COLLECTIVE INSIGHT
Newsletter: September Edition

September Edition Newsletter Topics:

- Plain Language Resource Guide
- Engagement Tip of the Month
- Measurment Matters Webinar

Plain Language, Part 2

Engagement is possible only when your process is accessible. Your first step to accessibility is creating plain language materials. As mentioned in our Summer Newsletter Edition Tip of the Month, speaking plainly (when sharing plain language materials) is also required.

We know that writing and speaking in plain language is not obvious or easy. People forget that acronyms are not often used by others. Also, using complex words can signal to our peers that we have similar knowledge, history, and expertise. This can be comforting. In fact, some people may worry that simplifying language will actually insult their audience or undersell their own expertise.

We need to think differently. Plain language expands your expertise, not minimizes it. Plain language allows you to learn from people who have different knowledge, history, and expertise. It also forces you to break concepts down, and as you do this, recognize your errors and premature assumptions. In summary, plain language can actually expand your own expertise. In case we haven't convince you, we've returned with more plain language information and resources!

Don't just take it from us!
Learn more about plain language here:

- University of Wisconsin Center for Journalism Ethics: The Call for Plain Language: Q&A with Disabilities Studies Professor Rebecca Monteleone
- Nielson Norman Group: Plain Language is for Everyone, Even Experts
- Center for Plain language:
  - Plain Language Moves Science Forward
  - Plain Language Advanced Technical Writing

Don't know how to start? Find our plain language resource guide below:

Steps to plain language:
- Center for Plain Language: Five Steps to Plain Language
- U.S. Census Bureau: Ten Steps to Writing Plain Language

Plain language generators:
- CDC Plain Language Generator
- Plainlanguage.gov Simple Words and Phrases
- Rewordify

Creating plain language requires revisiting your work (often) to find new and easier ways to say things. While the resources above should help, there is no magic bullet to plain language. Creating plain language requires commitment, patience, and humility.

Before you plug your text into a plain language generator or even brush up on the steps to plain language success, sit back and take a deep breath. Do the courageous work of checking your assumptions. Share some time with people who may benefit from your tools. Practice your plain language skills. Then, engage them in your drafting exercise. The learning will be endless.

Engagement Tip of the Month:

Look Around!

We here at Collective Insight live by the **PAE Attention Framework**. This Framework recognizes the People, Approach, and Environmental factors that influence the success of your engagement work. Today, we ask you to **look around!** Recognize your environment and what it may mean for your engagement success. What do we mean by environment? We mean the factors that are often outside of your control. For instance, whether or not 1) your boss thinks engagement is a priority, 2) you have a budget for engagement, or 3) strong voices, such as advocates or funders, are pushing for engagement. These environmental factors, among others, influence your engagement success. When you are eager to do engagement, but you are struggling to get engagement off the ground, consider how these factors may be getting in the way. **Hope is not lost!** There are always steps to address these factors.

For instance:
- If you're facing barriers from leaders, take time to understand their priorities. Determine how your engagement initiative aligns with these priorities and tweak your messaging.
- If you have a limited budget, build on engagement activities already happening (such as those in another department or being conducted by a community organization).
- Encourage a shift in thinking! Find funders that prioritize engagement and propose new engagement projects that everyone can get behind!

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Measurement Matters!
Join us this October to learn more

Collective Insight is a proud partner of the NEW *Measurement Matters* project! *Measurement Matters* is a research project funded through a highly competitive, first-ever **PCORI funding announcement**. This exciting new project will kick-off December 1, 2023 to design and test a tool to measure effective engagement in research projects.

Measurement Matters is a collaboration between the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston, Collective Insight, and Boston College. You can visit the PCORI website to learn more about our project and the other PCORI funded proposals. We know this project was only successful because of our Steering Committee, Older Adult Subcommittee, and paid expert advisors. **Thank you to all of you!**

Measurement Matters includes MANY opportunities to engage (of course).
Please join us for a one-hour webinar on Friday, October 27th at 1pm EST to hear more about this project. You can ask questions and learn more about the many ways you can partner with us on this trailblazing project.

To sign up for this event, click here.
Can't attend? Don't worry! We will record the event and share it on our **resource page.**

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Looking for Help with Engagement?

Collective Insight, a certified Women-Owned Business, is an engagement company you can count on to take you from concept to outcome.

Learn more **here** or email us at **info@collectinsight.com**

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