Webinar Transcript
Build Your Program and They Will Come? Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Partners & Participants

Operator: (Unintelligible). Thank you for standing by. Your lines are in the listen-only mode until today's question and answer session. If you would like to queue up to ask a question, you may do so by pressing Star and then 1.

Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objection, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the call over to Alexandra Warner. You may begin.

Alexandra Warner: Good afternoon everyone and thank you for joining us for the (unintelligible) webinar on Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Partners and Participants.

We believe the information that will be presented today will be helpful as you continue into the next year of your project.

Just a disclaimer – the views expressed in this webinar do not reflect the official policies of the Office of Adolescent Health or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Any statements expressed are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of Adolescent Health or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

I also just want to quickly note that sometimes it can be technically challenging to get onto these webinars. If you are on the call and unable to access the web portion, please feel free to e-mail Brandon Stratford. His e-mail address is bstratford@childtrends.org.

He will send you the PowerPoint slide so you can just follow along as you listen to the call. And now I will introduce our facilitator for today. Her name is Deborah Chilcoat and she is the Senior Training and Technical Assistance Manager at Healthy Teen Network and has conducted outreach and provided education and training for youth, parents and professionals throughout the United States for more than 14 years.

She has extensive experience working with evidence-based intervention and practices and has provided training and technical assistance, specifically on Getting to Outcomes, an approach to program planning, implementation, evaluation and sustainability across diverse communities in the U.S.

Her focus areas include capacity building, evidence-based and innovative practices and programs, adolescent development, reproductive health and sexuality, pregnancy, STI and HIV prevention, supporting pregnant and parenting teens and their families, male sexual responsibility, sexually diverse youth and youth in systems of care and parent-child communication.

Ms. Chilcoat served as one of Healthy Teen Network’s training and technical assistance providers for the Centers for Disease Control, Division of Reproductive Health, Promoting Science-Based Approaches project.

She also served as the project manager and has provided training and technical assistance to CDC, DRH Community-Wide Initiatives to Prevent Teen Pregnancy grantees.

Ms. Chilcoat also provides technical assistance to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health Tier 1 and Tier 2 Grantees, as well as Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grantees funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau of the Administration of Children and Families (ACF). Deb?

Deborah Chilcoat: Thanks, Alexandra. Oh, that was a lot. It is my pleasure to introduce our presenters today. First up we have Mary Myrick. She's the Chief Executive Officer and President. She began Public Strategies more than 25 years ago, providing high-quality public management, technical assistance, research implementation, program and curriculum development and dissemination services throughout state and federal cooperative agreements, contracts and grants.

She's developed expertise, credibility, and cross-discipline relationships for more than 15 years and her work has helped to advance important human services issues.

She specializes in implementation issues within a research context. Ms. Myrick has served as an integral member of numerous technical assistance teams for federally-funded evaluation projects, including MPR's evaluation of TPP programs, Building Strong Families, Supporting Healthy Marriage, PREP, Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency and WorkAdvance.

She has lead a comprehensive marketing and research dissemination project to the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation and has provided direct consultation to more than a dozen state human service agencies.

Ms. Myrick is an accredited public relations professional and studied family services at Oklahoma State University. Welcome, Mary.

We also have Rich Batten. Rich has more than 20 years of experience as a collaborative and strategic leader committed to improving the well-being of families and communities.

In his role as director of technical assistance services at Public Strategies, Mr. Batten leads the firm’s research and TA contracts focused on pregnancy prevention, healthy marriage and relationships, fatherhood, and workforce developing while managing an extensive national network of researchers, policy leaders, curriculum developers, and program operators.

Mr. Batten has provided TA for struggling sites in the evaluation of Teen Pregnancy Prevention and the Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency projects and also provided project leadership to facilitate a range of activities designed to better engage disadvantaged youth and youth of color in relationship education, while also working to put youth relationship education on the child welfare agenda.

Mr. Batten holds a Masters of Education in Family Student from Loyola University of Chicago. Welcome, Rich.

So for today we believe that by the end of the webinar you will be able to discuss how researchers and program managers tend to see impact differently. We also believe you will be able to identify at least two ways that program decisions can impact an evaluation’s result.

We believe you will be able to summarize four key recruitment concepts and describe three drivers of program retention.

So without further ado I am going to turn it over to Mary and just remind you all who are listening to please feel free to submit your questions in the Q&A box, or if you have something that you want to share with us, please feel free to send us a question – all right, Mary.

Operator: Excuse me; we're not able to hear anything from you at this time, Mary.

Mary Myrick: I'm sorry. Did something happen – I'm sorry.

Operator: We can hear you now.

Mary Myrick: Sorry, I don't know what happened. So I'm glad to be with you today as you're moving from your pilots toward full implementation and I look forward to talking with you about recruiting, particularly in the research context.

