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# COLLECTIVE INSIGHT

## *Newsletter*



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VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

- Engagement in Action with Beth Bostic, Part 2
- Engagement Spotlight: Collective Insight Training



# Engagement in Action Part 2 with Beth Bostic

## *Lead Engagement with Access*



This spring, we had the opportunity to sit down with Elizabeth (Beth) Yancy Bostic to learn about her experiences and tips for effective engagement!

During our conversation, we learned about Beth's start with engagement and her tips for making engagement work (see our [May newsletter](#)). Beth shared so many illuminating tips for making engagement in policy and research design accessible to communities, including communities that speak a range of languages. We decided to share these wonderful tips in their own newsletter.

### *About Beth*

Elizabeth (Beth) Bostic wears many hats. For one, she is an Assistant Director for the [Division of Children and Youth with Special Health Needs](#) at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH).

She is also a Faculty Instructor within the [Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities \(LEND\)](#) program at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center at the UMass Chan Medical School.

But most important, Beth is a mother who has experienced the challenges and triumphs that come with caring for a child with special health care needs. Beth knows how powerful this experience is, and she wants to ensure her voice and the voice of others with lived experience are valued when designing and improving systems of care. We sat down with Beth to hear how she leads with access in engagement.



### *What are ways you make engagement accessible to partners?*

For one, Beth helps people prepare. She sends agendas out at least one week ahead of time so partners have time to read, absorb, and think.

“We also ensure that a colleague who speaks the language of those we engage meets with our partners before meetings to confirm meeting materials work for them and to ask if they need any additional supports to be successful.”

Beth also highlighted the importance of supporting cultural and linguistic diversity through language and interpretation services. When talking about her work with the [Caregiver-to-Caregiver \(C2C\) Respite Network](#) at the Federation for Children with Special Needs, Beth said **“We led with language access. As challenging as it was, it has huge benefits.”**

For example, when the Federation for Children with Special Needs was preparing to launch the C2C, they conducted six focus groups in languages other than English. This led to rich insights on unexpected preferences on caregiving among different communities. For instance, some communities had more interest in paying for caregiving through a bartering system as a means of building relationships while others leaned towards upfront payment to ensure quality. These insights were only made possible due to a commitment to pause and making the process accessible.

## *What do I do first to support language accessibility?*

Beth recommends being flexible and open to learning as you go; however, she shared some insights that can set you on the right path. For one, Beth says it is important to identify the languages your partners use so you can use them. Then, remember that not all concepts translate easily. Beth shared that in focus groups for the Caregiver-to-Caregiver Respite Network, “we had to explain the concept of ‘respite,’ which was difficult because the concept can be at odds with some cultural values. For some, it didn’t make sense why someone else would take care of their child. But, the concept of ‘taking a break’ was something more people could get behind.” This new learning was not possible without having conversations in people’s own languages and taking the time to understand the power of words.

## *How do I keep language access centered in my work?*

Beth reports, “You must bake it into your process” as opposed to letting it be an afterthought. Beth advocates for sending meeting slide decks to meeting interpreters ahead of meetings so they can familiarize themselves with the content and ask questions. According to Beth, “Sometimes interpreters will need to reach back out and ask, ‘what the heck does that mean?’ since it might not translate in their language.”

Beth also notes that written materials, alone, may not be enough for those who cannot read the text. For example, American Sign Language (ASL) does not translate directly to English. In this case and in any case where reading text is not possible, Beth notes the importance of providing a video in addition to the written materials. Videos in multiple languages, including ASL, support those who cannot read or are deaf and hard of hearing.

## *How do I make this all work?*

Ultimately, Beth says, “through patience.” According to Beth, “we must have the patience to slow down so that a person who has to communicate in a different way than you has the time and the resources to do so.” Beth also notes, “you have to demonstrate that you value others’ contributions since not providing space for effective and authentic communication is a huge barrier to meaningful engagement.”



## *Then what?*

For one, “we give our community partners credit for their work.” Beth noted that we must “appreciate what partners are bringing to the table and demonstrate this appreciation through recognition. Their lived experience is a form of capital. That cultural capital is invaluable and critical to the success of our work.”

Beth also says it’s important to communicate how we engaged communities in work more broadly. “People need to understand that our policy and programs were not written by a bunch of bureaucrats, but rather that they emerged from partners with lived experience.”

## *Thank you for your insights, Beth!*

Thanks, Beth for sharing your insights on the importance of language access and how to make engagement accessible to people who speak a range of languages. Visit [here](#) to keep track of Beth’s wonderful work!

# Happy Pride!



Pride Month (and every month!), support the LGBTQIA+ community through meaningful allyship:

## Educate Yourself:

Dive into LGBTQIA+ issues, terminology, and history through books, articles, and documentaries.

## Listen Empathetically:

Open your heart and ears to LGBTQIA+ individuals' experiences without judgment.

## Communicate Respectfully:

Honor gender identities by using the pronouns shared with you. Avoid assumptions based on appearance or stereotypes.

## Create Safe Spaces:

Advocate for representation and cultivate environments where individuals feel accepted and valued.

## Start Dialogues:

Engage in respectful dialogue, ask questions, and discuss issues to promote awareness and understanding.

## Show Support:

Stand with LGBTQIA+ friends, family, and community members with love, acceptance, and affirmation.



## Engagement Spotlight

This May, our [Aging PCOR Learning Collaborative](#) hosted an Engagement Training. This live training session reached 22 researchers and policy experts from around the country! Together we explored:

- Various engagement methods and considerations for choosing them
- Key elements for planning any engagement meeting
- Tips for effective facilitation and decision making within your chosen structure

Looking for assistance developing or facilitating engagement?

Check out our training and technical assistance services [here!](#)