

Who's at Your Table? Power Sharing and Asset Framing:

This resource guide is designed to help assess your organization's readiness for partnership building. Using an asset framing lens, you will be able to apply the Power Sharing Awareness Tool and the Racial Equity Readiness Assessment to your work. Each section provides a brief description of the frameworks and tools you can use, along with an example of each.

The Innovation Hub Learning Community (IHLC) offers programmatic support to all practices in the MCH Innovations Database through one-on-one tailored coaching, didactic webinars, and peer sharing opportunities. This resource guide includes information created by the [Healthy Beginnings Learning and Practice Cohort](#).

Deficit Framing:

Understanding deficit framing is key to defining asset framing. Deficit framing is the act of defining people by their problems, often through the lens of outside “experts.” Additionally, deficit-framing does not give us a clear vision of the future, but instead focuses on problems and adverse experiences of the past. Unfortunately, deficit-framing is the dominant narrative framework in public health, and many, if not all of you, have probably seen language that mobilizes deficit-framing.

- **Example 1:** *Using harmful language to describe communities participating in your organization's program.*

Your organization just added a new 12-month program to support young parents returning to the workforce. Within this program, young parents who are already back in the workforce will be serving as paid subject matter experts on an advisory committee. Your team's role will be to ensure young parents are receiving support throughout their 12 months in the program. You will be incorporating the racial equity readiness tool and power awareness tool to assess how SMEs and employees are engaging with each other and young parents participating in the program.

Deficits Framing

Our program will address the workforce development and retention needs of young, **at-risk parents**, a population that experiences high rates of unemployment and **poverty**. Over the course of 12 months, our program will focus on finding and coordinating support for **vulnerable young parents** returning to the workforce after experiencing unemployment. We will partner with previously affected **vulnerable young parents** through an advisory committee to augment the program's goodness of fit.

Our program will create employment stability in an **instable population by building participant confidence**, connecting participants to basic professional necessities (e.g., professional clothing, public transportation access pass), and facilitating relationship-building with a mentor.

In this example, it's important to use Harm-Reducing Language to address why young parents are experiencing high rates of unemployment and address how the organization plans to work with young parents to reduce these rates.

- *Example 2: Now, let's reframe our language to be unarmful to young parents:*

Your organization just added a new 12-month program to support young parents returning to the workforce. Within this program, young parents who are already back in the workforce will be serving as paid subject matter experts on an advisory committee. Your team's role will be to ensure young parents are receiving support throughout their 12 months in the program. You will be incorporating the racial equity readiness tool and power awareness tool to assess how SMEs and employees are engaging with each other and young parents participating in the program.

Our program will address the workforce development and retention needs of young parents, experiencing **high rates of unemployment and poverty due to systemic neglect. This can be defined as neglect caused by educational institutions, healthcare systems, or systems rooted in racism and discrimination, which directly influence a young parent's ability to participate in the workforce.** Over the course of 12 months, our program will focus on finding and coordinating support for young parents returning to the workforce after experiencing unemployment. We will partner with young parents in the metro-Atlanta area, and young parents through an advisory committee to augment the program's goodness of fit.

Our program will create employment stability in an by co-designing resources (e.g. access to GED, college courses, entrepreneurial programs) with young parents, connecting participants to basic professional necessities (e.g., professional clothing, public transportation access pass), and facilitating relationship-building with a mentor. **We hope that this will create a workforce that is reflective of the needs of young parents, so employment stability can be achieved.**

REMEMBER!

- ✓ Review your program's descriptions and consider areas that you would reframe to include harm-reducing language.
- ✓ You can access a learning guide as well as a glossary on harm-reducing language terms on AMCHP's site here.

Asset Framing:

Asset-framing is the remedy to deficit-framing. **As opposed to deficit framing, asset-framing is defining and framing people first and foremost by their aspirations and contributions, not their problems.** It's not about ignoring the hardships communities face, but rather to focus on their strengths, gifts, talents, aspirations, contributions, and assets *before* and *during* sharing the hardships and challenges they face. By focusing on aspirations and contributions, you can set the stage for forward-focused solutions whose main goal are to support people in achieving their dreams and actualizing their value as opposed to “solutions” that focus on fixing people and their communities.

Moreover, asset-framing looks beyond the individual and to the systemic and structural. There is no asset-framing without acknowledging (1) the historical context and conditions that influence the health of communities today, (2) the political, cultural, and social conditions that impact the health of communities, and (3) without implicating systemic oppression, structural violence, and systematic discrimination as root causes of health disparities and poor health outcomes.

1. *Example 3: Using language from example 1 of the young parent workforce program, let's explore what it would look like to include an asset framing lens:*

Applying Asset Framing Language

Deficit Framing

We will partner with previously **affected vulnerable young parents** through an advisory committee to augment the program's goodness of fit.

Asset Framing

We will **celebrate and use their [young parents] subject matter expertise** to ensure the program is relevant, effective, and desirable to young parents.

Now it's your turn! Practice asset framing using a program description from your organization, or even exploring sections from previous updates/ reports. Use the Harm Reducing Language Glossary as guidance.

Original:

Reframe:

Workforce Development Racial Equity Readiness Assessment:

The Workforce Development Racial Equity Readiness Assessment is designed as a guide for workforce development organizations and practitioners to evaluate their programs, operations, and culture in order to identify strength areas and growth opportunities. This tool provides you with the information you need to advance racial equity more systematically, strategically, and successfully. Using this tool will help you normalize the practice of explicitly examining how your organization is addressing racism and advancing racial equity. *Figure 1: You can complete the assessment using the following steps:*

This tool is created by Race Forward, a national racial justice organization that advances racial equity and inclusive democracy. For more information on this assessment and templates to apply to your organization visit their webpage [here](#).

