



## Partnerships, What you need to know

by Lynn Eakin

### 1. Forming a partnership is a strategic decision

The agency needs to be clear on its planning, understand who it is, and where it wants to go.

#### What are the reasons for the partnership?

Because bigger is better,  
To better serve the target group,  
To bid on a contract,  
Because the Funder requires it  
Because the Funder would like it  
To be able to do things differently

Be clear about objectives to be achieved so you do not get caught in the process.

### 2. The Forced Partnership.....an arranged marriage?

Funder            needs to be clear on why they are requiring the partnership and what they expect as an outcome

Agency            should ask funder to be clear on the gains anticipated; the reasons behind the forced partnership; how much is laid on and how much can be negotiated. *Get it in writing.*

Agency            needs to evaluate the funder proposal and develop their own objectives.

explore with potential partner if there is the possibility of a successful agreement.

determine course of action, working alone or with potential partner.

- To get the funder to change their mind
- To negotiate with funder for different terms
- To negotiate with potential partner terms of partnership

### **3. What kind of partnership is it?**

Is it a pooling of resources and/or dollars to operate a joint program  
Is it a dividing up of roles and responsibilities e.g. you do classroom learning, we do job placement  
Is it staff secondment e.g. we will both put staff into the program to work together.  
Is it a working arrangement between two services with different jobs e.g Child Welfare and Police in child abuse investigation.

You must be clear about the objectives of the partnership so you know what kind of agreement you need.

### **4. Potential stumbling blocks to successful Partnerships**

Different philosophies and values (real and apparent)  
Different organizational cultures (e.g. Toronto Sun and Toronto Star)  
Power imbalances  
Unequal working conditions, comparable staff

### **5. Characteristics of Successful Partnerships**

Trust between parties  
Role clarity between parties  
Core service, not sideline service for partners  
Clear decision-making process  
Conflict resolution process  
Delegation of responsibility for operations  
Negotiated written agreement

## 6. Negotiating an Agreement

Funder	Clarify – role and involvement of funder -A party to negotiations? (when, how, and for what) -Sign off (Remember a funder is not a mediator)
Partners	Negotiate how to negotiate Clarify decision-making process (who, when, how, what) Have a dispute resolution during negotiations
Third Party	is a third party needed to facilitate/mediate? Selection of mediator Engagement of mediator, payment of mediator,

## 7. Critical Clauses in an Agreement

Nature of the agreement, purpose and intent  
Roles and responsibilities of the parties  
Resource commitments, dollars, staff, space, equipment  
Applicable policy and procedures  
Day to day decision-making  
Program management structure and decision-making  
Conflict resolution process  
Crisis management protocol  
Liability, responsibilities and limits  
Communications policy, internal and external  
Partnership agreement review process  
Termination of agreement clause

## 8. Implementing a partnership, -managing staff

Communication is critical  
Have a clear structure, expectations and decision-making  
Provide opportunities for joint problem-solving, program design  
etc.  
Respond to issues quickly  
Problems are usually with management and Board not front-line  
staff.

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