



## Building the Assessment Team

### Who should be involved?

- ✓ Youth and youth organizations
- ✓ Parents and parent organizations
- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Service providers (prevention, treatment, social services...)
- ✓ Law enforcement (police, sheriff, corrections, district attorney's office...)
- ✓ Civic and volunteer organizations
- ✓ Elected officials
- ✓ Businesses
- ✓ Movers and shakers

### Benefits to collaboration with your community...

- **Provides a vehicle for mutual aid and empowerment**
  - Coalition needs the community's trust and support to gain access to informal power structures, resources, and communication channels for information dissemination.
- **Increases the likelihood that the assessment team will identify work that has already been done by the community and incorporate it into the prevention strategy**
  - This recognition of pre-existing efforts further strengthens the coalition and avoids trying to re-invent the wheel.
- **Provides a feedback loop to share findings and fosters accountability to the community**
  - When community members have been involved in assessment and planning it is easier to share findings because community members have a sense of ownership in the program.
  - Community members recognize that the findings and the programming decisions which stem from the findings will benefit them.
- **Increases cultural sensitivity**
  - A needs assessment which involves community members allows planners to understand the culture of the community.
- **Requires a lot of effort**
  - We are not suggesting that a collaborative effort comes easy. Forming coalitions and involving your target audience is a real challenge.
  - However, the literature clearly shows that programs which are built upon a foundation of collaboration are more successful than those that are developed without a collaborative effort.

Adapted from:

Erica Schmitz, NECAPT & Maine's Environmental Substance Abuse Prevention Center, (August 2007). NY: *Weaving Environmental Strategies into Prevention Planning Training*.

Richard Shattuck, Shattuck & Associates, Inc (April 2004). DC: *Practical Evaluation of HIV Prevention Programs training*.