

Community Organizing Strategies to Reduce Risk and Increase Capacity

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Family Connections

Center for Families

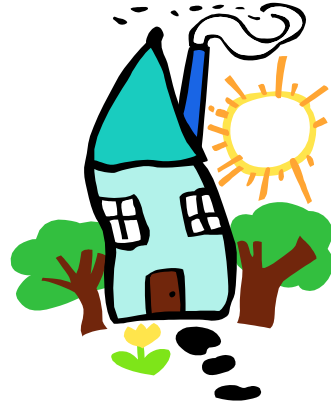
University of Maryland Baltimore

School of Social Work

The 9th Annual Governor's Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect

Baltimore, April 25-26, 2002

Family Connections



- Mission: Promoting the safety and well-being of children and families through family and community services, professional education and training, and research and evaluation.



Program Description

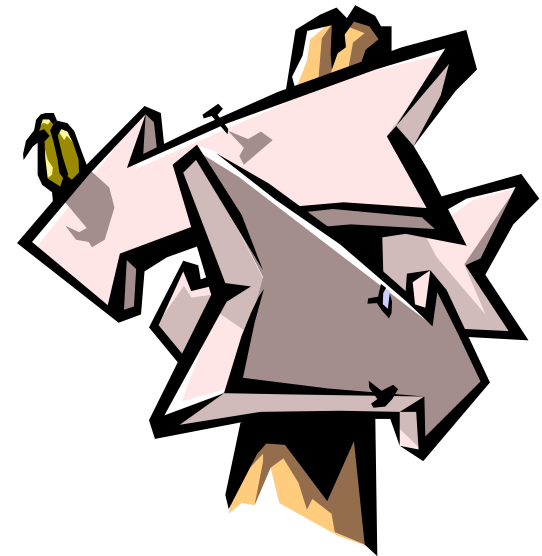
- Guiding philosophies
- Service
- Education
- Research





Agenda

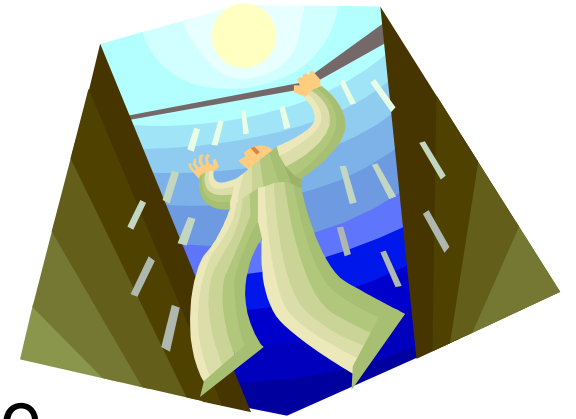
- Issue Identification
- Types of Macro Change
- Model for Macro Intervention
- Application of Model





Macro Change

- Benefits larger groups of people
- Involves systems
- Utilizes interventions including
 - Legislative advocacy
 - Community organizing
 - Community development
 - Coalition building



3 P's

- Projects
- Programs
- Policy



(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1998)



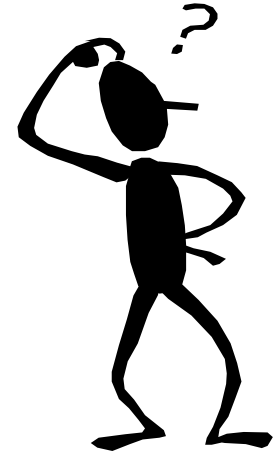
PREPARE

- **P:** Identify the **problem**
- **R:** Review your macro **reality**
- **E: Establish** your macro reality
- **P:** Identify relevant **people**
- **A: Assess** potential financial costs and benefits
- **R:** Evaluate professional and personal **risk**
- **E: Evaluate** the potential success

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1998)



P



Identify the **PROBLEMS** to address

- Break the problem down into needs/issues
- How severe is the problem?
- How many clients does it impact?
- Are you willing to make the effort?
- How will clients be affected?
- Will the change improve clients' lives?
- Will the change give clients more power?



R



Review your macro and personal **REALITY**

- Availability of funding, staff, agency resources
- Policies or laws that affect your agency
- Climate of the agency
- How willing is your agency to change?



E



ESTABLISH your macro reality

- What do you want to accomplish? (in broad terms)

3 P's

- Projects
- Programs
- Policy



(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1998)



P

Identify relevant **PEOPLE** of influence

- Who might be able to help you?





A



ASSESS potential financial costs and potential benefits to clients and agency

- Will the results be worth the effort?
- Might alternative solutions produce more benefits at less cost?
- Who gets the benefits and who pays the costs?

