

Building Our Community and Network Engagement

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Attendees:

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Where do we want to be in 2018?

OSEP has asked us to work together as a network.

* Political
	+ Jay’s blog post brought this together and messaged out about what OSEP has asked of us and what it means for the future.
	+ For school districts to provide FAPE they need access to quality TA.
	+ We have a long standing of funding which means we have a responsibility and improve our approaches. We always need to be thinking about change.
	+ What are we doing for sustainability? We should be building something that is effective that has to do with all of us knitting together and building things that will last.
	+ Shift in models of TA, meaning we are the last TA&D center that disability specific.
* Practical
	+ By nature, because of our deep history together, we are collaborators.
	+ Intense collective knowledge that needs to surface in order to reduce duplication.
	+ There are many people that are phasing out, so we really need to have this collective knowledge present and available for the new individuals to jump into this network.
* What does change mean?
	+ We already are a tribe, and connected by our profession and our interest in improving results for children. In many ways we also act as a community. Network is a different idea.
	+ What is our vision for being a network? It is not NCDBs job, or OSEPs job but it is *our* job to detail ideas and functionality that defines our work together.
	+ This requires a shift in our identity.
* Setting the stage…
	+ How do we as a network develop new behavior?
	+ We are already in the process of change.
	+ What are we already doing and doing well, what are the assets as a network?
	+ What are the things that prevent us from collaborating? Acknowledge the barriers.
	+ CoP (Community of Practice) is a potential framework for building and evaluating our engagement.
* Change Doesn’t Just Happen
	+ Graphic of change. It helps define the problems that an organization could potentially have in taking on change.
	+ Mary Lippitt, PhD quote from website. If you leave one of the steps out you will end up with something different.
	+ Let’s identify our assets as a national network that we all share and what are the barriers that we all share?

