Lifespan Respite Grantee and Partner Learning Collaborative
State Lifespan Roles for Implementing the Respite Actions in the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers

Meeting Notes
January 4, 2024

[Meeting Recordings and Resources Link]

Announcements

The 2024 National Lifespan Respite Conference, ***RAISE the Bar for Respite***, will be in Albany, NY on May 21-23, 2024. Registration will be open soon. A separate registration link for the Lifespan Respite Care grantee meeting and learning symposium, open only to grantees and their partners, will soon be available.

Principle of Leadership: Enable Others to Act

Enable others to act is empowering others, building trust so that everyone can be active participants in the group and feel like valued members, and developing leaders' skills and capacities.

Influence is the ability to affect the behavior of others in a particular direction, leveraging key tactics that involve, connect, and inspire them. Leaders that know how to influence people recognize and cultivate the power of networks and recognize that their personal networks must also be dynamic and growing. Leaders tap the knowledge and skills of a group, point individuals toward a common goal and consensus, and draw out a commitment to achieve results.

Leaders who are good at influencing others find ways to gather an audience. They find ways to "put on a show" and step into the spotlight at selected events and meetings to engage people in discussion and problem-solving around a priority.

You select "partners" because they have a certain type of experience or knowledge that you lack, or they have a product or service that complements your own. Everyone needs to be clear about objectives, expectations, goals, and other elements of the partnership - to take ownership of their roles and their duties. Even the leadership should be a collaborative effort between both parties - to set the pace for a successful partnership that everyone else can follow. Partners need to provide each other with the appropriate communication and support. Partners must share a vision, share a strategy; and agree on a shared analysis of the issues at stake. As partnerships set common targets, they must agree on monitoring and evaluation as key principles.

It is also important to get all the relevant actors to join in the partnership - both those who are part of the problem or part of the solution. Failure to invite or attract these key actors might turn out to be an ongoing weakness, limiting forward movement on goals and endangering results. Bringing together all relevant actors is not an easy task, as the interests of such partners and their approach to certain problems will usually be different.

Influencing tactics fall into three categories:

- Logical appeals tap into people's rational and intellectual positions - presenting an argument for the best choice of action to appeal to people's minds.
- Emotional appeals connect your message, goal, or project to individual goals and values. An idea that promotes a person's feelings of wellbeing, service, or sense of belonging tugs at the heartstrings and has a good chance of gaining support.
- Cooperative appeals involve working together to accomplish a mutually important goal, extending a hand to others in joining the work.

Resistance and objections are common barriers to successful influencing. By actively listening to others, we can gain a better understanding of their concerns and objections, and tailor our message to address them. By addressing concerns directly and honestly, we can demonstrate that we understand and respect the concerns of others. Listen carefully to objections and address them specifically and with empathy. Identifying shared interests or goals creates a sense of collaboration and reduces the perception of conflict. Focus on areas of agreement and emphasize shared benefits when attempting to influence others. By providing concrete and practical solutions to concerns or objections, we can demonstrate expertise and establish credibility.

One of the simplest and most powerful ways to motivate others and identify your partners' and collaborators' needs is to ask them open-ended questions. These are questions that invite them to share their opinions, experiences, feelings, and ideas, without limiting their responses to yes or no. By asking open-ended questions, you can gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives, motivations, and needs, and show that you are genuinely interested and respectful. Look for a personal connection you can make, identify problems they face, and watch for opportunities that lead to collaboration.

Not everyone is a leader. Not everyone is a confident public speaker. But a successful team thrives when each member can bring their own set of skills to the table. People start to lose interest if their unique set of skills are not used, and their value is not being recognized. Remind them why you want them there at the table.

Think about how you can share your vision for the future and include collaborators in it, and the role you envisage each member playing in that. It also helps if you can share how others have done similar things before and help your partners feel just as capable.

Avoid "decision fatigue" – the central premise being that the more decisions we make, the less likely we are to make good decisions. Fewer choices help others be more productive and improves their judgement.

There will be interest groups that can easily agree on common targets but that mistrust other organizations and have no cooperation base with them. You might find you have to "be the bridge" – and mediate between different clients and teams, or people within your own team. It is important to be neutral and look at things from each perspective. You set the tone. If you value them, you can help others value them too.

REWARD COLLABORATION

- Find ways to personally thank people that have taken steps toward your goal.
- Show concrete evidence that what they are doing has an impact.
- Rewarding repeated behavior helps to develop habits.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

- Ask for their participation.
- Share your vision and why you need them.
- Give them a choice of the ways they could contribute.

Understanding distinct types of collaboration styles and how to blend them to suit the diverse strengths and perspectives of team members is a critical skill you need to develop. We tend to prefer our own style and forget that others might prefer another style. Blending these styles is how you will engage more of your teammates and make significant forward movement on your goals.

