

Collaborative Community Problem Solving: A Model and Recommendations to Support Community Practice

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ABSTRACT

A comprehensive model for supporting community collaboration is proposed. The authors describe a model of community collaboration that consists of four components. First, the model is based on a community-centered approach. Second, the model consists of a formal decision making process. Third, collaboration as depicted in the model hinges on the performance of several roles related behaviors. Finally, actors in the collaborative community problem solving process comprise a system that must be skillfully managed. Current approaches to community problem solving has some limitations. Some of these limitations are described as fragmented, overlap with other efforts, based on limited information, limited connection to community residents, limited innovation, responses not tied to community conditions, and existing tools and procedures are not well developed related to collaborative community problem solving. The potential of the approach described in this article to address limitations of current collaborative community problem solving processes as well as implications for community practice are discussed.

Keywords: Community, collaboration, problem-solving, psychology, education.

Ortaklıkla Toplumsal Sorun Çözme: Toplum Uygulamasını Destekleyen Bir Model ve Öneriler

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada toplum işbirliğini desteklemek için kapsamlı bir model önerilmiştir. Önerilen bu toplum işbirliği modeli dört bileşenden oluşmaktadır. İlk olarak, model toplum merkezli bir yaklaşımı temel alır. İkinci olarak, model resmi bir karar verme sürecinden oluşur. Üçüncü olarak, modelde tasvir edilen işbirliği, çeşitli roller ile ilgili davranışların performansına bağlıdır. Son olarak, işbirlikçi toplum sorunu çözme sürecindeki aktörler ustaca yönetilebilir bir sistemden oluşmaktadır. Ortaklıkla problem çözmeye yönelik mevcut yaklaşımların bazı sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır. Bu sınırlılıklar yaklaşımların bölünmüş olmaları, sınırlı bilgiye dayalı olmaları, diğer çabalarla çakışması, toplum bireyleriyle kısıtlı bağlantı sağlaması, yeniliklere açık olmaması, toplulunun koşullarına bağlı olmayan yanıtlar üretmesi ve iyi geliştirilmemiş mevcut araç ve prosedürler olarak sıralanabilir. Bu çalışmada sunulan işbirliğine dayalı problem çözme modelinin mevcut birçok sorunun daha etkili bir biçimde çözülmesine yardımcı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmada önerilen yaklaşımın potansiyeli, mevcut işbirlikçi toplum sorunu çözme süreçlerinin eksiklikleri ve bu eksikliklerin nasıl ele alınması gerektiği ile bu modelin toplum işbirliği pratiğine yönelik etkileri tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplum, işbirliği, problem çözme, psikoloji, eğitim.

Introduction

Students face a variety of academic, emotional, and social/behavioral issues on daily basis. Therefore, educators, mental health providers, administrators, families, and other stakeholders should discuss how the community should respond to youth's problems. Experience suggests that addressing such problems in an effective manner requires highly collaborative approaches to problem solving (Bryan and Henry, 2012; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2014; Dogan and Julian, 2019; Kania and Kramer, 2011; Stockton and Dogan, 2019; Wolff, 2011; Yavuz, Dogan and Kabakci, 2019).

In most communities, the process of collaboration represents a fundamental issue worthy of attention. The role of individuals charged with facilitating such collaborative endeavors is similarly a point that merits the attention of community practice researchers and theorists. Julian (2006) defines community practice in terms of strengthening the capacity of communities to meet the needs of constituents and assist constituents in realizing their dreams. Weill (2012) suggests that community practices focuses on development, organizing, planning and action for progressive social change. The practice of collaborative community problem solving involves many similar activities. Thus facilitating or managing the collaborative community problem solving process would appear to represent an important community practice role. This article articulates a formal model of the collaborative community problem solving process and elaborates on details related to the management role.

Limitations of Current Approaches to Collaboration

Wandresman (2003) notes that the record of success for community wide interventions in public health has been “mixed.” Wolff (2011) devotes significant attention to the limitations of current approaches to community collaboration. He indicates that current approaches are characterized by fragmentation, limited information, duplication of effort and lack of connection to community residents. This sentiment is echoed by the Center for Mental Health in the Schools (2014), which notes that current school and community collaborations are highly fragmented and typically focus on linking students to health and social services as opposed to developing more innovative approaches.

