

Discussion Group #3
Strengthening Communications Within the Network

To help reach NN/LM outreach goals, the Regional Medical Library would like to strengthen network communications that help promote collaborative outreach to new audiences.

Please discuss and answer the following questions with your group.

Before you start, please identify a volunteer who will present a summary of the group's feedback for general discussion at 2:00 p.m.

1. Would dialogue about community-based outreach be useful to members already doing community based outreach? How?
2. What would you consider the best way to begin this dialogue with other network members e.g., email, listserv discussion, blog, snail mail?
3. For those who are *not* involved in community outreach but are interested, what kinds of communications support/resources may be needed?
4. Based on the resources and services that the NNLM/PNR offers, what interests you to participate as a network member and a network advisor?

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DISCUSSION NOTES

Roy Sahali gave background information on the Montana state campaign, "What's your story?" to connect health needs in Montana with health libraries in the state and to promote library services. He discussed the evolution of the development of the PNR brochure to promote our service and plans for state-specific inserts for the brochure, promoting libraries in each of the states in our region. He also mentioned we'd like to offer the opportunity to link to a state-specific blog or a website from the nnlm.gov/pnr website.

Susie McIntyre and Margo Harris agreed that the benefit of dialogue by various communication methods depends on the quality and content. Participation depends upon the focus and structure is needed in order for the communication to be useful.

What structure the group would find useful?

- Tom Page said it's important to consider the goal. Is the goal sharing or developing a resource? If we want to develop a resource, he suggested using a wiki where people can add their experiences, including "lessons learned."
- Margo Harris said it's important to study the benefit of each invitation to participate. Is there an inviting structure, a compelling interaction?

What are the rewards?

- Margo Harris thought those doing community-based outreach can benefit from new ideas and training experience; and can learn from others. Social marketing would encourage participation.
- Tom Page considered the long-term importance: How do we create a culture that engages those who do the work and keep it fresh?

How do we create and build community?

- Margo Harris noted that CBOs (and small departments in large organizations) might not understand where they fit in the NN/LM picture -- they need a better idea of how they fit in the mix. (For example, she didn't know our survey was for her -- she thought someone else in her organization would do it).
- Susie McIntyre cautioned to watch out for the use of the term "librarian." We want to include health educators and others who are in the role of providing access to health information.
- Tom Page said we're trying to engage people who are mediating access to health information.

Does being a member of the NN/LM mean the individual or the organization?

- Margo Harris said internal communication within the member organization is needed. It's important for individual departments and programs to know that PHSKC is a member.
- Pat Devine pointed out that individual departments can be members, and Margo said that would help with identity as a member.
- According to Susie McIntyre, public libraries have problems seeing how they fit in and how health info fits into their program. Health is a component of the program, but not necessarily a core, essential service. Time management is an issue -- public librarians don't have time, even to learn from each other.
- Marcia Horner noted that public librarians are not health experts, and that there are liability and licensing issues.

Is email a useful tool? Or is a wiki better?

- Jeanne Farnsworth said she has so little time, if email doesn't pertain to her, there it goes. Define different areas of focus would make email communication more useful. She'd like broad focus as well as defined areas on a wiki so she can go where it's most useful to her.
- The group agreed email is not as useful a tool as it used to be. Some prefer to call rather than email, and meetings are a good way to make contact.
- Tom Page suggested structuring a wiki depending on role: outreach provider, librarian, etc. NN/LM should prioritize issues and develop resources for a wiki.
- Roy Sahali asked if the group would be interested in serving as a test group for the wiki. What about an annual outreach meeting?
- Tom Page suggested conference calls held quarterly, to be reported on the wiki. Agenda: PNR gives an update and description of projects, for example 15 minutes featuring a certain program. If there is enough interest, it could lead to a

more detailed webinar on a certain issue.

- Mary Ann Hansen said we could use the calls/wiki to elicit problems and burning issues.
- Susie McIntyre noted she gets more out of a conversation when working towards a goal.

Other issues members would like to discuss:

- Margo Harris: they could ask for help with project planning/share draft of poster session, get collegial feedback.
- Susie McIntyre: background information on the Montana law on access to electronic resources for Health Care Professionals. Time and skill are issues. Training on how to write grants would be appreciated.
- Marcia Horner said we could have ways to ask for money from private sources.
- Partnering opportunities? Roy noted that Washington State Library marketing campaign/Federal dollars can no longer be used for marketing library services in general, only specific projects.
- Margo - City relationships - PHSKC is creating partnerships with "Within Reach" (used to be called Healthy Mothers/ Healthy Babies). Define concept of city partnerships, identify potential partners, programs have informal partnerships, but more formal partnerships are more real and useful.

Is there a better term than "outreach"?

- Consensus was that outreach can mean anything from A to Z, but generally is outside your walls. Using an example of outreach would help clarify.
- Education.

What could the RML do to better support you and your work?

- Margo Harris said individual membership for her department will help. Also, ask member to participate in one webinar per year, and ask every year if their contact information is current.
- Jeanne Farnsworth wants shorter surveys in a quarterly email, with participation required. You don't want to be in Girl Scouts if you're not working for badges! Have requirements of members.
- Ask "How do you want to participate?" of new members, create useful wiki categories.
- Tom -Page suggested requiring a ten-question survey of new member
- Susie McIntyre would like to promote the idea of using RML for support letters when applying for funding from other sources.

Facilitators:

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