

MODULE 3: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

KEY TERMS

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This module is part of a four-part series by the Systems Planning Collective to support communities with all their systems planning priorities. Check out the full series here: www.homelesshub.ca/SPC



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Funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy. The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS KEY TERMS

CHALLENGERS, PRODUCTIVE

Productive Challengers are the individuals, groups or organizations that are constructively critical of your efforts to prevent and end homelessness and can be relied upon to give honest assessments of with an eye toward solutions.

Their goals are aligned with the systems planning work, but their experience and knowledge of the issue allows them to see points of contention and possible barriers to success that need to be overcome to ensure efforts are successful. The attitude of Productive Challengers may be guarded optimism and/or realism - they are hopeful for change, but are able to see what may be risky, challenging or threatening to make that change come to fruition.

CHALLENGERS, TOXIC

Toxic Challengers resist change by actively sowing discord, doubt and distrust without interest in identifying solutions. Systems and service planning leaders need to be mindful of these Toxic Challengers to mitigate the risk they pose to effecting change, but must also get to the root of their toxicity, in order to identify whether it is something that can be changed over time or that needs to be managed.

Unresolved experiences of broken trust, failed attempts at change, and burnout can often be at the heart of Toxic Challengers' attitudes and behavior. While easy to write off Toxic Challengers, these individuals or groups are in the greatest need of your empathy, patience, and action.

CHAMPIONS

Champions are the active, ardent, and passionate promoters of the efforts to prevent and end homelessness in your community. They mobilize and bring new people to the table for the cause and often have decision-making power or know how to connect with and influence decision-makers. Having champions in multiple sectors, and at levels of the work - from executive to frontline - will help motivate and keep up the momentum for change.

An example of frontline champions might be a group of highly motivated and passionate youth workers in multiple agencies that have learned about a new approach and can encourage fellow staff members to implement the approach in their organization and communicate to executive leadership the need and impact of the approach. Another example of a Champion is a bureaucrat that is deeply passionate for ending homelessness and has the skills and drive to get information to and meetings with decision-makers.



CHEERLEADERS

The Cheerleaders in your community are the supporters of systems planning efforts that are heavily implicated in the work of design and successful implementation of systems planning efforts.

These individuals can come from both within and outside of the homelessness sector, and while not taking on active leadership roles in the systems planning work, are open and willing to collaborate and implement solutions. These are people you will want to keep regularly informed, consulted, and involved.

DEGREES OF ENGAGEMENT/PARTICIPATION

The Degrees of Engagement can be understood as a continuum that ranges in stakeholders' involvement in the design process and their ability to influence decisions.

INFORM

To provide with a one-way flow of information. Stakeholders that are informed are the recipients of information and are not provided influence upon or direct engagement with decision-makers. This will often include activities around public awareness or education, or informational updates for broader stakeholder groups not directly connected to systems planning.

CONSULT

To seek input, information and perspective on a particular topic, issue or idea. This is engagement that is purposeful, and is typically a one-off opportunity to ask questions and gather input. Stakeholders may shape the direction, but are not formally connected with systems planning or decision-making, though communication about how their input influenced plans and decisions is expected.

INVOLVE

To work directly with a person or group throughout the systems planning and decision-making process. There is a dialogue with and among stakeholders and an opportunity for them to shape the direction and final outcome. Those that are involved should receive feedback about how their participation and input contributed to or informed decisions.

ENGAGE/ COLLABORATE

To request and incorporate input into all key components of systems planning and decision-making. Stakeholders at this degree of engagement/participation are required to talk to each other about complex, values-laden issues. Stakeholders can participate in agenda-setting and are given the time to deliberate on issues. Final decision-making power is not in the hands of stakeholders that are collaborated with, but it is expected that their input is respected and taken up where possible.



PARTNER/ EMPOWER

To facilitate a process and provide information to assist those involved to develop solutions and make informed decisions about the systems plan design and implementation. The role of the leadership is to provide the necessary resources and supports to allow the involved stakeholders to come to the best possible conclusion. Leadership is also tasked with supporting the implementation process.

ENGAGEMENT

Efforts made to connect with individuals or groups in order to develop and achieve desired outcomes. Engagement can include activities that: build capacity, share information, strengthen relationships, gather feedback, consult, create, and/or design.

IMPLEMENTATION DELIVERY NETWORK

The individuals, groups, and organizations that are tasked with implementing the community systems plan to end homelessness. This includes both those at the executive leadership and management level, as well as frontline staff.

Having a deep understanding of all of the players involved in implementation and delivery - their roles, motivations, challenges, and strengths - can deeply improve planning for implementation and uptake.

STAKEHOLDER

In the context of systems planning to address homelessness, a stakeholder is any individual or group that are interested in and/or affected directly or indirectly by the work to prevent and end homelessness.

STAKEHOLDER SKILLS MATRIX

The Stakeholder Skills Matrix is a list of valuable skills that should be sought after in the stakeholders that are engaged in leading and implementing systems change. Lacking any of the following skills does not necessarily mean that an individual should not participate in systems leadership or change, but that there may be a need for skill-building opportunities.

Collaborative, relational leader: Demonstrated personal and/or professional leadership in multi-stakeholder efforts by building consensus and drawing people into a process of change.

Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and sharing power: Recognizes systemically embedded imbalances and inequity and takes active steps to share their own power and privilege with and creating spaces and opportunities for those that may have less power to lead and have their voices heard.



STAKEHOLDER SKILLS MATRIX

Commitment to preventing and ending homelessness: The passion and belief that homelessness can be prevented and ended and the resolve to make this a reality.

Decision-maker: Has the capacity, authority and willingness to make/influence decisions that advance an end to homelessness.

Influential communicator: Able to share ideas and can serve as a bridge and/or translator between stakeholder groups.

Knowledgeable: Has demonstrated knowledge (subject matter and/or experiential) of relevance to preventing and ending homelessness.

Politically astute: Broad non-partisan understanding of political and social issues influencing the public policy environment.

Practical & project management: Has the ability to manage the details and get things done, while effectively managing/mitigating shifting circumstances and arising risks.

Social change agent: Desire to deepen understanding of complex social and economic issues that take complex solutions and willing to take action to address these within their sphere of influence.

Strategic: Understands the local context and can work within it to advance collective goals.

Systems Disruptor/Innovator: Is willing to challenge the status quo within systems and look for solutions that will fundamentally improve outcomes for the individuals and groups that interact with and are affected by those systems.

SYSTEMS PLANNING LEADERSHIP

Efforts made to connect with individuals or groups in order to develop and achieve desired outcomes. Engagement can include activities that: build capacity, share information, strengthen relationships, gather feedback, consult, create, and/or design.

