

Enhance your Partnership's Strategic Planning Process using ABLe Change

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Strategic Planning Steps

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1

Prioritize goals, targets, and disparities

2

Identify systems changes needed to address targets and disparities

3

Understand root causes getting in the way of systems changes

4

Design strategies to address root causes

5

Develop strategy activities

2

Strategic Planning Template

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Use the following template to guide your strategic planning process. NCPC staff are available as thought partners to help you in all phases of this process.

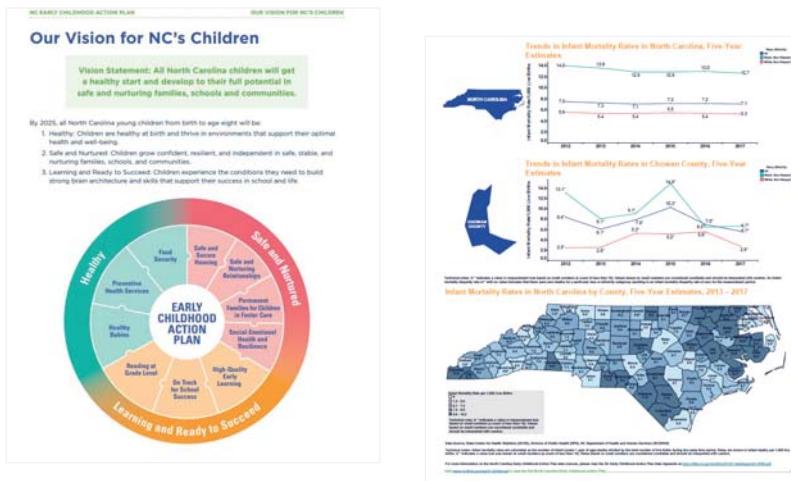
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Needed system changes to address targets and disparities				
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Find in handout list using
gotowebinar control panel



1

Prioritize goals, targets, and disparities



Goals

Engage partners in selecting high level population-level goal areas to collectively work on

Focus on what motivates and energizes people

Examples:
Babies born healthy
Kids on track for school success



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Simple ways. Smart ways. Big changes.

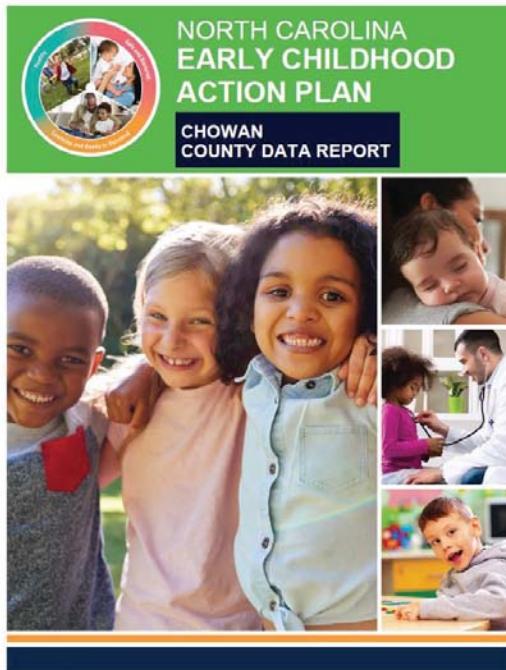
Targets

Engage partners in defining a list of specific **population-level** “indicators” related to each goal

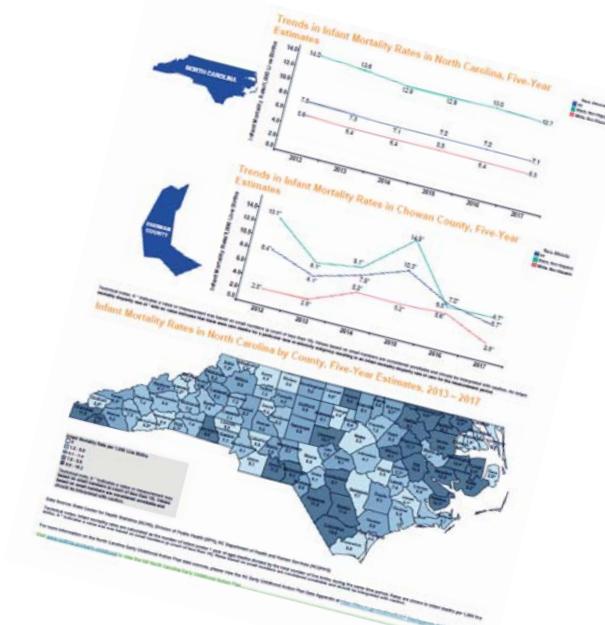
Example:
“Infant mortality rate” is a possible indicator for goal of “babies born healthy”



