



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
April 11, 2024

[Meeting Recordings and Resources Link](#)

Announcements

Early registration has been extended to April 22nd for the ARCH National Lifespan Respite Conference. The hotel conference rate will also end on that same date.

The Cultural & Linguistic Competence Assessment for Respite Organizations webinar has been rescheduled for April 29, 2024, at 2-3:00pm ET.

The Lifespan Respite Grantee and Partner Learning Symposium: *Bring, Brag, and Borrow* sessions will be held virtually from 1-4:00pm ET on both May 7th & 8th, 2024. Topics that align with National Strategy goals are due by April 23rd; materials for the 5-minute presentations need to be submitted by April 29th.

In-person Lifespan Respite Grantee and Partner Learning Symposium will be held in Albany, New York on May 21st. Separate registration, by invitation only, is required to participate.

National Strategy Matrix

To document your state's success in implementing respite actions that align with the National Strategy, we are asking you to report by May 15th. A helpful matrix has been distributed that shows past recorded activities and leaves a column for you to add to the record anything missing, or activities planned or being implemented that most closely corresponds to the National Strategy goals identified.

Bullet points are acceptable. An update will be included in NASHP final report for Administration on Community Living (ACL) and the RAISE Family Council will update them on Lifespan Respite grantees' progress.

Principle of Leadership: Performance

Improving performance requires considering a particular process or procedure, and then modifying it to increase output, efficiency, and effectiveness. To do this, organizations often focus on efficiency in the workplace.

Improving efficiency in the workplace is about helping employees work smarter, not harder. Figuring out how to work efficiently can improve productivity, growth, and outcomes with the same resources.

Here's some tips to help keep a positive work environment.

- **Benefit of the Doubt:** the state of accepting something/someone as honest or deserving of trust even though there are doubts.
- **Generosity:** Generous people share information readily, share credit often, and give of their time and expertise easily.
- **Speak Well of Others:** Gossip is juicy, but bonding with others over a mutual distaste or bitterness for someone else just isn't charitable or kind. Overlook others' imperfections or faults; seek to find and praise their virtues, good qualities, gifts, and talents instead.
- **Look At What Works:** Through your daily choices, actions, and decisions, you're deliberately crafting a work life that's more on your terms. That will look different for every person. Don't look at how other people are doing things and think that's what everyone else needs to do also.

Clear Direction & Guidance

Direction is the process of assigning tasks or delegating responsibilities in the workplace. Getting directions makes people more efficient and content in their jobs. Without direction, it's challenging to understand what you're supposed to do and how to complete the tasks assigned.

Sometimes, supervisors cannot communicate effectively because they have many responsibilities or lead a large team who all need guidance. Supervisors may have trouble communicating or have a different style of communication. Find ways of communicating that work for both of you.

Some supervisors may get little guidance from their leadership or haven't had the training to complete their responsibilities. They may appear uninterested in your work because they have a different or more self-guided work style. Increase your interaction with your supervisor and communicate what you require to do your best work.

Power of Direction

Use the power of direction by ensuring employees know their tasks, have the information needed to complete them, are aware of the organization's goals, and their role in achieving them. This is vital to incorporating change and adapting to new priorities, tasks, or technology.

Direction improves job satisfaction and helps staff members know that their supervisors care about them and want to help them succeed. It can also improve coordination and avoid

confusion when every member of a team is aware of project goals and work expectations. It motivates teams and gives everyone something to work towards.

Direction can help increase accountability in a workforce, making it easier to fix obstacles to productivity and recognize the accomplishments of valuable team members.

Polling Question #1 Results: When you think about your activities connected to the National Strategy in some way, how was that work conveyed? Did you...?

- 1) Design your own workplan – 17%
- 2) Receive a detailed workplan listing your responsibilities - 0%
- 3) Work with colleagues to determine a workplan for yourself - 83%
- 4) Have not received a workplan as yet- 0%
- 5) Not sure if your work aligns with the National Strategy - 0%

Constructive Feedback: Praise & Criticism

Constructive feedback is the type of feedback aimed at achieving a positive outcome by providing someone with comments, advice, or suggestions that are useful for their work or their future.

Both praise and criticism can play a role in constructive feedback. Providing feedback is necessary to help employees improve their skills and performance. Good constructive feedback should focus on the work rather than being a personal negative attack against an individual.

Praise is where you show appreciation to your employees for the work they have done. If an employee has done exemplary work or gone above and beyond to help someone, acknowledge their work, and show your appreciation to reinforce these positive behaviors.

Criticism is harder to navigate; it is imperative to try and make it not personal. Criticism plays an important role in helping people avoid negative behaviors and grow from their mistakes. Proper criticism should be sincere and caring while also containing a level of importance on why a change is needed. The outcome of criticism should still be positive and contribute to an employee's growth.

Do not let your emotions get the better of you as criticism levied while you are angry, disappointed, or frustrated may lose its message.

