

Chapter 4: Building a Strong Foundation

Mission and Vision Statements

At some point, your MDT may want to develop and adopt a mission and vision statement. Each statement should be brief, one sentence if possible. These statements can reflect either the decisions made so far or can serve to focus the discussions if these statements are adopted prior to discussions about the issues outlined in the Toolkit item: Issues for Initial MDT Discussions.

Vision Statement

The MDT's vision is a statement of your view of the future. There are numerous resources on the internet for developing your mission and vision statement.ⁱ An effective vision statement will tell the world what change you wish to create for the future of your community.ⁱⁱ For example:

Our vision is a community where _____.

Mission statement

The MDT may want to create a mission statement that defines its purpose and reflects initial decisions. The mission statement provides the team with guidance and motivation and therefore should be a goal(s) that is moderately difficult to achieve.ⁱⁱⁱ A mission statement should identify and include:

1. The population or the issue in the community that the partnership is targeting or addressing and
2. The reason the MDT exists (in some cases, this may serve as the building block of your branding and marketing).

Examples of mission statements include:^{iv}

To improve the lives of mistreated elders through clinical care, education, and research.^v

Coalition of Organizations Protecting Elders (COPE) is a community-based team of organizations in Lucas County, Ohio, committed to addressing abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders through enhanced collaboration and coordination of community resources.^{vi}

The mission of the Clackamas County Vulnerable Adult Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) is to develop a professional team committed to protecting elders and adults with disabilities, herein collectively referred to as "vulnerable adults."^{vii}

Linking Vision and Mission Statements

Some MDTs link their mission and vision statements in one paragraph, for example:

Our vision is a community where _____. To bring that vision into reality, we _____ for _____ in the _____ region / area / township / etc.

These statements are critically important to the actions of the MDT so take the time to develop these statements. Your vision and mission statements focus and guide your program so refer to them often when making decisions about your program and ensure that your decisions are in line with these statements. You will want to review your mission and vision statements periodically, even if you decide to retain the current version.

Strategic Planning

At some point in the future, within one year of developing the MDT, many MDTs step back and look at the bigger picture by engaging in a strategic planning process designed to guide the MDT in the coming years (typically, 3 to 5 years into the future) toward achievable goals.

The MDT members will want to think about and eventually decide on how all the team members are going to work together to achieve the stated goal(s).^{viii} This formalized plan will provide guidance to the MDT, increase accountability, and engender trust. The plan will help create clarity about how the team should operate and how to achieve goals. Consider using existing templates to assist in the development of your strategic plan, and explore tools such as Logic Models, and SMART Goals^{ix}. Information about and examples of these planning tools are easily located online. Once created, refer frequently to the strategic plan and build in period review sessions to ensure its relevance.

Developing Policies

Eventually, your MDT may want to develop policies (distinct from protocols), but not all communities do so (see examples in the Toolkit item titled: Sample Protocols and Policies). A policy is a plan or course of action intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and all activities that take place within the boundaries set by them. Policies to discuss include:

- Bylaws (outlines how the organization is to be governed)
- Data management^x
- Confidentiality (see Chapter 5: Ethical and Legal Considerations)^{xi}
- Delivery of services
- Membership^{xii}
- Follow-up
- Code of ethics (see Toolkit item: List of Professional's Code of Ethics)
- Employee/personnel
- Document retention and destruction^{xiii}

- Recruitment and selection of new members
- Financial
- Media^{xiv}

Plan for Ongoing Maintenance

As with any relationship, the MDT needs ongoing attention. Maintenance and growth of the MDT requires time, effort, and nurturing. Invite MDT members to provide feedback and suggestions regarding procedures and operations of the MDT,^{xv} preferably at regularly scheduled times such as bi-annually. Managing an MDT requires ongoing commitment and resources, including:

- Time
- Money
- Staff (and staff turnover)
- Ongoing joint training
- Developing trust and team building
- Conflict management
- Regular review of policies and procedures^{xvi}

Summary

MDTs require ongoing care and maintenance. As part of the maintenance process, there are a number of activities that require periodic review such as your vision and mission statement, your strategic plan, and various policies and procedures. Outdated and irrelevant documents are not useful. Therefore, build these review activities into your overall maintenance plan for the MDT.