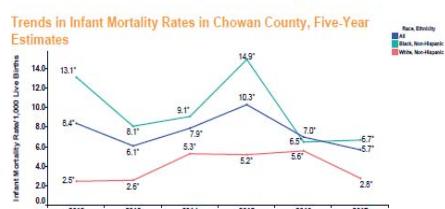
TIP: Look at relevant reports and ask stakeholders what data they typically use to measure each goal



Look at disaggregated data on this list of indicators for YOUR county

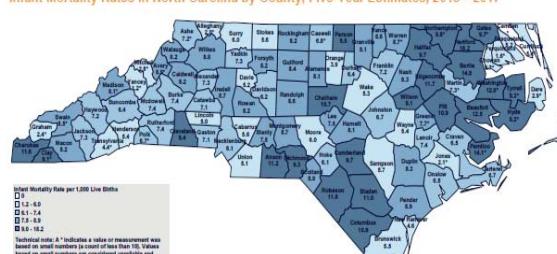


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Technical notes: A * indicates a value or measurement was based on small numbers (a count of less than 10). Values based on small numbers are considered unreliable and should be interpreted with caution. An infant mortality disparity rate is calculated for each county.

Infant Mortality Rates in North Carolina by County, Five-Year Estimates, 2013 – 2017



Data Source: State Center for Health Statistics (SCHS), Division of Public Health (DPH), NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS)

Technical note: Infant mortality rates are calculated on the number of infant (under 1 year of age) deaths divided by the total number of live births during the same time period. Rates are shown in infant deaths per 1,000 live births. A * indicates a value was based on small numbers (a count of less than 10). Values based on small numbers are considered unreliable and should be interpreted with caution.

For more information on the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan data sources, please view the NC Early Childhood Action Plan Data Appendix at <https://dph.nc.gov/divisions/SCDHHS/NC-Early-Childhood-Action-Plan/Data-Appendix.pdf>.

Visit www.ncdhhs.gov/earlychildhood to view the full North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan.

Using this data, ask partners:

- What sub-targets should we prioritize given local needs and disparities?
- Which groups should we prioritize in our efforts because they are experiencing the greatest inequities?

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2

Identify systems changes needed to address targets and disparities

This is **NOT** about changes within people (e.g., skills, knowledge, behaviors)

What needs to change **within the community system** to address our prioritized targets and disparities?



2

Identify systems changes needed to address targets and disparities

What needs to change **within the community system** to address our prioritized targets and disparities?

EXAMPLES: Service accessibility, coordination, alignment of policies and practices with goals, data-driven decision-making, etc.



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2

Identify systems changes needed to address targets and disparities

Ask stakeholders for their perspective...



Image it's 10 years from now and we've improved and reduced disparities around [__ target].

Image we're visiting you in this future. What would you show us about what you changed within the community, organizations, and service delivery system that made your success possible?

2

Identify systems changes needed to address targets and disparities

SUPER TIP:

Also look at ECAP p. 41-43 for possible system change ideas

STRATEGIES FOR ALL OF US

NC EARLY CHILDHOOD ACTION PLAN

COMMITTING TO ACTION: Strategies for All of Us

As North Carolinians, we all have a role in improving the health, safety and well-being, and early learning of young children from birth through age 8. Whether you are a parent, a health care provider, a policymaker, a business leader, a teacher or anyone else who is committed to our state's future, each of us can right now commit to actions that will create a better future for young children, their families and all of us.

Public and private partners across the state have come together to create an initial list of strategies that will help North Carolina move the needle on the 10 Early Childhood Action Plan goals by 2025, and toward the plan's statewide vision for children. This list of strategies is particularly informed by NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading, the Perinatal Health Strategic Plan, the NC IOM Essentials for Childhood Task Force, and NC Think Babies.

Healthy: Children are healthy at birth and thrive in environments that support their optimal health and well-being.

 North Carolinians can support young children's healthy growth and development by:

- Closing the insurance coverage gap to ensure more families have regular access to physical, mental and oral health services.
- Increasing access, particularly in rural areas, to healthcare providers, including pediatricians, OB/GYNs, oral health providers and pediatric specialists, through methods such as increasing reimbursement rates in Medicaid and through other insurers to healthcare providers.
- Making it easier for young women to visit a primary care provider more regularly, which can help support healthy future pregnancies, and provide access to services such as substance use intervention, tobacco cessation and delays and disabilities and their families.
- Making it easier for eligible families to enroll in supplemental food and nutrition benefits programs, especially during times of disaster and recovery.
- Making it easier for families to receive mental and physical health supports during times of disaster and during recovery.
- Collecting and analyzing reliable data on young children's health, well-being, social-emotional development, housing status, academic performance and other factors in order to track children's progress across multiple years, and then using those data to make better policy decisions for their care.
- Promoting opportunities for young children to access breakfast and after-school meals during the traditional school year, as well as opportunities to receive meals on weekends and school breaks.
- Promoting exercise and healthy eating habits for young children in early care and learning programs, kindergarten through third grade classrooms, and at home with their families.

