

Making a Meaningful Difference: Leadership and Communication Skills for Building Coalitions and Strengthening Partnerships

Western MCH Nutrition Leadership Network Meeting

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Agenda

8:30-9am

Building a Coalition: Leadership Practices for Strengthening Partnerships

- Appreciate organizational and environmental complexities to consider when seeking to make a meaningful difference

9-9:30am

Articulating Your Vision: Create an Inspiring Picture of a Desired Future

- Clarify your motivations for working on change—articulate a vision for increased organizational capacity

9:30-10:15am

Connecting with Colleagues: Inquiry as a Leadership Skill

- Inquire about the visions and priorities of others and listen with intent to understand those who have different perspectives

10:15-10:30 Break

10:30-Noon

Influencing Up, Down and Across: Building a Network of Relationships

- Identify current sources of social capital and map your individual network of relationships with key stakeholders

Noon-1pm Lunch

1-2:30pm

Preparing for Important Conversations

- Practice an “opening statement” for an upcoming conversation you’d like to engage

2:45-3:30pm

Experimenting and Moving to Action

- Identify and act on next steps using a “next action” or “prototyping” mindset.

This workshop will provide an opportunity to practice the skills you need to:

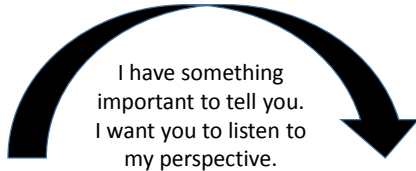
- Strengthen professional relationships through giving voice to your own compelling vision for the future at the same time as you inquire about what inspires others
- Recognize sources of power and influence you already have and learn how to make even better uses of them
- Discern which relationships to put energy into in order to accomplish your desired changes
- Prepare for important conversations with those key stakeholders
- Create an actionable plan to practice and experiment with these skills

Four key skills to influence and lead change:

1. Articulate your vision
2. Connect with colleagues.
3. Influence up, down and across.
4. Experiment and move to action.

INSPIRE + CONNECT + INFLUENCE + EXPERIMENT = *IMPACT*

IS THIS HOW INFLUENCE
WORKS?



OR DOES IT WORK
MORE LIKE THIS?



Principles of Partnering

Be a person who sees others, who grasps who they are and what is important to them;

Who gets behind them and moves them ahead in their world.

Be a person who puts your projects out to others, lets them know who you are and what is important to you;

And allows them to get behind you and move you ahead in your world.

BARRY OSHRY

Skill One: Articulate Your Vision

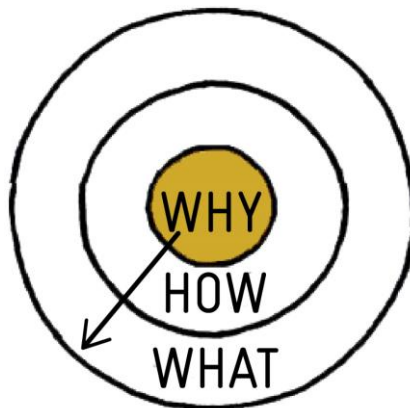
- Create an inspiring picture of a desired future.
- Share it with others.

“Martin Luther King, Jr. gave the ‘I have a dream’ speech, not the ‘I have a plan’ speech.”

SIMON SINEK

“Start With Why”

Simon Sinek



Case Study: Gaining Support for I+PSE Strategies Part 1

(example prepared by Angie Tagtow and the NLN Leadership Team based on NLN members' experiences)

Anita is the lead nutritionist at Alberta State Health Department (ASHD) and provides nutrition leadership to the WIC, MCH, and SNAP-Ed programs. ASHD is a mid-size agency and provides direct services through the 43 county public health agencies. Several years ago Anita attended a SNAP-Ed conference hosted by USDA and the Association of SNAP Nutrition Education Administrators in which new guidance was shared on how SNAP-Ed programs can expand reach and strengthen impact with multi-level comprehensive interventions - known as policy, system and environment (PSE) change approaches. Anita and the SNAP-Ed team want to work to incorporate PSE strategies in their work plans.

What “inspiring picture of a desired future” might Anita create?

Skill Practice: Articulating Your Vision

- *What is your own personal “why”?*
- *What is the meaningful difference you want to make?*
- *Describe your desired future in aspirational terms.*
- Share your reflection/Listen to your colleagues
 - ~5 minutes per person
 - No advice, problem-solving or critiquing.
 - Listen “generously” to witness what is true for the other person.
- Debrief
 - What did you notice as you listened to other people articulate their visions?
 - How did it feel for you to put your own vision into words?

Skill Two: Connect With Colleagues

- Ask others for their perspective.
- Listen with your eyes and heart as well as your ears.

“Seek first to understand and then to be understood.”

STEPHEN COVEY

“If you are not being heard, there is something you are not hearing.”

