**Communication and Feedback Practices to Strengthen Cross-Sector Partnership**

Workshop outlined developed by Youth Development Executives of King County for public use

**Workshop description:**

*When community-based organizations and schools are immersed in the work of serving youth and families, it can be difficult to find time to invest in relationships between the adults and organizations who are coordinating services. And yet, lack of communication and coordination can lead to challenges and conflict.*

*What practices can you put in place that align with values you share with your partners, such as building trust, continuous improvement, and accountability? In this interactive virtual workshop, we will explore ways to build a culture of open and effective communication within our partnerships, including giving and receiving feedback. Participants will become familiar with tools that support communication and equitable facilitation of meetings, and identify Feedback Touch Points to incorporate into their collaborative relationships. Our guiding tools to support school and community partnerships will provide you with resources to explore during the workshop and to apply after the session in depth.*

*This workshop is designed for leaders at all levels within schools, school districts, and community-based organizations who are developing or managing partnerships between schools and community-based organizations. It is strongly recommended for people looking for ways to improve communication with one or more partner organizations.*

**Session Resources (download from School’s Out WA Resource Library in advance):**

* Communication Practices Workshop Group Activity
* Feedback Touch Points Worksheet
* Feedback Loop Exercise
* Sample Partnership Check-in Agenda and Meeting Topics
* Tip Sheet: Planning Equitable Collaboration Meetings
* School-Community Partnership Design and Planning Tool
* Elevator Pitch

