3 SOLUTION-FOCUSED (SF) TIPS FOR
COMMUNICATING IN RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

The "Getting to Know" Stages

- ✅ Discuss + set priorities for each parent + researcher (e.g. Delphi survey)
- ✅ Develop a partner charter
- ✅ Parent/researcher resume exchange
- ✅ Discuss expectations + roles (i.e. time hrs/wk, compensation, childcare, communication preferences)
- ✅ Create a communication plan
- ✅ Leave rank + titles out of conversation

Try this SF Conversation Starter:

How do you see yourself involved?

What expectations do you have for this partnership?

How do you see yourself adding value to this project?

What do you consider important to create impact with your involvement?

The "Working Together" Stages

- ✅ Create space + time to ask questions
- ✅ Have a support process
- ✅ Build + maintain trust (e.g. icebreakers)
- ✅ Frequent "check-ins" for feedback; frequent dialogue about goals, experiences, and areas to improve
- ✅ Share the *talking time*
- ✅ Disagree on *ideas* not personalities

Try this SF Conversation Starter:

How will your team function when it works together?

What does that look like in concrete, positive, and realistic behavioural terms?

What concrete signs will tell you that your collaboration is successful?

The "Final" Stages

- ✅ Recognition, rewards + incentives
- ✅ Have an *"exit strategy"* + follow it
- ✅ Provide a summary of project process + outcomes
- ✅ Thank: give appreciation + recognition where + when it is due
- ✅ Encourage continuation of partnership
- ✅ Follow through with post-project expectations

Try this SF Conversation Starter:

How will you know that you have reached your goal of dissemination?

What steps do you think you need to take to get there?

What concrete signs will tell us that dissemination has been a success?

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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR
ENGAGING IN SOLUTION-FOCUSED COMMUNICATION

The "Getting to Know" Stage

Questions to consider before/when creating partnerships:

- Who will be involved?
- What do group members want?
- What type of group will work best?
- What will attract members to the group?
- How long should the group run for?

☑ **Criteria for inclusion in a group:**
Agreement on goals
Agreement on methodology
Group cohesion - can include: inclusive of gender, age, race/ethnicity, culture, disability, or concern
Group expectations

These questions are intended to frame conversations about partnering in research. Use them to guide dialogue!

☑ **Possible additional questions:**
What would be the best possible outcome from our collaboration?
What are your best hopes for this project/study?
What is most important for us to discuss during the time we have?
How do you see your involvement in this project/study?
What expectations do have for this partnership?
What would be the next step/next sign of progress?

The "Working Together" Stage

Possible general questions:

- What are the limitations that we need to take into account?
- What is most important for us to discuss during the time we have?
- What is different since our last meeting?
- What is already working?
- What skills did you bring to the work to help it go well?
- What would be the next step/next sign of progress?
- What possible questions would you like to hear that were not asked?

☑ **Possible course corrective questions:**
When faced with this sort of problem in the past how was it resolved?
Suppose there is a solution, what would be different?
What helped in the past, even if only marginally?
What would be the next step/next sign of progress?

Facilitator can then ask: *"What else?"* OR *"Anything else?"*
to any of these questions 3 times to generate more information if applicable

The "Final" Stage

Other considerations:

- What are the limitations that we need to take into account?
- Is it necessary or useful for us to meet again? If so, when would you like to come back?
- Forms of recognition rewards + incentives (e.g. comfortable venue, refreshments, meals, having a certificate)

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Smith et al (2011). Using solution-focused communication to support patients. *Nursing Standard.*
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Check out these helpful SF Resources!

Check out these resources for more info on the tips presented here + many more!

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