I hope that some of the things that I will be sharing with you today will help you address questions that you have that have come up during your pilot period, may be help you connect within the experience you've gone through and answer any questions that you might have and my colleague, Rich, also shares this expectation and hope. So hopefully together we will be able to be of some benefit to you.

Now you've completed your pilot or are about to do that. Some of the things that you've planned worked better than others. Maybe you all are lucky and you met or exceeded all of your expectations, or maybe there were a few glitches in what you planned.

But one thing that likely happened is that you've also gotten to know your evaluator a little bit better and maybe into this before your study or maybe you saw it during your pilot.

But sometimes program stuff and evaluators see situations with a little bit different perspective. So we get into discussing recruitment today in a research contract, we wanted to start out by talking a little bit about and checking in on that idea, about the different perspective that researchers have.

We wanted to begin by agreeing about what impacts are. So ultimately we generally understand the meaning of the word impact when we talk about evaluation. The idea is – did the program work as planned, and were people changed by what happened.

But we also know that researchers and program staff often see impact differently. So I've got a picture here and this picture is a great example of that concept. So I'll give you a moment to see what you see.

So in this picture some of you saw two people looking into each other's eyes while some of you saw a candlestick. And some of you overachievers saw both. But the illustration makes my point – two people can look at the same situation and see something totally different.

And why is that important? It's important because it's important to make sure that when you talk to one another, you're actually communicating. It's also a reminder that the value of teams is that people have different perspectives and if you have good teams, you're able to combine perspectives.

So I want to talk today about three different perspectives between researchers and program operators. So these are obviously generalizations, but I think they give a good framework for discussion.

In general programs see impact at the individual level. So if you think about your program staff, program staff can determine their success based on what happens for the people who receive services. So program staff will walk into a room.

They'll see a group of people who are receiving services and they gain confidence in the impact of their program because they see positive results from the lives of the people they serve, whether that's in a classroom, in a school, or a local program in the community.

They hear evidence of the success of their program in testimonials of the people they serve, and they experience it in the relationships they form with the people that they serve.

But really what is at the top of mind for them and rather in front of them in the program is the customer. Researchers, however, see impact at the group level. So they see all the people in your program group, particularly being, I know that many of you are doing a random assignment model, involving an intent-to-treat design. And in that design they're seeing the people in your program group who are coming to the services, so they see the same people that your program staff see.

But they also see in their analysis of people in your program group who never showed up for services, or who began your services but who didn't continue to come, so they see the people who are absent in the room.

The researchers also see the people who are in your control group – who may or may not be getting a similar service somewhere else in your community. So every person who is in your program group that does not receive services makes it harder and harder for the research team to see your program's impact.

Sometimes I think it's easier to understand the research principle with an analogy. So let's try this one even though it's not perfect. In this picture you see a pot of cooking spaghetti. For those of you who are not great cooks, let me tell you how this actually works.

The plan involves placing 16 ounces of water in a pot and bringing that water to a boiling point. You then add the noodles and seven minutes later – spaghetti is ready for your table.

So what would happen if we all did the plan – if we placed eight ounces of water into the pot and once that water got to a good boil, we added eight ounces of cold water into the pot before we added the spaghetti. What would happen?

Well, it would be really hard to get that spaghetti to cook. Well, your evaluation works in the same way. If you mix a lot of people who don't get your service into the group of people who get the service all within your program group, combined they will be really diluted.

And as a result it makes it really hard for your evaluator to measure the positive impact you believed you were having and that you're probably having.

The third, we talked about a perspective about individual and group level impact but I want to also talk about researchers seeing the difference because this is really, really important.

So simply comparing program outcomes is not enough to determine which program has the greatest impact. Instead your evaluator is going to look at the difference between the program group and the control group within each program to determine which program has the greatest impact.

So keeping in mind the difference is the same that matters what creative illustration for you to see that principle. So I show here three programs that are designed to increase condom use in sexually active teens.

If the state had three programs that were all designed the same way, typically the only way the policymakers and the program itself would have to evaluate their effectiveness is to look at direct program rates from participating teams.

For example in this case it’s easy to see that Program A is the most effective program because it has the highest percentage of participants at follow-up reporting an increase in condom use.

And if you think about it, most of the services offered in your community – that’s the kind of information available to judge effectiveness.

But sometimes what we don’t see tells the entire story and that’s what random assignment helps us see. Let’s say that in each of these three programs that there was a randomly assigned no-treatment control group. Meaning that the youth in the control group receive no services.

When researchers gathered information from the use about their condom use, during the same time period, we learn something very interesting. What you see now in this chart is Program A, which we previously thought was the most effective program, was actually the least effective program, because only five percent more youth reported condom use from their participation in the program.