**Detailed Session Agenda:**

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| **Time Estimate** | **Activities** | **Facilitator Notes** |
| 15-30 min | ***Workshop Prep***   * Designed for use with a virtual meeting account, with breakout rooms * Producer - Enable screen sharing for participants: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/9488811744909-Enabling-screen-sharing-for-participants-in-Zoom-meetings> * Producer – Make Breakout Room facilitators Co-hosts * Producer – Enable closed captioning * Producer – Understand how to Create Breakout Rooms where you “let participants choose room”: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313-Managing-breakout-rooms> * Facilitator – Open Communication Practices Workshop Group Activity * Facilitator – Test screen sharing with slide deck * Prepare to share relevant Partnership Tools in the session; add hyperlinks to workshop outline * Enable Closed Captioning. |  |
| 2 min | **Welcome and Introduction**  ***Slide 2 – Welcome to “Communication and Feedback Practices to Strengthen Cross-Sector Partnership”!***  Before we get started, we want to remind you that we are planning to record our session today so we can share it with you afterwards. We plan to pause recording whenever we move into breakout rooms but otherwise will keep the recording going throughout. This will record all interactions, including the chat box.  **We will begin recording now.**  ***START RECORDING***  Welcome to......  *Facilitators introduce with name, org, and brief description of partnership background*    ***Slide 3 - Introduction to the School-Community Partnerships Toolkit and why we’re here today***   * A full range of services and supports are needed to ensure that every child has what they need to learn, grow, and thrive. * Community based programs often are structured to support children and youth of color, refugee and immigrant youth, and children experiencing poverty in culturally supportive ways that our schools and larger institutions have rarely been set up to do well. * These services and supports can be most beneficial when they are comprehensive, complementary, and well-coordinated - when they are part of an ecosystem. * The Toolkit is a set of resources and strategies to support schools and community partners that are working together to serve young people and create more equitable systems at the same time. * It was created by Youth Development Executives of King County for public use. | **Share in Chatbox:**  Welcome and thank you for being here! Live Captioning is enabled. |
| 1 min | **Learning Objectives for Today & Agenda**  ***Slide 4 – Learning Objectives***  Participants will....   * Learn ways to build a culture of open and effective communication within partnership * Identify tools to support trust-building, continuous improvement, and accountability   Here’s how our agenda will flow today:   * Welcome & Community Building * Reflecting on Partnership Types * Building the Conditions and Culture for Open Communication * Tools to Support Effective Communication * Reflection & Closing |  |
| 2 min | **Setting the Stage**  ***Slide 5 – Setting the stage***   * Learn with and from each other * Trust you to take care of your needs during the session * Give each other grace – we're all learning * Keep cameras on whenever possible to support group discussions * Step up and reply to questions or prompts by typing into the chat box or use the raise your hand feature and we’ll call on you to unmute yourself * If you have questions at other times, please type your question into the chat box |  |
| 5 min | **Community Building: Strengths-Based Approach**  **Slide 6: Strengths-Based Approach**  When community based organizations and schools are immersed in the work of serving youth and families, it can be difficult to find time to invest in relationships between the adults and organizations who are coordinating services. And yet, lack of communication and coordination can lead to challenges and conflict. When all of the work is urgent, sometimes our communication ends up being focused around conflicts or challenges.  Just as we do in youth development, we recommend a strength-based approach, so we’re going to begin by communicating something positive.  Raise your hand to share, or write in the chat:  Give some positive recognition to a partner or share something to celebrate from your cross-sector partnership.  As an added challenge, think of something that happened that relates to communication.  Example: My colleague recently put up a Wall of Fame in the staff office and I’ve noticed how we make sure everyone in the partnership receives individual recognition.  *(Folks share.)*  Thank you for getting us started on a positive note! Acknowledging, recognizing, and celebrating our partners is one of the ways to build trust through communication, and is one of the practices that supports our capacity to deliver and/or receive critical feedback with partners. | **Share in Chat:**  \*What is some positive recognition for a partner or something to celebrate from your partnership? |
| 15 min | **Reflecting on Our Partnership Types**  **Slide 7: Partnership Types**  What your communication looks like, its frequency, and what topics you focus on will be greatly influenced by what type of partnership you’re in.  Let’s start by reviewing a framework used to describe partnership types (describe):   * Independent * Cooperative * Collaborative * Integrated   **Slide 8: Sample Communication Focus and Practices Within Partnership Types**  Here are some descriptions of what communication is likely focused on within each of these types, and some relevant practices.   * Independent - Transactional communication, such as an application for space rental and email confirmation. * Cooperative - Communication focused on partnership set-up and end-of-program/cycle. Each organization decides how and what to communicate. * Collaborative - Communication around shared goals, meeting community needs. Explicit agreements around communications – e.g. meeting frequency. Contribute to each other's public communications. * Integrated - Regular communication is integral to the partnership and program activities and outcomes, from visioning to evaluation. Relational communication practices, such as shared decision-making and twice monthly meetings. Have a process for conflict resolution and problem-solving as partners.   When these communication practices aren’t in place, what happens? What are the symptoms that we might see in our day-to-day work?  Share a thumbs-up or write “yes” in the Chat if you’ve witnessed any of the following:   * Lack of referrals because not enough people know about the program and partnership * No one does a specific aspect of the work because it isn’t clear whose role it is to do it * Feeling like you’re constantly making the case for the importance of your work each time leadership turns over in the school building   Share in the Chat – what are other things you see experience or see in your everyday work when communication practices aren’t strong?  *(Read aloud.)*  On the other hand, here are some examples of what the impact can be when communication practices are working:   * *Share 1 or 2 brief examples/stories from your experience with cross-sector partnerships, when effective communication practices are in place* |  |
| 22 min | **Building a Culture of Open Communication**  **Slide 9: Building a Culture of Open Communication**  Building a culture of open communication includes setting up channels for communication, understanding communication styles and preferences, and being able to express your needs/wants while being responsive to those of your partners. This includes giving and receiving positive and constructive feedback about what’s working and what isn’t in your partnership.  Why? Because that is what’s needed for us to work together to improve our programs, the supports we offer to youth and families, and our collaboration in a continuous improvement process. Building trust and talking honestly about our shared work takes practice. It’s like building a muscle.  Think of an example of a time when someone gave you feedback that helped you learn and grow. This could be a story from a school-community partnership or another setting, such as within your own organization or with friends or family. *(2 minutes)*  **Breakout rooms – share your stories *(12 minutes)***  *Full group debrief (8 minutes):*   * What stood out to you about these feedback stories? * What do you notice about the relationships or the environment that made it possible for you to listen to and learn from the feedback? | Producer: Set up breakout rooms, 2-3 people per room  **Share in Chat:**  In your breakout room: Share an example of a time when someone gave you feedback that helped you learn and grow. This could be a story from a school-community partnership or another setting, such as within your own organization or with friends or family. |
