

Core Competencies **AND** Jail Leadership

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What skills, knowledge, and abilities do you need in order to be a credible and successful jail leader? Beginning with the July/August 2015 issue of *American Jails*, we are exploring the 22 core competencies identified by jail administrators located across the country. Welcome to the third installment on core competencies and jail leadership.

A multifaceted approach was used to determine these core competencies. This approach incorporated a comprehensive literature review, input and feedback from a national advisory committee, and several focus group sessions conducted at national conferences. Integrating these various components ensured that all perspectives were accommodated. The knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with these competencies were also enumerated.

Not surprisingly, representatives from small, large, rural, tribal, and mega-jails easily arrived at the same conclusions (Stinchcomb, Smith, McCampbell, & Mancini, 2011). These core competencies now provide the basis of the curriculum for the National Jail Leadership Command Academy (www.nationaljailacademy.org) and the Southwest Florida Jail Leadership Initiative (2013).

In this issue of *American Jails*, we take a closer look at the core competency identified as “Build and Maintain Positive Relationships with External Stakeholders” and recommend several valuable resources related to leadership.

The Jail and Your External Environment

Description: Develop reciprocally beneficial external partnerships to achieve shared goals.

Rationale: Because jails are impacted by other criminal justice agencies, local and State policy-makers, and com-

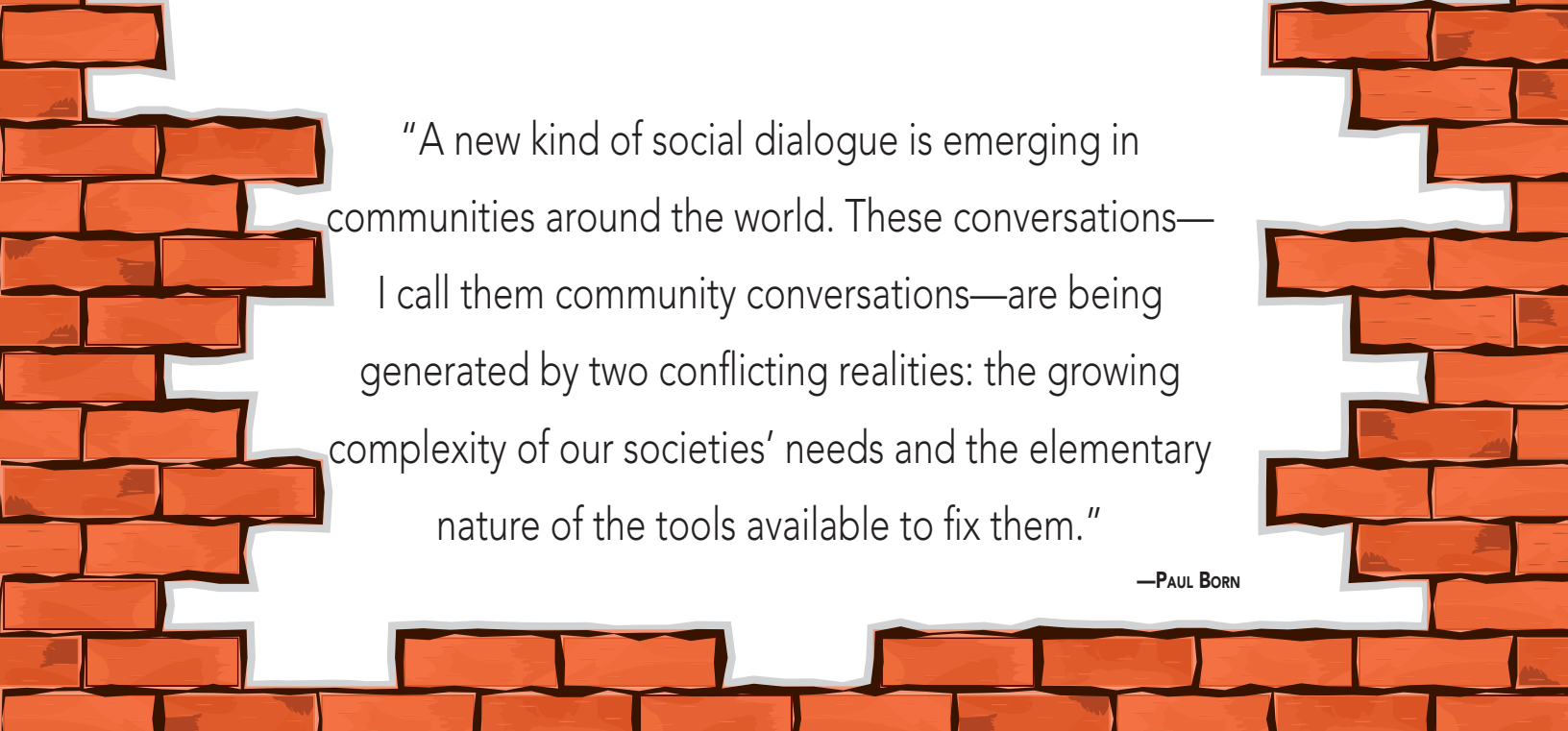
munity organizations, they cannot operate effectively without developing working relationships with such groups. Establishing linkages with these stakeholders not only assists with accomplishing the jail’s mission, but also with managing related external forces over which jails have no direct control. Identifying and building such relationships is a two-way process for the mutual benefit of everyone involved.

