

Engaging Men and Boys in Ending Violence against Women and Girls

Chrysalis House / Juniper House Project

Use of the Internet

Public Web Presence

On the day that our funding was announced, we launched our public website which can be found at <http://cjproject.engagingmenandboys.ca>. We had several goals for this site.

1. To let the public know about our project and to keep them informed as it evolved.
2. To provide information to the public about gender violence, about preventing gender violence, and in particular about engaging men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls.
3. To enable feedback from the public and to give us opportunities to provide surveys and questionnaires that would give us insight into local public opinion and community readiness.

We have been meeting the first two goals from the inception of the website but have held back on the third one until we can develop a clear policy around privacy and moderation issues. We have used the survey capability to get feedback from those who have participated in activities we have sponsored. The website was updated in November 2013 to a responsive design that worked equally well on desktop computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones.

Coordinating Communications

One of the challenges of operating a project over a catchment area of six counties and with multiple partners is coordinating communications. We needed a solution that was affordable and effective. We know from experience that using email is highly problematic for a number of reasons. These include challenges in organising communications as they arrive, ensuring all appropriate people are in on a given conversation, problems with lost emails or inadvertently deleted emails, and difficulty integrating new participants into a project.

As we were using WordPress software for our public website we looked for plug-ins that could piggyback on that for our private area. We initially tried out the Buddy Press software but found that it was primarily designed for social networking rather than for collaboration and thus was rather clunky for what we needed it to do. After looking at a number of other options, we settled on Simple-Press – an affordable plug-in that manages online discussions. See <http://simple-press.com> for details.

The Simple Press software met the following criteria:

- Has a responsive display that works on computers, tablets and smartphones
- Provides ability to control access to discussion forums on multiple levels
- Allows attaching many kinds of documents to posts
- Easily embeds images, video and other media into posts
- Easy to learn and use
- Provides options to be notified when a new topic is started when there is a reply to topic you are following
- Allows the creation of logins without having to give access to the WordPress backend. This is more secure and makes things less confusing for new users.
- Has good technical support

Advantages

The Simple-Press software allows for multiple groups of forums to be set up giving different groups of users access to each. When users login, they will not even see the groups or forums to which they do not have access. This makes it easy to invite partners to the discussion without overwhelming them with too much information or too many choices. There are also several other useful features such as a private messaging system, a font resizer to allow for easier reading, the ability to initiate polls, make site-wide announcements, etc.

Application

The on-line discussion venue cannot completely replace face-to-face or phone meetings but it does allow for more timely response and better preparation for when those meetings do occur and is invaluable for collaborating on writing documents and reports and is a good tool for tracking and archiving the project's ongoing work.

Process and Structure

We find that on-line discussion needs a different facilitation style and skill set than face-to-face. For example, it is essential to have a clear timeline responding to any particular issue. It is also important to separate out forums: those used for brainstorming, those that are used for decision-making, those that are used for document development and those that are used for archiving of finished documents.

Making sure that information and discussion are always in the appropriate places also makes it much easier to integrate new people into a team working on particular activity as the relevant information is easily accessible. For example, if a decision has been reached or a document has been finalised it may not be necessary for that person to go through the long series of posts that led to its creation, they can simply go to the finished work to catch up on the direction the group is taking. However, if they are interested in becoming familiar with the processes that the group uses to come to these decisions, the information is there for them to peruse.

Collaboration / Capacity-Building

The expertise that we are developing in on-line collaboration will enable us to share these insights and skills with other organisations that partner with us and develop their capacity to do the same.

Location

Our collaborative website can be found at <http://chrysalis.engagingmenandboys.ca>. Login credentials are required to access the site. A screen shot of the forum appears on the following page.

Project Collaborative Discussion Forum: <http://chrysalis.engagingmenandboys.ca>

Forum

View New Posts Unread: 16 Need Moderation: 0 Spam: 0 Admin Links

Logged in as **Bruce Dienes**

Members Watching: 6 Subscribed: 8 Inbox: 5 Profile Log Out Last visited March 16, 2014

Search... Search Advanced Search

New/Recently Updated Topics Select Forum

Forum

11 topics with unread posts

FORUMS

- Administration**
 - Project Management**
Communication between project admins
 - Project Coordination**
Ginger & Bruce making sense out of the chaos...
- Steering Committee**
 - General Discussion**
General discussion of issues relevant to the steering committee.
 - Decisions and Minutes**
Record of decisions and minutes from Steering Committee meetings
 - Documents**
Documentation that is not appropriate for general viewing
- Advisory Board**
 - General Discussion**
General discussion of issues relevant to advisory board.
- Projects**
 - Community Readiness Assessment**
Community Readiness Assessment
 - Facilitation Training**
Collaboration with SOAR re gender-aware facilitation training
- Technical Support**

TOPICS

- Project Management**
Communication between project admins [New Topic](#)
- Mentorship engagement models** Posts 2
Choosing three models to propose to partners
Last Post: Rhonda Fraser 1 week ago
- Interim report to SOW** Posts 2
Working on documents re interim reporting
Last Post: Rhonda Fraser 2 weeks ago
- SOW Documents** Posts 7
Latest versions of paperwork for SOW grant
Last Post: Rhonda Fraser 2 weeks ago
- Working with Be the Peace** Posts 2
Possible collaboration with BTP
Last Post: Rhonda Fraser 3 months ago
- Committee Structure / Terms of Reference** Posts 1
Clarifying how we do our work.
Last Post: Bruce Dienes 3 months ago
- Work Plan** Posts 7
Actions to be done
Last Post: Bruce Dienes 3 months ago
- Steering Committee Meeting?** Posts 2
Last Post: Rhonda Fraser 3 months ago
- Steering Committee Members** Posts 2
Last Post: Lisa Newell-Bain 4 months ago