5-4-2022

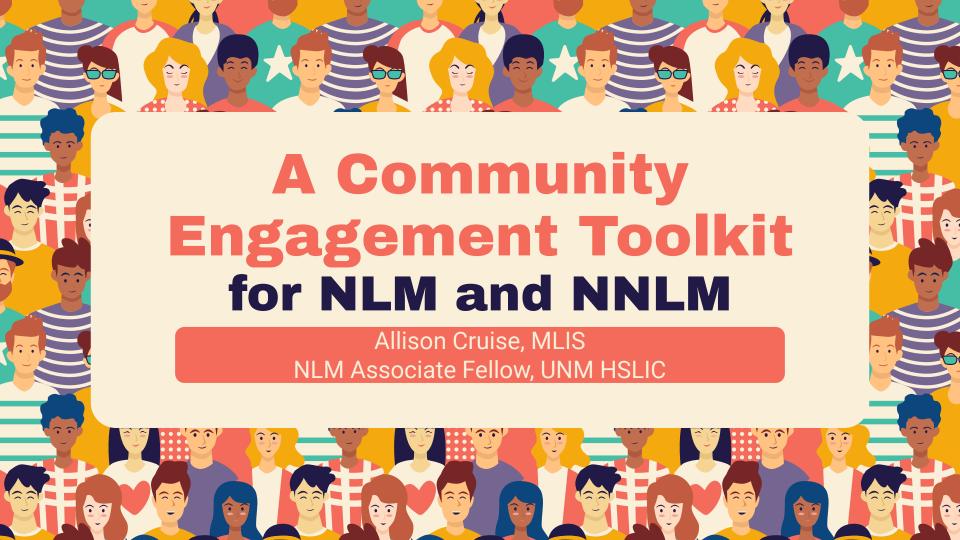# A Community Engagement Toolkit for NLM and NNLM

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A Community Engagement Toolkit
for NLM and NNLM

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Project Background

NLM Associate Fellow project with NLM Office of Engagement and Training

Original project proposal was to create a resource to facilitate community engagement efforts by NLM and NNLM

Methods

Phase	Objectives
1	Defining community engagement
2	Development of CE principles
3	Interviews with NIH, NLM and NNLM stakeholders
4	Creation of toolkit

Defining Community

For NLM and NNLM, community can include **healthcare workers, scientists and researchers, members of the public, teachers, librarians** and more. Communities can exist in **physical and virtual spaces**. They can include people linked by **location, interest, beliefs, or common goals**. They are not static or passive.

Defining Community Engagement

- It is an **intentional, mutual exchange** between a community and an organization that can i**nform, consult, involve and empower** community members.
- It promotes **diversity, equity and inclusion**, which improves discourse and strengthens consensus and decision-making.
- It recognizes that communities should have **ownership of their own resources**, solutions, and projects, which makes results more effective and increases the likelihood of success.

Defining Community Engagement

- It recognizes that **engaging establishes trust** in organizations and can lead to lasting partnerships and networks of multiple communities and organizations.

- It provides a way for **members to have their voices heard**, and for **organizations to learn and grow by listening**.

- It builds capacity. When implemented to its greatest potential, it can **empower groups of people and create lasting change**.

Development of Principles

Principles Identified

Using the team's collaboration on definitions and resources

Interviews

Third draft of principles shared with 11 stakeholders

Toolkit Creation

Feedback from interviewees and team led to toolkit draft

Interviews

Q1: What does "community" mean to your organization/division/team?

Q2: What does "community engagement" mean to your organization/division/team?

Q3: What does "successful community engagement" look like for your group? What is your group's mission when it comes to CE?

Q4: What do you think your group does best when it comes to CE? Where is there room for improvement?

Q5: Do you provide any training for employees involved in CE?

Q6: What does your group look for in CE?

Q7: How does your group encourage diversity, equity, and inclusivity in your engagement activities?

Q8: Is CE limited to the products or materials within your organization?

Q9: What are some of the biggest challenges you face when doing community engagement?

Q10: What feedback do you have for the principles?

Toolkit Principles

- Five principles were identified and defined: **trust, flexibility, respect, intentionality, empowerment**
- Each principle is defined and paired with **strategies**
- Strategies include potential goals and **ideas** for thought exercises, **tools** to use, and **resources** to consider
- The toolkit concludes with a brief section on **where to learn more**

Toolkit Example: Trust

- Establishing trust must be highly prioritized. **Without the trust of the community, engagement efforts will not be successful.**
- Recognizing the community's experiences with, and impression of, your organization can inform the approach to engagement. **What level of trust might the community have for your organization now?**
- Once trust has begun to be established, consistency, communication, **respect**, humility, and **flexibility** are needed to maintain this trust.

Toolkit Example: Strategy for Trust

- *Listening*: **Ensuring all stakeholder voices are being heard will help establish relationships and foster trust.** Respond to community concerns with honesty and action. The community knows its own needs. **Never assume.** Instead, listen with an open mind and think about how you can adapt your engagement to meet community needs. There should be **"nothing about us without us."**

Toolkit Example: Strategy for Trust

- *Things to Consider*: What demographics are you engaging with, and how can you reach others? Is this community over-surveyed? Is data already available which can be supplemented? **What resources and expertise do you have which could be helpful to the community?** What expertise and skills exist in the community already? What projects have already been done?
- *Tools to Use*: Primary and secondary data sources, focus groups
- *Resources for Listening*:
    - Community Guide to Advance Health Information Equity
    - Toolkits from the Asset-Based Community Development Institute

Toolkit Example: Intentionality

- Being knowledgeable about NLM resources and recognizing when these resources can be applied to meet community needs is a skill which **combines expert knowledge, experience, and problem solving.**
- Community engagement combines 'science' and 'art' –**knowing what resources you have** that can be adapted to meet community needs, being able to **identify the opportunity for engagement**, and then **facilitating change** through intentional communication, **respect**, and the establishment of mutual **trust**.

Toolkit Example: Strategy for Intentionality

- *Setting Realistic Goals and Measuring Impact*: Be transparent about the intentions of the project, set goals, and d**efine what success will look like for the engagement opportunity**. Throughout the engagement process, and at the 'end' of the process, **reflect**, solicit feedback, and explore ways to improve.

Toolkit Example: Strategy for Intentionality

- *Things to Consider*: Flexibility is important, but setting reasonable plans is needed to guide the engagement process.
- *Tools to Use*: Mission statement, goal planning, collaborative tools like Google Jamboard, Trello, or OneNote
- *Resources for Setting Realistic Goals and Measuring Impact:*
    - International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation
- *Examples:*
    - Washington State Department of Transportation Strategic Plan Dashboard

What's Next?

Use by OET, NLM & NNLM

Continued Updates and Adaptation

Thank you!

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Thank you to George Franklin, Blair Anton, Martha Meacham

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And all Interviewees