The success of your jail is directly and immutably tied to your ability to positively influence your community’s external environment. There is currently favorable discussion to examine the justice system and its impact on communities, but this window of opportunity to discuss important changes may not last long. More than 11,700,000 people cycle through America’s jails each year, with approximately 731,000 incarcerated each day (Vera Institute, 2015). This needed outreach aimed at helping your community to understand your jail’s mission may face some significant obstacles:

- Nearly half of young adults lack confidence in the Nation’s justice system or don’t trust their local police to do the right thing (Harvard University, 2015).
- Two-thirds of young Blacks lack confidence in the judicial system (Harvard University, 2015).
- Twenty-five percent of crime victims or their families believe that people who commit non-violent crimes should be imprisoned (Pew Center, 2012).
- Jails are warehouses for minor offenders who are held for longer periods of time than in the past two years because they can’t pay court-imposed fees (Vera Institute, 2015).

22 Core Competencies for Jail Leaders

- Anticipate, analyze, and resolve organizational challenges and conflicts.
- Assure organizational accountability.
- **Build and maintain positive relationships with external stakeholders.**
- Build and maintain teamwork; mentor and coach others.
- Communicate effectively, internally and externally.
- Comprehend, obtain, and manage fiscal resources.
- Develop and maintain a positive organizational culture that promotes respect for diverse staff.
- Develop and sustain organizational vision/mission.
- Engage in strategic planning.
- Enhance self-awareness; maintain proactive professional commitment.
- Establish organizational authority, roles, and responsibilities.
- Leverage the role of the jail in the criminal justice system.
- Make sound decisions.
- Manage change.
- Manage labor relations.
- Manage power and influence.
- Manage time.
- Obtain and manage human resources.
- Oversee inmate and facility management.
- Oversee physical plant management.
- Reduce jail-related liability risks.
- Understand and manage emerging technology.



"A new kind of social dialogue is emerging in communities around the world. These conversations—I call them community conversations—are being generated by two conflicting realities: the growing complexity of our societies' needs and the elementary nature of the tools available to fix them."

—PAUL BORN

- For many communities, jails have undisputedly become their only 24/7 mental health facility with many of these arrestees/inmates also chronic substance abusers.

Whether your jail's current concerns are budget, hiring and retaining employees, inmate mental health and medical care costs, condition of the physical plant, or crowding, *none* of these issues can be resolved by the jail alone. The elected officials who control the budget and the community must be in an effective collaborative partnership with the jail in order for any of these matters to be successfully addressed. Yet, how confident are you that your community knows your jail, understands your mission, and is sufficiently informed permitting them to be an effective partner in advocating for what you need?

Most jails have little or no presence in their community until there is bad news—an escape, an inmate death, and/or staff misconduct—then the media and the community demand answers. How can a jail leader provide education and inclusion that assures elected officials and community members know the jail? A few options are explored here, including the creation and sustaining of a jail advisory board and a citizen academy that includes not just the seemingly “sexy” law enforcement functions, but also the jail and its renewed commitment to be an active part of the community. Simply announcing the creation of a jail advisory board or a citizen academy, and setting a time and place for interested people to show up, doesn't have much of a chance for success. This is about collaboration.

