

Implementing Harm Reduction Initiatives in Rural Communities

Presenter: Eric Atkinson

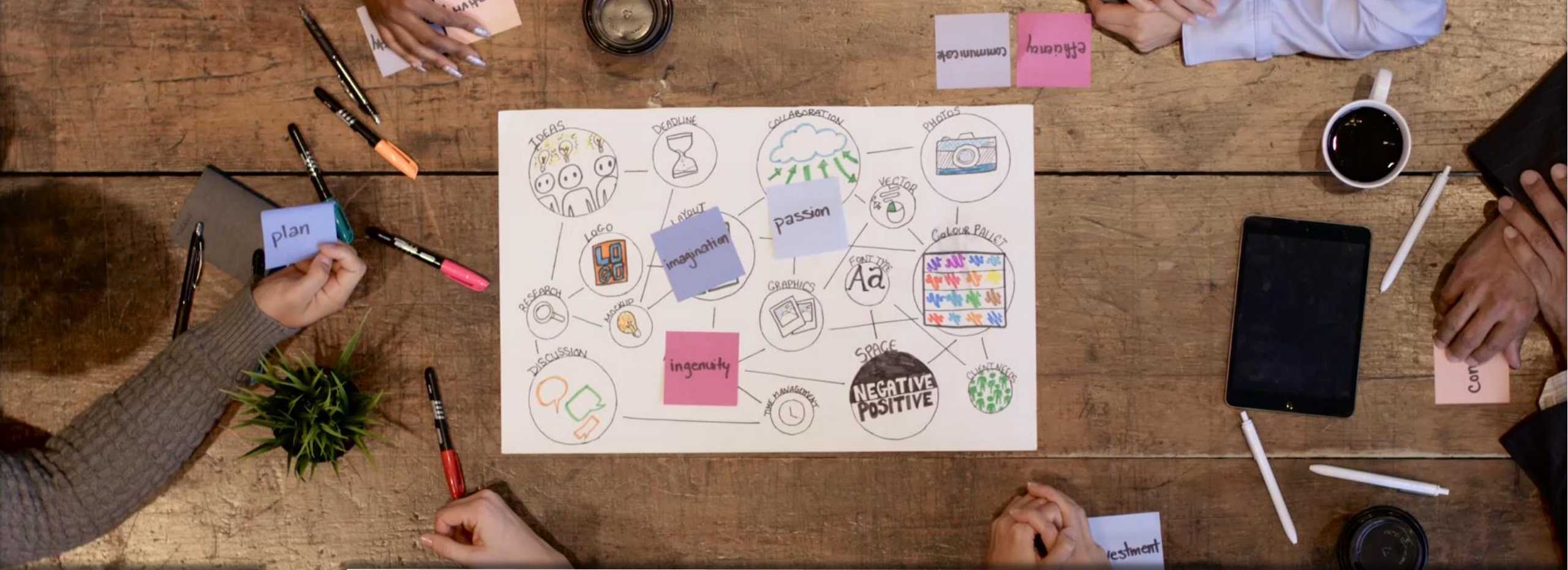
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Implementing Harm Reduction Initiatives in Rural Communities

Eric Atkinson

- Retired police chief with 25 years experience
- Practitioner of harm reduction methods
- Co-founder of Project Hope
- Active city administrator
- Former adjunct faculty in the University of Wisconsin System
- BS in Sociology and a MA in Leadership





Objectives

1. Learn strategies to overcome resistance to harm reduction initiatives.
2. Learn how to create collaborative partnerships that support harm reduction strategies.

Barriers to Collaboration

- Communication
- Competing Interests/Philosophies
- Comprehending Benefits



Communication



- Social Media
- Print Media
- Television Media
- Town Hall/Community Meetings
- Local Interactions

Find your champions both internally and externally.

Competing Interests/Philosophies

- Financial
- Political
- Internal Differences



Evidence-based

Reduced Recidivism

Current Harm Reduction Results

Understanding the Benefits of Harm Reduction

- People engaged in syringe services programs are three times more likely to reduce or stop drug use. –Centers for Disease Control
- Drug Courts report lower reoffending rates (40%) versus comparison groups (53%). – Center for American Progress
- From 2019 to 2020 Hamilton County, OH saw an 11% decrease in overdose deaths compared to the state average increase of 25% due to various harm reduction programs implemented county-wide. –National Library of Medicine