Endnotes

ⁱ Additional online resources: Van Korlar, C. (2012, September 4). *Guide to creating mission & vision statements*. Retrieved from <http://topnonprofits.com/vision-mission/>

ⁱⁱ Gottlieb, H., ReSolve, Inc. (2007). *3 statements that can change the world: Mission / vision / values*. Retrieved from http://www.help4nonprofits.com/NP_Bd_MissionVisionValues_Art.htm

ⁱⁱⁱ Levi, D. J. (2014). *Group dynamics for teams*. (4th ed). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

^{iv} Gottlieb, H., ReSolve, Inc. (2007). *3 statements that can change the world: Mission / vision / values*. Retrieved from <http://topnonprofits.com/examples/nonprofit-mission-statements/>

^v Reilly, B. A., Trahan, C., Hazelett, S., Istenes, N., Cafalu, C., & Dyer, C. B. (n.d.). *Guidance manual for: Medical professionals forming an interdisciplinary elder mistreatment team* (p. 100).

^{vi} Coalition of Organizations Protecting Elder. (n. d.) *Home*. Retrieved from <http://www.protectingelders.org/>

^{vii} Oregon Department of Human Services. (n. d.) *Services for seniors & people with disabilities*. Retrieved from <http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/spwpd/asp/docs/mdt-protocol.pdf>

^{viii} Levi, D. J. (2014). *Group dynamics for teams*. (4th ed). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

^{ix} For more on SMART goals, see Esposito, E. (2015, November 11). *The essential guide to writing S.M.A.R.T. goals*. Retrieved from <https://www.smartsheet.com/blog/essential-guide-writing-smart-goals> or Arunkundum, R. (2017, February 23). *Top 5 enterprise collaboration fails and how to avoid them*. Retrieved from <http://www.unh.edu/hr/sites/unh.edu.hr/files/pdfs/SMART-Goals.pdf>

^x Reilly, B. A., Trahan, C., Hazelett, S., Istenes, N., Cafalu, C., & Dyer, C. B. (n.d.). *Guidance manual for: Medical professionals forming an interdisciplinary elder mistreatment team* (pp. 137-138).

^{xi} For example, see Reilly, B. A., Trahan, C., Hazelett, S., Istenes, N., Cafalu, C., & Dyer, C. B. (n.d.). *Guidance manual for: Medical professionals forming an interdisciplinary elder mistreatment team* (p. 147).

^{xii} Reilly, B. A., Trahan, C., Hazelett, S., Istenes, N., Cafalu, C., & Dyer, C. B. (n.d.). *Guidance manual for: Medical professionals forming an interdisciplinary elder mistreatment team*.

^{xiii} Mackey, S. (2013, January 1). Policies your nonprofit needs.) Retrieved from <http://sarahwmackey.com/2013/01/01/policies-your-nonprofit-needs/>; for samples, see <http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/nonprofit-resources/templates-samples> Minnesota Council of Nonprofits. (2017). *Templates and samples*. Retrieved from <http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/nonprofit-resources/templates-samples>

^{xiv} See National Children's Alliance (2006). *Organizational Development Manual for Children's Advocacy Centers* (pp. 81-90), available at <http://bit.ly/2osGhwu>

^{xv} Mitra, S., & Vadivelu, N. (2013). Multidisciplinary approach and coordination of care. In N. Vadivelu, A. D. Kaye, & J. M. Berger (Eds), *Essentials of Palliative Care* (pp. 7-21). New York, NY: Springer.

^{xvi} Sloper, P. (2004). Facilitators and barriers for co-ordinated multi-agency services. *Child: Care, Health & Development*, 30(6), 571-580. doi:[10.1111/j.1365-2214.2004.00468.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2004.00468.x)