In the health care arena, Elliot, McBride, Allen, Jacob, Jones, Kerner and Brownson (2014) suggest that efforts to address chronic diseases in the United States have been fragmented with most health care providers working independently to achieve outcomes. In addition, a number of authors suggest that specific strategies for promoting effective collaborative problem solving are not well developed. For example, McGuire and Agranoff (2011) indicate that managing and leading collaborative networks is a difficult task and McGuire (2002) states that collaboration involving governments and organizations is limited by little “empirical description and theoretical explanation” (p. 599). McGuire (2006) also contends that new knowledge and competencies are needed to promote effective collaborative partnerships.

This article proposes a formal model for collaborative community problem solving that addresses many of the limitations of current approaches. Building on the most current conceptions and research related to collaboration, the authors propose a model of the collaborative community problem solving process composed of four elements. First, effective collaborative problem solving is built on a community centered approach. Second, collaborative community problem solving incorporates a formal problem solving process. Third, effective collaborative community problem solving hinges on the performance of specific role related behaviors and fourth, actors in the collaborative community problem solving process represent a formal system that must be skillfully managed. This model is put forth with the notion that attention to these elements may provide a means of enhancing the effectiveness of collaborative community problem solving.

Collaboration and Collaborative Community Problem Solving

Collaboration, in its various forms, has been a predominant response to many contemporary social issues. The Australian Public Service Commission (2007) suggests that collaborative problem solving strategies are appropriate for addressing the most vexing problems. For example, many communities have established coalitions that operate according to principles of collaboration to address issues such as substance abuse, behavioral health care, school success and a host of other issues (Anderson, Lawson, Bean, Flaspohler, Boone and Kwiatkowski, 2008; Innes and Booher, 2010; Kania and Kramer, 2011). But how should stakeholders define collaboration? Conventional definitions of collaboration focus on identifying appropriate partner organizations and developing relationships sufficient to achieve valued results.

Healey (2006) suggests that current conditions call for a more “communicative” approach to problem solving. Such an approach places emphasis on the expression of diverse interests and consensus building and less emphasis on expert knowledge and rational action (Bryan and Henry, 2012; Healey, 2006). Gray (1989) suggests that collaboration is a process through which stakeholders can develop solutions to specific problems that exceed the capacities of any individual stakeholder. Himmelman (2001) suggests that true “collaboration” requires that stakeholders exchange information, alter activities, share resources and be willing to enhance the capacity of partners. Innes and Booher (2010) suggest that a process is collaboratively rational “to the extent that all the effected interests jointly engage in face-to-face dialogue, bringing their various perspectives to the table to deliberate on the problems they face together” (p. 6). Experience in the field suggests that collaboration should be considered relative to a specific geographic area and defines collaborative community problem solving as the efforts of representatives of a specific community to collectively address recognized issues or problems (Partnerships for Success, 2008).

A Comprehensive Model of Collaborative Community Problem Solving

Several authors have proposed models of and/or approaches to collaboration (Anderson et al., 2008; Wolff, 2011). For example, Bryan and Henry (2012) have proposed a model for creating school and community partnerships that consists of several basic steps. The Bryan and Henry model begins with “preparing to partner.” In preparing to partner, stakeholders examine attitudes and practices that might impact attempts to engage culturally diverse stakeholders. The second step focuses on “assessing needs and strengths.” Step three focuses on “coming together” and creating a formal collaborative group or “PLT” (Partnership Leadership Team). In step four, the PLT “creates a shared vision.” In step five, the PLT “takes action” to implement the shared vision and in step six, “evaluates and celebrates success.”

Julian and Ross (2013) provide a conceptual model that emphasizes planning and policy development as a central activity. Planning and policy development are dependent on the performance of several role related behaviors including leadership and information dissemination. Perhaps the most innovative element of the Julian and Ross model is the emphasis on management of the problem solving process. The material that follows builds on existing approaches such as the Bryan and Henry (2012) and Julian and Ross (2014) perspectives by adding several critical elements that address specific limitations of current approaches. The new model is illustrated in Figure 1 (Dollarhide and Saginak, 2016) and incorporates a community centered approach; formal decision making procedures; performance of an array of role related behaviors and active management of the collaborative community problem solving process.