- Communication-oriented collaboration emphasizes effective communication among team members. It involves open sharing of ideas, opinions, and information.
  This collaboration style tends to prioritize discussions, meetings, and regular updates **-** to ensure everyone stays informed and aligned.
- Task-oriented collaboration revolves around achieving specific tasks, goals, or projects. Team members focus on their individual responsibilities and contribute their expertise to complete the assigned tasks on time. This style requires clear task delegation, well-defined roles, and a structured approach to project management - ideal for projects with specific deliverables and deadlines.
- Network-oriented collaboration emphasizes building and leveraging professional relationships within and outside the organization. This style involves connecting with

individuals across different departments, teams, and external partners - to tap into diverse expertise, gather varied perspectives, and facilitate knowledge sharing.

- Community-oriented collaboration focuses on creating a sense of community and shared purpose within the group. It involves building a positive and supportive team culture, where members collaborate based on shared values and a sense of belonging - particularly beneficial where a keen sense of camaraderie and shared values contribute to overall well-being and productivity.

Poll Question Results

Participants identified their collaboration style by selecting the style they use most frequently. Results of the poll are below:

- Meet regularly to provide updates and keep everyone informed. – 33%.
- Everyone completes specific assigned project tasks independently. - 19%.
- Network to make connections and build/gain new relationships. – 22%
- Create a positive workplace and a supportive team culture. – 26%

Breakout Discussions & Group Report

To strengthen partnerships or collaborations, participants considered all the things they are doing to gain partners, collaborators, and stakeholders and involve family caregivers.

In the breakout groups, they separated these efforts into one of three groups, summarized below:

START – Group for all things you think might be good to ramp up, including tasks you should be doing but are not doing yet.

- Easy to make caregiver input/representation an afterthought. Need to get their voice and have their involvement. When they tell their story, they want to see outcomes, so breaking down the stages/steps towards goals will help cement relationships.
- When Elder vs Child services focus on different "worlds," they need to see similarities and we need to play a role in making those connections.
- New people need to know how they can contribute but do not feel "up to speed," or even needed/acknowledged. Need to look for "shortcut" about National Strategy – a 1-page tool for onboarding so a first timer knows what is needed/how to help.
- Use "shared calendar"/email "newsletter" for timely promotion of all monthly/quarterly events and program offerings. During meetings, ask "what have you heard?" to stay up on consistent and new respite care programs and groups.
- Connect with programs/groups to "circle back" to see if resource directory is working for them.

- Need to connect with faith-based, 55+ active adult communities, because they are already doing things connected to caregivers in those communities. Programs are doing respite but call it something else.
- After evaluating progress, hold "listening sessions" to hear from stakeholders, caregivers, coalition contacts, and learn how we can build on our foundational efforts.
- Add more "memory café" sites, by offering mini grants to rural sites.
- Hold meetings that prove the value of that time commitment and honor it by giving real benefit to attendees. Realize that committee meetings need to happen prior to quarterly meetings; interactions need to happen more frequently to get work done.

STOP – These are tasks that do not do or contribute a lot. These are activities that you want to stop doing.

- Caregivers need action, not stipends. They tend to tap out for lack of "getting an answer." We ask questions and hope caregivers/peers will answer but it tends to be one more email they need to respond to.
- After attempting to connect with people who do not respond, we need to stop "giving up" on them. They are just busy, and we need to continue to get them involved/connected until they say "STOP" because they are needed, whenever they can participate/in any way they can contribute.
- We need to make better use of meeting time. Share any information or messages in a meeting invitation or email, so we can spend time on what it is we want to discuss. Instead of an agenda filled with information-sharing presentations, all that should happen before the meeting.
- Federal funding for respite is underutilized. Need to "stop" and identify what are unnecessary administrative things, punitive/arbitrary rules and simplify/make it as easy as possible (other than "legal" issues) to use.
- Stop asking so many "off-putting" questions on forms. We want to know but is it necessary to match them to programs?
- Recognize when meetings have too many people in them – meetings for the sake of having meetings – with no clear goal or objectives. People half-listening, talking off topic, and leaving without clear next steps.
- Taskforce by invitation to keep group at certain size left out providers who were upset that they were not included. Need to identify how everyone can participate.
- Partnerships cannot be taken for granted; need to keep group fresh and re-establish/build relationships because of turnover. New people make the group different and may change the goals and priorities the group works towards.

CONTINUE – These are the activities that are working, and you want to continue them.

- Having regular meetings at the same time/place. Educating others on the National Strategy because they would not otherwise be aware there is one. Pick one or two priorities because we only have so much time.

