

THE TENSION OF TURF: MAKING IT WORK FOR THE COALITION

“Turf-ism” can be defined as the non-cooperation or conflict between organizations with seemingly common goals or interests. Whether over resources, recognition, or control, turf struggles can threaten coalition vitality. Traditionally, coalition leaders’ response to turf struggles has been to ask coalition membership to “leave their hats at the door”. However, *The Tension of Turf: Making it Work for the Coalition* takes a different approach to addressing turf issues. Lead authors on this paper are Larry Cohen and Jessica Gould.

Turf struggle implies the existence of valuable turf. Especially in the social work and public health arenas, groups have a deep belief in what they do and connect that with their core identity.

While this passion may lead to turf battles, it is also the reason the group is willing to work with other organizations towards a larger goal. Rather than suppressing struggles, and thereby diminishing the importance of turf, coalition leaders must find ways to incorporate that passion into the overall collaborative effort. *The Tension of Turf* was developed as a tool to help practitioners working within coalitions to identify, address, and manage turf issues.



This paper builds upon the work of *The Eight Steps to Effective Coalition Building*, a coalition start-up framework previously developed by Larry Cohen which is available at www.preventioninstitute.org/tools.html#eightsteps. *The Tension of Turf* examines one of the harder issues of collaboration that often arises within coalitions, and offers recommendations to help leaders address this issue.

The Tension of Turf is available on Prevention Institute’s website at www.preventioninstitute.org/tools.html#turf. Please address further questions to either Larry Cohen at larry@preventioninstitute.org or Jessica Gould at jessica@preventioninstitute.org.