Community Champions The Key to Successful Networks

Community Champions

Who are they?

They're **individuals** who live and work within a community and possess the social capital to bring partners together and inspire change.

They possess awareness of and acknowledge the history of communities, the factors that have shaped available resources, and current communication techniques employed by the community.

What's their impact?

Social capital

Community champions have pre-existing trust and community relationships, an integral key to successful implementation and collaborations *(Alderwick et al., 2021; Davies et al., 2011)*.

Background

Bi-directional referral platforms provide a **streamlined process for making, receiving, and tracking referrals**, helping to ensure that families connect to services and resources to thrive.

While this **technology** provides communities with a valuable method of streamlining their referral processes, it will not succeed if the implementing community lacks engagement. Successful and sustainable implementation of a technological solution occurs when **led by champions within a community**.

Challenge

Implementation led by external members, not community leaders, may **lack the necessary social capital and community trust** to enact system-wide changes.

Lack of trust between organizations impedes successful implementation within a network.

Solution

Community champions are integral for successful community led implementation.

COMMUNITY CHAMPION

A data-driven communication tool paired with community generated solutions.

The Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS) is a bi-directional referral communication tool used to help organizations connect the individuals and families they serve to the right resources in their community.

Through a **streamlined referral process**, including closing the referral outcome loop, community partners improve warm handoffs to needed services and quickly follow-up on unsuccessful connections.

IRIS is paired with a **community-centered implementation approach** that fosters collaborative, cross-system discussions foundational to ensuring community members experience clear pathways to the services they need.

At the state level, IRIS data reveals gaps in services and opportunities for **increased collaboration and partnership**. State leadership is able to **identify best practices and scale them** throughout other communities.

IRIS

connectwithiris.org

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IRIS and Community Champions   The 5 phases of implementation

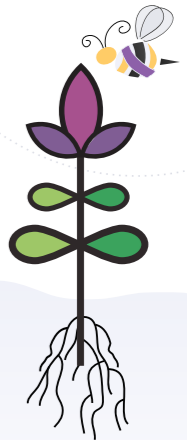| **GROUNDWORK**	**PLANTING SEEDS**	**STRONG ROOTS**	**IRIS BLOOMS**	**CULTIVATE**
Community visionary and IRIS team identify **community champions**. These champions lead the charge in creating a vision for the community.	Champions use social capital to **engage partners** and expand network.	Champions **lead the development of shared processes and expectations** with community partners.	Champions **provide support and guidance** to community partners as they use IRIS to connect families to services.	Champions **encourage ongoing connections, monitor progress through check-ins, and act as a resource** throughout implementation.