

Transcript for Community Engagement Toolkit Presentation:

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Hello and welcome everyone, thank you for your attention today as I present my project titled, A Community Engagement Toolkit for NLM and NNLM.

My name is Allison Cruise, and I am a second year NLM Associate Fellow currently hosted by the University of New Mexico's health sciences library and informatics center. My role focuses on community engagement and outreach.

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I'd like to get started with a brief introduction and some background information on the project.

This project was proposed by the National Library of Medicine's Office of Engagement and Training. The project was one of two major spring projects I completed for my fellowship.

This project was submitted, sponsored and supported by George Franklin, Blair Anton, and Martha Meacham.

The original project proposal called for an exploration of what successful community engagement looks like to stakeholders with NLM and NNLM, that is, the Network of the National Library of Medicine. The project was inspired in part by preparation for an expansion of the role of NNLM and NLM exhibitors.

Ultimately, the project aimed to create a resource of some kind to assist NLM and NNLM stakeholders with recognition and establishment of community engagement opportunities.

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We took a phase based approach with this project, beginning with establishing a working definition of community engagement for the project's purposes. This was done collaboratively in a shared word document, where George Franklin, Blair Anton and I shared our thoughts about the meaning of community and community engagement, ideal practices, and various resources we thought would be helpful.

Based on this document, in phase 2 I created a set of community engagement principles.

This was done to organize and consolidate the most important ideas around the topic of community engagement for the project and to begin thinking about how the principles could be applied by NLM and NNLM stakeholders for successful engagement.

After these principles were prepared I moved to interviewing a total of 11 stakeholders from NIH, NLM, and NNLM. I asked a prepared set of questions and shared the principles for feedback.

Finally, bringing all of the information gathered in the first three phases together, I began the toolkit creation, sharing a draft with George, Blair, and Martha, as well as with those I interviewed. Through their feedback I was able to refine the toolkit to its final form.

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Let's take a look at how we defined community from the toolkit's perspective.

Defining community is an exceptionally difficult task, and the toolkit recognizes that community and community engagement can be defined in many different ways.

For the purposes of this project, we recognized that the community served by NLM and NNLM includes healthcare workers, scientists and researchers, members of the public, teachers, librarians and more. We noted that communities exist in physical and virtual spaces, that they can include people linked by location, interest, beliefs, or common goals, and that communities are not static or passive.

This definition expands upon the CDC's definition of community, which is utilized by the NIH and defines communities as groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations.

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It was vital too to define community engagement itself and what we mean by that for our community engagement toolkit.

First, we acknowledge that community engagement is intentional, and highlight the mutual nature of successful engagement. Also listed here is the ability of community engagement to inform, consult, involve, and empower community members – these four ideas were inspired by the International Association for Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation.

Next, we highlight the power of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in community engagement efforts.

Finally, we stress the importance of community ownership over their own resources, projects and results.

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These defining ideas continue further with the establishment of trust through engagement, followed by how engagement should ensure community members are heard. The mutual aspect of engagement is demonstrated here through dialogue between communities and organizations.

The definition concludes with a reminder of the potential to empower through engagement, and even create lasting change.

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The collaborative process of defining community and community engagement in a shared document led to the next phase of the project, where principles of community engagement were identified and defined based on the pooled data of definitions and resources.

I created three drafts which were shared with the team for feedback. The first draft was a long attempt to summarize the most important ideas collected in the collaborative document. A second, more concise draft led to the third draft, which paired both principles and strategies.

Moving into the interview phase, the third draft was shared with the 11 interviewed stakeholders for their feedback.

Five principles were identified, which would be revised, defined, and paired with strategies for the creation of the final outcome for this project, the community engagement toolkit.

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Before we reveal the principles and talk about the toolkit, I'd like to highlight the importance of what was learned from the interviews with the NIH, NLM and NNLM stakeholders.

The value of the information shared by the interviewees cannot be overstated. Not only was this crucial for the toolkit creation, it was also an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how

community engagement is taking place across NIH, NLM and NNLM, and how much engagement has changed in the face of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Through the interviews the definition of community for this project was also expanded to suit the broad audience served by NIH, NLM, and NNLM. This was a tremendously important part of identifying the communities being served by those using the toolkit.

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Let's take a look at the five principles which were ultimately used for the toolkit creation, and the way the toolkit is organized.

The five principles are trust, flexibility, respect, intentionality, and empowerment.

