Managing Community Conflict

November 29, December 6 and December 13, 2007
1:30 – 3 p.m. CST

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Managing Community Conflict

Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region

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Component 3
Managing Community Conflict

Janet Ayres

Foundations of Practice

• Component One – Understanding Communities & Their Dynamics. A 7-part series on Breeze; offered spring and fall each year.

• Component Two – Developing Successful Community Initiatives. A face-to-face “train-the-trainers” workshop on 5 process skills offered November 2006.

• Component Three – Areas of Specialization & Emphasis. Variety of topics will be offered in 2008.
Managing Community Conflict

November 29 -- Understanding Community Conflict & Extension’s Roles
December 6 -- Dealing with People
December 13 -- Collaborative Problem Solving

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for the November 29th session are to better understand various concepts:

- Nature of community conflicts
- Community conflict spiral
- Sources of community conflict
- Conflict as a dynamic of community change
- Situational analysis
- Extension’s roles

Types of Community Conflicts

What are the controversial issues in the communities where you work?
What are your roles in these issues?
Nature of Community Conflicts

What makes community issues controversial?

Characteristics of Community Conflicts

According to Susan Carpenter and W.J.D. Kennedy in Managing Public Disputes (2001), public conflicts:

- Multi-party issues – diffusion of responsibility – “No one in charge”
- Varying levels of expertise & understanding
- Different forms of power
- Strongly held values
- Are largely left unmanaged

Characteristics of Public Issues

What are some of the characteristics of public issues?
Characteristics of Public Issues

- Tension between private property rights and public issue/concern
- Many different views and perspectives
- Issue affects many people; many interests to be met
- Decision results in public policy (regulation, law, tax, court ruling)
- Decision made by public body, usually a board/council/commission
- Other?

Today’s Public Decision-Making Environment

- Diversity of populations
- Cynicism
- Polarization
- Individualism
- Attitude about complexity
- Role of elected officials

Spiral of Unmanaged Conflict
Sources of Community Conflict

- Data
- Relationships (power, trust, perceptions, assumptions, stereotypes, poor communication)
- Structure
- Interests
- Values

Sources of Conflict & Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Conflict</th>
<th>Approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Joint fact finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>More intentional/effective communication; relationship building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>More intentional, inclusive processes; clarity on procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Reframe the issue to move beyond values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Situational Analysis

- What is the situation?
- Who are the stakeholders? What are their interests?
- What are the sources of conflict?
- How polarized are the stakeholders?
- Will education make a difference?
- What role might I play?
- Other?
Extension’s Roles in Community Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Situation</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Locus of Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Expert &amp; Client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Client</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


What are the various roles that Extension plays in community conflict?

What might be inappropriate roles for Extension?
SLIDE 19

Extension’s Roles in Community Conflict

Neutrality versus Advocacy

What does neutrality mean?
What does advocacy mean?

SLIDE 20

Extension’s Roles in Community Conflict

Should I get involved in this controversial situation?

Things to consider:

SLIDE 21

Resources


Resources (cont.)


Resources (cont.)


Web sites

Community Based Collaborative Research Consortium (CBCRC)
http://CBCRC.org

Conflict Resolution Network http://www.crn.org/Institute for Conflict Analysis & Resolution, George Mason University
http://icar.gmu.edu/department/ICAR

Policy Consensus Initiative
www-policyconsensus.us/

Public Dispute Resolution, School of Government, University of North Carolina
http://www.iog.unc.edu/programs/dispute
December 6 Session:
Dealing with People

- Conflict management approaches
- Understanding adversarial behavior
- Understanding and managing our own emotions
- Building relationships to move forward
- Developing more intentional, effective communication