Facilitating Researcher-Policymaker Relationships to Improve Government Function

Brittany Gay, PhD*, Michael Donovan, MA*, Jessica Pugel, MA, Elizabeth C. Long, PhD, J. Taylor Scott, PhD, Rachel Storace, & D. Max Crowley, PhD

Research-to-Policy Collaboration, Pennsylvania State University

PennState
CHILD MALTREATMENT SOLUTIONS NETWORK
Social Science Research Institute
Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences
EDNA BENNETT PIERCE PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER

NSF

William T. Grant FOUNDATION

*presenters

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- What does the use of research have to do with making government more effective?
- Why is it so hard to get research into policy?
- What can we do about this gap?
- Are you sure that works?
- Does it work at different levels of government and at different times?
- What does this mean for me?

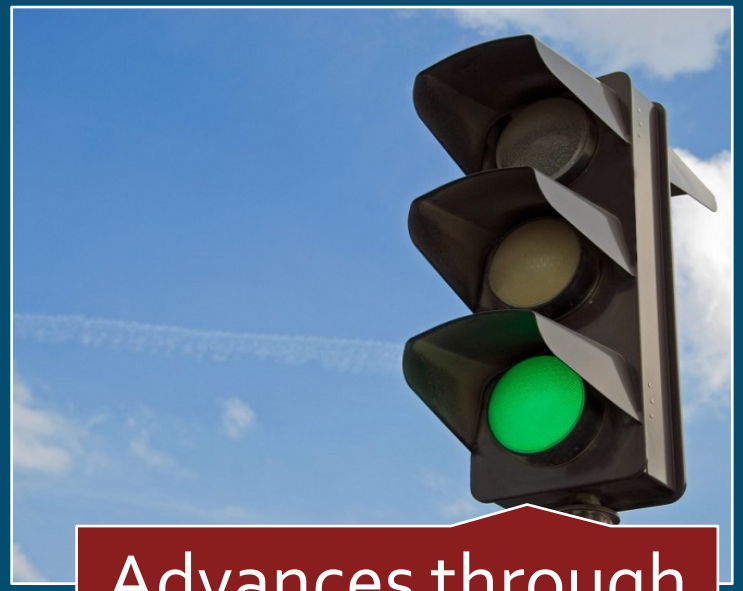
RESEARCH IMPROVES GOVERNMENT FUNCTION

Elevates the conversation

Bogenschneider & Corbett, 2021

RESEARCH IMPROVES GOVERNMENT FUNCTION

Elevates the conversation

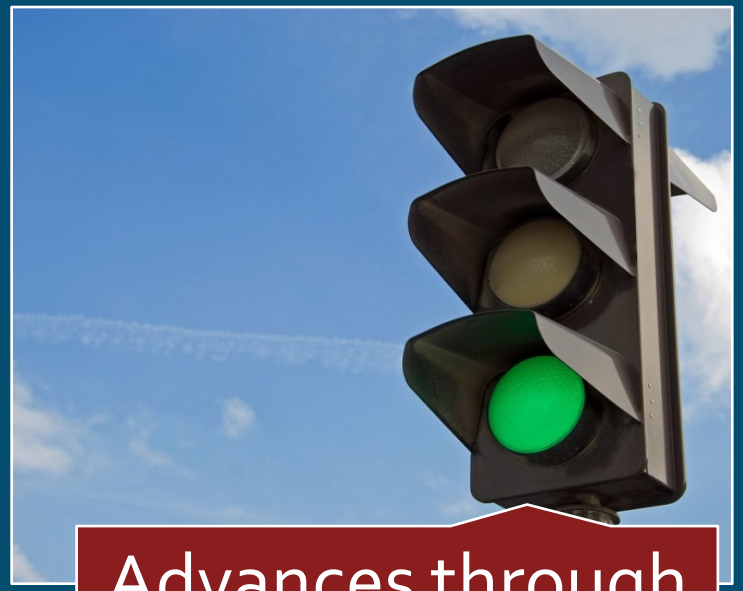


Advances through committee

Scott et al., 2019

RESEARCH IMPROVES GOVERNMENT FUNCTION

Elevates the conversation



Advances through committee

Improves relationships

