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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Rural Health Innovations (RHI), LLC, is a subsidiary of the National Rural Health Resource Center (The Center), a non-profit organization. Together, RHI and The Center are the nation’s leading technical assistance and knowledge centers in rural health. In partnership with The Center, RHI enhances the health of rural communities by providing products and services with a focus on excellence and innovation. RHI is providing technical assistance (TA) to the Network Planning grantees through a contract with the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.

Collaboration is one of the keys to sustainability in our changing health care environment. Rural health networks provide value to their members and contribute to the health and wellness of their communities with effective collaboration. This workshop and the accompanying participant guide are designed for rural health network leaders to improve skills and build capacity for meaningful and impactful collaborations.

The modules in this workshop include the following:

**Collaboration Basics** will help rural network directors establish both the framework and groundwork for intra-network collaborations. Specifically, this module will consider why organizations pursue collaborations, the types of activities and initiatives on which they collaborate and the initial steps a network director plays in launching the collaborative effort.

**Building Trust in Collaborative Partnerships** will help network directors enhance and improve trust in all relationships—at the individual, team and network levels. When demonstrated and modeled by network directors, trustworthiness sets a behavioral precedent and helps to create a culture of collaboration.
COLLABORATION BASICS LESSON 1: WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

Activity 1.1: Introductions

Table Discussion: Small groups of 2-3 people.

- Introduce yourselves with your name, network name, and network location.
- How has collaboration benefited your network or your members in the past 6-12 months?

Activity 1.2: Identify Collaboration Opportunities

- What are current needs the network or your members have that would benefit from collaboration?

- Select one situation and briefly describe the collaboration opportunity; include a list of the potential stakeholders.
COLLABORATION BASICS LESSON 2: DEGREE OF COLLABORATION

**Cooperation**
Includes sharing information, sharing space, sharing transportation services, sharing equipment, sharing lab resources, etc.

**Coordination**
Requires more commitment and includes sharing administrative services (e.g., payroll), sharing staff, subcontracting, sharing training programs, EHRs, joint programming, etc.

**Partnering**
While all of the examples discussed so far in this session are collaborations at some level, full-scale collaboration includes mergers, acquisitions, management contracts, and formal partnerships.

**Activity 2.1: Determine the Degree of Collaboration Needed**

Degree of Collaboration Grid: Using the collaborative opportunity you have identified in the first lesson activity (above), place that opportunity in the Degree of Collaboration grid next to the most appropriate collaboration type: Cooperation, Coordination, or Partnering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Collaboration</th>
<th>Degree of Collaboration</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Your Opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Low effort</td>
<td>Informal networking Resource sharing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Moderate effort</td>
<td>Administrative coalition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate complexity</td>
<td>Joint programming</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate integration</td>
<td>Joint service offerings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering</td>
<td>High effort</td>
<td>Mergers Partnerships Mgmt Service Orgs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High integration</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEADERSHIP LESSON 3: BUILDING CREDIBILITY

A Balance of Expertise and Trust

Credibility is made up of two components: expertise and trust.

**Expertise**

Expertise consists of your industry knowledge, knowledge of the business, and your technical knowledge and skills. Building your expertise is gained through formal education, training, and experience.

Note that expertise does not equal experience. Some people gain the equivalent of five years of experience with only one year on the job; other people get one year’s worth of experience in five years on the job.

**Trust**

Trust is the other key component of credibility. Trust consists of following through with commitments, behaving in an ethical manner, and making sound decisions based on data and proof. Building trust includes being sensitive to both what the situation calls for as well as the needs of stakeholders.

In their book *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*, James Kouzes and Barry Posner described their research which found that credibility is directly linked to both expertise and trust. Leaders who demonstrated high levels of both were deemed credible by research subjects.
Credibility Matrix

Low trust/Low expertise – Never on time or prepared, a lot of ‘fluffy talk’ and not much to back them up; will not even win you an audience with someone.

High expertise/Low trust – Smart but sneaky or overly competitive; while you will be respected for being bright and intelligent, your motives might not be trusted. People will seek you out for information, but won’t be as willing to give information to you.