Surprisingly, Program C which on the face of things looked to be the least effective program was actually the most effective program in getting more youth using condoms during sexual intercourse.

Hopefully this example gives you a framework for a tool that you can share with others in your program and activities as you try to explain to them why you’re using random assignment and why it’s so important.

So as you go forward, think about being a program difference maker. Your program choices impact your results every day. Running a great program doesn’t guarantee that your evaluator will find positive impacts, but it does give you the best chance at success.

Being positioned for success in your evaluation rests in the choices that you make. So remember that once in the study you’re always in the study.

Recruiting well, engaging well, and monitoring well are things that we are going to talk about today. Those matter – it’s impossible for researchers to measure what people don’t get – and, paying attention to the control group.

Resisting the desire to provide them with services is something that’s really important because more than one study has found no impact, not because the program wasn't good, but because the services received by the control group deleted the impact in the study.

So I'm going to turn it over to Rich to talk to you about recruitment in the context of a research evaluation.

Rich Batten: Everyone thanks, we're going to look at briefly four recruitment concepts.

I'm going to introduce those here and then build upon those and one is to identify and manage good prospects. We're going to talk a little about developing messages that connect with the people you're trying to serve, importance of getting your message heard, and then finally some tips on building effective partnerships.

So the first concept is identifying and managing good prospects and that all ties in together with being a good fit. Mary has talked about differences in those and as you think about participants, you have a model in which you want participants to complete the services and get more changes than the control group.

So you always want to be mindful of creating that difference and doing whatever you can to expose the greatest number of your participants to the intervention and to benefit from it most fully.

So some of the things to take into consideration when looking at that it's kind of like sifting for gold – not every prospect is a good fit. For example a student who's interested but has numerous conflicts over the times the service is being delivered is not a good fit.

And so you want to be sure to be looking at from your leads to your prospects to appointments that you make for – say for orientations to actual in-take - that you're finding participants that will endure the length of your intervention and get the most benefit from the dose.

So what you learn from your pilot is that probably recruiting takes a lot of retrospective thinking, in the sense that it takes many more people or students or schools if you're doing a program within the school, to get to the point of what you really need – the numbers that you need for an effective evaluation.

This slide looks at the importance that – kind of an analysis of converting prospects to participants and you can see in this slide which is based on a community-based program.

Several recruiters that are making recruitment calls through the week and as you see, as the process goes down the number of calls they make, the number that aren't interested, those that are eligible at pre-screening, those that are eventually scheduled, and then ultimately those who actually attended an orientation and were eligible.

You see that there is an 84.4% gap between those who are scheduled to attend, in this case an orientation, and those who actually attended. So you need a tool to monitor – to keep track of where people are dropping off and where you need to be focusing your energies, time, and resources to identify what are the causes of those drop-offs and what can be done to alleviate that.

In this case there could be scheduling conflicts, maybe there is a time lapse between when they were scheduled to attend an orientation and when the orientation happened. Maybe there are multiple distractions or conflicts that were happening in that situation.

And we'll talk about it later, some of the ideas that you can make to help consider and bridge those gaps that may be occurring. But the important point with this slide is the importance of converting prospects to participants. And to do that monitor where and how they may be dropping off,

In managing recruitment to maximize your effectiveness – especially if you're working with community-based programs, the steady stream is better than a crashing waterfall in the sense of having the number of recruitments – recruiters – people participate – kids participate.

Now this maybe a little different with a school-based program where you're beginning a specific time within the semester but you need to be aware of when people are coming and consistent recruitment efforts can be more easily handled and systematically addressed.

But if you're having to have a big crash of recruitment of participants all at once, be sure that you're staffed accordingly – to pace yourself accordingly to be able to handle and not lose potential participants in the program.

Recruitment isn't only about getting people – it's getting the right people. People who are interested in your services that have life plans that are consistent with your program and scheduling.

A common barrier may be that you've got somebody recruited, a student and it's a summer program and then, oh by the way I'll be staying with my dad during the summer so they won't even be in the community perhaps that you're recruiting them in.

So identify barriers as much as you can for participants to be sure that they are the right people who will be able to participate in your program. You don't want referrals from organizations that are offering similar services or unresolvable barriers like the example I just gave.

Those are a number of things that, as you can see, that good fit is important to get the right people to attend and most likely participate in your program on a consistent basis.

And to work together in a team to do that – to challenge yourself to beat – not meet your enrollment goals and set those enrollment goals based on the data that you've collected. We'll talk about some tools in doing that soon so that you're able to not only meet but extend beyond what you hope to achieve.