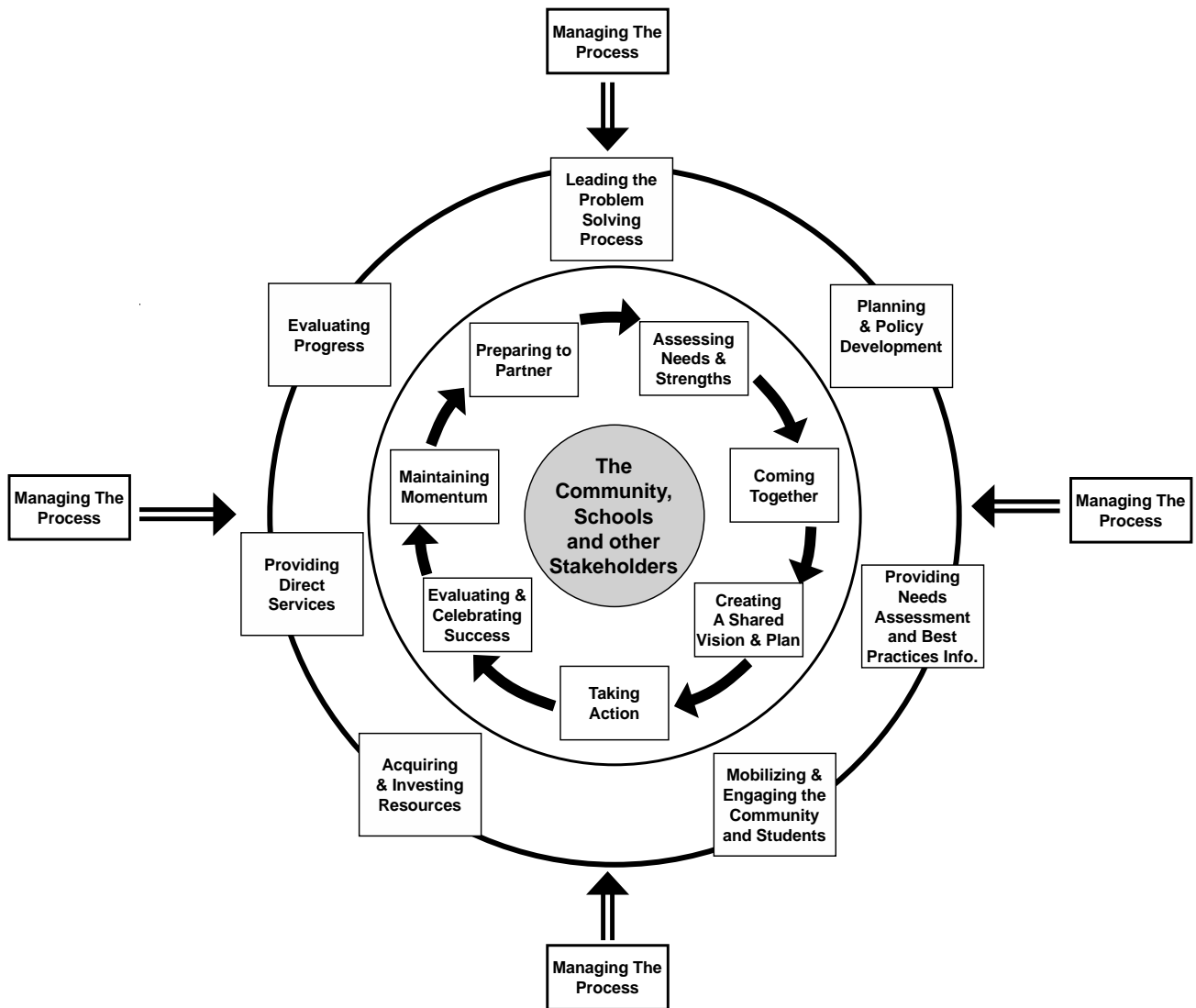


Figure 1. A Comprehensive Model for School and Community Partnership (Dollarhide and Saginak, 2016)

A Community Centered Approach

In an extensive meta-analysis related to public health interventions, O'Mara-Eves, Brunton, McDaid, Kavanaugh, Jamal, Matosevic, Harden and Thomas (2013) state that community engagement strategies are effective interventions relative to health behaviors, health consequences, participant self-efficacy and perceived social support. They go on to state that in a small number of studies, such interventions improved outcomes for communities. It can be argued that community engagement is a central component of a community centered approach. In order to define a community centered approach, it is first necessary to define community. A community can be thought of as a group of individuals typically in a specific locale who share common interests (Lyon and Driskell, 2012). A community collaboration is typically composed of individuals representing the various constituencies or stakeholders that comprise a community. Often, members of a community collaboration represent organizations with a specific interest in a particular community issue. For example, a community coalition addressing health disparities might be composed of professionals such as physicians and

other health care providers. So how would such a collaborative operate from a community-centered approach?

