When We Are Back Home

STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATING LOCAL AND RURAL DECISION-MAKERS TO SUPPORT TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION
About the LEAD Collaborative

Funded by OAH and coordinated by EngenderHealth, the LEAD Collaborative is a partnership between five organizations: the Adolescent Health Initiative at Michigan Medicine, the Center for Strengthening Youth Prevention Paradigms at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, EngenderHealth, the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, and Youth Catalytics.

The goal of the LEAD Collaborative is to provide OAH Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) grantees with meaningful opportunities to learn and engage with their peers and with the Collaborative’s partners, accelerating their ability to design and deliver high-quality, youth-centered programs.
Our Values

• Mutual Respect
• Working from a Strengths Perspective
• Collaborative Leadership
• Quality and Continuous Improvement
• Inclusivity and Humility
Who We Are

The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI), established in 1971 as part of the UMass President’s Office, addresses critical questions and develops innovative solutions that enable organizations and communities to meet challenges, measure success, and strengthen capacity. UMDI is known for economic and social science research; public, private, and nonprofit development; program evaluation; and workforce initiatives. Nonprofit Funding & Fiscal Solutions (NFFS), one of UMDI’s eight divisions, provides customized training, coaching/mentoring, intervention and services to enable our clients to create cultures and systems that result in sustainable programs, fundraising success, and stable infrastructure. Our goal as the Community Mobilization and Sustainability CBA provider is to support grantees to mobilize their communities, leverage resources, and sustain TPP programs and their impact for the long term.

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Our Team

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Your Presenter

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Session Objectives

Following this workshop, you will have a better understanding of:

• Why it is important to the sustainability of my project to have positive relationships with rural and local community and state decision-makers

• How to identify allies and decision-makers to engage

• What kind of support I am seeking from decision-makers
10 Word Flash Storm!

• In 10 words or less, what is your best reason to have positive relationships with local decision-makers, even in rural areas?

• Write it on a card

• Then stand and deliver

• Pass in cards!
Access!

- Local decision-makers have doors open to them that we do not have.
- The access is local, county, and statewide, but can also be national.
- They are our representatives to greater powers.
Two Roads

Two roads to engaging and educating decision-makers back home:

1. Direct: Engage and educate those you know personally
2. Indirect: Work through allies to engage and educate them

• Take BOTH roads!
How “Tight-knit” Is Your Community?

• “Tight-knit” refers to communities with little affective, normative, and interactive social distance

• “Everyone is a friend or family”

• Common in rural settings and “small” towns
The Challenge of “Tight-knit” Communities

• Tacit social norms on behaviors maintain and balance community cohesion

• May include taboos on talking publicly about certain topics (e.g., sex, religion, and politics)

• May result in:
  • Feeling awkward discussing TPP & politics with community friends and family
  • Worry about stirring up conflict and upsetting the balance of cohesion in our community
  • Fear of becoming socially isolated if issue causes people to “turn their back” on you
  • Discomfort in asking people to “take your side”
Activity: “Tight-knit”-ness Poll

• How tight is your community? Select one that best describes your community:

A. I don’t even know my neighbors!

B. I know many people by sight and their first name.

C. I can’t get away with anything! I know people everywhere I go and they know me.
Activity: Outreach in “Tight-knit” Communities

- Large Group Discussion
  - If you are in a “tight-knit” community, what has worked for you to maintain good relations even as you have reached out to people who do not or will not agree with you on important topics?
“To Do” List for Back Home

- Get clear on your message about TPP
- Find your allies
- Convene your allies
- Work with allies
  - Agree on key messages
  - Identify select
  - Train and prepare messengers (if needed)
  - Make an engagement plan
  - Execute!
  - Evaluate (and celebrate)
Get Clear on Your Message

Clear Messages are:

• Simple
• To the point
• Easily remembered
• Frequently repeated
Reminder: The Message Box

**Vision**

“So, what?” This is what the world will look like if your audience does what you want them to do.

**Value**

Make your audience nod back at you in agreement.

**Barrier**

(a.k.a. Overcome the Barrier or your “pre-buttal”)

What you would say if your audience says, “Yeah, but…”

**Ask**

What one, specific thing do you want them to do?
Activity: Tailoring Your Message for Home

• Work in your team (or alone, if not with your team)

• Using the message you’ve created, based on “The Message Box,” quickly write an adaptation for decision makers in your community

• Condense it into a 30-second message to share with the group
Finding Your Allies

• Who are your allies?
  • People and groups who support your cause and have the capacity and/or resources to help

• Why have allies?
  • Help achieve goal
  • Resource & capacity sharing
  • Power in numbers: the more you have with you, the more attention paid
The Ally Finder

• Before convening your allies, use The Ally Finder tools to identify and assess their potential as allies:
  
  • Tool #1: Community Resource Inventory to Recognize Allies
  
  • Tool #2: Potential Ally Risks and Benefits
  
  • Tool #3: Ally Power Grid

Source & Resource
Activity: Who Are Our Allies?

- Work in your team (or alone, if not with your team)

- Try out The Ally Finder:
  - Identify a single (1) ally to assess (Tool #1)
  - Use Tool #2 to assess the risks and benefits to that ally
  - Use Tool #3 to assess the power that one ally brings
Convene Your Allies

- Personal conversation leading to possible invitation
- Central, accessible location
- Convenient date and time for all
- Neutral location (if possible)
- Focus on organizing for action
- May be first of several
Working With Allies

Sample Agenda for Meeting
• Introduction of participants
• Describe purpose of meeting:
  • The issue (TPP)
  • Why it is important
  • What is being asked of participants
• Ask/confirm commitment of allies
• Go to Work!
  • Propose and get agreement on message
  • Brainstorm/discuss/select decision maker education and engagement strategies
  • Identify training or preparation needs of allies to be messengers
  • Make an engagement plan
After the Convening Meeting

- Provide or arrange for training and support needed by allies
- Implement the engagement plan
- Evaluate efforts, adapt, and keep going
- Meet again? Maybe… but this is not likely a long-term group
Four Time-Tested Ideas for Engaging Decision Makers

1. *Tell them* stories to convey information, win hearts, and “stick” the issue in their memory

2. *Give them* easy-to-understand infographics, pictures, graphs, and tables – not dense, detailed reports

3. *Work with the media* – traditional and social – to put out your message

4. *Yes, learn and memorize that* silly “elevator speech!”
Activity: Lessons from Peers

• Choose and complete any of the sentences below to share your insights and wisdom with your peers:
  • I’ve found the best time to engage and educate decision-makers is…
  • The best place I’ve found to engage and educate decision-makers is…
  • My most successful strategy or tactic for engaging and educating decision-makers is…
  • The best thing I have done to reduce the risk of controversy over TPP in our community is…
  • If controversy erupts, though, I’ve had the most success by…
Community of Practice Anyone?
Thank you!

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