



“The Power of Partners” Supplement

Steps of Partnership Development

Step 1: Determine Your Needs

Identify what you want from the partnership. Identify what specific strategic needs the partnership could meet.

Key Questions:

What program activities could be done more effectively with a partner? Where are you having difficulty reaching goals and objectives? What activities could be sustained, expanded, or improved through partnership?

Step 2: Make a List of Possible Partners

Identify which organizations make the most sense to partner with. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and list organizations that are unpredicted or unexpected.

Key Questions:

Which partners could help you better achieve program goals? Do they understand and support your program priorities? Do you have good relations with them?

Step 3: Research the Organization

Learn as much as you can about the organization and get familiar with what it does and how it does it. Understand what the partner wants and provide them support in acquiring it. Focus on recruiting partners that are interested in supporting issues around children's mental health and have a mission aligned with the work of your site.

Key Questions:

Has the organization been involved with children's mental health needs or contributed resources to the cause in the past? Does the organization have key leaders who are outspoken about children's mental health issues or have publically shared their experience around mental health? What is the

capacity of this organization? Does it have financial support to give? Does it have significant resources to contribute?

Step 4: Identify Contacts

Locate someone who can provide an introduction to the most appropriate contact within the organization. Your best corporate prospects are companies with local ownership, local franchises, or national organizations where charitable and/or media decisions are made at local branches or outlets.

Key Questions:

Do you have a strong contact at the organization who would be willing to introduce your program to the organization's decision-makers? Do you have a clear understanding of the specific audience the organization is trying to reach, and is your program compatible?

Step 5: Begin Your Outreach

As part of the initial outreach, ensure the partnership is beneficial to both you and the potential organization. Determine what's in it for you and them.

Key Questions:

Is the potential partner familiar with your program? Is it clear to the potential partner what the benefits are for them? Does the potential partner have your contact information and know when you will be following up?

Step 6: Make a Clear and Specific "Ask"

Your goal is to arrange a face-to-face meeting if possible, where you can state your case and secure the potential partner's support. The "ask" should give options for how the partner can help; for example, by giving financial support to sustain programs, featuring the program's success in a publication, or contacting media on your behalf to request National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day promotion. Focus on achieving realistic, mutually beneficial goals. Initially aim for small wins.

Key Questions:

What needs does the partner have? How could the program potentially address those needs and benefit the organization? What resources can the partner contribute, both financially and task-related?

Step 7: Follow Up With the Partner

A week after making the "ask," follow up with the partner to check the status of the potential partnership. Be prepared to give your pitch again. Be clear about what you want the partner to do for you. Be flexible and listen to what the partner may want. Come prepared with good information on cost savings, return on investment, benefits of systems of care, and other things the partner might want to know. Listen to what the partner wants in return. Decide how your program can create a mutually beneficial relationship.

Key Questions:

How will your program create a mutually beneficial program/event?

Step 8: Come to an Agreement and Put it in Writing

Come prepared with information on cost savings, return on investment, benefits of systems of care, and other things the partner might want to know. Listen to what the partner wants in return. Decide how your program can create a mutually beneficial relationship.

Key Questions:

What are the expectations of each partner? Have you established a timeline for the partnership? Are all roles of the partnership clearly defined?

Step 9: Maintain and Nurture the Partnership

Build trust between the partners. Trust is achieved by the follow-through of what has said will be done and what actually is done. Keep the lines of communication open. Respect boundaries and always value the time and resources of the partner. Express gratitude to the partner by sending thank-you notes.

Key Questions:

Are you continuing to build trust with your new partner? Are you keeping lines of communication open?

The Caring for Every Child’s Mental Health Campaign: Social Marketing TA Team’s Social Marketing Technical Assistance (TA) Providers are available to help support your partnership development efforts. Contact your TA Provider or email SOCmarketingTA@vancomm.com for support.