

The Role of Family Organizations in Reaching & Supporting Immigrant Families to Access Services



Presented by Mercedes Rosa, Director, Family to Family Health Information Center/Family Voices NJ @ SPAN, &

Deepa Srinivasavaradan, Family Resource Specialist & Immigrant Parent to Parent Coordinator, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of NJ (SPAN)

Questions



- How can we best encourage immigrant parents to get their children screened, and if screening reveals a need for follow-up, evaluated to see if their children have special needs?
- What are the barriers (i.e., cultural or religious beliefs, eligibility for public health insurance, affordability of private health insurance, quality of health services, when screening & evaluation services are offered vs. parent work schedules, etc.)?

Questions



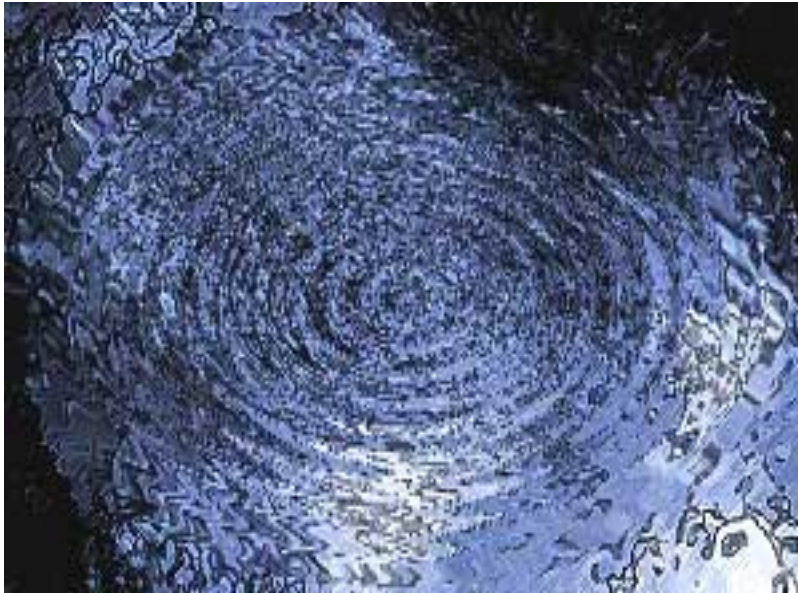
- How can we best support immigrant parents who have CSHCN to access needed services? To partner with professionals?
- What barriers do immigrant families of CSHCN face in accessing needed health, education, & other support services (i.e., language barriers, cultural or religious barriers, discrimination, lack of insurance or healthcare financing)?

Questions

- How should our research efforts with immigrant families be the same as – or different from – our research efforts with other families?
- What are successful strategies to elicit information from immigrant families about their experiences, barriers, how best to help them overcome the barriers, etc.?



The Pebble in the Pond...



“Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.”

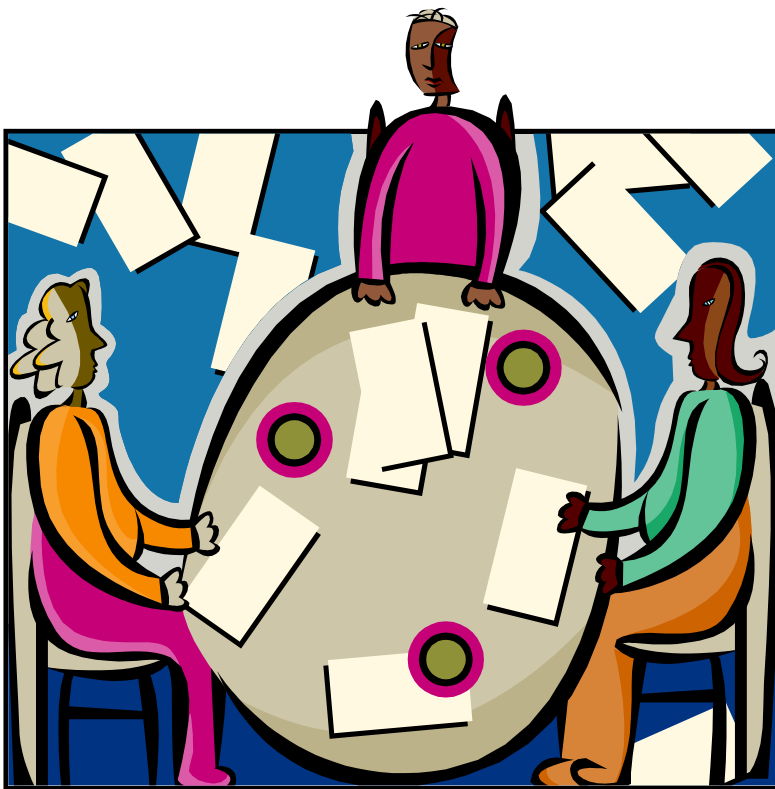
The Platinum Rule

- “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

Steven Covey

- You can only understand if you truly listen – with and for the heart.