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1998)

R

Evaluate professional and personal **RISK**

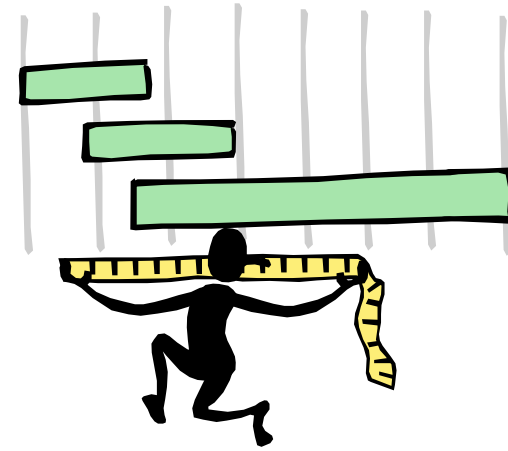
- Will you jeopardize your job, prospects of advancement or strain relationships at work?



(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1998)



E



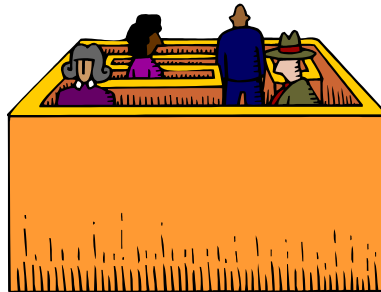
EVALUATE the potential success
of the macro change process

- Weigh the pros and cons of change process



P Identify the **PROBLEMS** to address

- Flawed educational system was a common problem confronting Baltimore families
- Parents uninformed of their rights and how to advocate for themselves and their children with the special education system



R

Review your macro and personal

REALITY

Resources:

- Staff
- Office space and equipment for staff
- Relationship with University of MD

Limitations:

- Continuity of Service
- Community Outreach Worker position has many varied responsibilities
- Culture of the Agency is to address problems clinically





E **ESTABLISH** your macro reality

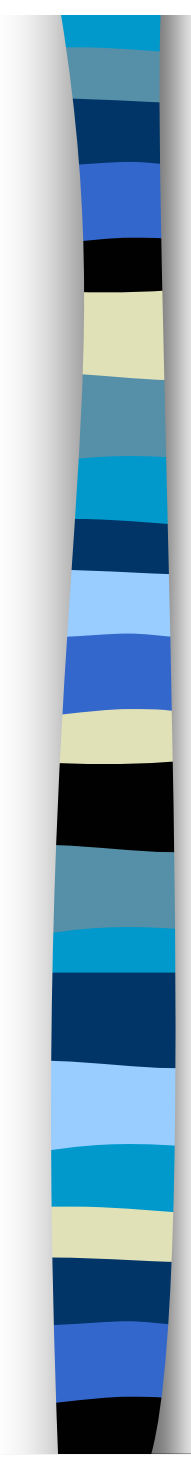
- **Long – term goal:** To improve the quality of education for students in Baltimore city
- **Intermediate goal:** To build capacity among current and former Family Connections clients





P Identify relevant **PEOPLE** of influence

- Baltimore Education Network
- Community providers
- 200 former clients, 25 current clients
- UMB School of Social Work, IVE staff and students
- Principals and staff of neighborhood schools
- City Wide Special Educations Advocacy Coalition members
- Parents from neighborhood schools
- ACORN leadership and members



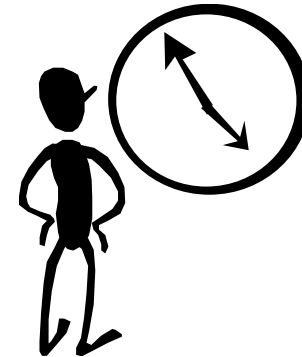
A **ASSESS** potential financial costs and potential benefits to clients and agency

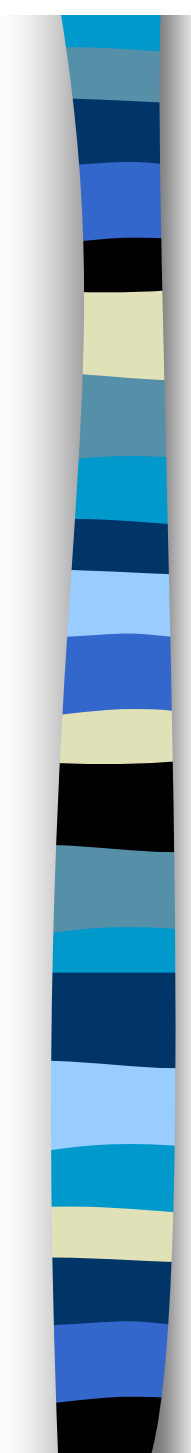
- **Cost:** Staff time, costs of materials, staff training
- **Other alternatives:** None identified
- **Who benefits:** Clients, program and community
- **Who pays:** The program and its partners
- **Will the benefits outweigh the cost?** Yes



