

Surfacing Grounding Assumptions

Everybody supports stakeholder engagement... but in what roles and to what extent?

- At your table, individually review these assumptions about stakeholder engagement that are communicated intentionally or unintentionally by state and/or local agencies.
- In the column titled *Most Often Experienced*, check the assumptions that you have most often encountered in your work.
- Share your responses with the others at your table. Together, identify the three assumptions that are most frequently experienced by the group.
- Mark them on the flip chart at the front of the room in **green**.
 - When you look at the responses from all the tables, what do you notice?
 - What might this mean in shaping (or re-shaping) a role for PTIs as important stakeholders and partners in achieving better outcomes?
- Now, re-read the list and mark the assumptions about working with stakeholders that you have least often experienced.
- Again, share at your table and identify the top three and mark them on the flip chart in **red**.
 - When you look at the responses from all the tables, what do you notice?
 - What might you do to act on the assumptions that you have identified to :
 - build on assumptions that value stakeholders as partners , and
 - overcome assumptions that limit stakeholder engagement?

Exercise 1: Assumptions about Stakeholder Roles in Achieving Outcomes

Most Often Experienced	Grounding Assumptions ¹	Least Often Experienced
	1. Our agency is committed to supporting improvement of child and family outcomes.	
	2. Our agency is committed to supporting improvement of child and family outcomes by engaging stakeholders.	
	3. Stakeholders are important, but the agency needs to “get its own house in order first. “	
	4. Stakeholders are important and the agency must engage stakeholders from the very beginning of every effort or we risk misunderstanding what stands in the way of change.	

¹ Statements adapted from quotes given by State Education Agency (SEA)/Lead Agency (LA) leaders and Technical Assistance (TA) staff supporting SEA/LAs in systemic change.

Most Often Experienced	Grounding Assumptions ¹	Least Often Experienced
	5. The agency is required to demonstrate that we have stakeholder input. But once we get it, the agency will be responsible for how to move forward.	
	6. Stakeholder input is fine but the agency needs to maintain control over the process.	
	7. The agency can get a practice 'rolled out' by working within the agency, but we cannot get it in place throughout the state without the stakeholders.	
	8. Involving stakeholders in the work will slow down the process.	
	9. The agency is good at describing practice change and offering professional learning and training but we are not as good at influencing practice change at the local level.	
	10. The agency is accountable to plan, develop, deliver and support training as the most effective strategy to influence practice change. This must be the focus.	
	11. If the agency tells practitioners what they should do, they will do it.	
	12. Too often the representatives of stakeholders groups serving on our teams do not have the authority and influence to make things happen.	
	13. The agency doesn't always understand how to reach stakeholders that are connected to networks that can make change happen at the local level.	
	14. It is difficult to engage stakeholders meaningfully in issues that are complex and require background knowledge.	
	15. Stakeholders don't have "the big picture."	
	16. To really engage stakeholders, the agency needs to understand what stakeholders already know and what new information they need to know.	
	17. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Early Intervention Programs (EIPs) just want the state agency to tell them what to do.	
	18. LEAs/EIPs want to know the minimum they need to do to be in compliance.	
	19. Stakeholders need to be involved from the very start; they do not want to be told what to do and they want meaningful involvement; not just a "rubber stamp" for the state/local agencies' initiative(s).	
	20. LEAs/EIPs will want to work as allies with the agency if they see that the agency is sincere about working together.	