Building Your Board

and helping others build theirs

Resource Sharing Project
Train the Trainers
Agenda

• Introductions
• Why have a rape crisis center?
• Why have a board?
• What does a board do?
• How do they do it?
• How do you develop a board?
Why are we here?
Rape Crisis Centers

What is sexual violence?

Who are victims?
Rape Crisis Centers

History

• Many grass roots movements
• Collaborative work with other civil rights/peace/social justice groups
• Women’s liberation movement
• Violence against women comes to forefront
• First rape crisis centers in 1971-72
What is a nonprofit?

- Organized and incorporated at the state level
- Reinvests profits into the organization
- Tax exempt/IRS benefits
- Often service/charity/community oriented
Why have a board of directors?

- Guardians of the public trust
- Demonstration of community support and investment in the organization
- Workers/emissaries for the organization
Trainers Discuss

• Why do we have boards?
• What can they do to help the organization?
• Why is it important to work with the group to understand sexual assault?
Board Duties and Responsibilities
Legal Duties

- Care
- Obedience
- Loyalty
Basic Board Responsibilities

- Determine agency’s mission/purpose
- Select the ED
- Support the ED and assess her or his performance
Basic Board Responsibilities

- Plan for the organization’s development
- Ensure adequate resources
- Manage resources effectively
- Determine and monitor agency’s programs and services
Basic Board Responsibilities

• Enhance the organization’s public standing
• Ensure ethical and legal integrity and maintain accountability
• Board development
Trainers Discuss

• What are stories or anecdotes you can tell to illustrate the importance of 3 of the previous board responsibilities?

• What are the differences between the three *duties* of a board?
Action Planning

• How do these responsibilities apply to your agency?
• What do you need to do in the next year to fulfill these responsibilities?
• What resources do you need to be successful?
Board and Staff Roles

• Difference between governing and implementing
• How roles shift over time depending on the organization’s needs
• Importance of communication
• Quiz
Board Development
Evolution and Board development

- Board phases
- Assessing performance
- Recruiting members
- Orienting & training members
- Changing board operations
- Board information & materials
- Board meetings and information sharing
Board evolution

- The nonprofit board cannot remain static and must change and evolve as the organization changes and evolves.

- The roles, functions, and membership need to be altered to meet the challenges the nonprofit organization confronts.
Board passages

Three Key Stages in a Board’s lifecycle:
1. Organizing Board
2. Governing Board
3. Institutional Board
The Organizing Board
Transitioning to a governing volunteer board

- Often preceded by a financial crisis or a struggle between staff and board leadership
- Essential to the transition are new board members who bring different experiences and new expectations
- Results in a clearer definition of staff and board roles, more systems, and a more businesslike approach
FRUSTRATION AHEAD
The functioning governing board

• Shifts its work away from the operational, staff-like tasks to assume the governance of the organization and responsibility for the organization’s well-being and longevity.

• Power and authority is shared between the board and staff. The board chair and the director emerge as the principal leaders and accept responsibility for ensuring that the work of the board and the staff gets done.
The functional governing board

Board work is concentrated in committees and task forces and less work is done by the board acting as a whole.

The board takes responsibility for reviewing finances, program planning, and fundraising strategy.

Board recruitment and diversity become essential.
The functioning governing board

- Transition to a governing board requires a lot of effort by the staff.
- The process is usually slow and can be frustrating. It may take as long as 3 years.
- Clear expectations for the board by the board chair facilitates the process.
Transition to an institutional board

- Needed to meet increased demands for fundraising
- Needed to meet increased need for exposure in other communities to broaden visibility
- Results in an expanded board with stronger, more independent committees
The Mature Institutional and Fundraising Board
Change is required

• Boards MUST change as an organization grows
• Roles must be added and discarded as boards age
• The leaders must ensure that board members are—and feel that they are—usefully and vitally involved with the organization’s welfare.
Board Assessment

- Can be used at any point in a board’s development

- Useful to determine where to grow, put energy
The responsibilities of a board suggest those skills and areas of knowledge that a board must collectively possess. A practical listing might include:

- Nonprofit management
- Organizational planning
- Fund raising
- Personnel management
- Legal matters
- Public relations

Adapted from Thomas Wolf’s Managing A Nonprofit Organization
Homogeneity in traditional governing boards has helped establish and maintain a model for class, ethnic, racial and sex discrimination throughout society.

Odehndal and Youmans, 1994
Board Composition

• The drive to diversify boards seeks to change this model and is motivated by a concern for accountability and accessibility.

• Membership composition makes a difference for organizational decision making: that for organizations to be responsive to a diverse society, their boards need to be composed of a diverse membership.

Johnson, Bonjean and Markham, 1994
Factors in Building and Maintaining Diversity

- The nominating committee has definite goals for diversity and takes the challenge of recruiting people of color seriously.
- Racial and cultural diversity is a constant organizational priority.
- Boards look all year round for candidates.
- Tokenism and the expectation that people of color can/will represent their entire community are avoided.
- Board and staff engages in ongoing anti-racist and cultural diversity training.
To build diversity on your Board

Firm commitment to diversity

- Create a sense of ownership
- Announce it
- Put it in writing (policy)
- Develop clear and specific goals and include them in the minutes

“How can we promote diversity while avoiding tokenism?” Knowledge Center, Q & A, Obtained from www.boardsource.org.)
Avoid Tokenism

• If you are choosing members based on pure representation of a specific group you are tokenizing
• Choose instead board members who contribute according to their skill and knowledge. Focus on the entity as a diverse mixture, not as individual representation.
• Duty of loyalty—board members are charged with duty to the organization and its best interests, tokenism promotes individual commitment to a population group or interest.

(“How can we promote diversity while avoiding tokenism?” Knowledge Center, Q & A, Obtained from www.boardsource.org.)
Avoid Tokenism

- Treat each board member equally
- Expect the same from everyone
- Each board member, new or old, has the same responsibilities
- Involve every new member immediately
- Assign tasks independently of cultural or ethnic background
- Recruit several members at the same time from the same group.

(“How can we promote diversity while avoiding tokenism?” Knowledge Center, Q & A, Obtained from www.boardsource.org)
Discussion

- Boards in local programs - where are they in development?
- Is this information new to them?
- Other questions?
Improving Effectiveness

Reasons Boards don’t govern...

- They get all their info from the ED
- Not familiar with nonprofit management
- Not understand volunteer management issues
- Not really get fundraising as the issue it is
- Busy people
- EDs don’t want a really functional BOD
- Consequences of a poorly functioning BOD rarely felt

Improving Board functioning

• Make sure that board members have information about the financial and program performance of the organization that comes from an independent source
• Use independent management evaluators
• Make governance an explicit part of meetings
• Have the board chair encourage dissent, debate and questions
• Recruit governors

How to Use: Good Information Opportunities

- Board orientations
- Board meetings
- Board policy review
- Board retreats
- Board recruitment & assessments
Exercise: Pair Discussion

• You’re talking with an ED whose Board is micromanaging her (and staff) activities. She wants you to come in and train them not to do that. She’s got a board meeting coming up. What can she do to start shifting what the board focuses on? How can she talk about them getting training? How could that help or not help?
Resources

- Compasspoint (www.compasspoint.org)
- BoardSource (www.boardsource.org)
- Free Management Library (www.managementhelp.org)
- RSP (www.resourcesharingproject.org)
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