

Member Retention/Participation Tip Sheet: The Six R's of Participation

1. RECOGNITION

People want to be recognized for their leadership. We all want to be known, initially by the members of our own group and then by others, for our contributions to a better quality of life.

What do we do now to recognize member leadership?	What could we do?
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Tip: You can recognize contributions through awards, dinners or by highlighting and praising partners at public events.

2. RESPECT

Everyone wants respect. By joining in community activities, we seek the respect of our peers. People often find that their values, culture, or traditions are not respected in the workplace or community, so they seek recognition and respect for themselves and their values by joining community organizations.

What do we do now to demonstrate respect for our members and their varied backgrounds?	What could we do?
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Tip: Do not schedule all of your planning meetings during working hours, but meet in the evenings and provide dinner and child care. Translate materials into languages for non-English-speaking members and provide translators.

3. ROLE

We all like to feel needed; we want to belong to a group in which our unique contribution is appreciated. Groups must find a role for everyone if they expect to maintain a membership.

What do we do now to clarify member roles?	What could we do?
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Tip: Community leaders and members may have experienced being "tokens" in partnerships. Create roles with real power and substance.

4. RELATIONSHIP

Partnerships/organizations are networks of relationships; often a personal invitation convinces someone to join. People may sign up for private and public reasons. People may also join to get connected to a “power player” in your partnership. Partnerships/organizations draw us into a wider context of community relationships that encourage accountability, mutual support and responsibility.

What do we do now to foster relationships in our partnership?	What could we do?
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Tip: Provide real opportunities for networking with other institutions and leaders.

5. REWARD

Partnerships/organizations keep members and attract new ones when the rewards of belonging outweigh the costs. Not everyone is looking for the same kind of rewards. To sustain participation in your partnership, try to identify their interests and find out what public and private rewards suit them.

What do we do now to reward members for their participation?	What could we do?
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Tip: Schedule social time and interaction into the agenda of the partnership so families can participate. Make sure there is an ongoing way to share resources and information, including funding opportunities and access to people in power.

6. RESULTS

Nothing works like results! An organization that cannot deliver the goods will not continue to attract people and resources. If your partnership is formed in response to negative forces in the community (e.g., rising rates of suicide attempts or rising rates of underage drinking), positive results (e.g., lower rate of suicide attempts or lower rate of underage drinking) will be welcome and enhance your partnership’s credibility. Build visible, short-term successes to your work.

What do we do now to share our successes with partners and the community?	What could we do?
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Tip: To many individuals that join partnerships, visible projects and activities that directly affect conditions and issues in their communities are the results they want in return for participation.