Groups coming together on Skills, Incentives, and Resources

* Skills
	+ Assets
		- People - collectively we have a big library of knowledge
		- Ability for projects to work together and collaborate
		- Local networking of the projects. Providing info to the local community, the people who are on the ground
		- Ability to share information.
		- Ability to be flexible. Teachers and learners
		- Build capacity within our individual projects and in the network at large
		- Work with diverse organizations. The deaf community, the blind community. Take knowledge from each one of those varying groups and apply it in multiple formats.
		- Technology to build those platforms and to build networks.
		- Communication between local networks and national networks (also a barrier).
		- Skillset that is outside of our world, like implementation science.
	+ Barriers
		- Time, money and people.
		- Lack of vision of the network. We don’t yet have a collective idea of what the network looks like.
		- Local needs of each state and each individual city and district. The politics of each of these is barrier.
		- Personal biases of each individual's states.
		- Lack of information. Back to the communication piece. States don’t always know what is going on in other states.
		- Training for the people who are working within the projects. Also who individuals who are working with the students, teachers, administrators. All need to have training in deaf-blindness and how to access the network.
		- Lack some pretty basic collaboration skills.
		- Lack of historical knowledge for new people. History would have condensed into things that matter, and is really important. We should be effective in creating a process that makes history functional in the present.
* Incentives (emotionally based)
	+ Assets
		- Intrinsic incentive. We desire to be together. Many come from a kid, parent, teacher background. Desire is to create harmony among the stakeholders. Working toward teamwork.
		- Compliance. If this is indeed where OSEP vision is, then we have an obligation.
		- No change = problems and stagnation. Looking at what you have and making appropriate changes.
		- Access to resource, skills and relationships.
		- Networks are reinforcing. Everyone like to hear that they are contributing to a greater network.
		- Wider recognition
		- Pride of development. If you feel like you have contributed to the development to the network then you will be prideful.
		- OSEP recognition in 2018
		- Money $$$ Drive more funding down to the kid level
		- Fear/Challenge
		- Years of experience. Distance you have come from where you were when you starting in the network.
		- Use of technology
	+ Barrier
		- Technology. Adobe window doesn’t provide the relationship. We are a high touch profession. Non-verbal communication.
		- Money $$$ State funding is only one salary. The amount hasn’t changed in the last 30 years.
		- Energy and resource from project staff (because lack of $$)
		- Long distance communication
		- History. Why things are done the way they are… you run up against this history. All the history isn’t nice and pleasant.
		- Retention of new staff. Retaining a consistent practice and business model. Much of this comes from retirement. Huge wealth of history that has the potential to be lost, not necessarily of resource. Generational influences piece, generations in the field. Big concern in our field that the new people who are coming into the field, don’t have the respect or understanding of the history. The retirement people need to share this information. The torch is being passed on to those who respect and understand it, so that we don’t face the same barriers. This is part of the training piece.
			* Creating something that informs new people to the project.
			* Mentorship that needs to be established.
			* A piece of this is CoP in order to implement this idea.
		- Inclusion. The people don’t know what they know, they have a field of knowledge in their head. They do not realize it is something that needs to be passed on.
		- Tight group can be barrier and asset. If the tightness of the group keeps it from being inviting external participation.
		- Rarely talk about integration in non deaf-blind environments.
		- Disconnection with the population. Not on the ground enough and building personal relationship with the kids.
		- Isolating job. Being a SDBP of one individual on staff.
		- Invisibility out of the State DOE
		- Variability of administrative structure.
		- Lack of knowing the individuals, know who to go to. Reaching out is one of the things that pulls you in.
		- The way our deaf-blind projects are written and evaluated. We are all writing state focused outcomes. We can’t keep doing all the state stuff and then have time to do national outcomes. Other TA networks are evaluated on how they collaborate, we are not.
* Resources
	+ Assets
		- NCDB Library and all the tools that exist eternally, state tools.
		- Wide range of expertise
			* DB content knowledge
			* TA knowledge and experience
		- Technology - huge range. Distance technology is used highly effective in our field.
		- Collaborative relationships. Personnel Prep, TA&D, OSEP (huge), state relationships with systems. Engage with your project officer.
		- Generational. History and wisdom, knowledge and skills of the milienal generation. If they are not digital natives, they are pretty close to it.
	+ Barriers
		- Knowledge of resources and how to access. Knowledge that is organized in old ways. We are ahead of this, and shifting this will be a large task.
			* Library - need to present it informally, and then come along with formal. Now we need two layers:
				+ Informal and formal knowledge.
				+ Knowledge management is a huge deal and evolves with change. Digital repositories. The focus is now on people building knowledge and sharing that knowledge
		- Not duplicating efforts, but we do not have access to know what other states are doing. This would help if we knew what other states are doing.
		- Uneven distribution of expertise. Representation of reality, but also as a network we have not been equitable in how we have distributed our TA. We have less people that know about us.
		- Organizational structure for our community. And to organize how we interact with each other in formal ways. New people do not know how to get in.
		- Ways of creating knowledge and sustaining piece. How do you sustain knowledge. Listserv, knowledge is created there but it is not sustainable. How we sustain the knowledge we create is hugely important. We need to shift this from what we are use to.
		- Different state structures. Difficult to reconcile these structures. State ed departments versus University based projects.
		- Time to be proactive.
* You will notice we left one out… VISION
	+ As a group, let’s come together and create the assets and barriers list. Let’s think about the vision for the network, not necessarily the vision for our children
	+ Assets
		- Consensus on a shared vision of sustainable change. Catch up with our own effectiveness.
		- We are set up enough structure that we can effectively communicate this vision, if we had a vision. We have a readiness.
		- We are all together discussing our direction and vision, networking. We are very open to collaborate. Motivated.
		- Vision as the arching statement, our diversity. We can bring vision that will embrace the diversity and be inclusive.
		- Our passion for our population does direct us to the north star. We have kids and families and teachers that are depending on us to be effective.
		- The individuals who are working with the children, interveners and their goals for the future. Their vision is further out on the line, their vision could drive energy all the way out to the children.
		- OSEP vision for the network. We wouldn’t be in this room discussing this without their vision.
		- The desire to be stronger.
		- Community of knowledge related to the history. The history can drive the current vision, vision is informed by the history. Acknowledge the incredible thinking and perspective that can put the vision into context. Honor the progressive thinking of the leaders for genuine systemic change.
		- Ability to operationalize the vision.
		- Kathy from HKNC - we all have access to deaf-blind adults that might help with this building process. Need for deaf-blind adults into the group.
	+ Barriers
		- State grant structure. We have different grant initiatives so we have different visions.
			* This makes sense because we are supposed to access the needs in our states.
		- Lack of deaf-blind adults.
		- Many states think their issues are unique, but the reality is the problems are the same all over the country.
		- Lack of having parents who have a different perspective at the table. Including family specialist in the field, often not given a voice at the table to express their point of views.
		- Idea of a vision is abstract when we are already in the soup of working things out. Things are complex.
		- OSEP vision for us, unclear as to what this actually means. Big elephant in the room that we do not know what to expect next from OSEPs vision. Whether they want us to follow a more regional model for the future, long term vision, and what that means for what we have to do in the meantime.
			* They were vague, and in some ways left it up to us to operationalize what it could look like.
			* Lack of shared understanding of this vision and not sure what to make of their expectations.
		- Inertia. If we do not know what the implementation of the vision looks like, it makes the future very insecure.
		- Undertone of belonging. Belonging with our own state, belonging with TWGS, NCDB. Hard to come up with a shared vision if we do not belong. There is an undercurrent of this feeling.
			* Our identity. There is a huge shift of identity from one type of focus to another, and this belong shifts with it.
		- Time. It is hard to be proactive. Most of us are responsive, and being proactive.
			* Setting your compass
		- Our own individual visions, and trying to come together to create one arching visions.
* Our Assessment
	+ What has emerged in terms of priorities?
	+ Could these be potential goals and actions on our action plan?
* Engagement practice in our field?
	+ Collaborative Teamwork
	+ Interagency Collaboration
	+ Communities of Practice
	+ Leading by Convening
	+ Common to all are:
		- shared goals
		- shared agenda has to be tied to a vision
		- agreed upon definitions of success, meaningful to the community
			* We should all recognize where we need improvement
		- mutually beneficial relationships - likely to promote learning for all parties
		- builds capacity and competency for all participants, this is the bottomline
			* sustainability is key to limited funding
		- implications
* Engagement Behavior
	+ Different ways of engaging
		- Really helping us define what these terms mean and how they apply to our field.
		- It is not unlike our levels of TA
* Engagement Continuum (graphic from presentation)
	+ Networking
	+ Cooperation
	+ Coordination
	+ Collaboration (need to have norms)
		- The challenging history can lead to mistrust.
* CoP fits with what we are doing.
* Coalescing around our needs
	+ Priorities
		- Short term
			* Every new person gets a mentorship. Mentorship model.
				+ Identifying the key players for the new people disseminating the information out there in the network.
			* Create vision - the shift has to occur mentally for each individual
			* Organization structure around the CoP
				+ Initiatives are starting to do this
			* Effectively communicating from state to state what each other is doing
				+ **Action** - sharing specific TA resources. Only way for this to work is that it is mutually beneficial. General user friendly outreach, here is where you can go to find out about our network.

