Circles of Involvement Exercise

**Objective:** To identify public health system and community partners that should be involved in the MAPP process

**Total Time:** 45 min

**Part 1: Community Partner Brainstorm**
- **Time:** 10 min
- **Format:** Small group exercise
- **Materials:**
  - NPHPSP local instrument
  - Description of different types of sectors
- **Directions:**
  - Turn to page 24 in the NPHPSP local instrument.
  - Read the description of Essential Service 4 (Mobilizing the Community) and model standard 4.1 on constituency development.
  - Select a recorder.
  - Brainstorm all the organizations, groups, and people that would be involved in Essential Service 4. Encourage them to think about public, private, voluntary, informal, governmental, funding entities, and beneficiaries (see handout).

**Part 2: Circle of Involvement Review**
- **Time:** 5 min
- **Format:** Large group
- **Materials:** Circle of involvement diagram and description of circles handout
- **Directions:**
  - Let participants know that this is a TOP created resource.
  - Have volunteers read, aloud to the entire group, the five paragraphs describing the different circles of involvement.
  - As volunteers read descriptions of the different circles of involvement, encourage them to underline key words.

**Part 3: Circle of Involvement Placement**
- **Time:** 20 min
- **Format:** Small group exercise
- **Materials:** Circle of involvement diagram and description of circles handout
- **Place each entity brainstormed in part 1 of the exercise in the corresponding circle of involvement. Note: An entity could fall into more than one circle of involvement. (examples: the health department, hospital and United Way may be in the “Core” circle; the police department and school system may be in the “Engagement” circle)**

**Part 4: Focused Conversation**
- **Time:** 10 min
• Format: Large group discussion
• Materials:
  o Circle of involvement diagram drawn on flip chart paper
  o Flip chart for challenges and strategies for overcoming challenges
• ORID Discussion Questions:
  o O: Ask the participants to share examples of entities for each circle starting with the core circle. (Write examples on flip chart diagram of circles of involvement)
  o R: After looking at all the circles and the examples that were provided, what resonates with you? What comes to mind when you see these different actors.
  o I: Which circles would be easy to engage and why?
  o I: Which circles would be challenging to engage and why? (write challenges on flip chart paper)
  o D: What are some strategies you could use to overcome these challenges? (write strategies on flip chart paper)
  o D: How would you use this exercise in planning your MAPP process?
Circles of Involvement — Developing Key Relationships for Implementation

The Strategic Plan

More “External”

Private Sector
Business, Media, Investors/Funders

Voluntary Sector
Faith Community, Non-Profits, Associations

Public Sector
Government, Education, Public Figures

Informal Sector
Kinship Relations, Interest Groups, Neighbors

Resource Partners
More who is providing resources, supportive involvement, program circle, suppliers, networking

Policy Partners
More “who is authorizing it,” management, the board, framing

Beneficiaries
More who is benefitting from it, the “customer” the “stakeholder,” on whose behalf it is being done, those affected by it

Practitioners
More, who is “doing it,” direct involvement, staff, mobilizing

More “Internal”
Circles of Involvement: Developing Key Relationships for Implementation

Core Circle
On the one hand this is the group that does most of the day-by-day work. On the other hand this is also the group that plots, plans, facilitates and orchestrates the authentic participation of people in all the circles who finally make it all happen. They were almost certainly involved in the development of the plan and its objectives. They think through how to take the next steps in the implementation of the plan, decide who needs to be involved, call the meetings, prepare the materials, processes and reports, and make the calls, in person and by phone, to enlist the support of others. The people who have real passion for the whole plan, who see themselves as responsible for monitoring and coordinating its various components and who can pretty much always be counted on to step forward when needed.

Circle of Engagement
People committed to the plan who can be called on to help with specific tasks at particular times. They don’t see themselves as the prime movers of the implementation effort but are willing to assume their fair share of responsibility for aspects of it. They may need to be reminded of decisions they’ve made to shoulder parts of the implementation and are generally responsive to requests from the Core Circle members to work with them on a delimited venture. This circle includes people who may or may not have been involved in the development of the plan. It also includes people who can become increasingly engaged in its implementation and leadership and so gradually move into the Core Circle.

Circle of Champions
People who typically hold positions of leadership in the organization and are or need to be committed to the plan. They may or may not be very involved in the daily activities of its implementation. They are the authorizers of the effort, advocates for it, the ones whose blessings can clear away some of the underbrush or roadblocks. They are the cheerleaders who can appear when it is strategically helpful, to affirm the work that has been done, recognize the people who have made it happen and insure that the whole organization knows that the endeavor has top-level support. They know how to open doors, make connections and say a word in the right places. They need to be kept informed of what’s happening (big picture) and where to plug in strategically without having to be involved in the minute details. They often appreciate making their contribution where it will do the most good and then stepping back until the next time.

Circle of Information and Awareness
People who usually aren’t very close to the plan or its implementation but need to be kept in the loop as things unfold. They are able, because of their positions and roles, to lend support to the effort or to raise questions about it and slow it down. They may be other managers or people who weren’t involved in the development of the plan but are impacted in some way by it. They will hear things about the plan and the implementation process from other sources and will draw conclusions based on what they hear. Sometimes these people have responsibility for or access to communications media that reach a wide audience. They need to be honored by occasional visits and reports that allow them to see the value in what is happening and to have their questions about it answered honestly. Sometimes, people in this circle can move into the Circle of Engagement—or even Champions.

Circle of Possibility
Long shots and wild cards. People one wouldn’t immediately think of as being at all related to the plan or its implementation but who just might find areas of common cause with it. Maybe they weren’t even around when the plan was developed. They could even turn out to be interested in partnering with it, be able to provide helpful resources for it or give it a boost in some way. Coming up with these names is an exercise in creative brainstorming that expands a group’s thinking about who it needs to keep in mind and look for. It can produce a wealth of surprising opportunities. These are relationships with people and groups that need to be explored, without assuming that they will necessarily turn out to be supportive. When they do turn out to be supportive, however, it can be a great gift.
Circles of Involvement: Developing Key Relationships for Implementation

Private Sector

Circle of Possibility

Circle of Information and Awareness

Circle of Champions

Circle of Engagement

Core Circle

Voluntary Sector

Public Sector

Informal Sector

Resource Partners

Beneficiaries

Practitioners

Policy Partners

The Strategic Plan