LPR GROUP

Case Study: Gaining Support for I+PSE Strategies Part 2

Energized by the opportunities emerging from the SNAP-Ed conference, Anita shared the PSE concepts and examples with her state’s MCH nutrition team. Two of the public health nutritionists talked about the new relationships formed with the nursing school and with the state breastfeeding coalition. One of the team members commented that MCH can’t take on more work **AND** abandon direct health and nutrition services to women and children. Another mentioned the legislation proposed the year prior (that didn’t pass) that would have provided greater maternity leave support and safeguards for women and men.

How might Anita respond with curiosity to the concerns expressed by these four different members of her own team?

Different Kinds of Questions

Leading Questions

Guiding their thinking
 Proving them right or wrong
 Suggesting an answer
 Making a point
 Offering advice
 Narrowing the choices

Curious Questions

Stimulating new thinking
 Exploring concerns or interests
 Looking for more options
 Discovering new information
 Learning
 Expanding the choices

Examples of Leading and Curious Questions

Leading Questions

Do you want this or that?
 Have you thought about...?
 Have you considered...?
 What did he say about this?
 Why don't you...?
 What do you think of this...?

Curious Questions

What would you like to do?
 What did you learn?
 What else are you considering?
 Who/what else is affected by this?
 What other ideas do you have?
 Help me understand your thinking?

Reflection

- *What is your usual experience of listening?*
- *What is your usual experience of being listened to?*

Skill Practice: Listening to Learn Something New

In trios:

A: Talker
B: Listener
C: Observer

Three rounds so
each person gets to
practice in each role

TALKER

- Speak about a current situation that is important to you

LISTENER

- Listen “generously” with appreciation for the reality, the feelings and the commitment of the other person
- Ask curious questions, not leading questions
- Do not give advice or “problem solve”
- Notice if you get distracted and bring your attention back to the person in front of you

OBSERVER

- Manage the time
- Offer feedback to the listener

Skill Three: Influence Up, Down and Across

- Build on your strengths.
- Do what you say you will do.
- Put your ideas out to others, and support others' ideas
- Say thank you.

Case Study: Gaining Support for I+PSE Strategies Part 3

Anita and the SNAP-Ed team presented their PSE strategies to their State Nutrition Action Council (SNAC). SNAC members were skeptical about changing their direct service delivery models and nutrition education strategies.

Anita approached SNAC the following year with positive preliminary results of their expanded SNAP-Ed strategies with the hope to demonstrate that PSE strategies - in addition to direct services (I+PSE) – could deliver greater impact. SNAC members asked a few questions, but appeared to be underwhelmed.

What strategies might Anita have used in advance of these meetings to strengthen partnerships with SNAC members?

Assessing Your Sources of Influence

What are my potential sources of influence?

- Reputation
- Relationship
- Expertise
- Learning Capability
- Grantwriting
- Inspiration

What will it take to be successful in the situation?

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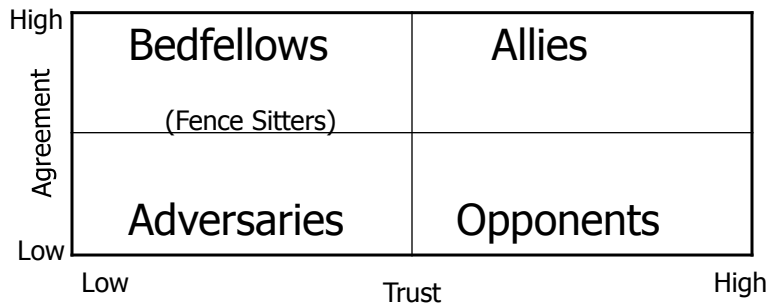
Building Your Sources of Influence

Questions from Art Kleiner, *Who Really Matters: The Core Group Theory of Power, Privilege, and Success*

- *Which is my greatest leverage?*
- *Which is my greatest “toothache”?*
- *Where will I invest next?*

Building Coalitions: A Framework

Peter Block, *The Empowered Manager*



Who agrees with your purpose? Who do you trust?

Advice for Building a Coalition

Peter Block, *The Empowered Manager*

- Allies (high agreement and high trust): Partner Fully
 - Acknowledge doubts and vulnerability, and ask for support and advice.
- Opponents (low agreement and high trust): Seek to Learn
 - Seek to understand their perspective and engage in problem-solving dialogue.
- Adversaries (low agreement and low trust): LET GO
 - Decrease emotional investment

Be slow to identify someone as an adversary; let go only after repeated attempts to rebuild trust.

Skill Practice: Influence and Inquiry Planning

- Start with your own purpose– what are you trying to make happen?
- Who are some of your relevant stakeholders? Where do you stand with each in terms of trust and agreement?
- How might you engage with them? (observation? conversation?)
- What questions might you prepare in order to learn from Opponents?

Use your Generous Listening skills to help your colleagues think through who they are seeking to influence and how they might approach those conversations.

Who agrees with your purpose? Who do you trust?

