

Wolff, T. (2010). *The power of collaborative solutions: Six principles and effective tools for building healthy communities*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 320 pages

Reviewed by
Julie Ann Pooley
School of Psychology and Social Science
Edith Cowan University
j.pooley@ecu.edu.au

It is with great pleasure I review Tom Wolff's book "The Power of Collaborative Solutions". I have been a fan of Tom's for a long time, receiving his collaborative solutions newsletters. Not only has Tom been involved at the ground floor level with so many different community projects he has been able to translate all this work into a well-substantiated and grounded research. He is one of the foremost people that links community work and research, which for many of us that are either in community work or research, Tom is a crucial translator.

This current book brings together a plethora of examples of community work in an overarching framework with which to effectively manage and build healthy communities. The book is written in an engaging manner and offers to the reader linkages to many tools on the web or at the back of the actual book. It is a real "how to" book. Tom presents a framework of six guiding principles to building healthy communities. At the heart of these principles is collaboration that builds an active citizenry in social change process.

In Tom's self-effacing style, he details many examples where things went wrong, and real lessons learned, which provides insight into the difficulty of community work but also provides motivation for those new to community work. Working with others does not always transpire the way we had intended in the beginning so our ability to evaluate is an important lesson in our own reflective practice. Tom embodies this reflective

practice.

For me, the central message of this book is about communication. People want to be heard, and this book argues that all people should be heard. If you want to work to change things in our world then you need to do this with other people, many people, all people. This point is so simple yet really powerful. Tom's book illustrates to us the power of collaborative solutions.