

**Gray & New Gloucester Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition**  
*Mission Development and Community Readiness Retreat*

**Tuesday, March 15th, 9:00AM-1:00PM—Gray New Gloucester High School**

**Meeting Minutes**

**I. Welcome & introductions**

a. In attendance:

Kim Allen, Fiddlehead Art and Science Ctr.

Beth Blakeman-Pohl, Drug Free Communities Coordinator,  
Casco Bay C.A.N.

Victoria Burns, Superintendent, MSAD #15

Becca Matusovich, Cumberland County Public Health Liaison, ME CDC

Kathleen Potter, School Board Member, MSAD #15

Carol Swicker, Project Manager, 21 Reasons, Medical Care Development

Sarah Kinsler, Project Assistant, 21 Reasons, Medical Care Development

**II. Review Agenda and Objectives**

- a. Carol discussed a few goals and objectives for this Retreat: to begin developing a mission statement; to familiarize ourselves with the concept of “Community Readiness” and determine where Gray-New Gloucester falls on the CR scale; and to select three community-based activities that are appropriate to our stage of community readiness that we will work on in the coming months.

**III. Group Agreements**

**IV. Visioning Activity** (See “Creating a Common Vision” handout, attached)

- a. Though we don’t see the need to create a “vision statement,” this activity is helpful in sparking thought and discussion.
- b. Each attendee read and responded to the same prompt: In two years, a local newspaper is doing a feature story on the Coalition, highlighting its accomplishments and the ways in which it has changed the community.
- c. The group shared responses to this prompt.  
Goals included:
- Community stakeholders working together for kids’ health.
  - Parents are aware, identifying issues, working together.
  - Parents feel that the community, including other parents and law enforcement, strongly disapprove of underage drinking and that they will face consequences for hosting or furnishing.
  - Students feel supported and connected within the community.
  - There is a law enforcement presence in Gray-New Gloucester.
  - The Coalition continues to be an engaged group, committed to keeping this vision for GNG alive.

## V. Mission Statement Development (See “21 Missions” handout, attached)

- a. Carol discussed the components of a strong mission statement. A strong mission statement is clear and concise, realistic and action-oriented. To those outside of the organization, it should explain why the organization exists. It should motivate and inspire members and potential members, and should set the tone for strategic planning. Mission statements should consist of three key components:
  - Purpose: What are the opportunities or needs to exist to address? What do we seek to accomplish? Purpose should identify the problem, and how we will work to change it.
  - Business: Activities or programs we choose in order to pursue our purpose.
  - Value: What principles or beliefs guide us in our work?
- b. We read through the “21 Missions” handout individually, looking at the mission statements of other DFC Coalitions in the region as a source of ideas and comparison. Participants read through these missions, highlighting words and phrases they liked. We discussed these key words and phrases and narrowed it down to a few in each component. Becca and Carol will work together to craft a draft mission statement over the next few weeks.
- c. We also discussed the mechanics of the sample statements. The group decided we want a mission statement which is action-oriented, rather than too general, and which is neither very long nor very brief.

## VI. Community Readiness Assessment (See “Community Readiness Assessment Interview Questions” and “Community Readiness Assessment Scoring Sheet”)

- a. Carol gave a brief summary of the Community Readiness model:
  - Community Readiness is an innovative method for assessing the level of readiness of a community to develop and implement prevention and other intervention efforts. It is assessed on a scale, which defines 9 stages of community readiness ranging from “no awareness” of the problem to “high level of community ownership” in the response to the issue.
  - It was developed by the Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research at Colorado State University after much research and testing in communities. Its validity and reliability have been demonstrated in many communities and with many issues, though it was originally developed to address alcohol and drug abuse prevention.
  - The model **can** help identify resources; help identify obstacles; provide an assessment of how ready the community is with respect to taking action on an issue; identify appropriate efforts based on the level of readiness; and build inter-sector cooperation and collaboration.
  - The model **cannot** make people do what they don’t believe in or tell a group exactly what action to take to accomplish an objective.
- b. The first step in assessing community readiness is to identify the issue and the target group/community for the group’s efforts. “Key respondent” interviews (similar to 1x1s) are conducted, then analyzed to determine the readiness level.

- c. Carol went through the key respondent interview questions with the group to get their sense of G-NG's level of readiness. The group assessed G-NG's readiness to be at level 3 on the CR scale.
  - Level 3: Vague Awareness: Beginning of recognition that issue is a local problem, but no motivation to do anything about it. Ideas about why the problem occurs and who is affected tend to be stereotyped and/or vague. No identifiable leadership exists or leadership lacks energy or motivation for dealing with the problem.
- d. To learn more about community readiness, refer to the handouts. If you would like to see the CR handbook, email Sarah and she will send you a copy: [skinsler@mcd.org](mailto:skinsler@mcd.org).

## VII. Community-Based Activities

- a. The group briefly brainstormed a few activities which could increase the community's level of readiness: a presentation to leaders of faith-based organizations, potlucks for parents of young teens to discuss their concerns, presentations to the Town Councils and to the safety community (Fire & Rescue).

## VIII. Community Opinion Survey

- a. The end of the meeting was used to gather feedback on the draft of the Community Opinion Survey. The group agreed it needed to be shorter, preferably one page, and brainstormed possible ways to distribute it.

## IX. Next Steps

- a. Carol will finalize the Community Opinion Survey and distribute it.
- b. Carol and Becca will begin crafting a mission statement.
- c. Members will continue to conduct 1x1s as assigned and report back to Carol with notes; as other potential sources of information arise, more 1x1s will be scheduled and completed. Carol will work with each Coalition member who is doing 1x1 meetings to coordinate schedules when appropriate.

<p><b>Next meeting date:</b> Wednesday, March 30th, 8:30-10:15. New Gloucester Meeting Hall</p>
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