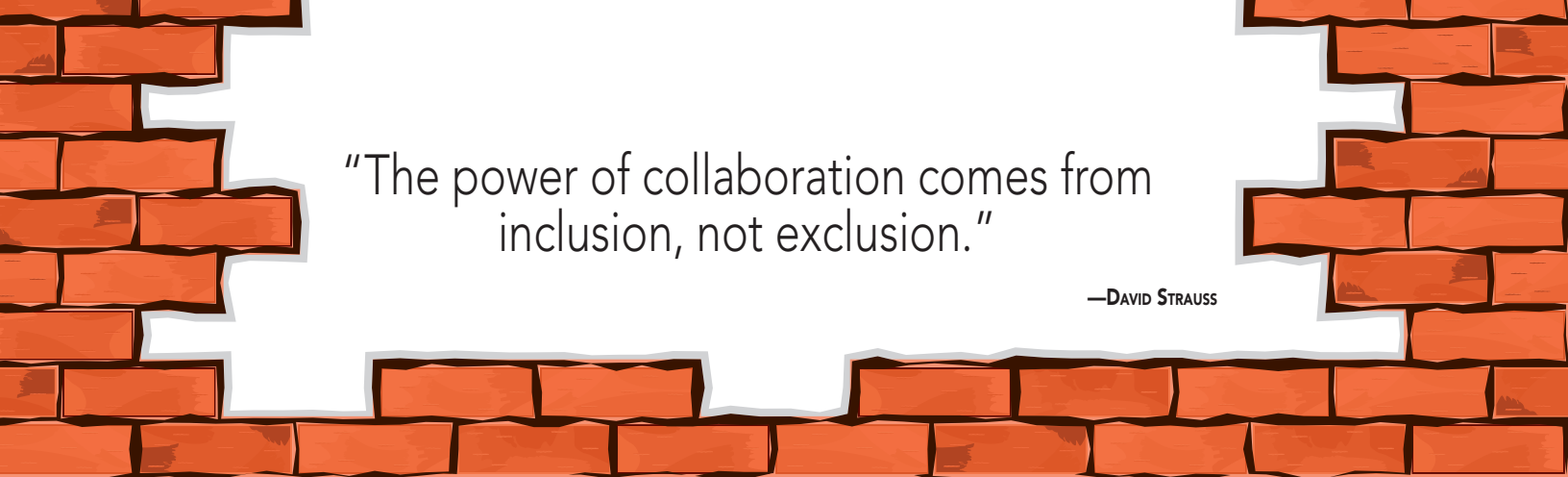
What Is Collaboration?

Collaboration accomplishes what can't be done alone—where there are shared goals among vested stakeholders, trust, open communication, teamwork, and action planning (Rinehart, Laszlo, & Briscoe, 2001).

It is the “process people employ when working together in a group, organization, or community to plan, create, solve problems, and make decisions” (Straus, 2002). Collaboration isn't only about what the jail wants, it is also how relationships among the official and unofficial community alliances converge for the good of all stakeholders. Collaboration is non-hierarchical—it isn't about rank, it is about interest, commitment, and shared beliefs. It requires time, patience, knowledge of the other's agenda in the partnerships, and give-and-take. For example, a collaboration to address the issue of improved management of inmates with mental illness in the jail also includes discussion of beds in diversion centers, training for law enforcement, and homeless outreach. The result is the jail may receive fewer inmates with mental illness, and at the same time, help a community group find funding for beds and services.

Who Are the Stakeholders?

The stakeholder-mapping exercise done at each session of the National Jail Leadership Command Academy (NJLCA) provides the identification of literally hundreds of groups and individuals whom the jail should know, acknowledge, and embrace. (See the sidebar “Your Community Literacy.”) Some of these stakeholders are more critical than others, but the number and scope of the list surprises even those jail leaders who are part of collaborations—the telephone company, bail bondsmen, inmate families, public transportation, domestic violence programs, public health departments, and the list is only limited by the space to post the results. So although the jail may feel isolated, unloved, and underappreciated by the community, there are many opportunities to reach out, educate, invite, and establish beneficial collaborations. Jail leaders need to keep their eyes open to opportunities, meet as many stakeholders as possible,



“The power of collaboration comes from inclusion, not exclusion.”

—DAVID STRAUSS

volunteer in the community with talent and time, and be informed partners.

According to David Straus (2002), there are four kinds of stakeholders:

- Those with the formal power to make a decision.
- Those with the power to block a decision.
- Those affected by a decision.
- Those with relevant information or expertise.

The interrelationships between such stakeholders require knowledge, finesse, and transparency to manage well.