Community centered approaches including community engagement have been defined from a number of different perspectives. Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969) suggests that community residents' involvement in political decision-making ranges from token participation to citizen control. Systems of care proponents suggest that children's mental health teams should mobilize community resources and supports (Cook and Kilmer, 2012). More specifically, the wrap-around services that comprise a system of care must be driven by families and connected to community resources (Cook and Kilmer, 2012). Wandersman (2003) provides a highly practical definition of practice from a community centered perspective in his adaptation of arguments developed by Green (2001).

Wandersman (2003) suggests that a community centered approach relies on: (1) process as "best practice"; (2) control by community members; (3) local evaluation and self-monitoring; and (4) community access to research and information about implementation of what have come to be called "evidence based programs." Splett and Maras (2011) have adapted Wandersman's arguments in support of providing mental health services in schools. They suggest that a community centered approach starts with a community need. Identification of a community need is followed by the development of a response from the community based on a formal community driven process that includes planning, implementation and evaluation.

This elaboration (Splett and Maras, 2011) captures the notion of a community-centered approach as incorporated in the model illustrated in Figure 1. First, the community is in "control." All actions are undertaken at the direction of or on behalf of the community. Thus expert opinion is one among many sources of information that might be taken into account in deciding how to address any particular issue. Second, the process starts with the identification of a community need. That is, members of the community initiate some process through which consensus or agreement emerges about an issue(s) to be addressed. Finally, the community response or responses arise out of a formal community process. Such a process might involve deliberations among experts but every effort should be made to facilitate community involvement and control.

The most appropriate structural arrangement to facilitate community control is debatable ranging from governing boards (i.e., local school boards) to actual participation of community leaders to reliance on a variety of mechanisms for collecting community input (i.e., public forums). One mechanism suggested by the model illustrated in Figure 1, places leadership responsibilities in a formal representative or representatives of the community. Such leadership would serve to promote policy decisions consistent with community wishes and values. A community collaborative with this form of leadership would place a high value on decisions reached by "consensus." In this case, consensus being defined as a process for developing decisions that can be supported by a group (Kaner, 2011).

Thus the collaborative group would be required to deliberate regarding key decisions and reach consensus regarding formal recommendations. Such recommendations would be subject to review by the community through the leadership mechanism. In any case, assuring that structural arrangements facilitate community involvement and that stakeholders act in ways consistent with community wishes is a critical aspect of managing the collaborative community problem solving process. Finally, the community collaboration should be established as a permanent and on-going activity as opposed to collaboration convened to address a specific issue.

Decision Making Procedures

Levy (1994) suggests that the rational planning model is the predominant approach to planning or charting a course of action in the United States. Levy identifies eight steps in the rational planning process: (1) defining the problem; (2) clarifying values; (3) selecting goals; (4) formulating alternative plans or problem solutions; (5) forecasting the consequences of each alternative; (6)

evaluating and selecting a specific course of action; (7) developing plans for implementation; and (8) reviewing and evaluating outcomes. Advocates of strategic planning offer an alternative approach. Strategic planning can be defined as a process through which organizations assess internal and external environments in order to develop and implement strategies to achieve specific objectives (Hax and Majluf, 1996). The Harvard Family Research Project (1997) indicates that strategic planners address several key questions as part of a systematic process. These questions focus on current conditions and available resources; desired future states; specification of goals; and strategy development. Rational planning, strategic planning and other approaches to decision making offer a prescribed set of activities that allow stakeholders to arrive at a course of action relative to a specific issue or problem. The series of steps indicated in the middle ring of Figure. 1 are an adaptation of the rational planning model.

Key Roles in the Collaborative Community Problem Solving Process

The third component of the model for collaborative community problem solving illustrated in Figure 1 focuses on the performance of specific role related behaviors (Julian and Ross, 2013). Biddle (1986) characterizes roles as the expectations that guide behavior of individuals in social settings. Julian and Ross (2013) define eight key roles that must be filled in the collaborative community problem solving process. These roles include: (1) planning and policy development; (2) providing needs and best practices information; (3) acquiring and investing resources; (4) mobilizing and engaging the community; (5) leading the collaborative problem solving process; (6) delivering direct services and engaging in other forms of intervention; (7) providing evaluation consultation and support; and (8) managing the collaborative problem solving process. The model illustrated in Figure 1 includes a series of roles that represent an adaptation of the roles described by Julian and Ross (2013). The adapted roles include: leading the collaborative problem solving process and representing community wishes; providing needs, best practices and other relevant information; mobilizing and engaging the community; investing in specific courses of action; and adopting an entrepreneurial or action oriented perspective. These roles are indicated in the outer-most ring of Figure 1.