High trust/Low expertise – Well-liked and comfortable to be with but not competent; people may want to work with you if you are enthusiastic or have growth potential, but they won’t be as eager to follow you, however.

High trust/High expertise – Responsive and calm and able to understand and explain themselves; where leaders are sought and are most effective.

"Leaders know that while their position may give them authority, their behavior earns them respect. Leaders go first. They set an example and build commitment through simple, daily acts that create progress and momentum.”

— Kouzes and Posner
TRUST LESSON 4: HIGH TRUST OR LOW TRUST

Take notes on the discussion in the space provided.

Activity 4.1: Relationships with High Trust

Instructions: Think about a person within your network with whom you have a high-trust relationship.

- What did the other person do to earn your trust?

- What did you do to earn the other person’s trust?

- Describe what it is like to work with this person.

- Describe what your conversations are like.

- How long does it take you to get things done?

- What have been the results of your work together?
Activity 4.2: Relationships with Low Trust

Instructions: Now think about a person within your network with whom you have a low-trust relationship.

- What did the other person do/not do that decreased your trust?

- What did you do/not do to decrease the other person’s trust of you?

- Describe what it is like to work with this person.

- Describe what your conversations are like.

- How long does it take you to get things done?

- What have been the results of your work together?
Activity 4.3: Dividends and Taxes

Considering your answers to high-trust and low-trust relationships, are the differences negligible or significant? Write your thoughts on the space provided below.

What are some of the hard and soft cost savings associated with high trust? These can be considered Dividends on your collaboration efforts.

What are some of the hard and soft costs associated with low trust? These can be considered Taxes on your collaboration efforts.
TRUST LESSON 5: BUILDING TRUST IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Behaviors That Build Trust

Stephen M. R. Covey identified 13 behaviors individuals can exhibit to increase trust in their relationships.

1. **Talk Straight:** Be honest and tell the truth.
2. **Demonstrate Respect:** Respect the dignity of every person and every role.
3. **Create Transparency:** State your intent, and admit your mistakes.
4. **Right Wrongs:** Apologize and seek restitution.
5. **Show Loyalty:** Share credit, and speak about others as if they were in the room.
6. **Deliver Results:** Establish a track record of doing what you are hired to do.
7. **Get Better:** Seek professional improvement, and listen to feedback.
8. **Confront Reality:** Address tough issues directly and early.
9. **Clarify Expectations:** State and restate expectations; don't assume they are known.
10. **Practice Accountability:** Hold yourself, others, and the team responsible.
11. **Listen First:** Demonstrate understanding of others before you speak.
12. **Keep Commitments:** Say what you will do, and do what you will say.
13. **Extend Trust:** Share authority, and show people you trust them.

**Activity 5.1: Personal Behavior Trust Inventory**

**Instructions:** In the space below, write trust-strengthening behaviors you currently practice or know you could practice more of to build trust in your workplace or network relationships.
WORKSHOP INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

Instructions: Take five minutes to recall some of your insights from today in the space provided below.

What did you learn about yourself that indicates possible strengths as a network leader?

What did you learn about yourself that indicates possible opportunities to improve as a network leader?

What will you do differently now to be a more effective network leader?

In what ways can you apply what you’ve learned today to be a more effective network leader?

What new goals will you set to help you apply what you’ve learned?
APPENDIX: INDIVIDUAL TRUST ACTION PLAN

Time: 10-15 minutes

Purpose: This is a worksheet to help you devise a trust-building plan with another individual.

Instructions: Identify one individual in your network with whom you would like to have greater sense of trust. Then complete the following questions.

Assess the situation:

What is my credibility with this individual? Does this person see me the same way I see myself? Have I had an opportunity to show this person who I am?

What does this person know/think about what I do (and how I do it)? Is there knowledge or a skill I possess of which this individual is not yet aware? Are there accomplishments of mine that this person does not yet know about? How can he or she learn of my knowledge, skill, or accomplishments?

Plan for action:

What is one thing I can do that would help this person understand me better?

What is one thing I can do to understand this person better?

What is one commitment I can make to this person that would showcase my knowledge and skill?

How will I honor that commitment with an accomplishment that matters to this individual?