Why Collaborate?

As noted previously, there is nothing in a jail’s mission that can be accomplished solely by the jail itself. In order to develop meaningful and effective collaborations, the jail’s leadership needs to carefully consider

Your Community Literacy—Do you know these organizations and/or individuals, and how to reach them?

- Names of elected officials (city council, county commission, district attorney, judges) and important appointed leaders (public defender, county attorney, chair of criminal justice council) in the jurisdictions your agency serves, and information about each of them?
- The names of Federal law enforcement officials in your area—FBI SAC, DEA SAC, U.S. Attorney, FEMA, DHS, ICE, CBP?
- Names of the corrections officials (jails, prisons, juvenile, community corrections) and treatment providers (community, county, and contracted) in your jurisdiction and in the neighboring counties?
- Name of the person on the governor’s staff who is responsible for criminal justice/jail issues?
- Name of the U.S. Representative(s) serving your jurisdiction and the names of your State’s two U.S. Senators? When was the last time they toured or were invited to tour your jail?
- Name and telephone number of the producer of the most watched prime time TV station in your area, name of the assignment editor, and the names of reporters who cover your organization?
- Names of those on the board of the chamber of commerce in the jurisdiction in which your jail is located?
- Name of head of local council of clergy?
- Name of presidents of local colleges and/or universities that serve the area in which your jail

is located? Do the colleges have criminal justice programs, and what are the names of the program chairs/coordinators?

- The names of the members of your State’s legislative body who serve the area in which your jail is located? The last time they were invited to tour the jail and when they toured?
- The approximate number (and contact information) of service organizations (Kiwanis, Rotary, Civitan, etc.) and faith-based organizations in your jurisdiction?
- The name of the president of the local NAACP and the time and location of the organization’s meetings?
- Names of the presidents of the local chapter of the Mental Health Association and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill?

Do you know?

- Date of the next session your State legislature begins, date committees begin to meet, date proposed legislation is due?
- Names of top five employers in your jurisdiction (other than your agency)?

If you don’t know them—why should they consider the jail important? Perhaps gathering this information and using it to educate your community’s formal and informal leaders can now be added to your “to-do” list.

For Your Leadership Library

Watch upcoming issues of *American Jails* for recommendations to add to your leadership library. If you can recommend a publication that helped you become a better leader, e-mail Susan McCampbell at susanmccampbell@cipp.org.

Guidelines for Developing a Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee

Robert C. Cushman, 2002

U.S. Dept. of Justice, National Institute of Corrections

<http://static.nicic.gov/Library/017232.pdf>

Callous and Cruel: Use of Force against Inmates with Mental Disabilities in U.S. Jails and Prisons

Jamie Fellner, 2015

Human Rights Watch

[www.hrw.org/report/2015/05/12/callous-and-cruel/use-force-against-inmates-mental-disabilities-us-jails-and](http://www.hrw.org/report/2015/05/12/callous-and-cruel/use-force-against-inmates-mental-disabilities-us-jails-and-prisons)

Guidelines for Staffing a Local Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee

Michael R. Jones, 2012

U. S. Dept. of Justice, National Institute of Corrections

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.nicic.gov/Library/026308.pdf>

Keeping Your Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee Going Strong

NIC, National Jail Exchange

http://community.nicic.gov/blogs/national_jail_exchange/archive/2013/02/12/keeping-your-criminal-justice-coordinating-committee-going-strong.aspx

The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organizations: Effective Strategies to Partner with Law Enforcement

Michael S. McCampbell, 2010

U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Policing Services

http://ojp.gov/fbnp/pdfs/Collaboration_Toolkit.pdf

National Network of Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Resources

www.jmijustice.org/network-coordination/national-network-criminal-justice-coordinating-councils/national-network-criminal-justice-coordinating-councils-nncjcc-resources/

Public Opinion on Sentencing and Correctional Policy in America

Pew Center for the States, 2012

http://famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/PEW_NationalSurveyResearchPaper_FINAL.pdf

Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships

Tammy A. Rinehart, Anna T.

