

## Establish support for the teach-back initiative.

Sponsor/senior leadership support to voice the importance of your teach-back initiative to staff and to address barriers will accelerate success. Regular conversations with your identified sponsor or senior leader are critical to making progress. Brief monthly meetings should be a priority. A friendly relationship with their administrative assistant can enable monthly conversations. If these need to be canceled, reschedule to ensure continuity. Watch for multiple reschedules since lapses in attention from leadership may slow progress.

### Story

The project lead for a large teach-back initiative had learned that engaging senior leaders and keeping them informed of important initiatives can make a big difference. She worked with the CEO's executive assistant to schedule 15-minute monthly check-ins with agreement that meetings could be rescheduled, but seldom, if ever, cancelled. Twice during the year, when it wasn't possible to reschedule that month, the lead sent a brief email listing progress, and a question or request. She also invited the CEO to large gatherings of the health system's improvement community and offered him talking points to share with the group – like progress to celebrate, why the improvement is important, and encouragement to reach their goals.

At the end of a large initiative, an audience member told the CEO that his attendance and attention to the initiative felt like the “wind beneath our wings!”

## Help your sponsor engage others with the initiative.

Develop a communication plan and encourage your leadership or sponsor to speak with various audiences who need to know or do something related to your initiative. Team members can provide input and help develop this plan for review by your sponsor or senior leader. See [Communication Plan Template](#).

Target Audience	Type/Purpose of Communication	Messages Customized to values of groups or individuals	Method	Frequency	Who, By When
Senior leaders Partners Frontline staff Stakeholders Project team	Awareness Information Take action Gain consensus Review/comment	Progress Proposal draft Lessons learned Scripted responses to frequent or expected questions	Standing messages Newsletters Email Personal contact Unit meetings	Regular intervals Planned/ongoing As needed	Name of person Date:

## Tell stories to engage hearts and minds.

Stories of what is happening to real people are often more impactful than data. Capture and tell stories about what patients, families, clients, or stakeholders are experiencing that your initiative is set up to address. Celebrate and tell stories of small successes along the way and include messages from the persons you serve and those who serve them.

### Story

A senior manager was increasingly impressed with the impact of a new initiative. Everywhere she went, someone was telling her a story of something that just happened that reinforced belief that the initiative was working. She began asking people to retell the story to her while she captured it on video with her iPad. These stories were shared with senior leaders, peer managers, staff, clinicians, and even board members. This built more belief in the importance of the new process and engaged even more people to the work.