All of the principles, except empowerment, are paired with at least one strategy to support or bring about that principle. Empowerment does not have any strategies as, from the viewpoint of the toolkit, empowerment cannot be brought about but can emerge within a community if the conditions of the engagement allow for it.

The strategies themselves provide some food for thought, tools to check out, and additional resources related to the strategy.

The principles are not hierarchical or independent of one another, instead they are interrelated concepts which overlap and support each other.

The toolkit was designed with the goal to be flexible, allowing users to apply the principles and resources to a variety of communities and community needs. The final section of the toolkit shares resources for learning more about community engagement.

Next we will take a look at some examples of how this information is organized and shared in the toolkit.

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Here we have an example of the principle trust.

These definitions are fairly extensive, so only a portion is shown here. I hope that this example illustrates the kind of, hopefully thought-provoking, information you can find in the toolkit.

It is important to determine what level of trust or distrust the community has for your organization. Be aware of how the organization has, or has not, interacted with the community, in the past and present. Gaining an understanding of the community's perception of your organization will inform your process moving forward and help you strategize about ways to establish, improve, and maintain trust between your organization and the identified community.

There are several important concepts about maintaining trust in the last bullet point, which actually demonstrates how the principles are interrelated – flexibility and respect, listed here, are two of the 5 principles.

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Here is one of the strategies paired with trust. This strategy is titled listening. Here we have the definition of this strategy, which likely includes some familiar language, like “Nothing about us without us”

This strategy also harkens back to the community engagement definition shared earlier, which included the importance of ensuring community members have their voices heard.

Listen intentionally, with an open mind and without making assumptions, so you can ensure you are hearing the community's needs, and become familiar with their strengths and expertise. Through listening to community member voices and responding with honesty and action you can begin to foster a trusting relationship.

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The listening strategy continues here with some questions to consider, to help you get to know the community, its needs, and how you can pair your own resources and expertise with those needs to bring about successful engagement.

There are also some examples of tools to help out under the ‘tools to use’ section, and a couple of resources as well.

Note that the Community Guide to Advance Health Information Equity comes from Darlene Kaskie, Community Engagement Coordinator at University of Iowa in region 6, who was one of my interviewees. So we have a direct example of how helpful these interviews were for toolkit development.

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Let's take a brief look at one more principle before we wrap up – here we have the definition for intentionality.

This is where you combine the science – your expertise and resources – with the art – identifying the engagement opportunity, discovering how to adapt your resources to meet the community needs, and bringing it all together through establishing trust, and communicating with respect. Again we can see how everything is interrelated.

While this example specifically mentions NLM, I hope this also demonstrates how the toolkit's content can be adapted to meet the needs of other organizations.

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The strategy I wanted to highlight which is paired with intentionality is 'setting realistic goals and measuring impact' – this strategy encourages you to think about what successful engagement will look like, and to consider how you will measure that.

Defining success can help with trust as it is a transparent way to set goals and get feedback, and the community knows what to expect from the project.

Note the highlighted word reflect. Reflect is also its own strategy paired with intentionality and I wanted to draw attention to it here as it is such an important part of the engagement process.

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And continuing our strategy here, we have a thinking point which directly relates to our flexibility principle, some specific tool recommendations, and two resources I want to draw your attention to.

I would like to encourage you to visit these two resources when you have time. You can get familiar with the International Association for Public Participation and their resources including the spectrum, at iap2.org.

And the dashboard from the Washington State Department of Transportation is a great example of a transparent way to communicate where you are with your plans and goals.

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So what is next for the toolkit?

This resource will be something for OET to use moving forward as they establish an engagement framework to help them meet the goals which inspired the project itself, expanding the role of exhibitors.

The toolkit may also be a resource to share within NLM and NNLM to help with engagement practice.

One of my goals for my second year as an NLM fellow is to continue to update and adapt the toolkit, hopefully to meet the needs of my current institution. The toolkit is meant to be a living document, with elements to edit and add based on the constant need to shift and adapt when doing community engagement and outreach.

To that end, your feedback, suggestions and critique are highly valued, and I am happy to share the full version of the toolkit in its current state with anyone who is interested.

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I want to acknowledge my project sponsors George Franklin, Blair Anton and Martha Meacham for their support and the opportunity to do this project. They gave me a lot of their trust and confidence and allowed me a lot of freedom with this project.

Thank you as well to NLM for funding me as an associate fellow, and to NNLM for the network's support throughout the project.

Finally, thank you to those who offered their time and expertise as interviewees.

If you have any questions I would love to hear them, and please feel free to email me at the address on the screen at any time. I would be happy to hear from you.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.