So identifying good prospects is key – a second principle in recruitment is developing messages that really connect, messages that are personal, they are about me speaking as a participant. They respect and benefit the participants – they offer them something of value and use language that they understand.

I'm going to look at some of these things. Here's the brief of video clip talking about what language are important to speak the right language. As you can tell, Dory's strategy isn't very effective and sometimes we can do that as well without realizing it.

We speak a different language at times and we're doing one part of a research study – you have a research group that's working with you and you begin to use all the research language and sometimes we lose track of what are participants are hearing and what they understand.

For example, I'm just going to go through some of the things that we're used to saying or within our team as we are talking about the research that we're a part of that may not make sense to participate. Researchers don't study (unintelligible), they may hear random assignment – what is that?

Most people don't know what random assignment is. I'm not going to each individually but I'm going to show you that some of the things, the words that we may use that as a student, as a kid, these don't really make a lot of sense to me.

So what the point is - is that we need to be conscious of the language that we use and try to be sure that when we're speaking without our participants that we don't alienate them by using language that doesn't communicate.

So I'm sure you see a number of words there – terminology that you've used, but it's not just the research speak that is kind of alternate to people speak as programs, we also develop our own terminology and you've probably used some of this terminology yourself which may not accurately translate over to a participant.

And so here is a couple of things that we may say, intake and enrollment, where a more simple or direct way would be to say, sign up, assessments, and tests.

That's kind of scary when you think about it as a student – I'm not ready for this screening and eligibility – curriculum, participation, retention, importance of just showing up and being there. Advancement – getting ahead – the job readiness situations to prepare for – find and keep a good job, background checks, orientation.

So these are a number of words and phrases that often that we'll use in speaking or show up in our brochures, our conversations or assigns. Important thing I want to point here is that in recruitment, it is important to be aware of the lingo and the acronyms and the language that you're using and be sure that you're using language that fits the participants that you're seeking to reach.

And it's not only increasing the volume, getting your message heard is to be sure that you're using the best resources to communicate that message. So the terminology that you use – but also the people or the messaging venues, the media that you use.

And some of what we're going to say are things that you probably are experts in already with the work and the proposals that I've seen that you're working, is that a lot of you are using peer-to-peer connections for recruitment, texting and social media.

Many of you understand this, especially this group as an innovative group, in connecting with your audience and I want to share some of the things that are important to make sure that you are making that connection - such as using high-impact materials and creating a great experience for the participants, whether it's in the workshop itself – if it's a workshop experience - or an orientation. Being engaging and using strategies that connect with them as individuals and persons and make that in-person contact a high priority for your staff.

And then, for example with community-based orientations, one of the things that you do as you develop a process of developing a threshold of commitment and opportunities to test before they're randomly assigned, whether they're really going to follow through on the thing so that's testing on their commitment or involvement.

So an orientation is setup to communicate an overall summary of what the program is might be a means of testing that commitment level of giving them an opportunity to participate before they are actually put into random assignment.

Self-explanatory slide - but sometimes we lose track, especially when we are tied to a program that's being studied and there are certain things that we need to communicate in regards to the IRB, and then the protocols.

Even within all of that, it's important that you talk with the person and not at them. Build excitement for what you're doing and what they did to be a part of. In these messages that are directly to them – talk to them. Use 'you' language rather than putting them in a third-party context.

Not only is it communicating personally but also just in our communication, our media, how we develop our flyers. Flyers as a main recruitment tool probably isn't the most effective way to recruit new people, but we all use it as it seems.

But if you're going to have flyers they need to have a high impact message – a message can be engaging and interesting. And no matter how engaging your flyer is, it's often going to get stuck in a board like one of these, and you'll see that it will be hard for people to pick out.

So it's important to find ways to break through that clutter – whether it's in the design and in the means in which you are reaching out to your participants and doing so in a way that communicates specifically to them.

Find out what is the best way to communicate with your people – is it phone, is it text, is it e-mail.

Older audiences would probably be newspaper, but with the young teen audience, newspaper posts are not going to be something that's going to bring people in as compared to Facebook and mobile messaging and Instagram and things of that nature.

So it's important to understand the people that you're trying to reach obviously in crafting your message, both in the terminology that you use and the words that you use, but also the venues and media that you use to communicate to them.

Where you deliver your recruitment messages determines who will follow up. So you're more likely to recruit you if you put an ad obviously on Facebook or utilize an app ads in a Smartphone, then you are in some other venue or messaging.

And then finally and most important of all is that our messengers matter and our best recruitment efforts are often the participants that we have or are the participants we have.

We can't emphasize that enough -- use your best messengers. In this case, fellow students or past participants, to really engage and reach out and sell the program. The best way you do that is by providing the best experience for them within the program itself.