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- Making it easier for pregnant women and families to navigate the healthcare system by providing care coordination and case management services.
- Promoting referrals to and participation in early intervention services for infants and young children with developmental

EXAMPLE SYSTEM CHANGES

Increase access to insurance

Increase access to healthcare providers

Make it easier for young women to visit a primary care provider more regularly

.....

2

Identify systems changes needed to address targets and disparities

Create a integrated list and have stakeholders prioritize which systems changes are most:

- POWERFUL**
- have a big influence on targets/disparities
 - affect or involve multiple settings and/or individuals at different ecological levels
- FEASIBLE**
- motivate local stakeholders to take action
 - are seen as important by local residents



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3

Understand root causes getting in the way of systems changes

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System Change:

Make healthcare system easier for pregnant women and families to navigate



What information do you need about this system change before designing strategies?

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3

Understand root causes getting in the way of systems changes

System Change:

Make healthcare system easier for pregnant women and families to navigate

Why is the healthcare system difficult for pregnant women and families to navigate?

System Change:

Make healthcare system easier for pregnant women and families to navigate

Why is the healthcare system difficult for pregnant women and families to navigate?

Info about how to navigate healthcare system not widely distributed

Many cross-sector orgs lack skills to effectively use NCCARE360

Healthcare enrollment processes are confusing and difficult to use



Use ABLe Change System Characteristics to reveal root causes



System Change Target:

Make healthcare system easier for pregnant women and families to navigate

Why is it difficult for pregnant women/
families to navigate the healthcare system?

CONNECTION ROOT CAUSE:
Info about how to navigate
healthcare system not
widely distributed

RESOURCE ROOT CAUSE:
Many cross-sector orgs lack
skills to effectively use
NCCARE360

REGULATION ROOT CAUSE:
Healthcare enrollment
processes are confusing and
difficult to use

Design your strategies to address these root causes!

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3

Understand root causes getting in the way of systems changes

Have stakeholders prioritize which root causes are most:

POWERFUL

- have a big influence on sub-targets and disparities
- affect or involve multiple settings and/or individuals at different ecological levels

FEASIBLE

- motivate local stakeholders to take action
- are seen as important by local residents
- Can be influenced by organizations and groups within your county



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Root Cause Cheat Sheet

http://systemexchange.org/download_file/37/0

Root Cause Analysis Template

Use the Root Cause Analysis Template to ask why issues are happening

Mindset Root Cause

What local beliefs, values, or attitudes may be causing this problem?

Component Root Cause

How is the design and delivery of local programs, services, and supports causing this problem?

Connection Root Cause

How are the current connections and exchanges between local people and organizations causing this problem?

Regulation Root Cause

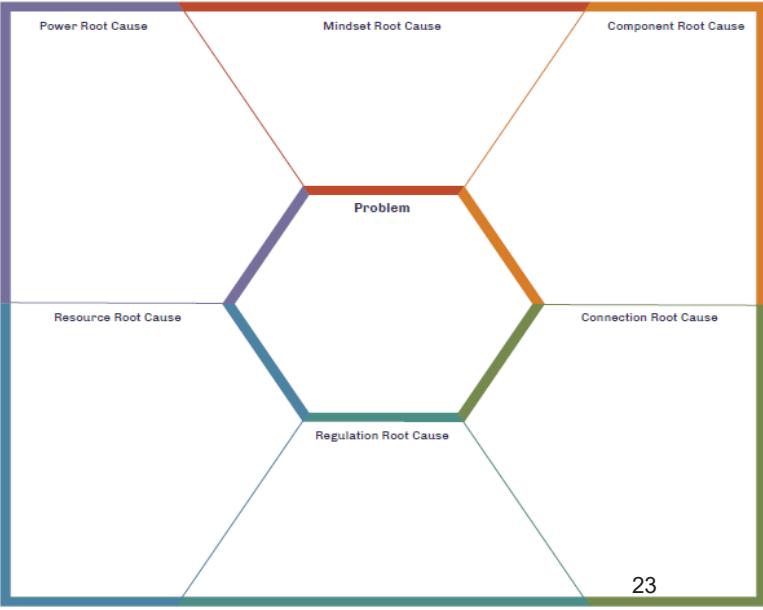
What policies, procedures or other rules and regulations are causing this problem, and how?