Laszlo, and Gwen O. Briscoe, 2001

U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Policing Services

www.cops.usdoj.gov/html/cd_rom/collaboration_toolkit/pubs/collaborationtoolkit.pdf

Incarceration's Front Door: The Misuse of Jails in America

Vera Institute, 2015

www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/incarcerations-front-door-report.pdf

its needs and priorities, while identifying prospective partners. David Straus (2002) suggests one way to calculate prospective collaborations: First, analyze the issue and visualize how the situation will look when resolved. Then, work backwards to decide who can help and when help is needed. This also means that the jail's staff must be willing to devote time to other stakeholders in the community, and help out as needed—it is *not* a one-way “give us what we want and leave us alone” undertaking. It must be deliberate, planned, and resourced.

As our best examples illustrate—building a collaboration to divert individuals with mental illness from the jail, providing treatment to those who are incarcerated, and developing aftercare to provide continuity back to the community—an extremely worthwhile community collaboration requires much of those who will be involved. When asked to participate, the jail must be

ready: with the appropriate staff, data to inform the process, and examples of how other jails have implemented solutions in partnership with their community.

Unless a jail can accomplish its mission, fund the programs and staffing necessary to achieve its goals without collaboration—why not give it a try?

Other Strategies

During the process to form a collaborative partnership, jails have at least two options to develop community education and collaborations.

Jail Community Advisory Board

Very few jails have established a community advisory board to help achieve their mission. Most new jail construction involves a community group to help define needs and gain political and financial support—these

initiatives are focused solely on this—and fade away when the jail is open. Some States require a criminal justice coordinating council as a matter of law, but many of these are focused only on jail crowding and associated issues. Often the sheriff and/or jail administrator are members, but the agenda is not necessarily focused on the jail's mission. Although a good model, it doesn't prevent a sheriff or jail administrator from establishing their own collaborative board aimed at improving the jail and the knowledge about the jail in the community.

As noted above, such an initiative must be well thought-out and resourced. Nothing is worse than having a group of community members, program representatives, and other stakeholders sitting around a table asking why they are there and what is expected of them. These questions need to be addressed:

- Determine the need. What can be improved through the work of an advisory council? Are there specific projects, funding initiatives, and educational objectives?
- What interest is there among the community's informal and formal leaders, community groups, elected officials? Who will be involved in the jail's leadership meeting with potential stakeholders in the community?
- Identify any legislative mandate (State or local). What are the requirements, if any?
- Identify the jail staff responsible for the advisory board:
 - The point of contact for members.
 - The resource who gathers information.
 - The person who circulates the agenda and maintains minutes.
 - The individual who keeps members informed.
- Identify the jail staff responsible for participation in other community collaborations and partnerships. Assure these individuals possess the time, knowledge, and skills to credibly do this work.
- Are there other groups within the community doing similar work? Is there a way to partner?
- Develop a mission statement/scope of work for an advisory council, including members, duties, meetings, responsibilities, and authority (who has the final say on any decisions). Identify the structure, membership, and attendance guidance. Draft by-laws. Determine how often and where the group meets, who develops the agenda, and who keeps minutes. Is there a web site?
- Approach and ask community stakeholders and citizens to be members. Be able to provide the information about what people want to know: What is the goal? What is expected of me? How much time do I need to devote?

- Consider developing criteria/metrics to determine if the advisory group brings not only value to the jail, but to other community endeavors as well. In other words, be able to answer the questions “did this work?” and “how do we know?”

Citizen Academy

Many communities across the country have implemented citizen police academies, or public safety citizen academies as a way to involve and educate the community (www.nationalcpaa.org/index.html). If the jail is part of a full-service sheriff’s office, the jail’s role and function may be one module of the academy, or not. If the jail is not an organizational component of a full-service law enforcement agency, the challenge will be to:

- Develop such an initiative.
- Identify the goals and objectives.
- Define the content.
- Determine interest of the community.
- Find qualified and interested jail staff to teach.
- Assess if the investment of time and resources gives a return on the investment.

A citizen academy may not be collaboration in the broad sense; however, if the jail has no presence in the community, or is not yet seen as a “player” with community initiatives, this may be a good first step.

What’s Next?

If a jail considers itself to be undervalued in the community—or if it is overlooked in decisions that directly affect it—it is time for the jail’s leadership to take action becoming more visible. Waiting to be asked will only further maintain their status quo. This article provides many resources that can help facilities understand what collaboration means, and take those first steps to begin the process.

Collaboration is powerful. “The goal of collaboration is not to exercise power over others but to use the power of the collaborative to engage people with power” (Born, 2012). Jails need to step out and assume their role in the community—bettering the jail, the staff, and the inmates and improving the public’s safety. ■

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