

Unlocking Innovation & Collaboration: The Power of Engaging Critical Perspectives

SPDG Network

March 5, 2026



Purpose

- Understand how to use the 'Engaging Critical Perspectives' Tool to foster collaboration and promote collective impact
- Generate innovative strategies for authentically engaging diverse perspectives
- Apply concepts for 'Engaging Critical Perspectives' by developing one action item to use within the center setting



Image Credit: Presentation Pro





- Welcome & Introduction
- Purpose & Agenda
- Connector
- The Why?
- The How?
- Practice & Discussion
- Next Steps: Action Items
- Wrap Up & Closing



Connector

- You are tasked with creating a dinner menu for a special occasion.
- What items are on the menu?
- What process do you use to select the menu items?



Image Credit: Adobe Stock



Defining Critical Perspectives

The individuals or groups who have a stake in the implementation process and whose thoughts, views, and ideas must be considered to make the process effective and equitable.

(Farmer & Perkins, 2022)



Defining Engagement

The extent to which you are involving the critical perspectives in the implementation process. Levels of involvement range from informing to co-creation and may look different among individual and groups.

(Farmer & Perkins, 2022)





Implementation Matters

Equitable Implementation occurs when strong equity components (including explicit attention to the culture, history, values, assets, and needs of the community) are integrated into the principles and tools of implementation science to facilitate quality implementation of effective programs for a specific community or group of communities (Woo, DuMont, & Metz, 2019).



Implementation Matters

Students, families and communities can't benefit from supports they do not receive.



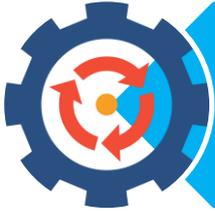
Image Credit: Adobe Stock



Why Engage Critical Perspectives?



To improve responsiveness to complex and ever-changing needs in education and other agencies serving children and families



To cultivate a culture of deep learning and ongoing improvement



To effectively leverage the expertise of various perspectives both within and without an agency and navigate challenging conversations





The How?