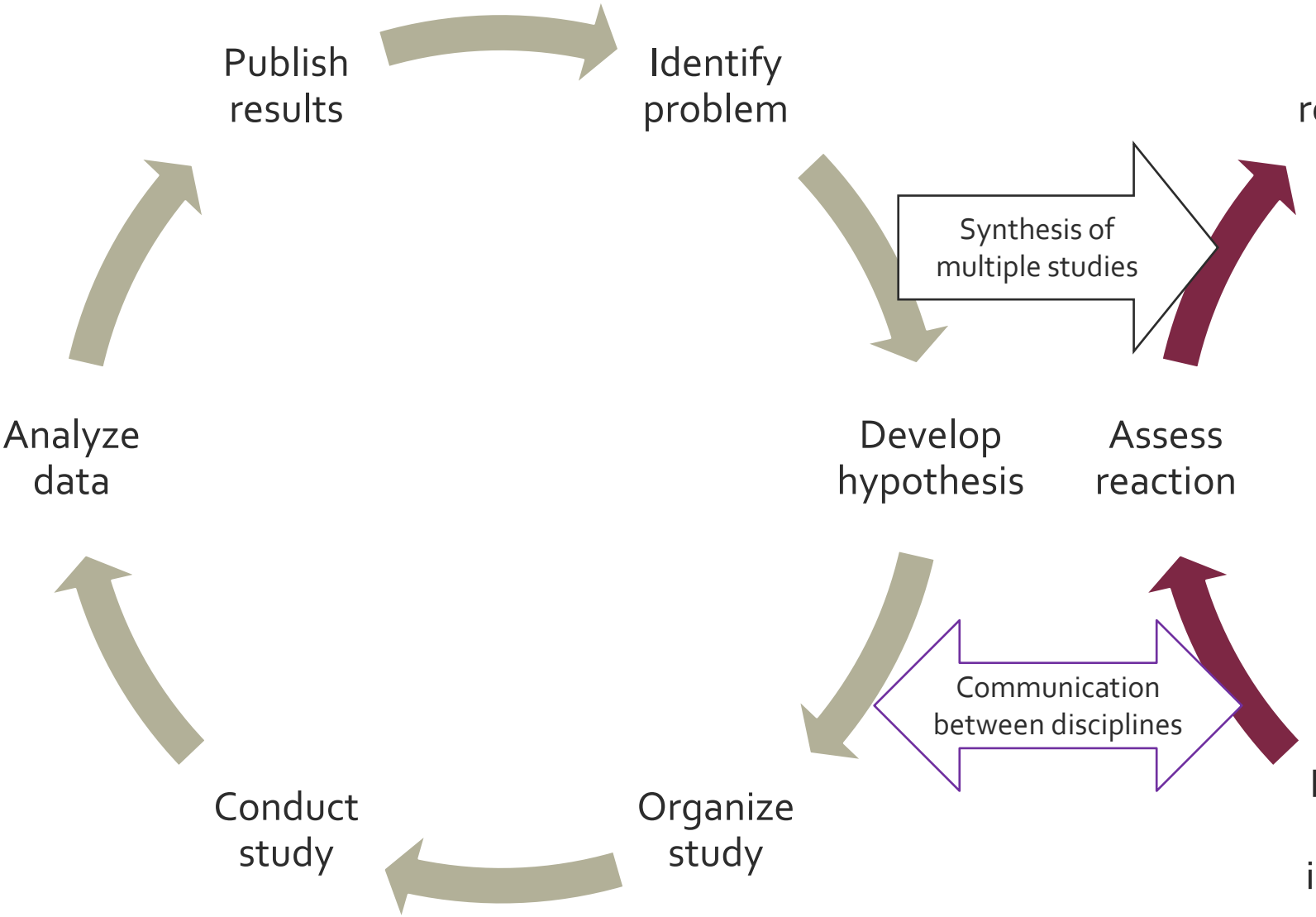
Bogenschneider, Day, & Parrott, 2019

BARRIERS INHIBIT RESEARCH USE

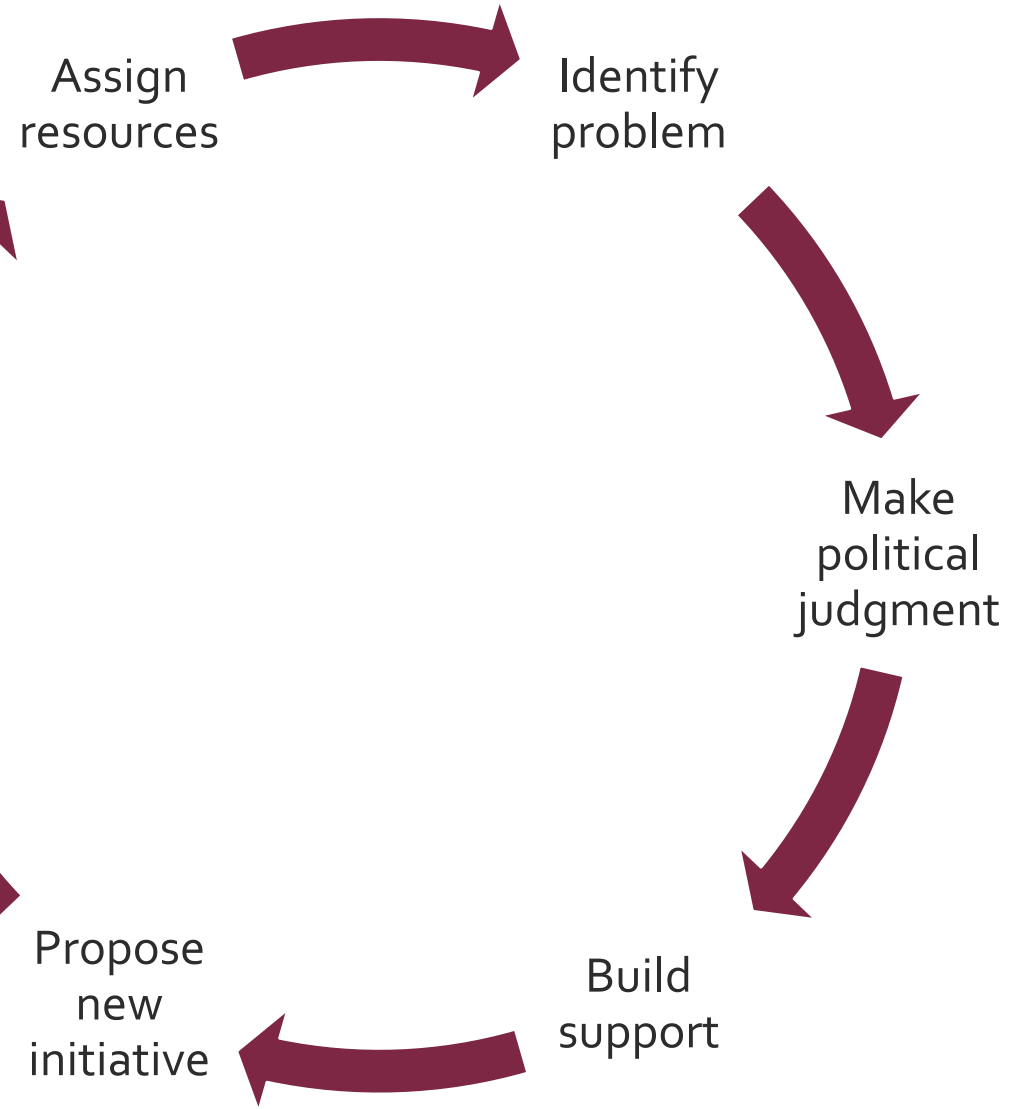
Stereotypes and mistrust

Choi et al., 2005; Oliver et al., 2014

Scientific Decision Making



Political Decision Making



BARRIERS INHIBIT RESEARCH USE

Stereotypes and mistrust

Timeliness and relevance

Choi et al., 2005; Oliver et al., 2014

BARRIERS INHIBIT RESEARCH USE

Stereotypes and mistrust

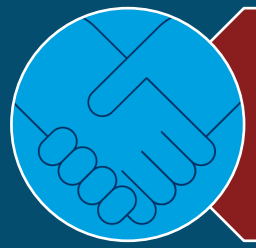
Timeliness and relevance

Access

Choi et al., 2005; Oliver et al., 2014

ADDRESS BARRIERS TO FACILITATE USE

Researcher-Policymaker Interactions:

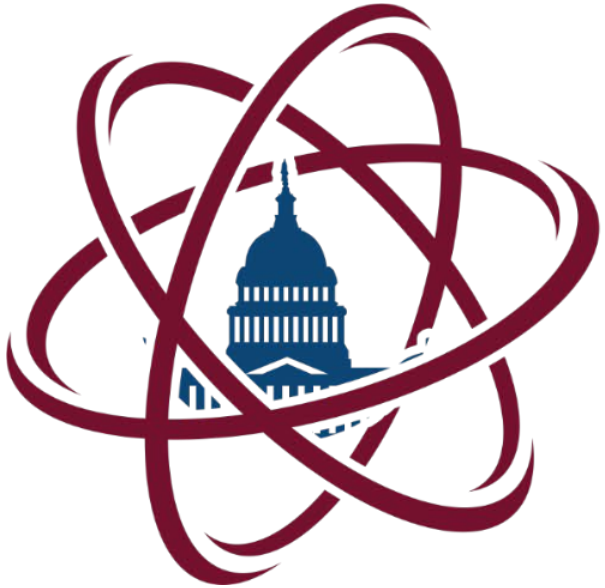


Build trust and understand norms

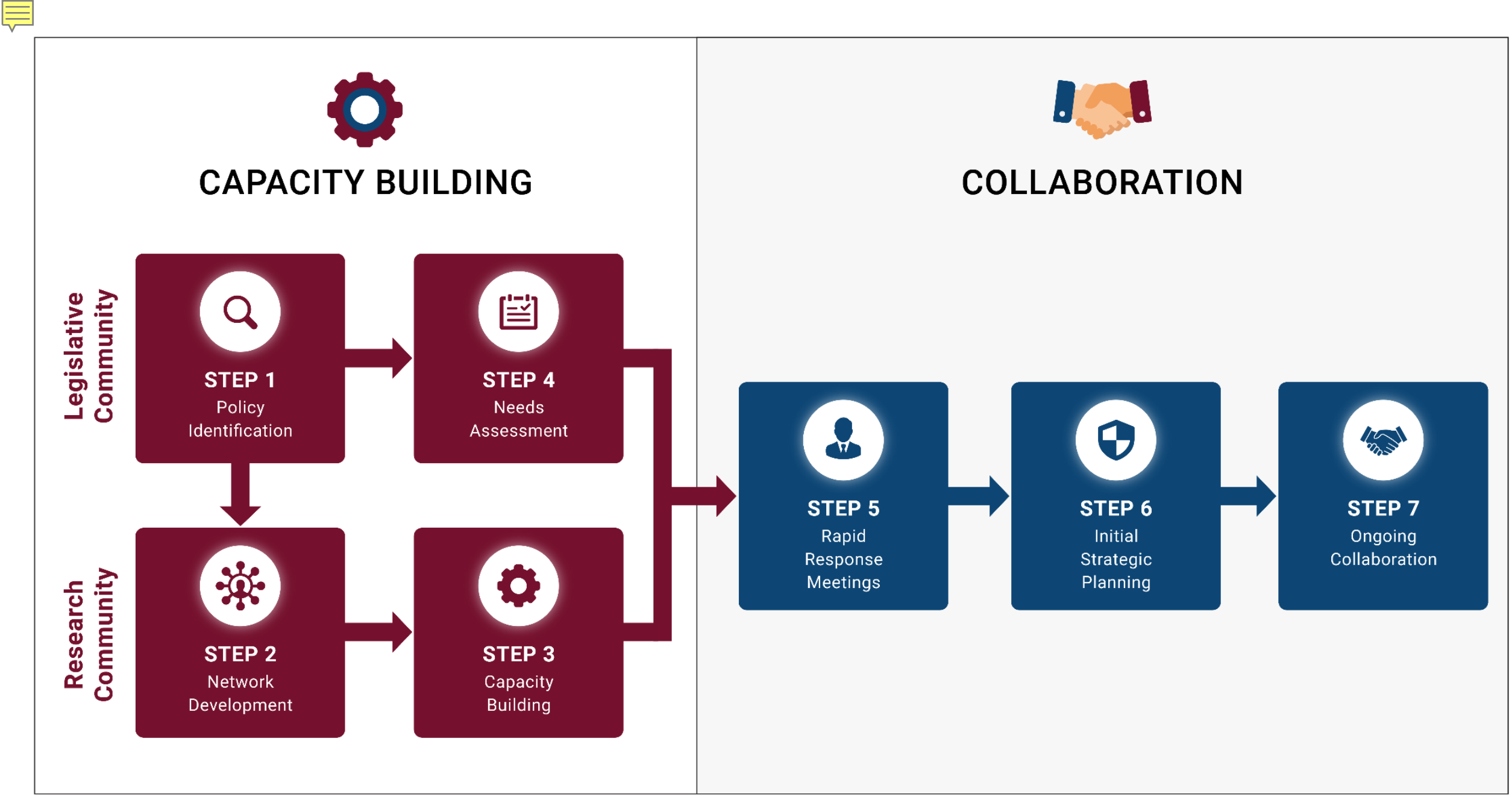
Timely and relevant research

Accessible research

Choi et al., 2005; Oliver et al., 2014; Boaz et al., 2019; Tseng, 2012



Research-to-Policy Collaboration

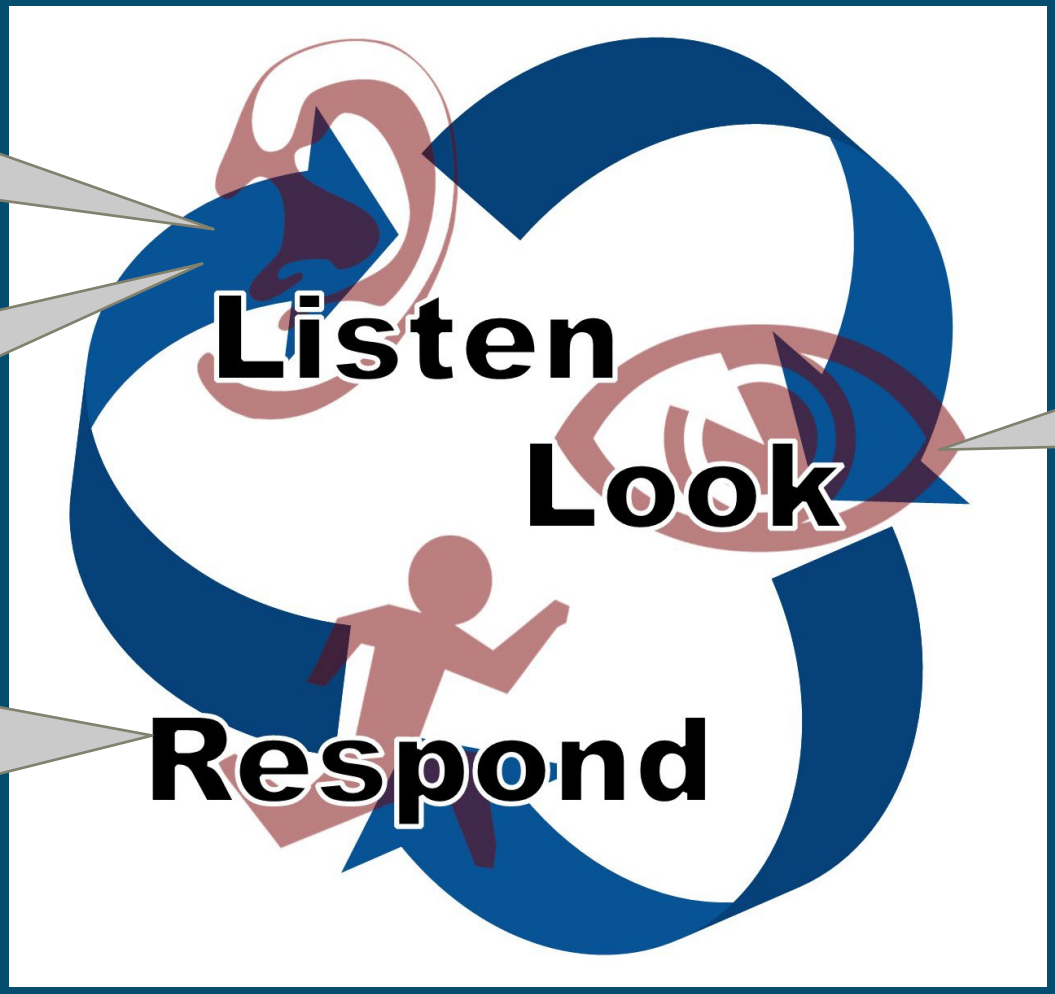

CAPACITY BUILDING
COLLABORATION
Legislative Community
Research Community
STEP 1
Policy Identification
STEP 2
Network Development
STEP 3
Capacity Building
STEP 4
Needs Assessment
STEP 5
Rapid Response Meetings
STEP 6
Initial Strategic Planning
STEP 7
Ongoing Collaboration

OUR THEORY-DRIVEN APPROACH

Repeat: Next Steps?

To Congressional Needs and Interests

By Organizing Input from our Network and Engaging Researchers



For Researchers with Related Experiences

DOES IT WORK?

Randomized Controlled Trial

Congressional offices n = 96 (50% intervention)

Researchers n = 226 (75% intervention)

RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIVENESS WORKS

- 23% more RPC-supported offices used research evidence in bills
- Staffers who collaborated with the RPC valued conceptual research 7% more than control staffers
- Researchers in the RPC Network:
  - Maintained policy engagement
  - Increased their knowledge
  - Improved their research

Crowley et al., 2021

EFFECTIVENESS ACROSS CONTEXTS AND TIME

U.S. Congress

Texas

Online

