Building Community Change Agents: Session 2 - Communication & Collaboration

Women & Girls ExCEL Program:

Exemplifying Change, Empowerment, and Leadership

A program of the Rutgers Center for Women and Work

This initiative is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rape Prevention and Education grant funds, administered by the NJ Department of Children and Families, Division on Women.

Welcome and Agenda Overview

Quick review of change agent skills

Foundations of communication; communication styles

Understanding group dynamics and collaboration

Change Agent Skills

- Build central skills:
  - Communication and collaboration
  - Engaging Stakeholders: advocacy, outreach, and community building
  - Planning/accommodation: a roadmap for success

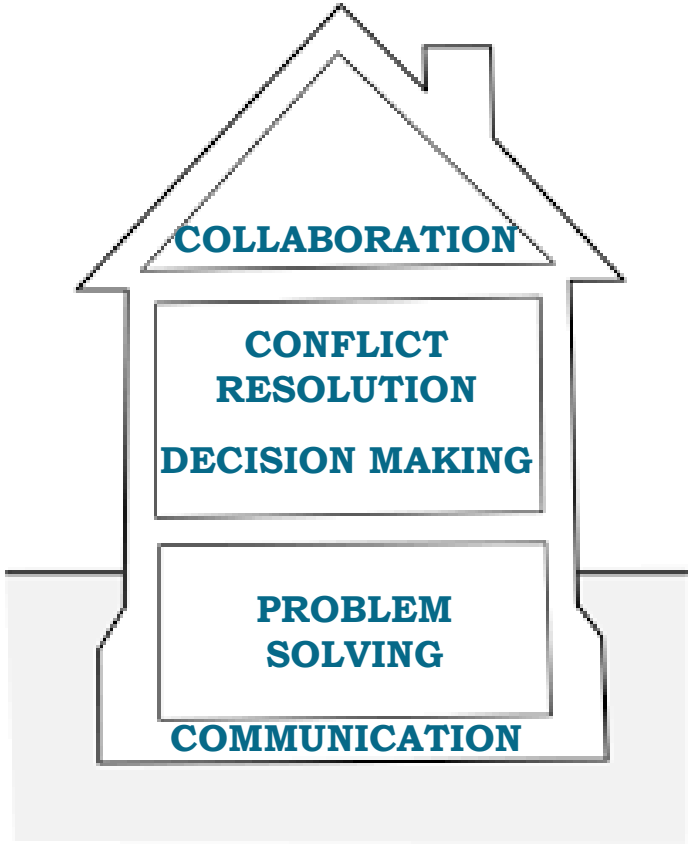
Change Agents: Central Skills

Clear communication:

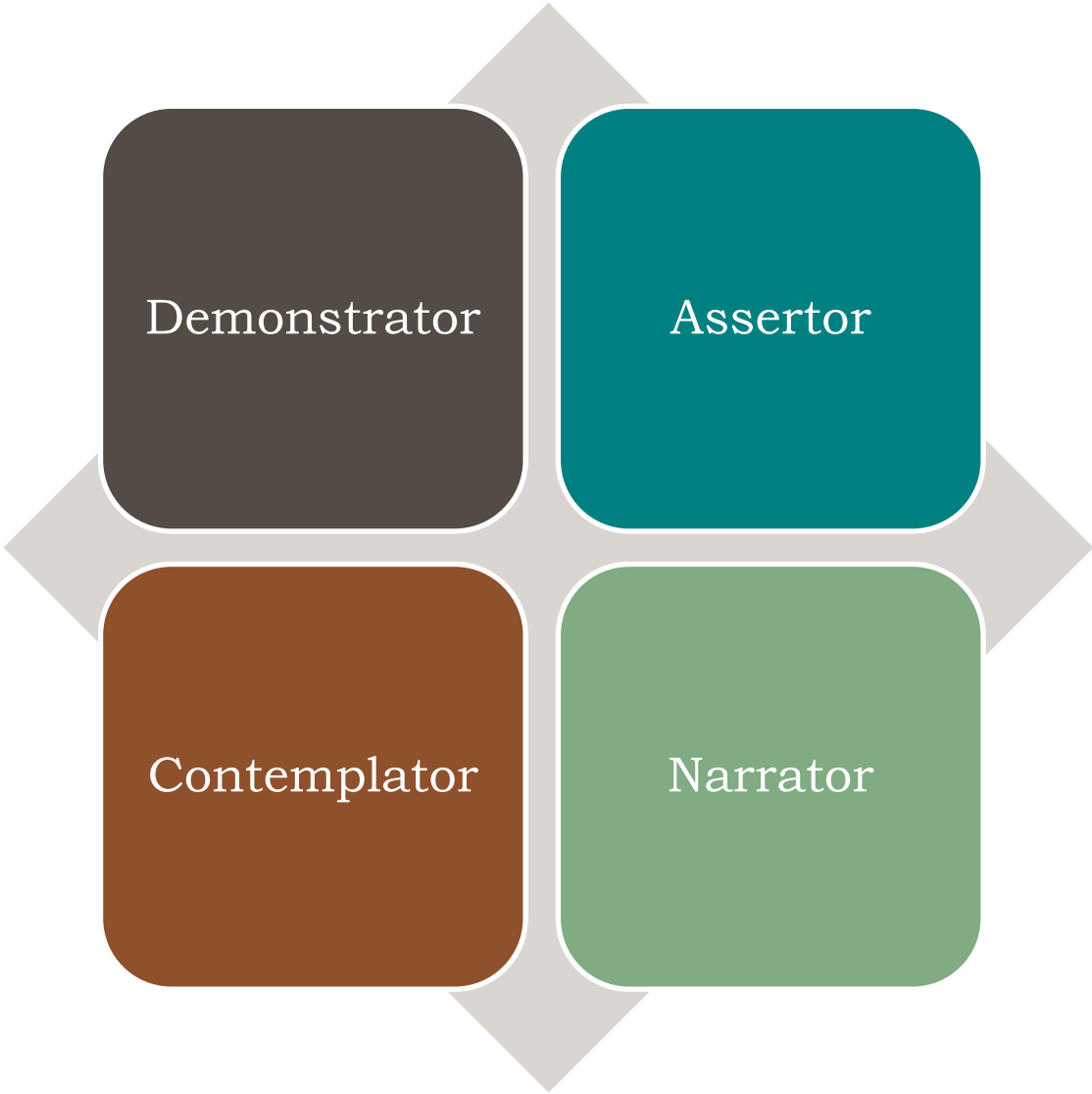
- Communicating to others about the shortcomings of the existing system, what are the problems you're trying to address?
- What is the need for change, what should that change be?