Provide specific information on past actions and behaviors. Don't speak in broad generalities, but communicate how specific actions contributed to one exceeding, meeting, or falling short of expectations.

Then focus on the future. It's the opportunity to *give direction* about what one should do to improve their performance next time.

During interactions on a “performance feedback” talk, people will want to know, “What does this feedback mean for me? If you can successfully identify and connect your feedback to people's unique goals, it results in a more impactful message.

Effective feedback utilizes emotional intelligence. Before discussing performance, think about the emotions the person you are addressing is likely to experience. Then craft your message with these feelings in mind.

Criticism focuses almost entirely on the problem. Feedback focuses on recognizing the problem and then working with the recipient to come up with ways to resolve issues, correct problems and move forward. Constructive criticism is actionable, clear, and beneficial to the recipient and attempts to avoid offending or discouraging employees while still providing detailed comments on what might be improved.

Most employees want feedback in order to improve, and constructive criticism provides that direction and advice on how to improve. Therefore, feedback should not focus on previous performance and the punishment of past failures but work to develop the next steps, be opportunities for interesting and worthwhile endeavors, and give them a vision of what they could achieve.

Negative attitudes can create hostile environments and this needs to be addressed to help preserve a pleasant work environment and team morale. To avoid creating an even more hostile situation, focus on finding the underlying cause behind the behavior and offer your assistance to overcome it.

Unprofessional behavior sometimes stems from seemingly innocent actions. However, behaviors like gossiping can quickly escalate into a situation that decreases employee morale. If you see an employee gossiping or engaging in other unprofessional conduct, discuss it with them one on one.

Performance evaluations are a great opportunity to assess the team’s output. It’s also a chance to address any concerns about an employee. A great way to do this is to ask the employees how they feel about their performance in areas you think need improvement.

Make it a collaborative experience and allow all parties to share their points of view. Constructive criticism is more valuable when there is a give-and-take component. The person you’re giving feedback to may disagree with you. Allow them to question why you feel that way and how they can improve based on your comments.

Keep the conversation private. The feedback and suggestions could have little to no effect if the receiver feels embarrassed. It could demotivate and discourage them even more. Find a place in private where you can have a conversation without feelings of humiliation.

Give your praise for progress made along the way to show you're on their side and invested in their accomplishment. This will also allow them to raise any concerns once they have had time to understand and think about the critique thoroughly. Positive reinforcement can also help prevent them from relapsing back into old routines.

Promote a recognition-rich environment; the ideal praise-to-criticism ratio is 5:1 - for every negative comment you make, share five positive comments as well. This type of employee feedback should be frequent (the recommendation is every 7 days) and timely, being tied to recent achievement or to organizational values to reinforce them.

Polling Question 2 Results: When was the last time you were appreciated or complimented on your work or efforts?

- 1) Within the past week – 86%
- 2) Within the past month – 14%
- 3) Within the past few (2-4) months – 0%
- 4) Within the past year – 0%
- 5) I cannot remember – 0%

Breakout Discussions

When leaders do not provide clear direction and guidance, this leads to decreased efficiency and productivity. After reading the discussion guide scenario, discussion focused on what constructive criticism and feedback could be given.

LEADERSHIP: When there is no designated point person, work to frame the situation by asking:

- *Who is in charge? – Who is responsible for this and will make sure everyone completes tasks? Who will take responsibility if it fails?*
- *When do you need this? – Are we allocating sufficient time to write grant, shift work priorities, or commit to "crunch time" efforts to make it happen?*
- *Who do I report to? When's the next meeting? – Regular communication and meetings needed to follow up on tasks, provide direction, and make people accountable.*
- *Who has a vision of how this endeavor will align with other priorities and how everyone's part fits into a larger goal? Is everyone invested in this process?*
- *What experience/skills/knowledge are available at the table? Does everyone have the authority/power to proceed?*
- *What are the pros/cons of going for this grant? Whom else needs to be involved? Who can mentor others with less experience through this process?*

Leaders usually come forward naturally, but leadership need not always be top down. Those not in assigned leadership positions can ask questions, solicit guidance, tease out details of how the

plan would come together, identify people's strengths and interests, and recognize everyone's efforts.

PERFORMANCE: An important part of leadership is clarifying roles and responsibilities and procedures for accountability and specifying activities and timelines as part of a Comprehensive Work Plan.

If leaders don't naturally emerge to initiate or oversee the process of planning and developing the comprehensive work plan—or if leaders lack authority or clout to make assignment, monitor, or supervise something, go back and frame the situation by asking questions like those stated above so that the need for leadership is apparent, or so leaders with authority can be identified and invited to join the group.

Direction will need to be given. One person should identify all that needs to be done upfront and assign tasks/responsibilities. Who is writing it or gathering all the parts? Who is working on the budget? Who will handle the document last, make sure it's formatted correctly, and submit it at the end?