R Evaluate professional and personal **RISK**

- Change in professional role of clinicians
- Time management
- Professional relationships may be strained with local school administrators and staff, and Board of Education





E **EVALUATE** the potential success of the macro change process

- **Pros:** Educate and empower parents and children; develop parents' leadership potential; wide range of supporters; enhance relationships with clients, community partners, and school system; attention and prestige to program
- **Cons:** costs of materials, transportation, child care, potential resistance





IMAGINE

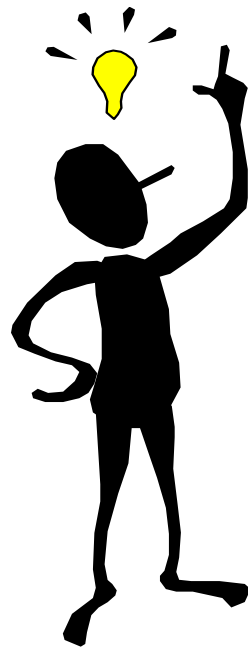
- **I:** Start with an innovative **idea**
- **M:** **Muster** support and formulate an action plan
- **A:** Identify **assets**
- **G:** Specify **goals**
- **I:** **Implement** the plan
- **N:** **Neutralize** the opposition
- **E:** **Evaluate** the progress

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1998)



