

RETAIN Sustainability Workshop: Strategic Communication – Notes

Facilitator: Deja Garraway

September 18, 2024

Deja facilitated introductions with an icebreaker that included two questions (a) What activities for yourself do you have time for now that children are back to school? and (b) What fall activity do you enjoy the most and are looking forward to?

After the icebreaker, Deja went over why strategic communication is important to sustainability. She said communication should be aligned across partners and tailored to the audience. States also should focus on supporting strong internal staff and partner communication and showcasing program success.

Deja said effective communication means engaging and communicating with partners and the public about your program. She said peer-to-peer discussion would take place regarding three topics: (a) developing a plan for internal and external communication efforts and outreach; (b) tailoring communication plans to specific audiences; and (c) highlighting program impact.

Question 1: How have you developed a plan for internal and external communication efforts?

- Ohio discussed how communications and monitoring have been barriers; it cited developing a website for communication as an example. The state's internal approach to communication as it relates to sustainability is to emphasize how its program benefits patient satisfaction and the bottom line. It needs to convey these benefits to its stakeholders. Ohio also shared how it tracks every aspect of the program, including sending satisfaction surveys 4 months after program completion with follow-up reminders.
- Kansas said that internally, it has used various communication methods, including developing a "case for change" to explain what happens if the program goes away. It has focused on partnerships with medical providers and workforce organizations across the state, working to highlight the program's community impact.
- Deja noted catching Kansas's advertisements on the radio and billboards and mentioned their digital ad campaign—12 days of RETAINmas
- Minnesota shared how it essentially has a state administrator: its Department of Employment and Economic Development. It also shared that it has a communications subgroup that meets regularly. They collaborate with work comp staff, workforce development, and medical professionals. This group worked together to manage a booth at the Minnesota State Fair, which was a large undertaking but a huge success.

Question 2: What is the value and effectiveness of current program resources to your program's sustainability?

- Ohio said it collects testimonials from participants, employees, and providers to highlight success stories. It also has a patient satisfaction survey.
- Kansas said it has been happy with its success stories. It also continues to communicate and remind partners that the program is active, helping maintain interest.
- Ohio, which has hosted a podcast addressing employers' challenges, holds bimonthly webinars featuring guest speakers covering different topics. The podcast has been well received.

Question 3: What barriers have you experienced in outreach?

- Kansas said it is challenging to get participants to understand the magnitude of the services. It also said more focus is needed on the patient's well-being first before providing resources.

Question 4: Where have you advertised the RETAIN program and have you considered new partnerships?

- Kentucky has partnered with health care systems to integrate the RETAIN program. The state also holds monthly employment seminars. It also held an Inclusive Workforce Summit in collaboration with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, bringing together a wide range of audiences. It has a social media presence and has advertised RETAIN on various platforms. It also has started the process of doing a video project with AIR at the summit. Kentucky always has room for new partners and is proud of the partnerships it has established. It tracks outreach success using data collection, focusing on where referrals come from.
- Minnesota tracks different avenues of outreach. It collects data through Salesforce and has a community advisory board comprising individuals from throughout the state to spread the word about RETAIN. The state has used presentations, lunch-and-learns with providers, and other outreach efforts to engage stakeholders. Sending out emails about the program also has helped.