So that's kind of an overview of some important things and the first parts of recruitment of messaging and being sure that you're communicating what you intend in a language that connects.

And we're going to hand it over to Mary now for a little bit of discussion on the importance of building partnerships to help develop recruitment and she may have a few additional comments in regards to making messages matter.

Mary Myrick: So I just have two quick things about messages in a research context but I thought I would broach while you were talking. So one for those of you that are evaluating in a no-treatment control context, you may have struggled talking with people in your community about random assignment.

You know, we do a whole webinar on how to talk about random assignment in everyday language in a way that makes people in the community comfortable with this idea.

But for those of you who are in a no-treatment control situation, it's really important to shift the idea and the thinking from what people typically think about which is you're keeping people from getting something.

You know that what the control group is about is keeping people from getting something. So thinking about how you're actually providing something to people who would have been getting nothing had you not gotten the grant that you got.

And so before you got your OAH funding those services were not available in the community and you're now able to provide services to a group of people. You can't provide them to everyone so this is just a way to select which people are going to get those services.

So getting people to sort of switch that trigger in their minds from you're keeping people from getting services to actually you're helping people who weren't going to get services – get services.

It's a really important way to think about increasing people's buy-in to your recruitment efforts. The other thing I thought about as I went through the people who were going to be on this call when the number of people who were doing activities in a school-based setting.

You know and some of the people that are working with you – I know you have to deal with parental consent and some of you may be lucky enough to be able to phone consent. Some may have passive consent – good for you if your IRB was righteous enough to let you have those kind of activities.

Some of you may be in the circumstance where you're having to do things like send packets home with kids, get packets back as part of your recruitment activities. Those things are obviously very difficult to achieve to complete the random assignment process.

But one of the things that makes it really, really difficult is the IRB package itself and so you think about, just take that packet that you're sending home with the kids, and think about it as a parent yourself.

If you got that packet – is that packet intimidating to you as a parent and how would you receive that parent. So I think about it when I go to the doctor's office and I walk up to the counter and they say fill out these forms.

You know, I don't read those forms I just sign them because I want to see the doctor who's in the room in the back and the only way I'm going to see the doctor is I have to sign that form.

And so, you know, when that packet goes home, you know, this parent gets this big old wad of papers and that's pretty overwhelming sometimes for the parent who's home alone who has got to sort through that information.

So if you can create a coversheet that's very simply stated that actually walks them through the step – maybe buy some of those little red arrow stickers that say sign here, but things that would make it very easy for the parent to complete the consent packet when they get it come.

That might be a step that would actually help you get some of those return packets back. So those are things that might help those of you in a school setting with your recruitment in a school-based setting.

So my job is to talk now about building effective partnerships. Oh where'd I go – sorry about that. Blame it on my computer. So, you know, most of us think, you know, if we need to recruit a bunch of participants that wouldn't it be great if we could just buy some television – if I could just get on the Today Show I could get enough participants in my program.

If a local television anchor or celebrity would say that all the kids should come to my program -- that would be fine. I'd have enough people come but really the way that most people are successful in meeting their enrollment targets is by building effective partnerships.

So it's the hard work of building and maintaining relationships, getting people enrolled one at a time - getting schools enrolled one at a time. But I wanted to talk about building effective partnerships to achieve a goal.

So the first thing is that all partners are not the same. So one of the tasks that we do at our place is that we organize our partners into three different groups and we try to say here's all the people that have said they are willing to help us, and among that group then we put those partners into three categories.

These partners are what we call willing partners. These partners are supportive and these are engaged. Then we have kind of our own definition that we've created over time for each of those partnership groups.

So willing partners are the kind of partners that are willing to let us put up a flyer. You know, they're willing to let us do the things that we ask them to do.

They're not making any effort to help us but, you know, if we asked them for something they're willing to be supportive about us. Supportive partners are a little more active, they occasionally think about us if something comes up at their place.

They'll say hey, you know, thought about those folks, maybe you ought to call them and ask them to come over. It's a little more engagement between us and them. They might send us some referrals, they might invite us to speak at something they have.

You know, a little more actively engaged with us and just sort of being willing to let us come into their space.

And then our engaged partners are our most important partners and we don't have nearly as many of those but they're probably our most important partners and they're where we get most of our referrals.

So in those partnerships, you know we have been able to identify mutual goals. We've been able to say sometimes sets some targets for those referrals to say, you know, they will identify – I'll send you 10 prospects this month.

And they join in a commitment towards our recruitment goals – they'll actually take on the responsibilities that we have and they'll say, "Not only do you have those responsibilities but we also have equally committed to what you're trying to do and will actually share the responsibility with you to achieve those goals.