Leading collaborative problem solving efforts is defined as the ability to create a vision and inspire action to achieve that vision and should not be confused with managing the problem solving process (Julian and Ross, 2013). Leadership is strongly related to the concept of a community centered process and places ultimate responsibility for making policy decisions in the hands of community leaders charged with representing the wishes and desires of the community at large. Providing needs, best practices and other pertinent information often involves original research, consultation with experts and/or other data collection activities such as reviews of the literature. Mobilizing and engaging the community is associated with various strategies designed to inform stakeholders (including the community at large) about the workings of the collaboration. Investing in a specific course of action involves the acquisition and allocation of community resources in activities endorsed by the collaboration. Adopting an entrepreneurial and action orientation implies that the collaboration uses data to make decisions about the best investment of resources to achieve an identified outcome and takes action to ensure that allocations of resources are consistent with investment decisions.

It would appear that engagement in specific role related behaviors is important to effective collaborative community problem solving. The problem solving process illustrated in Figure 1 defines several concrete steps that, in theory, allow stakeholders to develop an optimal or at least a satisfactory solution to any given issue at a particular point in time. However, as has been noted, the degree to which a collaborative group can skillfully define or identify a problem and effectively plan, implement and evaluate a particular community response is dependent on engagement in a variety of roles related to specific steps in the problem solving process. Ensuring that stakeholders are engaged in appropriate role related behaviors and perform the formal steps in the decision making process is clearly a critical management task.

A Managed System

When considering social change, Foster-Fishman and Behrens (2007) describe a system in terms of a collection of actors, niches, activities and myriad other components that interact in complex ways for a specific purpose. The model presented in Figure 1 presents the collaborative community problem solving process as a complex system. The community and members of a standing collaboration are engaged in a formal effort to address specific community issues or problems. The application of an identified community need, problem solving process and formalization of role related behaviors are also integral parts of the system. In a special issue of the American Journal of Community Psychology (2007) devoted to systems change, a number of authors suggest that systems thinking is a valuable perspective that may facilitate community change (Foster-Fishman, Nowell and Yang; Tseng and Seidman, 2007) and that many recent efforts to address community issues or problems rely on a system change framework (Foster-Fishman and Behrens, 2007).

Foster-Fishman, Nowell and Yang (2007) define a system change effort as an “intentional process designed to alter the status quo by shifting and realigning the form and function of a targeted system” (p. 197). Inherent in this definition is the notion of managing the process of change. Julian and Ross (2013) define management of the collaborative community problem solving process as “initiating appropriate procedures at the appropriate time, encouraging and fostering relevant role related behaviors and applying appropriate tools in the appropriate sequence in order to achieve desired collaborative outcomes.”

A number of researchers and theorists acknowledge the importance of the management function and note the limitations in current theory related to the specifics of effectively managing the collaborative community problem solving process (McGuire, 2002; McGuire 2006; McGuire and Agranoff, 2011; Provin and Kenis, 2007). Julian (2015) suggests that managing the collaborative community problem solving process requires that managers gain significant understanding of an array of concepts and engage in formal management tasks including: (1) assuring that stakeholders commit to true collaboration; (2) initiating recognized steps to form a collaborative group; (3) designing, building and sustaining the infrastructure necessary to support community collaboration; (4) assuring that the fundamental roles in collaborative community problem solving are performed; (5) applying a formal problem solving process and establishing guidelines for decision-making; (6) using appropriate tools to support collaborative community problem solving; (7) instructing members of collaborative groups in how to use specific tools relevant to specific tasks; (8) recruiting and motivating appropriate individuals and organizational stakeholders; (9) facilitating group processes; and (10) managing specific collaborative projects. Julian (2015) suggests that while there may be many other critical management tasks, these ten activities are a starting point in considering the management function as it relates to collaborative community problem solving.

Contributions of this Model

Addressing Limitations of Current Approaches

The model described in this article has the potential to address several of the limitations of current approaches to collaboratively addressing community issues. Table 1 provides an overview of commonly cited limitations of current approaches (Center for Mental Health in the Schools, 2014; Healy, 2006; Himmelman, 2001; Innes and Booher, 2010; Julian and Ross, 2013; Wolff, 2011) and potential contributions of the model described in this article.

