



CAPACITY BUILDING



***EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND SYSTEMS TO GROW,
COLLABORATE, AND ACHIEVE LASTING IMPACT***

Building capacity is essential to achieving family, organization, and community goals. Capacity building refers to people, their assets, and strengths, as well as the dedication of their abilities toward achieving identified outcomes, whether working as an individual, within families, part of a team/group, or organization/community. Capacity building requires access to resources such as finances, time, information, equipment, and physical space, and the ability to use them effectively and efficiently. The process involves analyzing personal assets and strengths, expanding knowledge and skills as necessary, devising a plan, locating required resources, and implementing the plan. This approach may not be applicable to everyone and might need several adjustments to be effective. While there can be objectives established as capacity is developed, it often enables the identification of new goals or targets.

Successful capacity building involves empowerment and self-reliance and knowing when building a collaboration is required. Even if the individual is addressing personal issues, they will likely still need to build a network of individuals (e.g., FCS professionals, subject matter experts, community leaders) to access their resources (e.g., funding, knowledge, skills, and talents), which will expand their capacity for problem solving.

One might define collaboration as a team approach where individuals bring their assets and resources together to address a common goal. This work requires a leader to step forward. This leader could exist within the team or be created through education, experience, and mentorship. Solving personal or practical problems requires critical thinking, decision-making, motivation, and perseverance. Collaboration embraces diverse points of view and a mindset that leads to continuous learning and improvement as successive problems arise. Capacity building is ever evolving and specialized to each individual or group; built from best practice, trial, and error, and based upon applied research.

Capacity building enhances individuals, groups, and systems by improving their operations, programs, financial security, and organizational maturity to achieve their goals efficiently. This same concept exists concerning issues at the national and global levels to address challenges that extend beyond geographic and political boundaries.

Family and Consumer Sciences understands the unique attributes individuals bring, and their enhanced ability to achieve goals through personal and group growth and targeted experiences. Leadership development is a part of capacity building that involves understanding and providing opportunities for leaders. Professionals in Family and Consumer Sciences are essential in fostering these opportunities through professional development, team building, and mentorship. This involves leading or supporting individuals, programs, or organizational efforts. Building capacity is essential for Family and Consumer Sciences professionals to advance knowledge, skills, issues, and programs.