



## **Making a Big Splash: Checklist for Hosting Successful Community Events**

Provided by:  
**Caring Connections**  
[www.Caringinfo.org](http://www.Caringinfo.org)  
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# Checklist for Hosting Successful Community Events

## 1. Identify Your Vision

- Believe in and be committed to the idea of a successful community event
- Identify your topic and your audience
  - What are audience's relevant interests? What are their cultural values? What are their current or future needs?
  - What information do you hope to convey?
  - What would your audience gain from attending?
  - How is the topic relevant to this audience?

## 2. Coordinate With Other Coalitions

- Go to the *Caring Connections* coalition website ([www.CaringInfo.org](http://www.CaringInfo.org)) and find other coalitions in your state or region - contact them and see if you can coordinate to make a bigger impact, co-market events, share expenses, etc...
- Ask others about what worked, best ideas, lessons learned

## 3. Start Planning in Advance

- Leave plenty of time to attend to all the details of planning and promotion
- Speakers often have busy schedules booked in advance, leave room for speakers' schedules

## 4. Have an Organized Planning Committee

- Meet regularly
- Assign tasks and responsibilities among the coalition partnership so the effort is shared

## 5. Identify Resources to Support the Event

- Identify resources that each coalition member brings to the partnership
- Leverage relationships - who knows whom? Who could provide food? Publicity? Media coverage? Supplies? A venue?
- Consider other available resources

## 6. Set Goals

- Develop goals so you can measure outcomes, learn lessons and develop a track record
- Record of success helps establish the coalition and attract future support

## 7. Plan the Event

- **Determine the location**
  - Make sure that topics and titles are enhanced by the location you choose. If the topic you choose is attractive to your audience but the location is unfamiliar or difficult to access, people are less likely to attend
  - Keep in mind that the location you choose can also communicate an affiliation with a group or belief
- **Secure speakers**
  - Start with existing relationships. You will be surprised by the speakers you have access to through existing connections!
  - Make a list of potential speakers and contact them to see if they are available, affordable, and if they can present what you want.
  - Tell the speaker about your community, about the event you are planning, and about what you want.

- **Set the agenda**
  - Keep in mind that some groups may benefit from time to “mingle,” and that your advertised and actual start times can vary to accommodate the situation.
  - Leave some time for audience participation. This can lead to meaningful conversations.
- **Plan for providing refreshments and other supplies:**
  - Information packets about your coalition and your contact info
  - Relevant materials (grief in the workplace, advance directives, etc)
  - Publicity information on upcoming coalition events and other relevant community events
  - Written instructions for any facilitators, moderators, or greeters
  - Sign in sheets for participants

## **8. Promote and Publicize the Event**

- Hold every member of partnership accountable for bringing a certain amount of people to the event
- Make a promotional flyer for the event – invest in one well-done piece
- Focus marketing efforts to targeted groups, not individuals - you get more “bang for your buck.”
- Get creative – remember that church bulletins, supermarkets, little league games, community bulletin boards, book clubs, libraries, and hair salons all provide marketing audiences for your efforts.
- Use professional champions
  - Offer continuing education through an approved school or agency
  - Connect with local associations
  - Go to the teachers in local schools – law, medicine, high-school, nursing, community colleges, legal assistant, theological seminaries – and encourage them to bring the class to the event.

## **9. Evaluate the outcomes**

- Provide evaluation forms and ask participants to provide comments and rate their satisfaction with the event. Evaluations can measure number of attendees, participant satisfaction, participant increases in knowledge, changes in attitude or behavior.
- Suggestion and comment boxes are a great way to ensure that participants have an opportunity to give feedback about the event.
- If a participant shares a personal story, ask if you could write it up or share it anonymously at future events or in your materials. Personal stories about the need to improve end-of-life care and services often have the greatest impact.
- This information can be used to help plan future events, revise coalition goals, garner support from community leaders, educate public policy makers and share insights with local service providers.

## **10. Follow-up**

- Collect participant names and contact information on a sign-in sheet. People who attend your events have already demonstrated an interest in your cause -- keep them involved! You may decide to invite some of them to join the coalition.