FRAMEWORK FOR DECONSTRUCTING A PARTNERSHIP

Deconstruct means to disassemble or to take apart.

The deconstruction process is intended to help participants develop questions about the partnership, to reflect on responses heard in the session, to probe for elaboration of practices, and to analyze accepted practices for application to another context.

Directions: After a brief presentation by the partnership team, participants will be encouraged to ask questions using the framework. While it is quite comprehensive, it does not limit the inquiry of participants. The deconstruction is intended to be processed in the three stages that organize the framework. Use the framework as a guide or stimulus for your engagement with the partnership team.

STAGE ONE OF DECONSTRUCTION: Warm-up, building an informational foundation, developing rapport between the partnership team and attendees and facilitators.

Frame questions in relation to the following list of practices and principles:

Partners agree upon the mission, values, goals and measurable outcomes for the partnership (Seifer & Maurana, 2000).

Roles, norms, responsibilities, and processes for the partnership are formally established with the input and agreement of all partners (CCPH, 2006; Janke, 2009).

Partners come to agreement about how the credit for the partnership's accomplishments will be shared (Janke, 2009; Seifer & Maurana, 2000).

Partners make ongoing communication a priority, with a process for listening to each other, develop a common language (CCPH, 2006).

Partners commit to continuous assessment of partnership as well as outcomes (Holland, 2005).

There is an understanding that partnerships develop slowly and significant time is required to move from the initial relationship building stage to an implementation (Reardon, 2005).

Partnerships begin with collective definition of issues, collective searches for information, and collaborative selection of solutions (Cox, 2000).

Partners work through the "cultural divide" of the perceptions, experiences, orientations, and intentions of each partner to a shared vision of the partnership (Freeman, 2000).

STAGE TWO OF DECONSTRUCTION: Probing deeply into practices that sustain the partnership.

Frame questions related to the following list of practices/principles:

Partners recognize each other as a unit of identity (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998) or share a sense of identity (Janke, 2008, 2009)

Relationships, often interpersonal, are based on trust and mutual respect (Seifer & Maurana, 2000; Avila et al., 2010).

There is ongoing feedback to and from all stakeholders in the partnerships with a goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes (CCPH, 2006).

There is leadership from all partners (Reardon, 2005; Seifer & Maurana, 2000; Avila et al., 2010).

Small victories or accomplishments are required to sustain efforts (Reardon, 2005).

There is an ongoing process for decision making and initiation of a change (Seifer & Maurana, 2000).

An on-going practice is to pause and reflect about progress, or lack of it, barriers and obstacles, and lessons learned (Avila et al., 2010).

Organizational structures are formally established within the partnership (Janke, 2008, 2009).

There is an operational design that supports shared leadership, decision making, conflict resolution, and resources (Holland, 2005).

There is a willingness of both partners to reflect upon, learn from, and adjust to challenges and mistakes (Reardon, 2005).

STAGE THREE OF DECONSTRUCTION: Analysis and assessment of the partnership from the conceptual foci of reciprocity and transformation.

Frame questions to examine the partnership, focusing on the qualities of reciprocal and transformative. Explore with the partnership team how well those qualities describe their relationship, how they nurture those qualities, and what other values and commitments may be in tension with them.

Reciprocity is increasingly understood to go beyond mutual benefit to encompass the recognition, respect, and valuing of the knowledge, perspective, and resources that each partner contributes to the collaboration (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009).

Reciprocal partnerships position all partners as co-educators, co-learners, co-servers, co-generators of knowledge, etc. (Jameson, Clayton, & Jaeger, 2010).

Transformation (of a partnership, of the individuals involved in it, of the organizations involved in it, of the systems all are embedded within) often involves transformational learning or the reframing of the lenses through which all or some see the world and understand their identities and roles within it. That transformational learning or reframing may occur for individual partners, for partners in relationship with one another, and for partnering organizations (Clayton & Ash, 2005).

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