I

Start with an
innovative **IDEA**





M

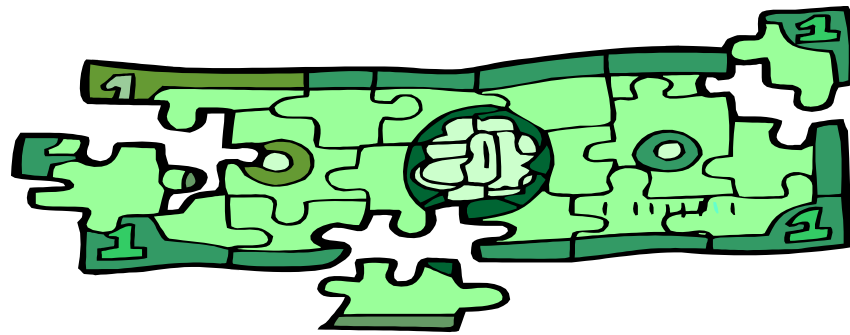


MUSTER support and formulate
an action system



A

Identify **ASSETS**





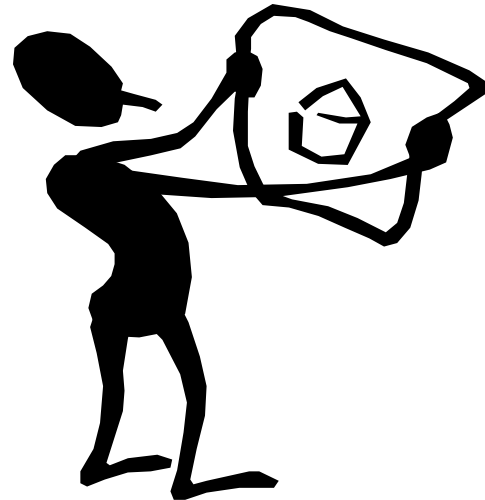
G

Specify GOALS





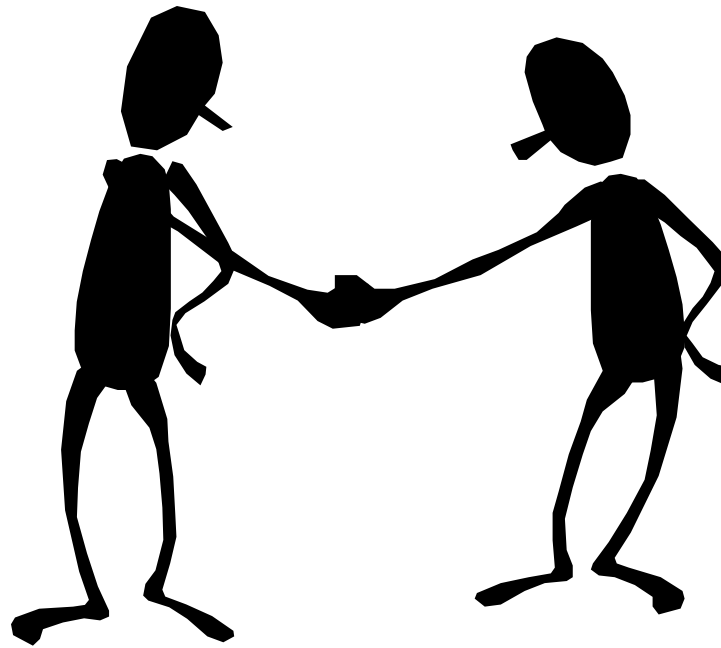
IMPLEMENT the plan



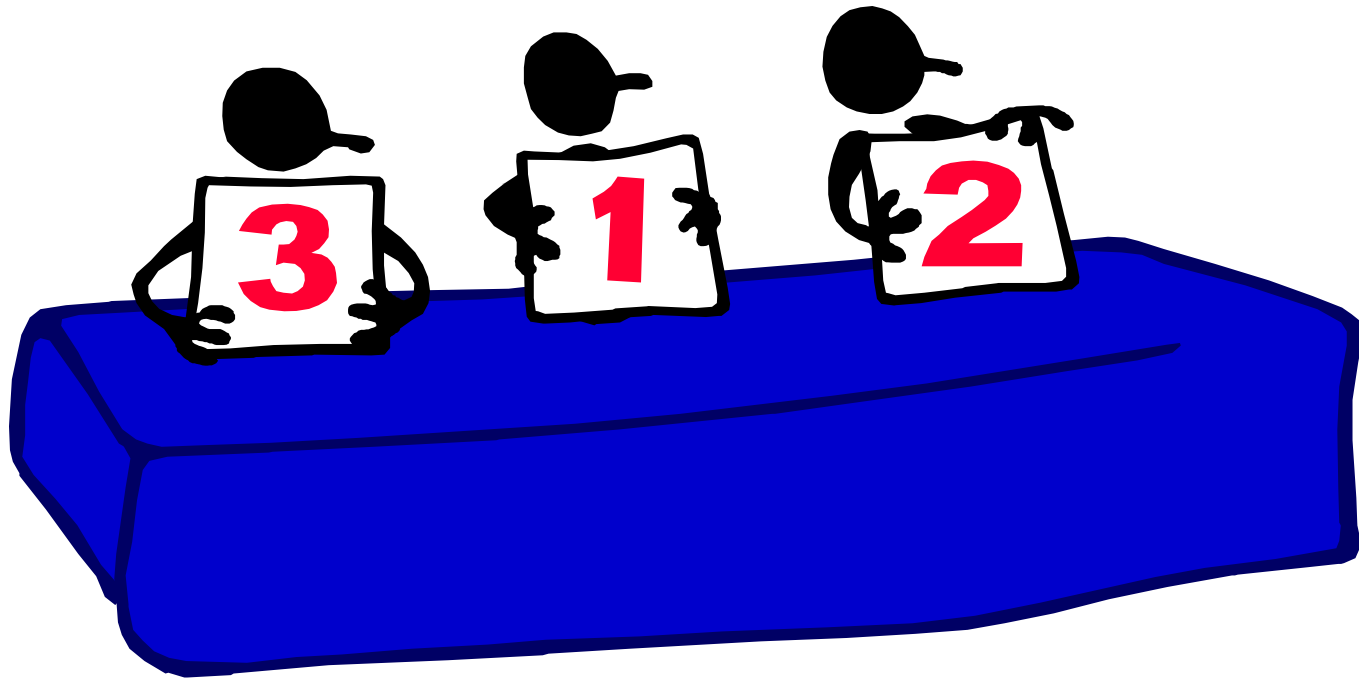


N

NEUTRALIZE OPPOSITION



E EVALUATE progress





I

Start with an innovative **IDEA**



To give parents an opportunity to become more involved in their children's education, learn their rights, and navigate through the special education process



M

MUSTER support and formulate
an action system

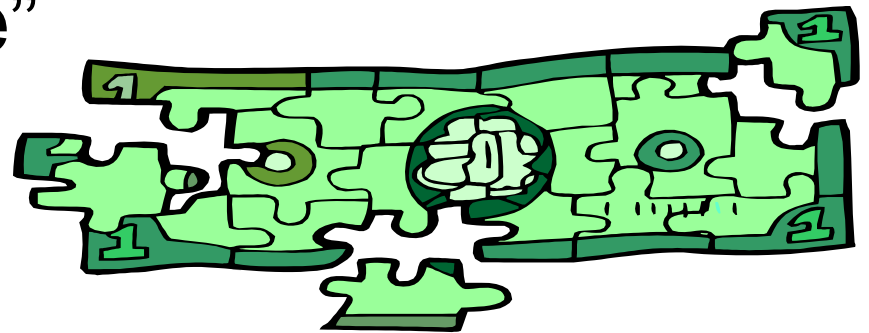


- Utilize Coalition contacts to determine support for and establish task group to work on the development of parent forums



