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Key Takeaways from “Marketing Respite Programs for Long-Term Impact” 2025-26 Keys to Sustainability Webinar #7

Family Education & Caregiver Understanding

- Respite is framed as meaningful, social, and essential.
- Families are reassured that their loved one will be: safe, cared for, engaged in community, on a predictable schedule, stimulated socially and cognitively.
- Invitational approach: come visit, meet staff, talk with other families, build comfort and familiarity.

Cultural Responsiveness & Equity

- Shift away from traditional “marketing” and aim for a relationship strategy focus.
- Use terms like “caregiver support” or “family support” instead of “respite” if terminology is unfamiliar to audience or stigmatizing.
- Utilize linguistically appropriate language.
- Adapt: If messaging or materials aren’t working, change them, even if it’s uncomfortable.

Outreach, Marketing, and Building Trust

- Trust grows naturally when familiar, well-known team members engage with the community.
- Start with trusted spaces - going to events, meeting people where they are, creates more authentic conversations and allows for low barrier entry points.
- Word of mouth remains a strong driver of engagement.
- Strategic partnerships to prioritize: County senior services, Area Agencies on Aging
- Outreach posture matters: focus on being helpful and non-intimidating rather than selling services.

Partnerships & Referral Networks

- Churches: Serve as trusted hubs, often provide physical space and built-in community.
- High-impact referral partners: Alzheimer’s Association local chapters, senior advocacy organizations, memory clinics or healthcare providers, schools and universities, local city, and county agencies.
- Messaging to partners: use caregiver testimonials, share outcomes and data, include photos and visuals, tailor presentations.
- Relationship-building strategies: co-host events or invite healthcare providers as guest speakers.

Funding Sustainability & Revenue Strategy

- Shift from promoting a single program to promoting the overall mission.
- Position the organization as a trusted, long-term community resource.
- Funding sources beyond grants: fundraising, in-kind contributions, sponsorships tied to specific, tangible needs, private donors (congregations, former participant families, community members with personal connections), or anniversary dinners with QR-code-based giving.
- Organizational mindset: Be bold, ask for money, invest in relationship maintenance year-round.