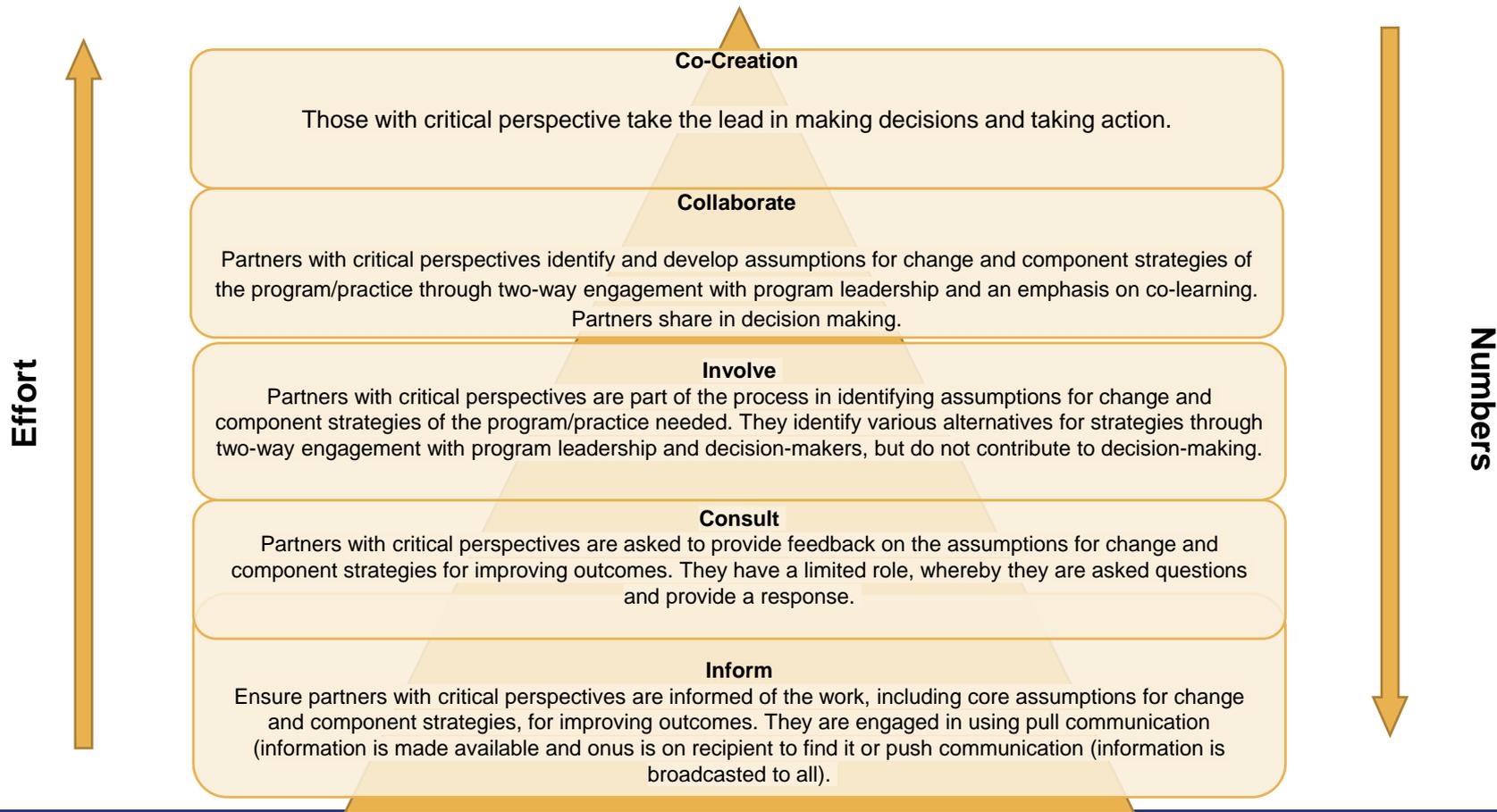


Partner Activity

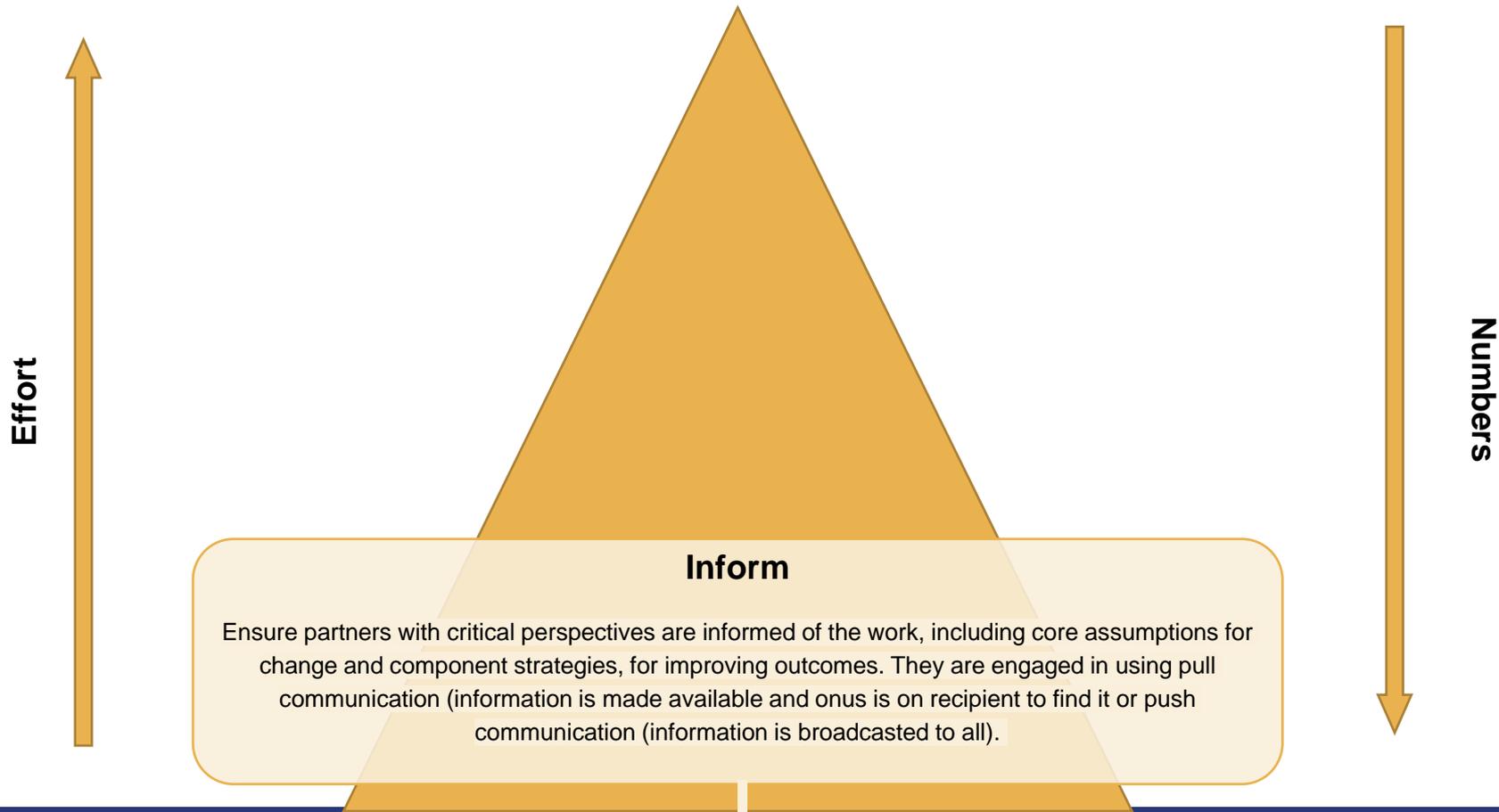
- What is one program or practice you are currently implementing at your center or agency?
- What engagement strategies have you found most effective for incorporating multiple perspectives and voices?
- What engagement strategies have you found least effective? Why?
- Share your response with a partner in the room.