Resource Root Cause

How is the availability and quality of local resources causing this problem?

Power Root Cause

In what ways are local power dynamics causing this problem?



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More example
root cause
questions

http://systemexchange.org/application/files/8415/3494/5983/ABLE_SystemScanMenu_f.pdf

ABLE Change

SYSTEM SCAN QUESTION MENU

A **system scan** is a process of asking questions with diverse groups of people to understand community conditions influencing targeted problems and possible solutions. This information is then used to:

- **Identify Change Targets for Strategy Design:** Identify system root causes that are "getting in the way" of your goals or vision. These issues can be used to guide strategy design.
- **Promote Collective Impact:** Identify shared issues to collectively address with local efforts. This information can guide agenda development for local collaborative and coalition meetings.
- **Identify & Leverage Assets:** Discover and leverage system conditions that are aligned with addressing the targeted problem as well as unused strengths and resources across the community system.

Contents:

- ❖ Menu Overview p. 2
- ❖ General Questions p. 3
- ❖ Social Determinants of Health p. 4
- ❖ Mindsets p. 8
- ❖ Components p. 9
- ❖ Connections p. 11
- ❖ Regulations p. 13
- ❖ Resources p. 14
- ❖ Power p. 15



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System Scan Design Guide

http://systemexchange.org/application/files/2415/4993/5160/GENERAL_able-System-Scan-Design-Guide-1-14-19.pdf



System Scan Design Guide

Foster-Fishman & Watson
Michigan State University

Key Design Questions:

1. What is our targeted problem?
2. What do we want to learn about this targeted problem?
3. Which perspectives, settings, and data sources should we engage to help us understand these conditions?
4. What is the best way to collect the data we need?

Find this and other tools online at <http://ablechange.msu.edu>

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Sense-Making Guide

http://systemexchange.org/download_file/76/0

ABLE Sense-Making Guide

What is sense-making?

Sense-making is a process to organize and understand information so it can be used for problem-solving. This guide provides ideas and recommendations for how to use a sense-making process to understand system scan data to inform strategy design.

Why is sense-making important?

The very process of assessing and making sense of collected data can be transformative for some stakeholders: increasing their awareness and understanding of local issues and sensitizing them to the diverse experiences and perspectives in the community.

Because the information coming out of the sense-making process is used to design strategies, engaging diverse stakeholders in the sense-making process can not only lead to better strategies but it can also support implementation by encouraging these stakeholders to support and champion proposed strategies.

SENSE-MAKING PROCESS

Step 1: Organize system scan data

Step 2: Engage stakeholders in Sorting Data

Step 3: Prioritize targets for change

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Design strategies to address root causes

Goal Targets & Disparities

Systems Changes

Root Cause

Root Cause

Root Cause

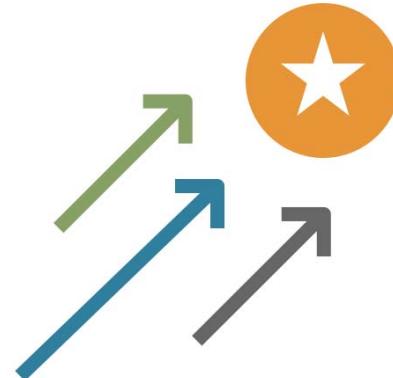
↑
Strategies

4

Design strategies to address root causes

Powerful Strategies are...

- Sufficient
- Embedded
- Disruptive
- Just

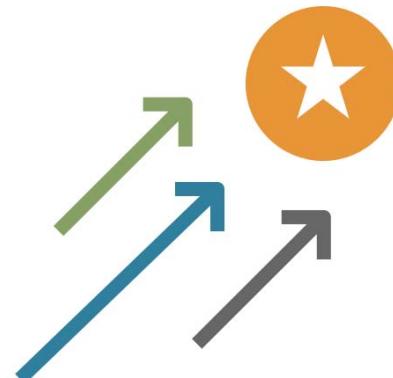


4

Design strategies to address root causes

Powerful Strategies are...

