member contribute to a group drawing depicting positive changes the alliance wants to bring about within the community.

Encouraging members to share the visions and values that inspire their work.

4. Perform a resource and skills assessment to map the capacity and strengths of each group. The mapping process can be used to acknowledge each group's history, role and stake in the community as well as to help the group make practical decisions about who should fill which roles in the alliance. Resources can include:

Staff skills and availability.
Funding sources.
Office space and supplies.
Mailing lists and contacts within the community.
Legal support and other professional expertise.
Different constituencies which the group represents or serves.
Relationship with the target community and its informal as well as official leaders.

5. Develop a process for decision-making that is as inclusive as possible. Possible options are:

- ◆ Consensus: All members agree to support or accept a specific decision, policy, rule or course of action.
- ◆ Majority rules: The option with the greatest number of votes or supporters will be adopted by the alliance as a whole.
- ◆ Weighted decisions: The number of votes each group or member gets varies, based upon a predetermined set of criteria, such as the amount of funds they contribute to the alliance, the number of staff members available to work on a campaign, the number of constituencies the group represents, its tenure in the community, etc.

6. Perform an assessment of the alliance's diversity and generate ideas for becoming more inclusive, asking:

- ◆ Are the leaders and spokespeople for the alliance reflective of community diversity?
- ◆ Are there young people, elderly people, people with disabilities, and people from diverse ethnic and religious communities involved in the effort?
- ◆ Have all groups with a stake in the community and the issue been contacted and invited to participate?
- ◆ What barriers need to be removed or addressed in order to make the alliance more accessible to people from diverse backgrounds?