First, fragmentation has been observed as a criticism of many current community collaboratives. This is not surprising since issue specific collaborations are often established in response to the requirements of specific grants or funding streams. For example, a community that receives a SAMHSA “Partnerships for Success” grant is likely to convene a community collaboration to address substance prevention issues. If the same community received an Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools grant, community members might form a community coalition to address issues related

to school safety. A community owned, standing collaborative prepared to address all or most projects requiring a collaborative response within a specific community is likely to reduce fragmentation often associated with current efforts to collaboratively address local community issues. Limitations of current approaches and potential remedies are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Limitations of Current Approaches and Potential Remedies

Limitation	How Addressed by Model
Fragmented	Shift from collaboration as required by individual projects to standing community collaboration.
Overlap with other efforts	Community collaboration addresses many issues as standing group thus reducing overlap.
Based on limited information	Collaboration has information gathering function. Community makes decisions based on variety of information gathering activities and performance of information gathering role.
Limited connection to community residents	Controlled by the community. Community ownership as fundamental role in process. Process managed so that collaboration members act in ways consistent with community ownership.
Limited innovation	Collaboration charged with developing responses to issues. Entrepreneurial orientation encourages focus on evaluation and investment based on value. Innovation may occur in developing potential responses when traditional approaches prove inadequate.
Responses not tied to community conditions	Process starts with identified community need (condition) and solution generation is tied to formal decision making procedures.
Existing tools and procedures not well developed	Collaborative process driven by well-trained manager of problem solving process who has knowledge of and access to variety of tools and procedures. Sets stage for development of best practices related to collaborative community problem solving.

Second, traditional funding mechanisms that require that communities implement specific projects or issue specific initiatives utilizing collaborative problem solving processes are likely to result in significant overlap in interventions across collaborative projects. A community owned, standing collaborative is likely to address this limitation. Third, limited access to information has been cited as a problem in many local collaborations. The model described above incorporates a specific information gathering and dissemination role and positions a process manager to ensure that this role is performed in a satisfactory manner.

Fourth, the problem of community involvement is a long-standing issue with many efforts to collaboratively address local issues (Wolff, 2011). The model described above incorporates a community-centered approach and provides at least some guidance for ensuring community involvement and ownership. However, and as noted above, potential structural arrangements for operationalizing community control remain elusive.

Fifth, some commentators suggest that current approaches to collaborative community problem solving limit innovation. Innovation is valuable to the extent that innovative approaches result in true progress toward achieving desired outcomes. The model described in this article provides for a structured decision-making process which may prove useful in moving stakeholders to formal decisions about how to intervene to achieve desired outcomes and incorporates an entrepreneurial and action orientation. Such an orientation is based on the notion that evaluative information is available to inform decisions about perspective courses of action. Thus, the community's ability to invest in worthwhile programming is enhanced.

Sixth, it is often argued that interventions are often adopted irrespective of community conditions. This has been particularly problematic in situations where a community desires to utilize an evidence-based program to address a specific issue. The model described above provides a formal mechanism for identifying a community need and procedures for developing potential responses when available options are not adequate to produce desired outcomes.

Finally, several theorist suggest that procedures necessary to effectively manage the collaborative community problem solving process are not well developed (McGuire, 2002; McGuire 2006; McGuire and Agranoff, 2011; Provin and Kenis, 2007). The proposed model places significant emphasis on the management function. Prior theory suggests that the manager must be prepared to facilitate the collaborative community problem solving process in a manner that assures that a range of specific role related behaviors occur in a specific sequence.

Recommendations for Practice

Consideration of the model described in this article suggests two primary implications relative to community practice and one implication for research related to effective collaborative community problem solving. The first implication for practice focuses on how local collaborations are formed. Adoption of the model described above requires that members of the community collaboration be recruited explicitly to serve the community and to be part of a “community centered” process. Thus, the collaborative group might deal with any number of issues as members of a standing community collaboration as opposed to focusing on a specific issue such as substance abuse or academic performance. The model described above also incorporates very specific procedures and steps designed to identify issues and develop formal community responses. Finally, the process is managed in order to provide enhanced efficiency and effectiveness and the process manager is charged with ensuring that specific role related behaviors are performed in at appropriate times. The formation of a collaboration based on the model described in this paper requires that stakeholders be aware of and endorse this specific approach to problem solving.

The second implication for practice concerns training of managers of the problem solving process. The model purports to provide significant guidance in process and procedures relative to managing collaborative community problem solving. At a minimum, the process manager would need to be proficient in the principles of collaborative problem solving as well as have a keen understanding of decision-making procedures such as the rational and/or strategic planning models. Perhaps most critically, the process manager would need to understand the roles associated with different aspects of the model (i.e., community ownership, leadership, etc.) and feel comfortable directing members of the collaboration with regard to acting in ways consistent with these roles. In the approach described in this article, the manager acts as a content neutral facilitator of the collaborative problem solving process.