- Sufficient
- Embedded
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- Just



Powerful Strategies are: Sufficient



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SUFFICIENT strategies address MULTIPLE ROOT CAUSES

System Change Target: Make healthcare system easier for pregnant women and families to navigate

CONNECTION ROOT CAUSE:

Info about how to navigate healthcare system not widely distributed

RESOURCE ROOT CAUSE:

Many cross-sector orgs lack skills to effectively use NCCARE360

REGULATION ROOT CAUSE:

Healthcare enrollment processes are confusing and difficult to use

Example Strategy Elements:

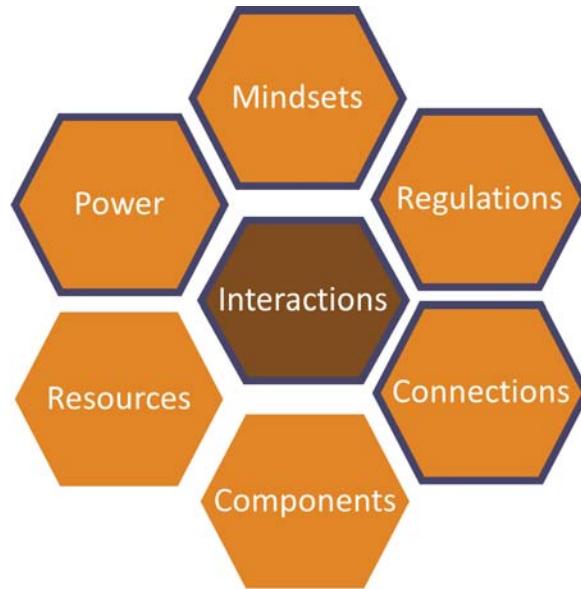
- Provide TA to help cross-sector org staff share info about navigating healthcare system AND effectively use NCCARE360 with pregnant women
- Work with healthcare system to simplify enrollment processes, link to NCCARE360

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SUFFICIENT strategies address powerful LEVERAGE POINTS

For each root cause...

Consider how strategies could affect powerful “leverage points”



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Change
Simple ideas. Small wins. Big changes.

Connection Root Cause: Info about how to navigate healthcare system not widely distributed

Components Strategy (less powerful)

Initiative creates brochures and resource fairs to inform pregnant women of how to navigate local healthcare services and programs



Why is this strategy considered “less powerful”?

Connection Root Cause: Info about how to navigate healthcare system not widely distributed

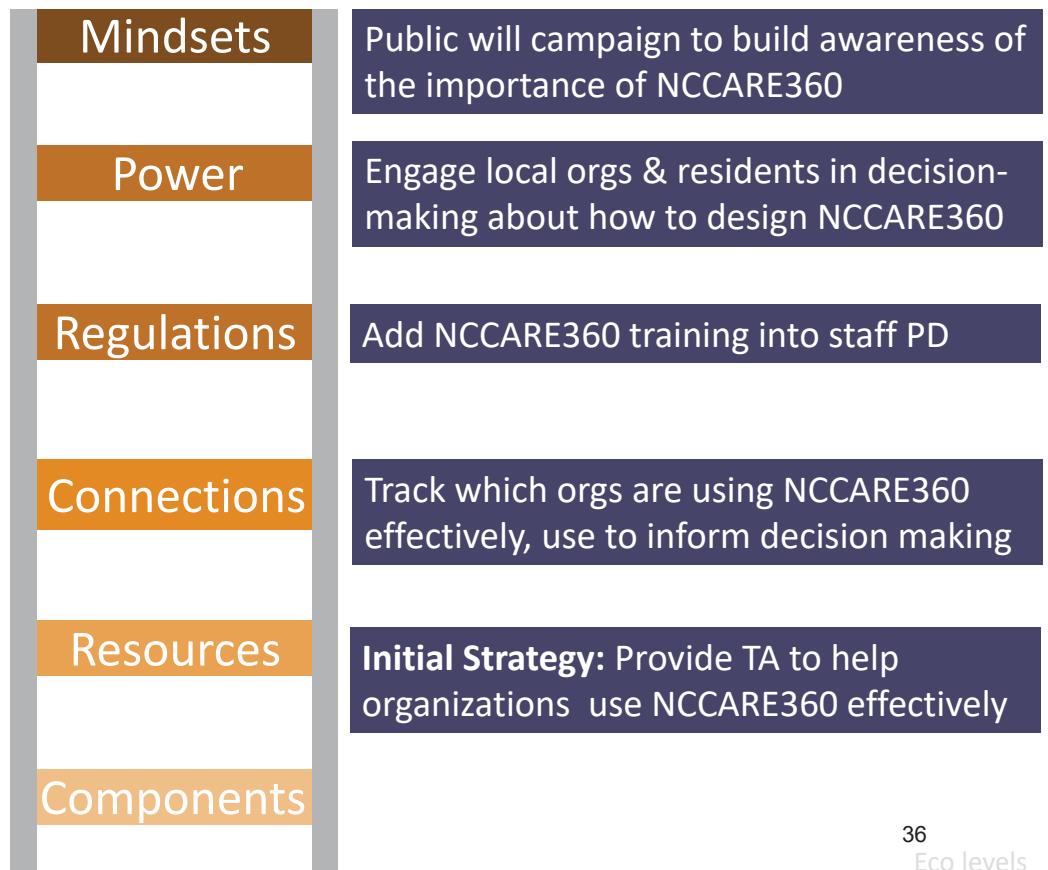
Components Strategy (less powerful)	Regulation Strategy (more powerful)
Initiative creates brochures and resource fairs to inform pregnant women of how to navigate local healthcare services and programs	All organizations that touch pregnant women adopt new practice for staff to connect women to NCCARE360 with warm handoff United Way and other local foundations require funded organizations to keep NCCARE360 profiles updated

