Increasing cross collaboration in the community requires intentionality. The "CONNECT" section includes the why, the how, and the what to help business and public health professional partnerships consider when to engage with the other. By creating mechanisms to increase cross-sector collaboration and using trusted "gate-keepers", new partners are attracted and connected to the work, while also re-engaging existing partners.

The "SHARE" section of the roadmap helps partnerships consider how, when, and where they tell others about their collaborative work. It emphasizes the importance of telling the story - both what works and what doesn’t from various perspectives - to spread ideas across sectors, ultimately connecting others to the work.
KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Sharing Leads to Connecting**
ABHC was caught up in the work and ‘performing,’ relying on and working with the same initial partners, which was leading to stagnation. Through the Roadmap, ABHC realized by not sharing, the connections stopped occurring. To be successful, sharing and connecting need to be just as intentional as planning and performing.

**Investing in Community Needs Leads to Greater Dividends**
ABHC listened to their community and developed tools and resources useful for them, and in turn, by sharing in a strategic way, this drove the initiation of even more work to support the community - the perfect example of community investment.

**Ensuring Accessibility Increases Utility**
Focusing on accessibility of information is key in all communities and something often overlooked because of capacity and funding limitations. Being strategic and thoughtful when developing materials ultimately increases the utility and impact.

**Partnership Work is a Continuous Process**
Publicizing the work of the partnership should be continuous to share successes, important lessons learned, and critical “how-to” steps to build the knowledge base around this important work. ABHC found that following the recommendations in the Roadmap helped to solidify a process and sort out reasons for engaging across sectors.

DESKTOP

- Sharing past successes, as well as current and future plans, prompted interest from new funders and expanded partners.
- Increased awareness of ACEs and made progress toward building a better trauma informed community by hosting community events and trainings, earning media coverage.
- Expanded web presence that includes partner stories and a digital community resource guide increased the visibility of ABHC and its mission.
- ABHC has become a recognized authority, modeling processes for neighboring communities and being invited to participate in and host key statewide mental health listening sessions.

Check out ABHC’s stories and digital resource guide on their new website.
The road to strengthened partnerships is not one-way. It must be a continuous process where partners cycle between steps as their work progresses. The interdependency and cyclical nature of the steps is clear when you look at ABHC’s efforts. By taking the time to invest in sharing their story, not just successes, but also the challenges, ABHC connected new partners to the work while reconnecting early supporters now looking to reinvest in ABHC’s future activities.

The Roadmap was exactly what ABHC needed to propel the collaborative to the next level. In the beginning stages of ABHC the community was really engaged in the collaborative. As ABHC moved into the next stages of “doing the work” and addressing the needs and issues identified by the collaborative that community engagement piece fell off. It was difficult to balance both, and the “work” took the priority. The Covid-19 pandemic also exacerbated this issue. This project really gave ABHC the capacity to think through and effectively find ways to share about the collaborative and in doing so connect more organizations and individuals back into the collaborative.

Ellen Roberts
Lighthouse Behavioral Wellness Centers

GUIDE POSTS

Impact of COVID-19 on Program Activities

As with many organizations, connecting during the pandemic was difficult, and many partners stepped away due to personal and professional challenges. While this closed some doors, it also created space and opportunity for new partners to step into leadership roles. COVID-19 created an even greater need for the information and resources provided by ABHC.

Health Equity Considerations

ABHC approached principles of health equity with intentionality, making it part of the dissemination planning process. The goal was to make the resources widely available to all parts of the community, especially those under-resourced. They worked with partners to ensure the language and terms used in the videos focused on equity and would resonate with audiences across the community. They made accessibility a priority when developing the website, ensuring translation, access for those using a screen reader, and appropriate content for all reading levels were included.