The primary implication for the research community revolves around the task of developing formal tests of the propositions suggested by the proposed model of collaboration. For example, it is assumed that collaboration incorporating community control, formal decision making procedures, recognition and engagement in specific role related behaviors and formal management will result in enhanced collaboration and progress toward addressing complex social issues at the community level. In addition, these factors are assumed to represent enhancements to traditional approaches to facilitating collaboration. Numerous research questions are inherent in such assumptions. Several commentators have noted the preeminence of collaborative approaches to addressing complex community problems and pointed out the limitations of current approaches. Future research may provide the opportunity to verify useful methods for enhancing collaborative community problem solving and furthering important community practice goals.

Yazarların Katkı Oranı

Bu makaleye birinci yazarın %60, ikinci yazarın %40 oranında katkısı vardır.

Çıkar Çatışması

Bu çalışmada çıkar çatışması oluşturacak bir husus yoktur.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Öğrenciler farklı şekillerde ve yoğunlukta hemen her gün akademik, sosyal, kişisel veya davranışsal problemlerle karşılaşmaktalar. Öğrencilerin yaşadığı bu problemler, farklı ve aynı zamanda birbirini doğrudan etkileyen birçok faktörden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bundan dolayı eğitimciler, ruh sağlığı uzmanları, yöneticiler, aileler ve diğer ilgili kişilerin toplumun öğrencilerin bu sorunlarına nasıl etkili çözümler sunabileceğini tartışmaları ve çözüm üretmeleri beklenmektedir. Bu bağlamda araştırmacılar öğrencilerin bu sorunlarına etkili çözüm üretmede işbirliğine dayalı çalışmaların daha etkili olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır (Bryan ve Henry, 2012; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2014; Kania ve Kramer, 2011; Wolff, 2011). Julian (2006) toplum uygulamasını ortaklıkla toplumsal sorun çözme kapasitesinin artırılması ve bu sayede toplum üyelerinin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayarak hayallerini gerçekleştirilmesi olarak tanımlamaktadır. Weill (2012) ise toplumsal işbirliği pratiğinin ilerici toplumsal değişim için gerekli olan gelişim, organize olma, planlama ve harekete geçme üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır. Wandersman (2003), toplum merkezli problem çözme yaklaşımlarının en iyi yaklaşım olduğu, toplum üyelerince control edildiği, local kişilerce değerlendirildiği ve toplumun araştırmalara, bilgiye ve uygulanacak programa kolayca ulaşmasının önemini vurgulamıştır. McGuire ve Agranoff (2011) işbirliğine dayalı problem çözme yöntemlerinde yönetim ve liderliğin zor olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Buna benzer şekilde McGuire (2002) ise hükümetleri ve organizasyonları ortak olarak barındıran işbirlikçi yaklaşımların teorik ve ampirik yönlerinin öneminden bahsetmiştir. McGuire (2002) ayrıca işbirliğine dayalı yeni modellere olan ihtiyacı açıkça ortaya koymuştur.

