

# The Partnerships Continuum

**A distinction can be made between the purposes and nature of partnerships.**

- **Networking** involves the exchange of information for mutual benefit. This requires little time and trust between partners. For example, youth services within a region may meet monthly to provide an update on their work and discuss issues that effect young people.
- **Coordinating** involves exchanging of information and altering activities for a common purpose. For example, youth services may meet and plan a coordinated campaign to lobby the Council for more youth specific services.
- **Cooperating** involves exchanging information, altering activities and sharing resources. It requires a significant amount of time, high level of trust between partners and sharing the turf between agencies. For example, a group of secondary schools may pool some resources with a youth welfare agency to run a 'Diversity Week' as a way of combating violence and discrimination.
- **Collaborating**. In addition to the other activities described, collaboration includes enhancing the capacity of the other partners for mutual benefit and a common purpose. Collaborating requires the partner to give up a part of their turf to another agency to create a better or more seamless service system. For example, a group of schools may fund a youth service to establish a full time position to coordinate a 'Diversity Week', provide professional development for teachers and train student peer mediators in conflict resolution.

Adapted from: Himmelman A (2001), 'on coalitions and the transformation of power relations: collaborative betterment and collaborative empowerment.' American Journal of Community Psychology, vol, 29, no 2.

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