High	Bedfellows:	Allies:
Low	Adversaries:	Opponents:
	Low	High

Trust

Case Study: Gaining Support for I+PSE Strategies Part 4

Last fall, Anita's division received a Federal grant to address childhood obesity, specifically focused on healthy eating and physical activity initiatives, and Anita was asked by ASHD leadership to direct this work and specifically to link efforts across all nutrition programs within the Department. Although already overstretched in her job, Anita developed a comprehensive plan in which she incorporated I+PSE strategies across all Department nutrition initiatives. In addition, the plan included several opportunities for building relationships and networks with external stakeholders and to leverage these relationships to advance certain strategies (i.e., early childcare and education (ECE), community-clinical linkages (CCL)).

Anita presented the plan to ASHD leadership. Her Division Director commented that these strategies were out of scope of the programs. Another asked how she could justify working on Policy (Big P versus little p) when their job was simply to inform and educate the state legislature and not lobby or advocate.

Anita was dumfounded. She applied evidence-based strategies, including individual behavior change *and* system change theories, to the comprehensive plan. Why did leadership not embrace these approaches? Why were they making such assumptions? Is it back to the drawing board for Anita?

1. *What might Anita have done to build greater support for I+PSE approaches with her teams?*
2. *How can Anita and her team better communicate the value and benefits of PSE approaches to both internal (leadership and her teams) and external stakeholders (e.g., SNAC, ECE, CCL)?*
3. *Although Anita is a mid-level practitioner within ASHD, how might she influence organizational change (upstream) so ASHD better supports PSE strategies across all public health initiatives?*

Preparing for Important Conversations

- What result am I trying to create?
- Do I notice “silence” or “violence” in myself or the other person?
- Are my emotions “in the basement”? How might I change that?

What result am I trying to create?

- Advocate for a program I’m responsible for
- Get agreement or support from someone who sees things differently
- Communicate a decision
- Ask someone else to do something
- Ask someone else to change their behavior
- Seek a mutually agreeable solution to a problem

- Other types of “important” conversations?

Is a conversation the right first step?

Do I notice “silence” or “violence”? *Crucial Conversations*

- Silence: Am I holding back? Am I smoothing over? Am I not sharing important information?
- Violence: Am I blaming, attacking, or trying to control others?

Strategies for Emotional Regulation

- Name That Emotion
- Cognitive Reappraisal

Name That Emotion

- How am I feeling right now?
- What is that about?
- What do I want?

Cognitive Reappraisal:

Questions for getting my emotions “out of the basement”

Adapted from Crucial Conversations

- What was my part?
- Why would a reasonable decent person act this way?
- What do I really want? (for myself, for the other person, and for our relationship)
 - What would I do if I really wanted this?

Preparing for Important Conversations Worksheet

Data – What I see. Describe facts a video would capture. (Avoid assumptions here.)

- I see...
- I notice...
- I observe...

Feelings – What I feel. Share your personal feelings, share the impact for you.

- I feel...
- The impact for me has been....

Assumptions/Perceptions– Briefly share your story . Consider using tentative language.

- I think/I imagine...
- To me this seems...
- I interpret this as...

Wants – What I want. State the change or outcome you want for yourself and others.

- I would like...
- I do not want...
- It is important to me that...

Skill Four: Experiment and Move to Action

- Use “next action” thinking.
- Prototype like it’s a verb.

“Start where you are.
Use what you have.
Do what you can.”

ARTHUR ASHE

“What’s the
next action?”

DAVID ALLEN

Next Action Thinking Susan Johnson, paraphrasing David Allen

“The next action is the very next physical action you will take to move toward a desired outcome – call, e-mail, buy, talk to, write, read, search, dictate etc.. The outcome can be big or small – setting up transportation for an upcoming trip, putting on a bar mitzvah, or submitting an grant.”

“To test if you have identified a real next action, ask yourself:
“Could I do this *right now* if I had the time?”

Skill Practice: Moving to Action

- Briefly describe your vision for change—give it a headline (<1 min)
- How might you try out your idea as a “prototype” (not a finished product)?
- Whose help do you need to achieve your goals and purpose?
- Who will you reach out to first? (Pick just one person) Next?
- How might you approach them to get the conversation going? Will you inquire about their perspective at the same time as you share your vision and passion?
- Be specific: What first step action will you take, by when?

My wish for you:

- Pick **one** of these skills and **practice**. Practice some more. Practice in everyday life.
- Start small...
- Step up!

Recommended Readings

- Peter Block, **The Empowered Manager**
- Geoffrey Bellman, **Getting Things Done When You Are Not In Charge**
- Steven Covey, **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**
- Amy Edmondson, **Teaming to Innovate**
- Malcolm Gladwell, **The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference**
- William Isaacs, **Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together**
- Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, **Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High.**
- Robert Quinn, **Building The Bridge As You Walk On It: A Guide For Leading Change**
- Scott, Susan, **Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work & in Life One Conversation at a Time.**
- Stone, Patton, & Heen, **Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most.**
- William Ury, **Getting To Yes With Yourself (And Other Worthy Opponents)**