So understanding the important roles that the partners play – obviously nobody cares about your recruitment goals as much as you do. You're the one with funding and unless you're paying one of your partners, they probably aren't as invested as you are, and they care about your mission but they're going to be distracted by the things that they have to do every day.

But they are your best opportunity to create a consistent strain of prospects so it's up to you to engage in a way so it'll help them take ownership for your goals.

It's important to remember always that the deeper commitment you can get from a few partners will save you more valuable time and money than having a low commitment from lots of partners that will keep you running all over town.

So retention drivers are things that keep them coming back for more. So retention is your job of re-recruiting people to come back to your program with every interaction.

So every time somebody engages with your service, I think of that interaction as a way that you're re-recruiting people. So intake and recruitment is something that happens at the beginning. But recruitment is really something that happens all throughout your program.

Particularly in the cases where you're running a voluntary program, you're competing with every single interaction for people's time and attention and one bad experience can be enough to keep people from coming back.

So we want to focus on three groups of retention drivers – why do people come back with engage well, why and when did people stop coming, we have to monitor well, and don't give up because dose matters so we have to re-engage well when people stop coming.

The best retention efforts seek ways to keep participants engaged – both mentally and physically. So in the area of engagement there are lots of ways to engage.

So some of the strategies that I know many of you deploy during your pilot period. Relationship with peers and other participants -- you utilize the youth or other participants' relationships with one another to get people to get more involved in your program.

Relationship with staff is one of the reasons why people come back to programs. One of the number one reasons they care about, believe that the staff care about them, that they know what they're doing, the confidence - so that staff relationships matters a lot. They are great facilitators.

Those of you who are offering groups, you know, it’s important that you didn’t define, you know, somebody who’s on your staff and stick them in front of a group, but you actually have people who know how to connect.

They can hold peoples’ attention, you have a good content and curriculum, it’s useful, interesting, I’m treated well when I get there.

I notice that several of you all are doing technology so another “engage well” that I‘d add to the slide is your technology workflow. Technology is something people aren’t very patient with it because you don’t get a lot of do-overs, so I’m making sure I’m engaged well but your technology works well.

An incentive – not sure what the details are of the incentives policy within OAH, but if there are incentives allowed in this particular grant, utilizing incentives in the right place, particularly for achieving benchmarks.

One more comment about incentives – incentives are something that motivate me. So thinking very clearly about what an incentive is – an incentive has to be something that motivates me to action. And if it’s not, it’s probably not worth spending money to do it.

So sometimes people say well I’ll just do ten dollars a class. If you don’t think ten dollars is going to motivate somebody then use the ten dollars another way.

Removal of participant barriers – oh, can you make it easier for me to participate. Again we talked about that parental consent form. Right before I started I mentioned that as a way again to make it easier for parents to get engaged.

Confirmative results from participation – so can I see a difference for schools. Can they see a difference in the kids that are walking around their schools. Environment and Culture – do I feel like I belong here – is it safe?

Again, do schools see a transformation in the culture of the school because your program is involved there?

Monitoring well to successfully reach program goals – we have to constantly monitor and track participation. Relationships do matter and they matter a lot, but performance management tools are also really valuable in helping to manage where participants are losing interest in a program.

I've provided here some examples of a tracking tool. These tracking tools are examples that reinforce the ideas that we talked about earlier in the webinar. The first one is a recruitment tracking tool and you can see that they are tools that you can use to be more effective in your efforts.

So I just give you one example in each of the tools. So for example in Table 1 which is the Recruitment Tracking Tool on – you'll see under attended orientation, that person did not attend.

So you could use this recruitment tool to find all the people who did not attend orientation and then re-contact that group to try to get them into your next orientation.

On the Retention Tracking Tool again you can see something that you can't see when you walk into one of your rooms. You can see all the people who did not attend. So one of the things that I encouraged people that are involved in random assignment to do is to make sure that every report that you design for your program always shows the people who don't participate.

These need to be – I'm conscious of the people who are in the room but you want to be sure you always see the people who are not in the room.

So the sample tools that you see here are from the evaluation and technical assistance - free for OAH and the CDC, teenage pregnancy prevention grantees developed and it's titled 'Developing and Implementing Systems for Tracking Recruitment and Retention for Programs Participating in Effective Evaluations, and the full brief will be made available to you during the question and answer period.

So the last thing I want to say is that I want to talk about re-engaging well. So random assignment makes it critical that program staff are always seeking out program participants that drop out of services for re-engagement, even thinking about make-ups when possible.

Teens should always be developing protocols for engaging participants in this – one or more sessions and examples of protocols for re-engaging participants might be things like facilitators following up with youth who are absent from a session within 24 hours.

Processes may even be incentives for peers who re-engage non-attenders to participate. Developing an incentive infrastructure, make-up sessions that can improve participation rates for programs, depending on the design of services and the frequency of offerings.