A Identify **ASSETS**

- Staff
- Office space and equipment
- Relationship with UMB School of Social Work
- “Relevant people”





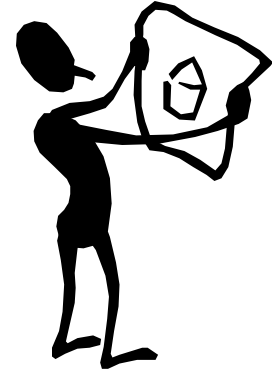
G Specify GOALS

- To provide parent training in the areas of general education standards, parents' rights, and how to navigate through the special education process





IMPLEMENT the plan

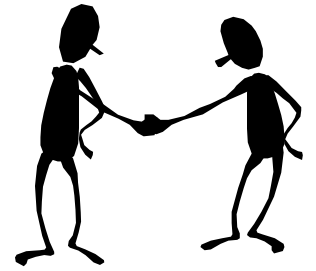


- Conduct one-on-one interviews with former clients to identify issues and potential leaders
- Initiate contact with potentially interested community providers
- Set-up task meetings to discuss potential project



N

NEUTRALIZE OPPOSITION

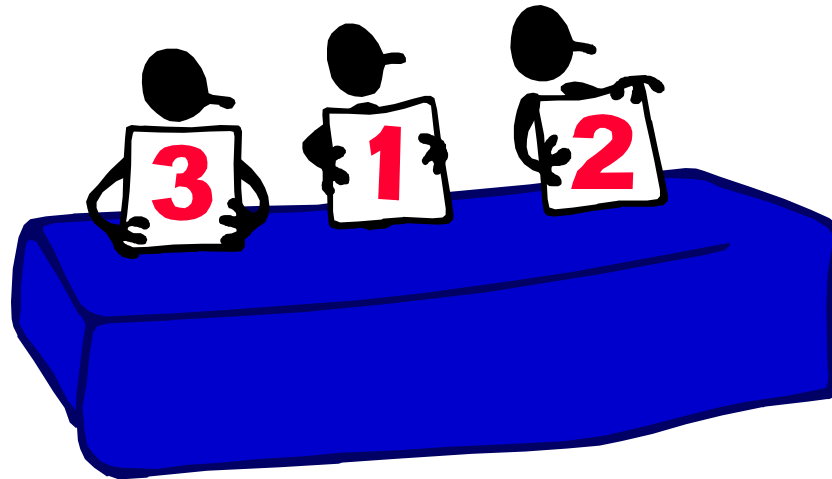


Challenges: Resistance, reconnecting with former clients, conflicting responsibilities of Community Outreach Worker

Strategies: Include potential adversaries in the process-- outreach and execution of plan, optimize partnerships

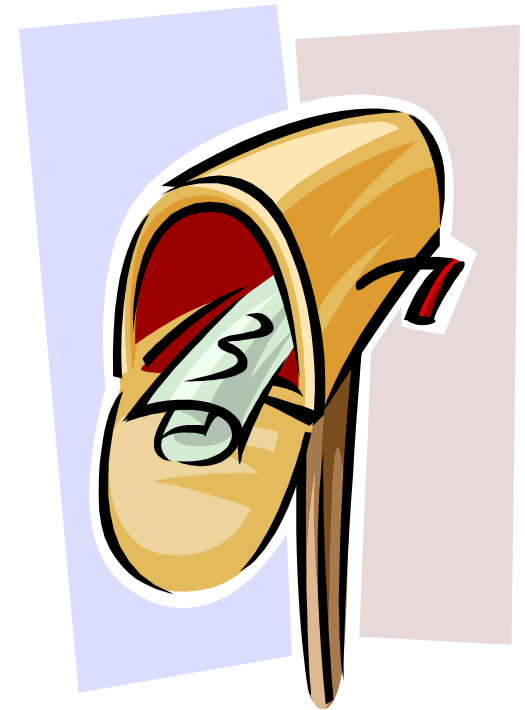
E EVALUATE progress

- On-going evaluation



Family Connections Macro Interventions

- Letter writing campaigns
- Legislative advocacy
- Coalition participation
- Fundraising



What can I do in my agency?



- Identify legislative districts of agency staff and partners
- Add category to monthly report to collect data on client trends
- Feature a bulletin board to identify concerns
- Conduct community assessment

Final Thoughts? 🦋