Cultural Brokers



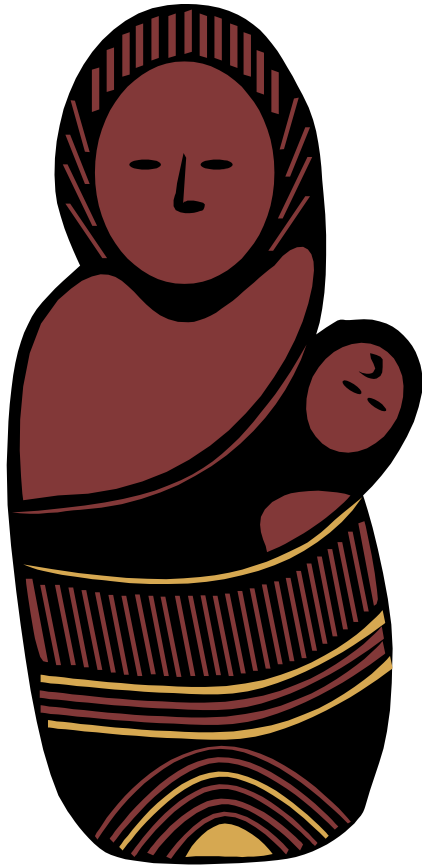
- Identify partners with legitimacy with families & targeted communities.
- Ensure partners are representative of the community.
- Develop reciprocal trusting relationships
 - Bring resources to the table
 - Demonstrate humility

Cultural Liaisons



- Knowledge of:
 - Values, beliefs & practices within their cultural group
 - Service delivery systems they have learned to navigate

Gathering Community Knowledge



- Communities know:
 - Their history: where they have been
 - Their culture: who they are
 - Sacred places
 - Dangerous places & topics
 - What is important to them

Cultural Mediator



- Helping service delivery systems & researchers:
 - Establish and maintain trust
 - Build meaningful relationships

Catalyst for Change



- Helping service delivery systems & researchers:
 - Recognize the barriers to participation by immigrant families
 - Make changes to address barriers
 - Engage immigrant families in all processes

Partnering for Cultural Reciprocity in Service Delivery & Research



- Committed Leadership from all partners
- Maintaining a partnership with good communication, clear decision-making, & specific responsibilities

Preparing for Collaboration

- Discuss with partners in advance:
 - Each partner's role in the collaboration
 - How you will communicate with each other
 - Parental consent to sharing of info
 - What potential conflicts may exist
 - How conflicts will be resolved
 - Other roles of partners

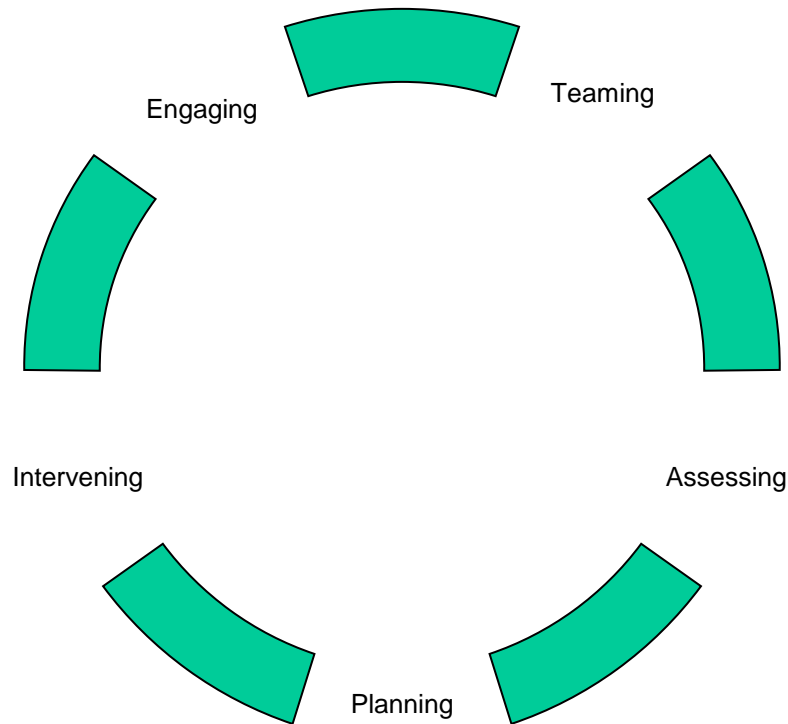


Your Partnership Plan

- Quality information:
 - Develop accurate “map” of strengths & needs of families from diverse communities –who’s important, what’s important, relationships
 - Formal
 - Informal
 - Know how others have addressed these issues



Engage families from targeted communities as powerful partners from inception of your research project or program development



Implementing Changes to Enhance Cultural Reciprocity



- Bring about changes
- Monitor implementation to make sure improvements take place

Our Experience

- Identify partners with legitimacy with families & targeted communities
- Be prepared to reach out beyond existing databases to identify potentially eligible families
- Ensure that representative staff are involved in the outreach & support effort
- Ask families what they need and what works for them
- Be flexible & determined in your outreach



Our Experience

- Revisit your written materials to meet diverse & targeted family needs
- Be flexible in your activities & be prepared to change many times along the way
- Provide the support that immigrant families need
- Build a cadre of parent leaders to continue the provision of support including support of research efforts
- Conduct ongoing evaluation of your efforts & their impact & learn from mistakes



Strengths-based

- Parent leadership development thru peer-to-peer education, support & empowerment
- Parents can be leaders regardless of their current situation
- Build leadership, not dependence
- Measure your effectiveness in enhancing family confidence, competence, attitudes & skills
- Ask families to assess your work



Information-Gathering/Research Tools

- Focus Group—Parent, staff
- Review of research materials by immigrant family leaders
- Surveys – developed by families, administered by families



Commitment

People say, what is the sense of our small effort.

They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time.

A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that.

No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless.

There's too much work to do.



Questions?

