BUILDING A STRONG LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR YOUR INTERGENERATIONAL WORK

Hello! Are you interested in creating an intergenerational community center at your settlement house? These are spaces that intentionally bring together community members of all ages. They offer regular programs building on the resources all generations have to offer and benefit participants of all ages.

Generations Connect, an initiative of United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), helps settlement houses make intergenerational program approaches a core practice. This guide is part of a series of tools to support organizations embarking on the multi-year and iterative process of developing an intergenerational community center. Browse them all here: unhny.org/intergenhub

What is this?

To create intergenerational programming and start developing your intergenerational community center, you need a well-oiled and effective cross-departmental team of staff members leading the work. This tool provides some tips on how to build a strong team of staff that communicates well and gets things done. You are probably already doing many of these!

Key elements of a strong team

- Adopt a team charter that everyone has developed together. (There are prompts at the end of this tool to help you make one.) Adapt your team charter as new needs come up, it is not written in stone.
- Share leadership and responsibility
  - Team leaders are actually team facilitators who work to build consensus rather than act as decision-makers (more on this later!)
  - People can shift their roles as often as they see fit
- Use consensus-based decision-making as much as possible
- Have clear roles
- Have a clear goal, set by the group
- Have the authority to act
- Schedule a series of regular meetings with agendas shared ahead of time so the full team can weigh in on the agenda
- Embrace the variety of skills all your team members bring to the table
- Have a strong working relationship with the settlement house, especially with executive-level staff

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WHY FACILITATE RATHER THAN LEAD?

Facilitators...
- Help the team come to a decision together
- Create an environment where people are free in expressing their feelings and ideas
- Create an environment where differences of opinion are seen as necessary and helpful
- Ensure that people REALLY listen to each other

MORE ON CONSENSUS-BASED DECISION-MAKING

What is it?
- With consensus decision-making, you talk through an issue until you get to a decision everyone can support, even though it may not have been their first choice
- It's the opposite of majority rule, where the majority stands has the loudest voice and what they prefer becomes the decision for entire team

How do you do it?
- Make sure everyone is heard from and listened to
- Talk through the issue until reach an agreement everyone can support
- Resist temptation to take a vote or give in quickly
- You can say things like: "I think we need more discussion" or "I think we haven't reached agreement yet."

Why do it?
- We recognize consensus-building takes time, but if your goal is to create a culture where everyone has a stake in what's happening, consensus-based decision-making helps you reach that goal

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ROLES EACH STAFF MEMBER CAN TAKE IN THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Team Facilitator

- Motivates the team, holds them accountable, keeps team focused on task, prepares agenda for meetings, facilitates consensus decision-making and conflict resolution
- Resists temptation to tell others what to do, fill dead air, end discussion prematurely, take sides, tune people out, or make the decision themselves
- Acts as a link between the team and the rest of the organization
- Note: this role can be shared or rotated among team members

Team Point Person

- Sends reminders about tasks, meetings, deadlines
- Owns the timeline and tracks it
- Communicates with other departments

Team IT Manager

- Manages any necessary technology questions/needs

Team Operations Manager

- Finds space for meetings
- Manages time during meetings
- Provides practical support for meetings (food, breaks, etc)
- Brings any necessary materials for meetings

Team Note-taker

- Takes notes during meetings and shares them after the meeting

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HOW TO RUN A MEETING

Before you meet
- Send out an agenda with enough time for the team members to weigh in on it

During the meeting
- Go through agenda items one by one
- Leave time for discussion and consensus decision-making

At the end of the meeting
- Review what you said you would do
- Review who is doing each of those things
- Confirm the date and location of the next meeting
- Ask: What should we discuss in the next meeting?
- Check in on your process
  - Is our group process working?
  - Is there anything people want to change, including their role?
- Express thanks
  - For example, everyone could express one thing they are grateful for or appreciate about the meeting, their colleagues, or the overall program

After the meeting
- Have the Team Point Person check in with other team members as deadlines approach

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PLANNING YOUR FIRST MEETING

Who at your center (both staff and participants) do you want to involve in your leadership team and why?

WHO	WHY

When should our first meeting be? _____

What should the goal of our first meeting be?

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CREATING A TEAM CHARTER

Who will take which roles on our team? (Note: this can and should change)

Team Facilitator:_____

Team Point Person: _____

Team IT Manager: _____

Team Operations Manager: _____

Team Note-taker: _____

What are the ground rules/agreements for our group?

When and where should our regular meetings happen?

What are our communication protocols between meetings?

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What is the relationship between the team and the organization? How is information shared?

When can the team take action without outside approval?

What needs outside approval?

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