If problems arise, take time to talk through it, discuss solutions, and create action plans so everyone knows what they need to do. Status quo thinking or internal history ('Favored Child' status) will hamper conversations and be reflected in lack of trust in others. Formal group facilitation, dedication of personnel/resources, and understanding each other's role in accomplishing the vision might help group move forward.

VISION and PERSUASION: This process of creating an encompassing vision should be inclusive of the perspectives of all partners through a process of negotiation that makes sure that all partners are included and honored. This process of understanding perspectives and negotiating should be done in a way that aligns differing visions and priorities across partners. In this way, service silos or gaps may be avoided, and members may be more likely to commit to working together in a coordinated way toward the same overriding goal or goals. Persuasion occurs in real time as part of the planning process rather than after the fact by trying to convince others about things that have already been decided.

The vision, and the corresponding and supporting priorities and activities should be represented in the comprehensive workplan in ways that are concrete and functional rather than esoteric. It is important that the people participating in the planning and grant writing process have buy-in from the whole program or organization they represent, which requires regular and clear communication.

Guest Presentation

Amy Harris, Colorado Department of Human Service, State Unit on Aging, and Megan Bettinger, Colorado Respite Coalition, were guest presenters for their presentation entitled *Colorado Respite Coalition: Leading with the Heart*.

They inherited the Colorado Respite Coalition after a global pandemic and significant staff changes and were left to rebuild their program. They didn't know how to begin but led with their hearts, were honest and authentic with each other, formed a close partnership (that led to other close relationships that would prove crucial to their success), leveraged their lack of experience and institutional knowledge for a fresh take on their programs, and reached out for help. They realized that they were responsible for the programs going forward, and they didn't have to run them the same way as in the past. When they asked why things were run a certain way, if there was not a good reason or problems with the approach existed, they felt they had the right to change it. As a result, the Colorado Respite Coalition has been transformed into a flexible, tailored program that helps more people with more resources.

Easterseals Colorado is the fiscal agent for the Coalition, formed 12 years ago. Primarily funded by the Lifespan Respite Care grant and dedicated state funds of \$350K, administered through the Colorado Unit on Aging, there are several programs and services working seamlessly in Colorado, namely:

- **Stress Busting** – a 9-week course for caregivers, held every 6 months, providing group support/relaxation techniques from demands of chronic illness. Offer \$50 value gift to participants.
- **Coming Up for Air** – Respite weekends at Rocky Mountain Village for families raising children, including kinship/adoptive/foster families. Adults have learning opportunities/peer support while kids are busy with activities.
- **Quarterly Webinars** – used meetings to discuss pros/cons of respite models and what works or problems stemming from current programming. Cover a variety of topics such as mental health.
- **Respite Vouchers** - \$800/family for respite of caregivers providing 40+ hours of unpaid care. Borrowing from a participant-directed model, caregivers select a respite provider from family members, friends, or agency providers, with rates determined by the care needed. Previously, vouchers could only be used with an approved list of agency providers for a set hourly rate. Increasing the funding level and providing choice in provider resulted in twice as many families utilizing the vouchers and spending down the funds.
- **Caregiving Training and Support Groups** – virtual and in-person “tea parties” held to bring people together to talk about caregiving issues. Several organizations provide various training and support groups.
- **Grants to Respite Providers** - \$10-30K/year given to provide free/low-cost respite to caregivers. The “old way” allowed only 9 months to spend down the money, so they reworked the timelines to give them more time to utilize funds and changed billing procedures to allow for more frequent reimbursements. Better communication was needed to help providers transition to the new grant parameters.
- **New Adventures Respite Program** – Monthly Saturday respite for children/siblings in rural Colorado, provided by nursing students (who gain clinical hours), background checked and supervised by RN/instructors, in 1:1 ratio with participants.

- **Rebuilding Regional Respite Coalitions** – before COVID, Colorado had groups as representative of the needs/priorities of underserved communities, but they fell apart. Quarterly webinar meetings have helped get groups started again.

While they inherited an ambitious workplan, they utilized strategic planning meetings to comb through the plan, identify what could and could not be accomplished, and determine what was most important. One of their greatest sources of information and support has been ARCH and the Lifespan Respite Network.

Next Steps

Next Meeting Topic. The learning collaborative will meet next on **June 6, 2024**, (skipping the month of May) where we will discuss **negotiation**. Negotiation involves two or more people finding an acceptable solution to a shared problem. Successful negotiators control the process and come away with a result they're satisfied with – whether or not they've made compromises along the way. For projects to be successful, roles, strategies, targets, and deadlines all need to be agreed on, ideally to everyone's satisfaction, as we implement the goals and recommendations of the National Strategy.

We need your help in updating the matrix, entitled **State Lifespan Respite Grant Activities Aligned with the National Strategy's Goals and Outcomes**, to see our movement on the goals and priorities identified as pertinent to Lifespan Respite. The deadline for updates is May 15, 2024.

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](#).

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