



# COLLECTIVE INSIGHT

## Newsletter

Volume One, Issue Four  
March 2023



## Making Engagement Work

### Topic of the Month: The Usual Suspects

"Not The Usual Suspects." We hear this often when assisting organizations to develop or expand their community advisory efforts. They do not want the 'same ole' people who 'keep showing up.' Instead, they want to include new voices with new ideas.

We get it. Fresh viewpoints are always helpful, especially when advisory groups are missing commonly left out community voices. Expanding diversity is always paramount. That said, it's not *always* the reason we choose to bring new people into the fold.

Imagine finally understanding your job and then being fired because you finally understand your job. This "new blood" concept is not far off. Our take on this concept can be controversial, but please hear us out.

The experienced members you engage are finally decoding your industry jargon and mentally untangling the complex systems you are trying to fix. They finally have some grasp of evolving group norms and how decisions are made—maybe even enough to inform change.

### March Newsletter Topics:

- Engaging the Usual Suspects
- Engagement Tip of the Month
- Collective Insight Updates
- Call for Advisors
- Engagement Spotlight

Now that they are growing in knowledge and confidence, it is time for them to leave. It seems unfair. Also, it seems inefficient.

To be clear – we are not talking about eliminating term limits for long-term Advisory Boards. Recruiting new Board members is expected and essential for ensuring Advisory Boards consistently rise to their mission. That said, term limits are not always required or needed for short-term engagement activities, including project steering committees, listening sessions, or workgroups. In these instances, we tend to dig a little deeper to understand why there is a call for completely new membership. Often times, this call for new members occurs when experienced members are perceived as uninvested, off-topic, or (and this is the most common one) "pushy." When this happens, we question if leaders are looking for a fresh perspective or simply just a way out.



## If this is the case, instead of seeking new blood, seek new strategies:

- **Determine what members are telling you.** In our experience, less collaborative behaviors are symptoms of bigger issues. Members who are 'checked-out' may feel their involvement is inconsequential. Members sharing off-topic items may mean you are actually off topic and avoiding higher priority conversations. And, members being "pushy" may simply be members confident enough to hold you and your organization accountable to the engagement process.
- **Use engagement tools.** In addition to determining what members are trying to tell you, use your engagement tools to make the process work better. Make sure you have a Charter that outlines the group's purpose so members can align their purpose or opt out to do more important things. Then, ensure you have clear meeting Agendas that align with the Charter and follow these Agendas so meetings are productive and worth members' time. If meetings are becoming more about pointing fingers than developing solutions, revisit your Meeting Guidelines and work with members to intentionally reset group culture.
- **Embrace varying experiences.** Similar to the question of "new blood" or "old blood," we are commonly asked if advisory groups should be "real people" or advocates. While the group's purpose should always drive representation, we find a mix of experiences to be most valuable. In reality, advocates are often "real people" who understand the complex system that other "real people" are forced to maneuver. That is an asset for you and the community you engage. Use that asset to your advantage.
- **Create mentors.** With all this said, seeking new voices to ensure diversity is always a good idea. Existing members can play a valuable role in identifying missing voices. Then, being the assets they are, experienced members can assist with mentoring new members as they too become advocates with expanded experiences and viewpoints to share.

## Engagement Tip of the Month

### Align Representation with Group Purpose

When considering representation, always consider a group's purpose. What are you seeking to accomplish and what diverse viewpoints are needed to get there?

If a group's purpose is to inform changes in programs or services, then seeking representation from those with lived experience with these programs or services is a must. But, don't forget: lived experience is influenced by many factors, including geography, age, race, ethnicity, language, and more. Make diversity in lived experience a primary focus of your representation.

In addition to diverse lived experience, consider representation from other perspectives, such as program staff, community leaders, or advocates. Just be sure these voices work with, not drown out, those with lived experience.

Finally, group members should have knowledge of the programs or policies you seek to change. This knowledge is not a prerequisite for engagement, but rather knowledge you commit to sharing as a part of the onboarding and ongoing support process.

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](mailto:info@collectinsight.com)



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# COLLECTIVE INSIGHT Updates



## Dr. Airia Papadopoulos receives the Muma College of Business **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate**

Dr. Papadopoulos has dedicated her career as a cultural anthropologist to researching and addressing racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in health outcomes. Most recently, she attended the University of South Florida program focused on building a more diverse workplace, tackling equity issues, and fostering inclusivity. We are excited to watch her bring this certification to all of our work at Collective Insight. Congratulations, Dr. Papadopoulos!



**Aging PCOR**  
Learning Collaborative

### Join our Advisory Committees!

#### The Aging PCOR Learning Collaborative: Advanced Engagement Project

Our Advanced Engagement (EACB-26961) project, funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), is shifting the **research paradigm** so more researchers engage older adults as research partners, not just as research subjects.

#### What are We Looking for?

The Learning Collaborative is led by numerous engagement structures, including a Steering Committee composed of older adults, funders, researchers, and academic leaders and an Older Adult Subcommittee. We are seeking new members across these lenses to join our groups and share their experiences.

Interested in joining or know someone who might be? Contact Missy Destrampe at [missy@collectinsight.com](mailto:missy@collectinsight.com) to learn more.

### Engagement Spotlight!

#### Collective Insight joined LEND!

The Advanced Leadership Fellowship Program (LEND), administered by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center at UMass Chan Medical School, develops and enhances leadership skills for those working in disability related fields, including clinicians, self-advocates, individuals with disabilities, and family members.

Dr. McGaffigan joined LEND this month to discuss community engagement as part of LEND's "Disability and Public Policy-Expanding Access" course. Students learned all about the factors that influence engagement and ways to bring community engagement into their class projects so people with lived experience can inform the policies and programs that impact their lives.

**Want to learn more about LEND and apply? Visit their website [here!](#)**



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