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Example of addressing multiple leverage points

RESOURCE ROOT CAUSE:

Many cross-sector orgs lack skills to effectively use NCCARE360



Practice

REGULATION

ROOT CAUSE:

Healthcare enrollment processes are confusing and difficult to use



Initial Intervention: work with healthcare organizations to simplify enrollment processes



What could you add to this strategy to address a **power** leverage point? ³⁷

Practice

REGULATION

ROOT CAUSE:

Healthcare enrollment processes are confusing and difficult to use



Help healthcare organizations engage residents in decision-making

Initial Intervention: work with healthcare organizations to simplify enrollment processes

Example Systems Change Strategies

http://systemexchange.org/download_file/190/0

Powerful Strategies are:
Just



Strategy Design Resource

This document provides example strategy approaches used throughout the U.S. and internationally to address local problems and inequities. Where available, references to specific sources or websites have been provided with the strategy approach descriptions. These strategies represent promising practices (not necessarily evidenced-based practices) to explore in your community.

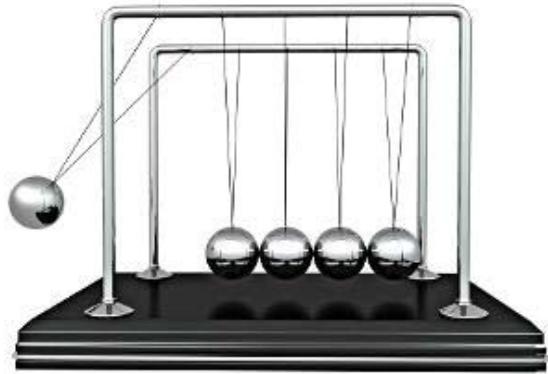
The strategies have been organized around different types of system leverage points. Systems thinkers suggest certain "leverage points" are more powerful for shifting community patterns than others (Johnston et al., 2014; Meadows, 2008). The following ladder visual summarizes leverage points that are most powerful (level 1) to less powerful (level 4) for shifting patterns driving local problems and inequities, and includes page numbers for corresponding strategies.

Example Strategies to Address System Leverage Points

<table border="1" style="width: 100px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">Level 1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">Level 2</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">Level 3</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">Level 4</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"> </td></tr> </table>	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		PARADIGMS (Most Powerful) Mindsets: Deepest held beliefs, attitudes, values p. 1 Goals: the aims and purpose of local efforts p. 5
Level 1									
Level 2									
Level 3									
Level 4									
	STRUCTURE Powers: how decisions are made, and who participates p. 6 Regulations: policies, practices, incentives, and rules p. 9 Connections: relationships between people, organizations, and sub-systems p. 10								
	FEEDBACK LOOPS Interactions: Exchanges that inform action and keep actors responsible to feedback p. 13								
	ELEMENTS (Less Powerful) Components: program design, quality, range, accessibility, and reach p. 14 Resources: skills and knowledge, community living conditions, financial p. 20								

Just Strategies

Anticipate and Address
Unintended Equity
Consequences

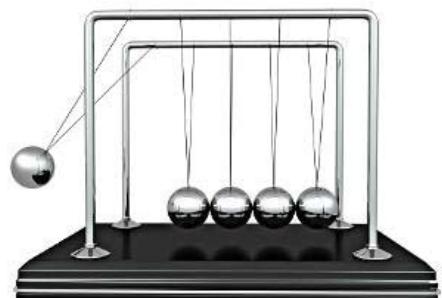


Example Unintended Consequence

Language in new shared consent/ROI form
discourages people engaged with DHS from
signing

“Simplified” color coded intake forms show who
has Medicaid, creates stigma and decreases
engagement

School lice policies disadvantage kids living in
poverty, leads to disproportionate absenteeism



Key Question:

How can you ensure your strategies don't unintentionally disadvantage groups experiencing inequities?