Why is Communication Important?

The ability to communicate effectively is the foundation for all other skills!



Communication Styles



Small Group Activity

- Get in a group with all the other participants with the same communication style as yourself. Work with group members on the following prompts:
- List at least one strength and one challenge your group faces as a Demonstrator, Assertor, Contemplator, or Narrator.
- Try to identify some famous people who match your group's communication style.
- Report out to the larger group

Are You: The Demonstrator?

- Promote ideas
- Relate to others through the power of personality
- Create energy and enthusiasm
- Come up with many good ideas and motivate others
- Take risks
- Work intensely
- Often leave details to others, hate routine tasks
- Usual prefer to work with others, but as the leader

Are You: The Assertor?

- Action oriented
- Good at starting things, getting results, taking control, making decisions
- Love to compete and win
- Have strong opinions
- More concerned about getting things done than forming relationships
- Take charge

Are You: The Contemplator?

- A thinking person
- Good at figuring things out, action planning, gathering data
- Can look at the pros and cons of each step
- Plan for delays, work methodically, meet deadlines
- May seem stand-offish; like to work alone
- Produce excellent results

Are You: The Narrator?

- Sociable
- Relate to others through warmth and friendliness
- Let others take the lead
- Try to create and maintain cooperation; share credit
- Stick to tried and true methods
- Like informality; use personal influence to get things done
- May be overly concerned about what others think
- Prefer working on a team

Collaborating with Others

- When you understand the 4 styles and work with your natural style, you feel more confident when speaking to groups and individuals.
- When individuals have different communication styles, it's easy for conflict or misunderstandings to occur. Understanding the characteristics of different communication styles can help us to effectively interact with someone who has a different style.

Engaging with Demonstrators

- Be chatty and casual with them.
- Ask them lots of questions and let them talk.
- They like to socialize so invite them to social events or out for a meal/drink, where appropriate.
- They are more likely to buy in to your offers, if you share with them such things as media buzz, social media, testimonials and word-of-mouth referrals of someone they admire like a celebrity or person with status.

Engaging with Assertors

- Avoid being too chatty. Just get right to the point.
- They prefer a formal environment and interaction style.
- They want to understand the facts, stats and scientific background of what you offer. Anything that sounds too flakey or inflated will put them off.
- Combine stories with facts. They will do their research, so come prepared. It may be harder to get them to take time out to talk to you, as they'll probably be too busy, so be persistent.
- They are sharp negotiators so think through ahead of time what you can give them.

Engaging Contemplators

- They are task-oriented like Assertors.
- They prefer technology, facts, figures and knowledge over stories and right-brained kinds of communication.
- They don’t trust people who come across as too “salesy” and are the most skeptical of the four styles.
- Ask them lots of questions and let them talk, as they will tend to be more reserved than other styles.
- They are motivated by the idea of solving people’s problems and complex puzzles.
- They will also need excellent written, audio or video materials which they will study carefully.

Engaging with Narrators

- Like to chat and get to know you first. Don't dive into your pitch too soon.
- They prefer a warm, comfy environment and friendly interaction style.
- Ask them lots of questions and let them talk, as they will tend to be more shy than other styles.
- They love stories, examples and metaphors so ensure you don't just talk using facts and concepts as they will get bored. Anything that sounds too cold or scientific will put them off.
- It will be easier to get them to come to a face-to-face meeting than other styles.
- They are motivated by the idea of helping others.

How Does this Relate to ExCEL and the Community Action Projects?

- Which of these roles is best suited for speaking publicly about this project/ program?
- When reaching out to collaborate with external stakeholders/partners, which communicator is best suited for that role?
- What are some ways to improve your group's dynamics, considering the different communication styles?
- What types of roles can each of the other communication styles be best suited for?

Next Sessions

Session 2 – Communication & Collaboration Skills

Session 3 – Engaging Stakeholders: Advocacy, Outreach, and Community Building

Session 4 – Planning and Accommodation: Roadmap For Success

Closing/Questions