- Add to Online Resource Directory from "a hard-copy form" to hand out whenever connections are made "on the ground" so that new people/groups can be added.
- Build rural/community outreach with programs like "Nightlights" and "Break" rooms with faith-based, 55+ communities, and senior centers.
- Continue "old-fashioned" community events in rural areas where introductions, grassroots level stakeholder relationship building can happen "over a cup of coffee."
- Writing letter/invitations to government agencies and service providers, targeting rural areas where the need was, to come to "resource sharing" events where information on their respite programs and how it fits into the state plan; this received good participation and feedback. Learned who had waitlists and what is working or not working. Shifting more to include grandparents raising grandkids. Found older adults/grandparents were in common groups.

Guest Presentation: *Be Curious, Not Judgmental: Lessons on Consensus Building from Ted Lasso & Walt Whitman*

The Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Project, represented by **Amy Nazaire** and **Lisa Marschke,** and **Ashley Woodman** from the UMass Campus to Community Program provided a brief overview of the MA Lifespan Respite Project and examples of strategies they have used to achieve consensus among various stakeholders, and relationships that have resulted in non-traditional ways of expanding respite opportunities.

Massachusetts has received six different Lifespan Respite grants over the past several years, and an awareness of the need for respite is more embedded. Harnessing the abilities of others and building respite opportunities have been the focus of activities.

Massachusetts led an effort to meet with respite "partners" individually, to ask lots of questions and find out they used for the definition of respite. They then needed to bring a large group of providers together to create a cohesive definition that was respectful of all the members, the clients served, and the program goals they sought to achieve. By really listening, incorporating all the feedback they received, they held a meeting to develop a definition in real time as a group and make sure all the participants felt heard. No one was to feel excluded or omitted by this definition.

The definition agreed upon gained team ownership of the results with additional benefits of team building and with steps each state agency could take to further define terms such as caregiver, special needs, exceptional, support, etc.

They also identified a state respite "champion" with expertise in partnership building, leveraging resources, and fostering collaboration among members with a wide range of competencies – not always the usual players.

Relationships between leaders of two different organizations led to a realization that one had two hundred students who needed to "do something" with a DD population to gain 120 hours of experience, and another was struggling to help family caregivers find respite providers – and families did not want just anyone!

A service-learning course developed for multidisciplinary students across the campus with a 3-hour service requirement came before organizers knew about the Respite Coalition or the Lifespan Respite Care grants. Now a partnership with them has added to the number of families they can reach. Leaning on the partnership with the agency, a respite "champion" managed to convince others to put funding and resources towards the program, which allows them to offer stipends to students so they can "work" as respite providers while reaching career goals. Families can "expect" a certain level of support because it is now a "job."

Two other collaborations have resulted. Nursing training is being ramped up for kids with complex medical needs and, because of overlapping interests, respite training and materials from the Campus to Community program were shared. Now both multidisciplinary students and nursing students are serving as respite providers. This summer, multidisciplinary students will get training experience with more complex medical needs, allowing them to get future jobs as respite care providers, PCA or complex care assistants.

Leadership comes from students themselves. An autism awareness club with undergraduate students who needed activities to do as a club, became a Saturday drop-in respite program where they build with Legos and allow friends and siblings to join the fun. Parents come together to chat and share resources and serve as a support group for each other. Soon the club will have a Spanish-speaking group going.

Connecting with people at the right time, and with an infusion of funds at the right time, has expanded respite resources in Massachusetts – and they hope to replicate their success in other locations!

Next Steps

Next Meeting Topic. The learning collaborative will meet next on **February 1, 2024**, where the focus will be on o**vercoming barriers to implementation of the National Strategy recommendations**. There are typically four barriers to implementing any effective strategy: (1) vision barrier, (2) people barrier, (3) management barrier, and (4) resource barrier. What are the barriers that organizations face in translating their strategy into action? Leaders will learn innovative ways to change, grow and improve to overcome these barriers. Leaders constantly question "how things are done" in their organizations. They identify processes that do not work and take action to fix them.

Inviting Partners to Join the LC. If you have partners who are working with you on implementation of National Strategy goals that you would like to invite to participate in this learning collaborative, you may send Jill Kagan the names and email addresses of one or two key partners so that they can receive an invitation to join us in upcoming meetings. This is not an open invitation to all who you may be working with, but to a select few who you think would benefit from joining you in this learning collaborative.

Revised LC Meeting Schedule. Details on the framework, and the revised schedule for future meetings of the learning collaborative, are available here. To view recordings and materials from previous meetings, please visit the National Strategy LC webpage.

Prepared by ARCH for the Lifespan Respite Grantee and Partner Learning Symposium on Implementing the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers, January 2024

This project is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling $1,647,597 with 75 percentage funded by ACL/HHS and $549,200 amount and 25 percentage funded by non-government source(s). The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.