Create an equity team:

- 1 Should include variety of perspectives involved and be reflective of the community and workforce serve

Review the entire tool before adding pieces

Complete the responses in stages:

- 1 On a scale of 1-4, how is this being addressed?
- 2 Consider which parts will require more research
- 3 Conduct necessary analysis and workplan

Gather and Analyze key findings:

- 1 Make recommendations for action/change
- 2 Prioritize what will work on
- 3 Turn your recommendations into clear goals & Evaluate progress

Power Awareness Tool

The Power Awareness Tool was created by Partos Shift-the-Power Lab, an organization based in Amsterdam to analyze relationships between NGOs and local organizations. This tool can be used to

- Address *power imbalances*.
- Understand *how power operates*.
- *Analyze your power in partnerships* for development.
- *Assess power partners* have in decision making.

After you have identified all partners that will be participating in the decision-making process, the **first step** is to identify important decision-making topics. Workshops are great ways to design this partnership meeting! Team members representing different partners may have diverging views on what's important, so make sure you include every topic area, even if only 1 partner considers it to be important.

The **second step** is to score the level of participation of each partner in decision making. For each of these topics the team scores the relative power of each partner, using the ladder of participation in decision-making (*see image below*). If the topic is still under development, then you would score based on level of participation partner should have once reached. In addition, remember that each score is relative, scoring a 4 does not mean that the partner possesses the most power. Consider what the role of the partner is as it relates to the topic area of decision making.

Diagram 1. Ladder of participation in decision-making



The **final step** is to reflect on the findings. You can create guiding questions to help reflect, such as:

1. Are these all the decision-making topics that are relevant to your partnership, or are there more topics that need to be included in the analysis?
2. Should the level of participation of partners change? Why?
3. If more influence of a partner on a particular topic is deemed desirable, would the partner actually have the ability to be more influential?
4. If the partner is not able to have more influence, what measures are needed to change this?

Remember to...

- ✓ Establish the right atmosphere, pre-conditions, and expectations.
- ✓ Encourage transparency: ensure participants feel comfortable talking without fearing critical feedback or negative consequences.
- ✓ Remind participants the intentions for organizing a power awareness session are genuine and that the aim is to achieve more balanced power relations in the partnership.
- ✓ Repeat the process at different stages of partnership engagement.

You can explore more about the Power Awareness Tool at <https://www.partos.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Power-Awareness-Tool.pdf>.

NOTE: This is an adaptation of the Power Sharing Learning Bundle created by the Healthy Beginnings Learning and Practice Cohort at AMCHP. For more information about this project and the creations of the cohort, please visit the [Healthy Beginnings page](#).

Let's Explore an Application of the Power Awareness Tool!

Your organization just added a new 12-month program to support young parents returning to the workforce. Within this program, young parents who are already back in the workforce will be serving as paid subject matter experts (SMEs) on an advisory committee. Your team's role will be to ensure young parents are receiving support throughout their 12 months in the program. You will be incorporating the power awareness tool to assess how SMEs and employees are engaging with each other on decision-making topics for the program.

Power analysis framework

Key decision-making topics

Step 1: Insert key decision-making topics that are relevant for your partnership here..

Level of participation

- 4 Partner decides
- 3 Partner co-decides
- 2 Partner is consulted before a decision is made
- 1 Partner is informed about decision-making
- 0 Partner is not involved in decision-making

Step 2: In those columns score the level of participation for each partner

	Partner A: <i>Program Manager</i>	Partner B: <i>Young parent back in workforce for 1 year</i>	Partner C: <i>Young parent back in workforce for 3 months</i>	Partner D: <i>Young parent back in workforce for 5 years</i>
Scoping and Building ➤ <i>Decisions about the eligibility requirements to be included in the program</i>	3	3	3	3
Managing and Maintaining ➤ <i>Decisions concerning changes in the day-to-day implementation of programmatic activities</i>	3	2	2	2
Revisiting and Revising ➤ <i>Decision about what measurements will be used to evaluate program's success</i>	4	3	3	3
Sustaining Outcomes ➤ <i>Decision about what donors to include in fundraiser to continue program</i>	4	3	2	3
TOTAL	14	11	10	11

In your reflection, you noticed that Partner C should have more decision-making power when it comes to sustaining outcomes and decided to increase the level of participation to 3 (co-decides). In addition, your organization recognized that while Partner A will be a decider in decisions related to measurements on the evaluation plan, all partners should still know what measurements will be included before completing the evaluation. Your organization scored a 4 mainly because Partner A will be leading the evaluation.

Now it's your turn!

Apply the Power Awareness Tool to any current partnerships you have:

Power analysis framework

Key decision-making topics

Step 1: Insert key decision-making topics that are relevant for your partnership here..

Level of participation

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- 1 Partner is informed about decision-making
- 0 Partner is not involved in decision-making

Step 2: In those columns score the level of participation for each partner

	Partner A:	Partner B:	Partner C:
Scoping and Building:			
Managing and Maintaining:			
Revisiting and Revising:			
Sustaining Outcomes:			
TOTAL			

You can also download the excel version of the Power Awareness Tool [here](#).