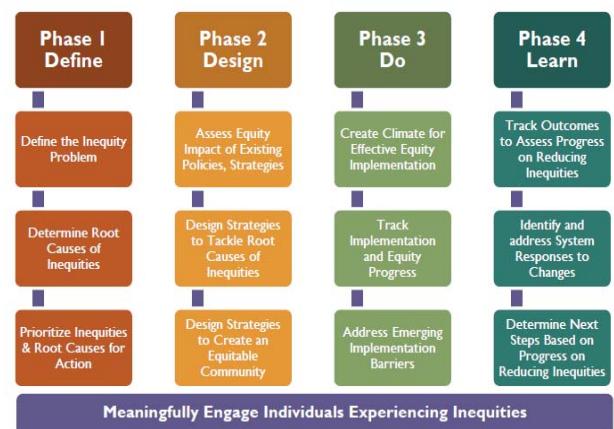


Equity Impact Assessment

ABLE Change Equity Impact Assessment Phase I: Define Questions



This assessment is designed to be used to assess equity in any phase of the change process. Below is an overview of the objectives assessed in each phase.



This section of the assessment includes the process and questions for the **DEFINE** phase of work. Additional sections for the DESIGN, DO, and LEARN phases outline specific objectives and questions to guide your work.

Strategic Planning Template

Use the following template to guide your strategic planning process. NCPC staff are available as thought partners to help you in all phases of this process.

Goal: List a prioritized population-level goal (e.g., more babies born healthy, more children reading at grade level, etc.). See Smart Start EC Profile, NC Early Childhood Action Plan , or County EC Agenda for examples.				
Targets:	List prioritized targets or indicators defining the specific population-level changes you want to bring about related to the goal statement above (e.g., target for goal of "more babies born healthy" could be "decreased infant mortality rate"; target for goal of "more children reading at grade level" could be "3rd grade End of Grade rates above proficiency"). See NC Early Childhood Action Plan for examples.			
Prioritized Disparities:	List disparities related to the targets you want to prioritize for change. See NC Early Childhood Action Plan , County Profiles, or other local data sources for disaggregated data and examples.			
Needed system changes to address targets and disparities				
Systems Change 1: <i>Describe what needs to change or be put in place within the community system to address the targets and prioritized disparities listed above. Remember, this is focused on changes to the systems (e.g., improved service accessibility, coordination, alignment of policies and practices with goals, data-driven decision-making, embedded capacity-building processes, etc.) vs. changes inside people (e.g., people's skills, knowledge, behaviors). Identify these systems changes from conversations with local stakeholders (including families experiencing prioritized disparities), research or literature reviews, and/or relevant examples starting on page 41 of NC Early Childhood Action Plan.</i> Measure: identify a measure to track your progress on shifting this system change (e.g., more (%) of local organizations are using data-driven decision-making processes to improve their efforts).				
Root Causes:	Describe the systemic root causes (e.g., related to mindsets, power dynamics, regulations, connections, resources, and service components) getting in the way of the systems change described above. List prioritized root causes in a numbered list.			
Proposed Strategy: <i>Describe a strategy to address root causes of Systems Change 1. See the following checklist and strategy resource or ideas.</i> Root Causes addressed by this Strategy: Review the list of root causes associated with this systems change. Write the numbers associated with the root causes this particular strategy is addressing Anticipated Outcomes of this Strategy: List place and people outcomes you hope will result from your strategies. Focus on outcomes that will lead to systems change 1 and relevant targets. See Defining Outcomes Guide for ideas.				
Activities	Responsible	Target Dates	Resources Needed	Outputs of Activities
Add activities (each on a separate row) to pursue the strategy described above. See this Developing Strategy Activities Guide for examples and ideas.	Add individuals or groups responsible for carrying out activity	Add targeted dates when activity will be accomplished	Describe resources needed to carry out the activity	Describe outputs to track implementation of this activity

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Develop strategy activities

Strategies

Activity

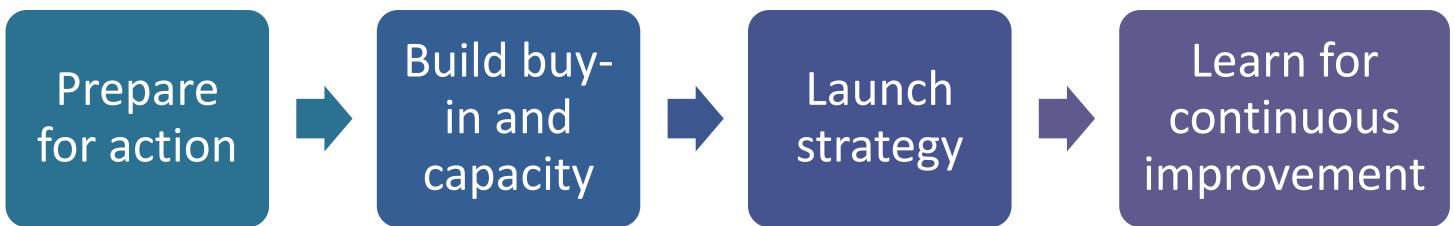
Activity

Activity

Activity

5

Develop strategy activities



Developing Strategy Activities Tool

http://systemexchange.org/application/files/4815/4960/3286/Developing_Activities_to_Carry_Out_Strategies_1-17-19.pdf

Developing Strategy Activities

Use the following categories to help develop activities to carry out your strategies.

