



## OFFICE OF STUDENT WELLNESS

NH Department of Education

# GAINING SUPPORT FOR AND LAUNCHING YOUR COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TEAM

Now that you have identified the need for and importance of a Community Management Team (CMT) to your efforts to improve the health and wellness of children and youth in your community, you are well positioned to gain support for your efforts and to pull your team together.

Below you will find key steps in gaining support for and launching your CMT. These steps are meant to be guidelines in an organic process. At each step, be mindful of your community's culture and needs. These steps may occur quickly or slowly and may occur in an order different from the list below. It is important, however, that that are all completed.

### 1. *Convene one on one meetings with key stakeholders and champions*

Odds are that open and frequent collaboration amongst diverse and varied stakeholders in your community is new, especially with a focus on the health and wellness of children and youth. Even if it is not a completely new idea, it is likely not currently happening or is happening on a limited scale. If either of those statements rings true in your community, brace yourself, you are about to get innovative!

The road to success is littered with thousands of fantastic innovations that have failed. To ensure that this is not one of them, you need a team of cheerleaders. A key group of stakeholders who are as passionate as you are and committed to the notion that your community's children and youth are better served through broad based collaboration.

How do you create a team of cheerleaders?

- Identify people within and outside your organization that have the power to designate resources, lend their credibility, and increase attention on the health and wellness of children and youth.
- Meet with each of those people to introduce yourself, your initiative, and the CMT.
- Ask that they partner with you and join the CMT.

This stage may seem time consuming, however, the benefits of fully executing it will be returned exponentially.

*What if I get a negative response? What if I get push back?*

*Sadly, innovation is not always met with open arms. There are a variety of reasons that someone may not be open to the sort of systems change you are proposing including lack of understanding of the importance, inability to allocate resources, and negative past experiences to name a few. It is important when you encounter a negative response that you do not get discouraged! Instead, thank the person for their time and considering your proposal. Ask if they would be willing to receive continuing updates on the progress of the group. If the answer is yes, be sure to add that person to your email distribution list and circle back to them periodically to determine whether their openness to participation has changed.*



## 2. *Schedule the first meeting*

After you have identified your team and received their commitment to join, you need to schedule your first meeting. Considering that it can be very challenging to convene such a large and diverse group, we suggest the following:

- Create an email distribution list of all committed parties
- Identify 3 to 5 dates and times that work within your schedule and the schedule of one or two other people whose attendance is a must
- Create an account at [www.Doodle.com](http://www.Doodle.com) and create a Doodle poll based on the identified dates  
*A Doodle poll is a web-based survey that collects the availability of all invitees during dates and times selected by the organizer. The organizer is able to keep track in real time and in one location which scheduling option works for the most invited participants.*
- Send link to Doodle poll to the entire distribution list

Once the Doodle poll is complete, select the option that has the most availability and notify the CMT. It is important to not wait too long during this phase. Schedules are fluid and a date and time that is available today may not be next week.

## 3. *Create and distribute the agenda*

The agenda for your first Community Management Team is an important one. It will set the tone and focus for the group as you move into arguably the hardest and most important part of the CMT's work, conducting a Needs Assessment, Environmental Scan, and Gap Analysis of your community's response to the health and wellness needs of its children and youth. Without proper framing, education, and development of group norms, this process can become overwhelming to some which weakens the ability to have all voices equally represented.

A potential agenda for your first CMT might include:

1. Welcome
2. Introductions
3. Establish group norms
4. Overview and history of the project/initiative  
Review your organization and why it is engaged in this work. Include overview of any particular funding sources or events that were catalysts.
5. Community Management Team  
Refer to the Community Management Team Pre-Development Planning Tool.
  - a. What is it?
  - b. What are the benefits?
  - c. What is the commitment?
  - d. Memorandum of Understanding  
Distribute and review a draft of an MOU. Ask for feedback and input. For homework, ask participants to review the MOU within their organizations and come to the next meeting prepared to sign.
6. Next Steps  
Discuss the next steps generally. State the need for diverse voices in this process. Reinforce the importance of these tasks. State this process will begin at the next CMT meeting.
  - a. Needs Assessment
  - b. Environmental Scan
  - c. Gap Analysis