| 15 min | **Building the Conditions for Communication & Feedback**  **Slide 10: Cultivating Conditions**  We encourage a human centered approach to partnership, which emphasizes the relationships between people, from intentionally thinking about how to navigate conflict to attending to power dynamics to discussing how you are centering equity in their work.  In white dominant culture, feedback can be passive-aggressive, punitive, or nonexistent, so we aim to push back against those norms and encourage practices that normalize human-centered communication within relationships, with an assessment of risk.  Your own identity, positional power, and your organizational power influence how you show up to communicate in partnerships, and may impact how partners respond to you – and vice versa.   * So...It starts with self-awareness and social awareness. Be aware of power differentials – across individual identities, types of roles, decision-making power, size and scope of organizations, etc. (hierarchical roles, decision-making power – e.g. to shut down a partnership) * Know your audience – build relationships rather than taking action on assumptions. Know what matters so that your elevator pitch – what you talk about with each set of stakeholders, matters. * Be explicit about intentions, preferences, and expectations related to communication * Take steps to mitigate stereotype threat – for example – Stereotype threat is a situation where people are or feel themselves at risk of confirming to stereotypes about their social group – e.g. that women as not as strong at math than men. Technique for mitigation - The WISE method when working across differences in race or gender (Source: Clayton Robbins, based on research from Stanford University), useful in situations such as – if I, as a white leader, am supervising a leader who is Black   + Connect to the individual’s goals   + Demonstrate high standards and expectations   + Asset framing - “I believe you are capable”   + Candidly share constructive criticism * Recognize strengths, contributions, and improvements on a regular basis * Model it   + COIN – Context, Observation, Impact, and Next (Source: Leading Spirit) * Structure it! (e.g. incorporate a feedback exchange into quarterly agendas) * Consider relevance of time and place * Ask for specific feedback – "Name one thing I could do to improve" (Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen) * Know who your allies are and when to call on them – e.g. a supervisor, a colleague with a shared concern |  |
| 10 min | **Application – Culture of Communication**  **Slide 11: Application: Feedback Touch Points**  We’re going to introduce a tool to support you in creating a culture of feedback within your partnership.  Now we are giving you an opportunity to assess what Feedback Touch Points are already taking place in the way you work together as partners and document some ideas for how you could work together to create a culture and practices that lead to more authentic and frequent feedback.  We recommend doing this exercise with one or more partners, but we want to give you some quiet reflection time to begin to consider what’s currently working and what you might want to try within your partnerships.  Here are the questions to consider:   * What are the current feedback touchpoints? What do we give/offer feedback about? * What values or practices would help us be more authentic? * What is one concrete step we will take?   *8 minutes quiet reflection* | **Share in Chat:**  \*Feedback Touch Points Worksheet: LINK TO FEEDBACK TOUCH POINTS WORKSHEET |
| 43 min | **Tools to Support Effective Communication**  **Slide 12: Tools to Support Effective Communication**  Now that we’ve talked through some of the practices that support open communication, we’re going to introduce you to some tools to support those practices. Combined, these tools encourage partners to set expectations about communication upfront, understand each other’s preferences, and ask open-ended questions to facilitate conversations about sharing power, navigating conflict, and ensuring all voices are heard and valued.  First, we’ll do a brief intro to each tool.  Then, you’ll have a chance to go into a breakout room to explore ONE of the tools in greater depth, and talk about its application within your partnership work.  ***Introduce tools (brief intro, show each tool online):***  ***Screen Share (Screen 2): Tools to Support Effective Communication – Breakout Room Activity, then click on each tool***   1. *Feedback Loop Exercise:* ADD LINK HERE 2. *Sample Partnership Check-in Agenda and Meeting Topics:* ADD LINK HERE 3. *Tip Sheet: Planning Equitable Collaboration Meetings:* ADD LINK HERE 4. *School-Community Partnership Design and Planning Tool:* ADD LINK HERE   (10 min)  **Slide 13: Self-Assessment**  Self-assessment – where is your opportunity for development? 1, 2, 3, 4   1. I want to strengthen communication through giving and receiving feedback. 2. I want to plan meaningful and productive partnership meetings. 3. I want to create conditions for more equitable collaboration with my partners. 4. I want to communicate effectively when reviewing, revising, or designing a partnership.   **Slide 14: Breakout Rooms: Discuss the Tool**  Each room will have one tool to discuss.  Rooms:   * *1 - Feedback Loop Exercise* * *2 - Sample Partnership Check-in Agenda and Meeting Topics.* * *3- Tip Sheet: Planning Equitable Collaboration Meetings* * *4 - School-Community Partnership Design and Planning Tool*   Your task as a group is to discuss:   * What the tool is * What’s an example of what it looks like in action * What’s important about the tool? * How might you apply it? * What steps would you need to take to put this into action? * Be prepared to have at least one person report back on what was something useful to share from your group’s conversation. * Each group will have someone who is prepared to help facilitate the conversation.   **LAUNCH BREAKOUT ROOMS**  (Breakout Rooms: 20 minutes)  Resume Recording.  Report back for up to 3 minutes on each tool:   * What was something useful you heard in your group that could benefit others in our community? * Groups for tools 1, 2, 3, 4   (12 min) | Producer: Set up 8 breakout rooms, Choose Your Own Room option, 20 minutes (see labels below)  Have tools ready to screen-share in advance  Enable screen-sharing for participants in breakout rooms or make facilitators co-hosts  **Share in Chat:**  \*Breakout Room 1: Feedback Loop Exercise: ADD TOOL LINK HERE  **Share in Chat:**  \*Breakout Room 2: Sample Partnership Check-in Agenda and Meeting Topics:ADD TOOL LINK HERE  **Share in Chat:**  \*Breakout Room 3: Tip Sheet: Planning Equitable Collaboration Meetings: *ADD TOOL LINK HERE*  **Share in Chat:**  \*Breakout Room 4: School-Community Partnership Design and Planning Tool: ADD TOOL LINK HERE  **Share in Chat:**  \*Breakout Room Questions: 1. Review the Tools; 2. What’s important about it?; 3. How might you apply it? What’s an example of putting this into action? |
| 5 min | **Reflection**  **Slide 15: Reflection**  Share in the Chat:  In one word, one action and one appreciation as a closing reflection for today’s session.  This is a reflection exercise that supports both task-oriented and relationship-oriented people and helps group members understand each other by communicating some of their take-aways from the meeting.  And then, fill out the survey!  **(Slide 16: Keep in Contact)** | *(From Mike Beebe)*  **Share in Chat:** \*Please complete our survey: ADD SURVEY LINK IF USING ONE |
| Total Time: 120 min/2 hours | **Total time**  **Post Event Tasks:**  Email to registrants with PDF of slidedeck, links to resources, and access to recording of session |  |