Strategies to Create Buy-in

Strategies

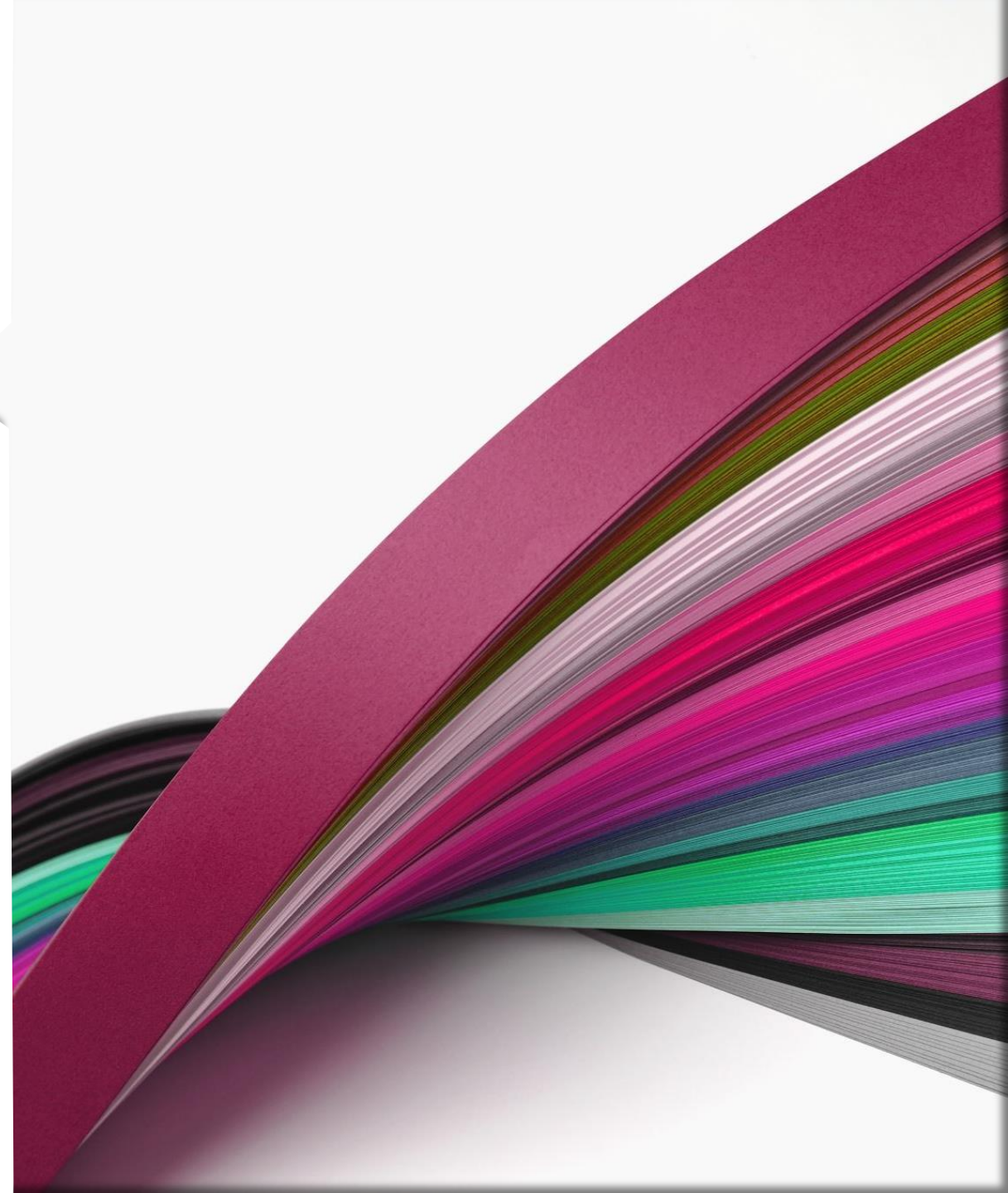
Utilize effective principles of negotiation:

Never Split the Difference –
Chris Voss

Getting to Yes – Roger Fisher
and William Ury

Know the data

Know your audience (what
motivates them)



Strategy Continued

- Local Politics
- Financial Position
- Group Education
- Embrace Difficult People
- Constant Communication Builds Trust
- Public Relations
 - Social Media
 - Local Media
 - Education Campaign
- Find Your Champions (Internally & Externally)

Getting Started

Time for Action

- Assemble the Team
- Outline the Goals/Desired Outcomes
- Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
- Invite Potential Partners to the Initiative
- Bring Difficult People to the Table
- Group Education
- Analyze the Costs
- Build Out the Plan
- Bring It Forward for Consideration



Success Stories

- Project Hope – City of Menomonie/Dunn County, WI
- Hamilton County, OH – QRT, LEAD, and other Harm Reduction Initiatives
- Cabell County, WV – Quick Response Team
- Beaver County, PA – Behavioral Health/SUD Initiative
- Hope Not Handcuffs – Michigan & New York

I just love it when people say I can't do it, there's nothing that makes me feel better because all my life, people have said that I wasn't going to make it.



Ted Turner
Founder of CNN

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Resources for Consideration



cossup.org: Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant and Substance Use Program

nicic.gov: National Institute of Corrections

samhsa.gov: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

crimesolutions.gov: National Institute of Justice – Crime Solutions

nih.gov: National Institutes of Health

paarius.org: Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative

ptacollaborative.org: Police Treatment and Community Collaborative

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Questions