Prepare for Action

- Gather any additional needed feedback on strategy ideas, particularly from targeted users
- Develop materials, processes, or protocols related to strategy ideas (e.g., draft shared curriculum to adopt, design training program, create social marketing plan)
- Identify critical individuals who are essential for carrying out strategies
- Gather information and input about potential implementation barriers

Build buy-in & Capacity

- Put communication processes in place to ensure relevant stakeholders learn about strategy and how it will be carried out
- Build stakeholder buy-in to support the strategy (e.g., develop talking points; contact relevant issues and help them see strategies and actions as necessary, beneficial, and feasible)
- Build needed skills and knowledge for people to carry out strategies

Launch Strategy

- Initiate activities to carry out the strategy. For example, put new policies, practices, or procedures in place; shift program location/times; create new settings to engage residents; etc.)

Learn for Continuous Improvement

- Develop and launch tracking process to ensure changes outlined in your strategies are being implemented effectively (e.g., if new policy, practices, or procedures are being put in place; if program features like location, staff, or hours are being adjusted; if new settings are being created, etc.)
- Check in with those implementing and being reached by strategy to see how implementation is progressing and what challenges are being faced (e.g., gather feedback from relevant perspectives like families, staff, and community members; conduct direct touches with families, fast five surveys, etc.)
- Make sense of data/feedback and what it tells you about implementation and the impact of your efforts (e.g., what extent are your efforts being implemented effectively? To what extent are they starting to make a difference?)

Strategic Planning Template

Use the following template to guide your strategic planning process. NCPC staff are available as thought partners to help you in all phases of this process.

Goal: List a prioritized population-level goal (e.g., more babies born healthy, more children reading at grade level, etc.). See [Smart Start EC Profile](#), [NC Early Childhood Action Plan](#), or [County EC Agenda](#) for examples.

Targets: List prioritized targets or indicators defining the specific population-level changes you want to bring about related to the goal statement above (e.g., target for goal of "more babies born healthy" could be "decreased infant mortality rate"; target for goal of "more children reading at grade level" could be "3rd grade End of Grade rates above proficiency"). See [NC Early Childhood Action Plan](#) for examples.

Prioritized Disparities: List disparities related to the targets you want to prioritize for change. See [NC Early Childhood Action Plan](#), County Profiles, or other local data sources for disaggregated data and examples.

Needed system changes to address targets and disparities

Systems Change 1:

Describe what needs to change or be put in place within the community system to address the targets and prioritized disparities listed above. Remember, this is focused on changes to the systems (e.g., improved service accessibility, coordination, alignment of policies and practices with goals, data-driven decision-making, embedded capacity-building processes, etc.) vs. changes inside people (e.g., people's skills, knowledge, behaviors). Identify these systems changes from conversations with local stakeholders (including families experiencing prioritized disparities), research or literature reviews, and/or relevant examples starting on page 41 of [NC Early Childhood Action Plan](#).

Measure: identify a measure to track your progress on shifting this system change (e.g., more (%) of local organizations are using data-driven decision-making processes to improve their efforts).

Root Causes: Describe the systemic root causes (e.g., related to mindsets, power dynamics, regulations, connections, resources, and service components) getting in the way of the systems change described above. List prioritized root cause in a numbered list.

Proposed Strategy:

Describe a strategy to address root causes of Systems Change 1. See the following [checklist](#) and [strategy resource](#) or ideas.

Root Causes addressed by this Strategy: Review the list of root causes associated with this systems change. Write the numbers associated with the root causes this particular strategy is addressing

Anticipated Outcomes of this Strategy: List place and people outcomes you hope will result from your strategies. Focus on outcomes that will lead to systems change 1 and relevant targets. See [Defining Outcomes Guide](#) for ideas.

Activities	Persons or Groups Responsible	Target Dates	Resources Needed	Outputs of Activities
Add activities (each on a separate row) to pursue the strategy described above. See this Developing Strategy Activities Guide for examples and ideas.	Add individuals or groups responsible for carrying out activity.	Add targeted dates when activity will be accomplished.	Describe resources needed to carry out the activity.	Describe outputs to track implementation of this activity.

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