Tartışma ve Öneriler

Bryan ve Henry (2012) okul-toplum işbirliğine dayalı problem çözme modelinde “ortak olmaya hazırlanma” aşaması ile başlar. Paydaşlar, ortak olmaya hazırlanırken kültürel olarak farklı olanların katılımını sağlama çabalarını etkileyebilecek tutum ve uygulamaları incelerler. İkinci adım “ihtiyaçların ve paydaşların güçlü yanlarının değerlendirilmesi” üzerine odaklanır. Üçüncü adım, “bir araya gelme” ve resmi bir işbirliği grubu ya da “Ortaklık Liderlik Ekibi” yaratmaya odaklanır. Dördüncü adımda bu ekip için “paylaşılan bir vizyon yaratılır.” Beşinci adımda, ekip, paylaşılan vizyonu uygulamak için “harekete geçer” ve altıncı adımda “başarıyı değerlendirme ve kutlama” yapılır. İşbirliğine dayalı problem çözme sürecinde başarıya ulaşmak için sekiz tane rolün başarıyla sürdürülmesi gerekmektedir (Julian ve Ross, 2013). Bu roller (1) planlama ve politika geliştirme, (2) ihtiyaçları belirleme ve en iyi uygulamalar hakkında bilgi toplamak, (3) kaynak bulma ve yatırım yapma, (4) toplumun harekete geçirilmesi ve katılımının sağlanması, (5) işbirlikçi problem çözme sürecine öncülük etmek, (6) doğrudan hizmet sunmak ve diğer müdahale biçimlerine katılmak, (7) değerlendirme desteği ve danışmanlığı sağlama ve (8) işbirliğe dayalı problem çözme sürecinin etkili bir biçimde yönetilmesi. Toplum sorunlarının çözümüne yönelik işbirliğine dayalı teorik alan çalışmalarının azlığı ve mevcut çalışmaların önemli eksikliklerinin bulunması bu çalışmayı yapmamız temel amacını teşkil etmektedir. Mevcut çalışmaların eksiklerinden bazıları şu şunlardır. Örneğin problem çözme ekibinde bulunanların süreç içerisinde problemi yaşayan topluluklara nasıl ulaşacağı, onlarla nasıl bağlantı kuracağı ve onlara programa ya da sürece doğrudan nasıl katkı sağlayacakları konusunda bazı eksiklikler bulunmaktadır. Bunun yanında bazı modellerde süreç toplulukların yaşadığı problemin tespit edilmesi ile başlıyor fakat daha sonra ne yapılması gerektiği konusunda kimseye danışmadan kendi resmi ajandaları takip ediliyor. Bu çalışma yeni bir işbirliğe dayalı toplumsal problem çözme modeli sunmaktadır. Bu sayede mevcut modellerin eksiklikleri giderilmiş ve yaşanan problemlerin daha etkili bir biçimde ele alınmaya olanak sağlandığı düşünülmektedir. Bu yeni model dört varsayımdan oluşmaktadır. Birincisi etkili işbirlikçi problem çözme yöntemi toplum merkezli olmalıdır. İkincisi işbirliğe dayalı problem çözme yöntemi resmi problem çözme sürecini barındırmalıdır. Üçüncüsü etkili işbirlikçi problem çözme yöntemi sorumlu kişilerin spesifik rol ve performanslarına bağlıdır. Son olarak etkili işbirlikçi problem çözme yöntemi resmi bir yönetim sürecini barındırmak zorundadır. Bu makalede önerilen, toplum pratiğinde işbirliğine dayalı problem çözme modeli iki önemli çıkarımda bulunmamıza yardımcı olmaktadır. İşbirliğine dayalı toplumsal hayattaki uygulamalara yönelik olan birinci çıkarım mevcut problemlerin çözümü için lokal

katılımcıların nasıl seçildiği ile ilgilidir. Toplum üyelerinin mevcut programa dâhil olma sürecinin şeffaf ve ciddiyetle yürütülmesi ve “toplum merkezli” problem çözme sürecine aktif katılımlarının sağlanması gerekmektedir. Dolayısıyla proje üyeleri toplumun içinden gelen bireylerin problemlere ve olası çözüm yollarına bakış açıları noktasında bazı fikir ayrılıklarına da hazır olunması gerekmektedir. İkincisi çıkarım proje yöneticilerinin eğitimleriyle ilgili. Proje yöneticilerinin yeterli derecede işbirlikçi problem çözme yaklaşımı karar alma süreci hakkında bilgi sahibi olması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca proje yöneticilerinin proje üyelerini yönlendirme, onlara direktifler verme konusunda rahat hareket etme becerisine sahip olması gerekmektedir.

Sonuç

Bu çalışmada sunulan işbirliğine dayalı problem çözme modelinin mevcut birçok sorunun daha etkili bir biçimde çözülmesine yardımcı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu model sayesinde toplumsal sorunların ve ihtiyacın tespit edilmesi, problemin çözümü için proje geliştirilmesi, proje için kaynak bulunması, projenin yönetilmesi, sürdürülmesi ve denetimi ile değerlendirmenin yapılması gibi işbirliğe dayalı problem çözme yöntemi sürecinin kritik aşamalarının nasıl yapılacağına ışık tutmaktadır. Ayrıca alan literatürüne önemli katkısının olduğunu düşündüğümüz bu çalışmanın çok boyutlu ve karmaşık günümüz problemlerinin daha etkili, az zamanda ve az maliyetle nasıl çözülebileceğine katkıda bulunduğu düşünülmektedir. Bunun yanında bu çalışmaya benzer teorik ve ampirik çalışmaların devam etmesi ve alternatif modellerin geliştirilmesi gerektiğine inanılmaktadır.