Training staff in various protocols and practices and then finally always celebrating completion. So if you can get your participants as committed to completing and getting the full dose of your services as you are to them getting a full dose of your services – you will be successful.

Turning it back over to our presenter.

Alexandra Warner: Wonderful, thank you Mary and Rich – it's really, really helpful. Just wanted to open it up to the audience to be able to ask questions that may have come up for you all. So if you would in your Q&A box, feel free to go ahead and type in some questions.

If you would prefer asking your questions aloud, you are welcome to hit Star 1 on your telephone.

Operator: If you would like to ask question by phone, please make sure that your phone is not muted when you press Star 1 and when you are prompted please record your name so that your question can be introduced. Again that is Star 1 to ask a question by phone and Star 2 if you would like withdraw your question.

Woman: Thanks.

Alexandra Warner: So while we're waiting for some questions to come in, Mary and Rich, I have a question about – you had mentioned the time lapse between recruitment and participation.

Is there a magic time that works or even like the tipping point that it doesn't work? I know some colleagues have shared that, you know, they do a phenomenal job with recruitment.

But there's such a lag time before the actual program begins that often times theirs numbers are really, really low and maybe they get five to ten percent of what they thought they were going to have in the implementation.

So can you talk a little bit about that time gap?

Mary Myrick: That's one of the great uses of the tools that we showed earlier, that you can organize your prospects in those tools and delay random assignment until right before your participation begins.

So, the challenge is, you know, if you wait to do recruitment right up until the time that your program is going to start, you may or may not get enough people.

So you obviously have to identify them earlier, but if you go and take people all the way through random assignment, then you're two months out – then life just happens for people.

You know, they move, they change priorities, they sign up for different things, they lose interest and then you end up with a lot of people in your program group that end up not participating in your services.

So utilizing that tool to organize prospects and thinking about – again most of us think about sort of – we were thinking about enrolling people in the program.

But in random assignment you actually have to back-up several steps and think about managing prospects and keeping them sort of in a prospect chain and then doing random assignment really just right before you start your services so that you don't end up with a lot of people in your program group.

You want to get that random assignment process as close to the start of the program as possible, so this is little lag time as possible.

Alexandra Warner: All right, great. Okay, so we do have a question.

One of the attendees is asking if you could please elaborate on how to test people's commitment to showing up for the program?

Mary Myrick: So we talked about the orientation as one idea. So you know if you create steps in the process, so one of the things that we kind of think is oh we just want to make everything really, really easy for people cause we're trying to enroll.

You know, you have this pressure to enroll people in your study and so you've got to enroll 20 people this month and so I want to make it as easy as possible to enroll people.

But you want to be sure you enroll people who will show up. If you're in a community-based setting, then one way you can do that is an orientation or a pre-meeting or something.

So if you have that at the place where you're going to actually have the group, then that actually allows people to demonstrate that they have either the commitment to show up, the resources to show up or they can access your resources if you have resources to provide them – the system in showing up.

But you actually sort of get a practice run of, you know, we're going to actually show up. So allowing people an opportunity to sort of try out their commitment by a one step before you actually complete random assignment is a good way to see if this will actually follow through.

So people are well intentioned. A lot of times if you actually bring people in, you know, I analogize everything to my own life so I think about shopping, you know. If I'm out shopping I see something, I think "This is great, I want this." I get home and I'm like, "Why did I buy that?"

Right and so the next day I'm like – how do I get that returned. So that happens for people when they hear about your program. So if you come in - bring somebody tell them about your program, they sign up right then for your program. Some percentages of those people are going to have buyer's remorse and not follow through on your program.

So if you can create a step in there that allows people to think about, "Do I really want to follow through on this?" Then you get rid of those people who get buyer's remorse about signing up.

Alexandra Warner: I also wanted to tell you I love the fact that you acknowledge that flyers are, you know, fading in their effectiveness and so, I think it was Rich actually.

What examples, specific examples do you know work because we want to make sure that the message is getting to the young people so if a flyer isn't it – what are we supposed to do?

Mary Myrick: So I think it depends on the context – depends on the – you know – young people obviously provide you with a lot of opportunities given the number of ways they access information and, you know, a school-based setting provides a different resource than a community-based setting, etc. in terms of the way you might engage them.

The hardest part about recruitment towards the study is that, particularly if you're doing individual random assignments, you're likely going to bring people in one at a time. And so that individual engagement is going to be the most important piece.

So you probably need some sort of, you know, marketing piece that is well done and actually communicates well with young people that you can actually have when you are telling them about the program.

