



# Strengthening Community Network Partnerships

*March 2018*



# Agenda

*Participants will leave with specific strategies to strengthen their relationship with partners and to coalesce their community to strive for and support program improvement.*

- Partner engagement challenges
- Lead Agency success stories
- Adult learning principles
- Engaging partners
- Planning changes
- Next Steps



# Partner Engagement Challenges



# Success Stories



# Adult Learning Principles



# Principle # 1: Respect Autonomy

Adults are *autonomous* and *self-directed*. They need to be free to direct themselves. Meeting leaders must actively involve participants in the meeting process and serve as facilitators for them.

## Don't:

Talk *at* your partners the entire time

Give partners a “to do” list and deadlines without allowing discussion

## Do:

Ask partners to talk about their experience that relates to an agenda item

Ask partners to identify potential obstacles and assist with developing solutions

## Principle # 2: Connect Life Experience and Knowledge

Adults have accumulated a foundation of *life experiences* and *knowledge* that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. They need to connect the meeting to this knowledge/experience base. To help them do so, meeting leaders should draw out participants' experience and knowledge which is relevant to the topic.

### Don't

Assume the role of "expert"

### Do

Ask partners to talk about their experience that relates to an agenda item

Ask partners to identify potential obstacles and assist with developing solutions

## Principle # 3: Define the Goal

Adults are *goal-oriented*. They usually know what goals they want to attain. They, therefore, appreciate a meeting that is organized and has clearly defined elements.

### Don't

Be late or unprepared

Begin the meeting with – “What would you like talk about?”

### Do

Have an agenda that clearly states what is to be accomplished and why

Call attention to the goal at the beginning of the meeting



## Principle # 4: Have Relevant Objectives

Adults are *relevancy-oriented*. They must see a reason for the meeting. The meeting has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them. Therefore, meeting leaders must *identify objectives* for adult participants.

### Don't

Speak negatively about tasks to be accomplished

### Do

Convey a positive attitude and define benefits of the work in a manner that is relevant for participants



# Principle # 5: Have Practical Content

Adults are *practical*, focusing on the aspects of a meeting most useful to them in their work. They may not be interested in knowledge for its own sake. Meeting leaders must *tell participants explicitly how the content will be useful* to them on the job.

## Don't

Speak generally as if everyone knows what you are talking about

Use acronyms

## Do

Explain why an agenda item is important for the attendees and the network



## Principle # 6: Treat Adults as Equals

Adults need to be shown *respect*. Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the meeting. Meeting participants should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely.

### Don't

Make assumptions

Be dismissive or discount what a participant says

### Do

Assume good intentions

Ask participants for their opinion or to propose solutions, especially if they have not spoken



# Motivation for Program Partner Engagement

*How can you use the information below to encourage partner engagement? What specific things can you do as the lead agency to meet the needs of your partners and improve engagement?*

- Social relationships: the need for association and friendships.
- Personal advancement: to achieve higher job status or secure professional advancement.
- Social welfare: to improve the ability to serve a community or mankind.
- External expectations: to comply with the recommendations of a formal authority.
- Cognitive interest: to seek knowledge for its own sake.
- Escape/Stimulation: to relieve boredom or provide a break in routine.

# Engage Community Partners

*Successful community networks have community partners that are aware of what they are trying to accomplish and directly support their efforts.*

[Engaging Your Community](#)

[Meet the Network You Never Knew You Had](#)



# Planning Change



# Next Steps