MESSAGING DATA UNDERSCORES RELATIONSHIPS

Hello Michael,

In light of efforts across the country to safely re-open, increasing participation in and cooperation with contact tracing is crucial. I'd like to share this piece with you from the Societal Experts Action Network (SEAN) that highlights lessons from survey research that may be applied to contact tracing: https://www.nap.edu/read/25916/chapter/1

If you have any questions or comments, please let me know and I'll be happy to discuss.

Best,
Monica N. Feit, PhD, MPH
Principal Investigator, Societal Experts Action Network
Deputy Executive Director
Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education
The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Data on email open and click rates will be used for research and quality improvement. If you have questions about this research, you may contact the Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775, ORProtections@psu.edu, or Elizabeth Long at ecl5218@psu.edu. If you would like to change your communication preferences, please contact Morgan Thomas at Morgan Thomas@research2policy.org

MESSAGING DATA UNDERSCORES RELATIONSHIPS

Trial 1 subject lines:

A fact sheet on managing COVID-19 and community health

Join colleagues in managing COVID-19 and community health

Lead the way in managing COVID-19 and community health

Trial 2 subject lines:

Important policy considerations for contact tracing

Surprising policy considerations for contact tracing

Shocking policy considerations for contact tracing

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER: REVISITED

- **What does the use of research have to do with making government more effective?**
  - Research neutralizes topics and helps move the conversation to solutions
- **Why is it so hard to get research into policy?**
  - Research isn't perfect, and there are issues in communication between researchers and policymakers
- **What can we do about this gap?**
  - Break down the stereotypes and build trusting relationships between research and policy staff

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER: REVISITED

- **Are you sure that works?**
  - Yes! We have shown using the gold standard method that our model increases the use of research evidence.
- **Do those methods work at different levels of government and at different times?**
  - Yes! This has worked at the state level in Texas before COVID, and at the federal level before and during COVID.
- **What does this mean for me?**
  - By collaborating with researchers, you can improve your access to credible, neutral sources of information, making for a more effective government.

Research-to-Policy Collaboration

THANK YOU

Contact:
Brittany_Gay@research2policy.org

Michael.Donovan@psu.edu