Developing a state portal, one of the things that starts to shift this knowledge piece.

* + - * How to get to know each other better online.
				+ **Action** - beefing up our online profiles.
			* Identify what to share for specific practice versus national practice.
			* Documentation, how to put in words and information so that we can share this information.
			* Building trust among each other.
			* **Action -** Asset map
			* **Action -** offer a national webinar based on this specific meeting. Help us message and inform in a more direct way.
				+ We need to link all of us together, we all get the same information. It doesn’t mean that I don’t have an interest in all of those areas. A vision means trust and effective communication for everything.
				+ Even at a staff level, you are responsible for the messaging and the knowledge. We are all now disseminators. As staff and state.
			* Consistent messaging
			* NE TWG have this information
		- Long term
			* Promote and refine that vision
			* Address the history
				+ **Action** - Post historical items that inform everyone about how they got to where they are. Information distribution. Figure out how people got to where they are.

Example is Utah having a 100 interveners. How?

* + - * Organization structure to CoP
				+ How we organize our existing knowledge base, and then how we change how we create new knowledge
				+ Task of the modern librarian
				+ We are the only national TA center that is disability specific, and the other TA centers are farther along.
				+ **Action -** find out what their trajectory is and what OSEP recognized about them. It is big. All information is there and needs to come into this group.
			* Measuring our collaboration
				+ Some of the networks and grants have already developed this.
			* **Action -** Asset map. Evolving map.
			* **Action** - All one website. Potentially states to give up our own project names.
			* Pay attention to what we have before we start out on path (asset map)
			* Celebrate where we are as well
* Would OSEP be willing to test out the structure from what we might need to do as a network, and maybe put some of our state individual needs aside as far as evaluation? Try it out before we can sell it to other in the network.
	+ Can we allocate resources a bit differently
* We are saying we are one network, but we do not know the goals of the other grants. We were writing as one network, but all wrote individual grants. Look at their goals and grants and see if I am aligned.
	+ **Action -** Put these up on the website.
* Have a tiered system, local, regional, and national. Layered system of what we actually collaborate on.
	+ If the elephant in the room were not there, where does OSEP see us? If we knew this then we could be more strategic about this action.