But, you know, things that are videos on iPads that show how fun the program is or show the benefits of the program, or technology that they're more receptive to seeing, might be the kind of things that would resonate more than traditional printed piece.

Alexandra Warner: Rich do you have anything to add to that?

Rich Batten: No, I think that covers that. I think it's being creative in what you can do and communicating excitement for the program. There can be – I know a number of programs that do like Facebook contests as far creating mini-videos or developing a meme that relates to the theme of the program that is being done.

It's not necessarily a recruitment – you got someone in front of the line but it develops interest – interest developed by their peers who have experience with it.

So people who have participated to develop some themes or some memes or some little video vignette that gets the word out about what this is and then that can be followed up with some more specific recruitment stuff.

So encouraging your participants to generate excitement and consider a number of ideas that they come up with that would work – if that makes sense.

Alexandra Warner: That's the key – I think that was the one piece that I wanted to just emphasize is always ask the young people what's going to work for them.

You know the rub versus… you know, not everybody is an expert in marketing or technology but if that's what they say works – seek out the expertise or, you know, figure out what the variation on that theme would be appropriate.

All right, wonderful, wonderful. Thank you so much Mary and Rich, I really appreciate it. and I wanted to thank all of you for attending and submitting questions for our guest presenters. We do have resources which will be available to you all.

We have them listed here including different types of tracking tools, how you search media, thinking about how do you get them into the program, and then staying with the program. Really, really crucial resources that you can get easily by clicking on some of the links that are provided.

We will have a link available to you for all of these resources and you will find that in your chat box. So take a look there. And then of course we're always interested in hearing back from you. Your feedback is really going to drive and save the future opportunities such as these webinars or discussion that you have as grantees, as well as shaping what the Office of Adolescent Health can offer to you.

So we encourage you strongly to complete the feedback form and rather than – it's not a hyperlink on your screen. You will find a link to the SurveyMonkey in your chat box. So can you please be sure to complete the feedback form and I hear we have one question coming through the phone.

So everybody stand by and Kate you want to go ahead and have that person ask their question?

Operator: Mary, your line is open you can go ahead with your questions.

Woman: But like if you're trying to recruit people for….

Woman: Hello – hello.

Operator: Mary.

Woman: (Unintelligible).

Operator: Mary, your line is open, you can go ahead with your questions.

Mary: Oh, thank you I thought we ran out of time. So we're actually doing a cluster design – an RCT and we're very interested in this, suggestion of using our intervention as a recruitment tool.

But we will know what sites we go into that they're not going to be the intervention site, and we're just not sure how ethical or comfortable we are with saying, "Hey you might get this intervention," when we know beforehand that they're not getting the intervention. And so do you have any suggestions on that?

Alexandra Warner: Okay, I'll turn it over to Mary and Rich to respond.

Mary: Oh thank you.

Mary Myrick: Well, so a couple of things – one, so the researchers are going to allow the recruiters to know whose going to know – you're going to know in advance who's going to be in which group?

Mary: Yes, so we have 10 sites that we're working with and we're randomizing the sites so we're using clusters.

Mary Myrick: Right. So I think the important thing is for everybody to understand the importance of the study. So you know, at the end of the day that – I don't know - are you re-randomizing the groups, you know, by year or are you always in and always out?

Mary: We're re-randomizing like every 10 months.

Mary Myrick: So you'll re-randomize every 10 months. Right, so I think the importance is for people to understand the purpose of the study and, you know, whether or not you're – regardless of what you're receiving in this 10 month period.

It doesn't dictate what you're going to receive in the next 10 month period, but whatever role you're playing in this 10 month period is equally important.

Because your study will also collapse if your control group collapses. So you made everybody just sort of do their job – whatever their job is and understanding the importance of the control group's role is really important in getting long-term buy-in and support for the program and ultimately long-term funding for the program.

So having a long view is the reason why you use random assignment – you don't use random assignment because you're going to get a quick answer.

You use random assignment because you're going to get the best answer. It just takes some education for people to understand that.

Mary: Right, okay – no that's very helpful – thank you so much.

Deborah Chilcoat: Thank you for your question.

Operator: There are no other questions on the phone line at this time.

Deborah Chilcoat: Okay, Kate thank you. Thank you all for staying on just a few minutes over. We really appreciate your patience with that. Again, thank you to Mary and to Rich and Alexandra. You want to go and take us to the last slide.

Alexandra Warner: Sure, thanks Deb, and thanks to everyone for joining us today. Here are a few ways to stay in touch with OAH through our website, Twitter, our monthly newsletter and our YouTube channel.

We look forward to hearing your feedback about today's webinar. Thanks to Deb, Rich and Mary and thanks again and have a great day.

Operator: This concludes today's conference. Thank you for your attendance. You may disconnect at this time.

END