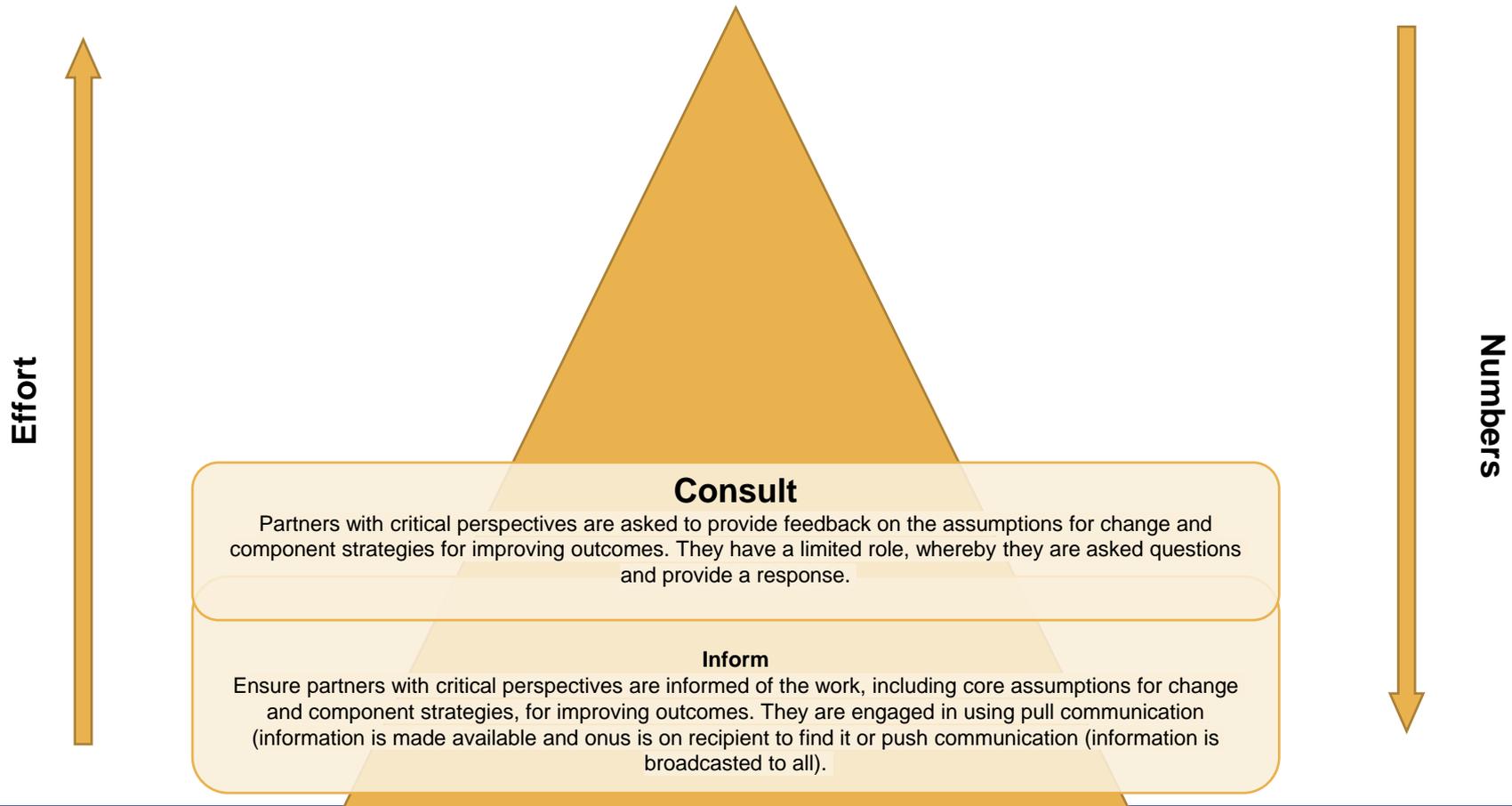
Levels of Engagement



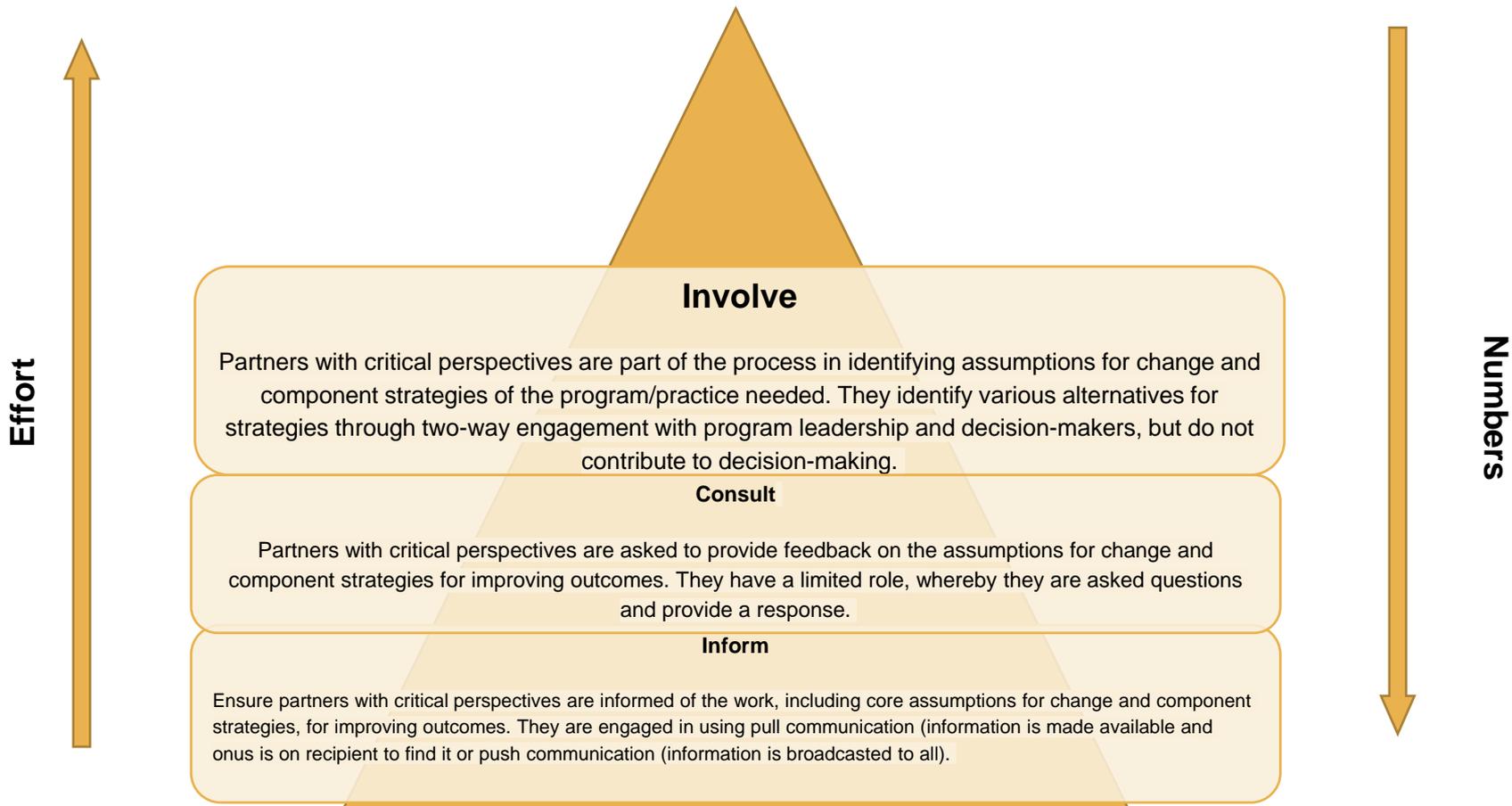
Levels of Engagement



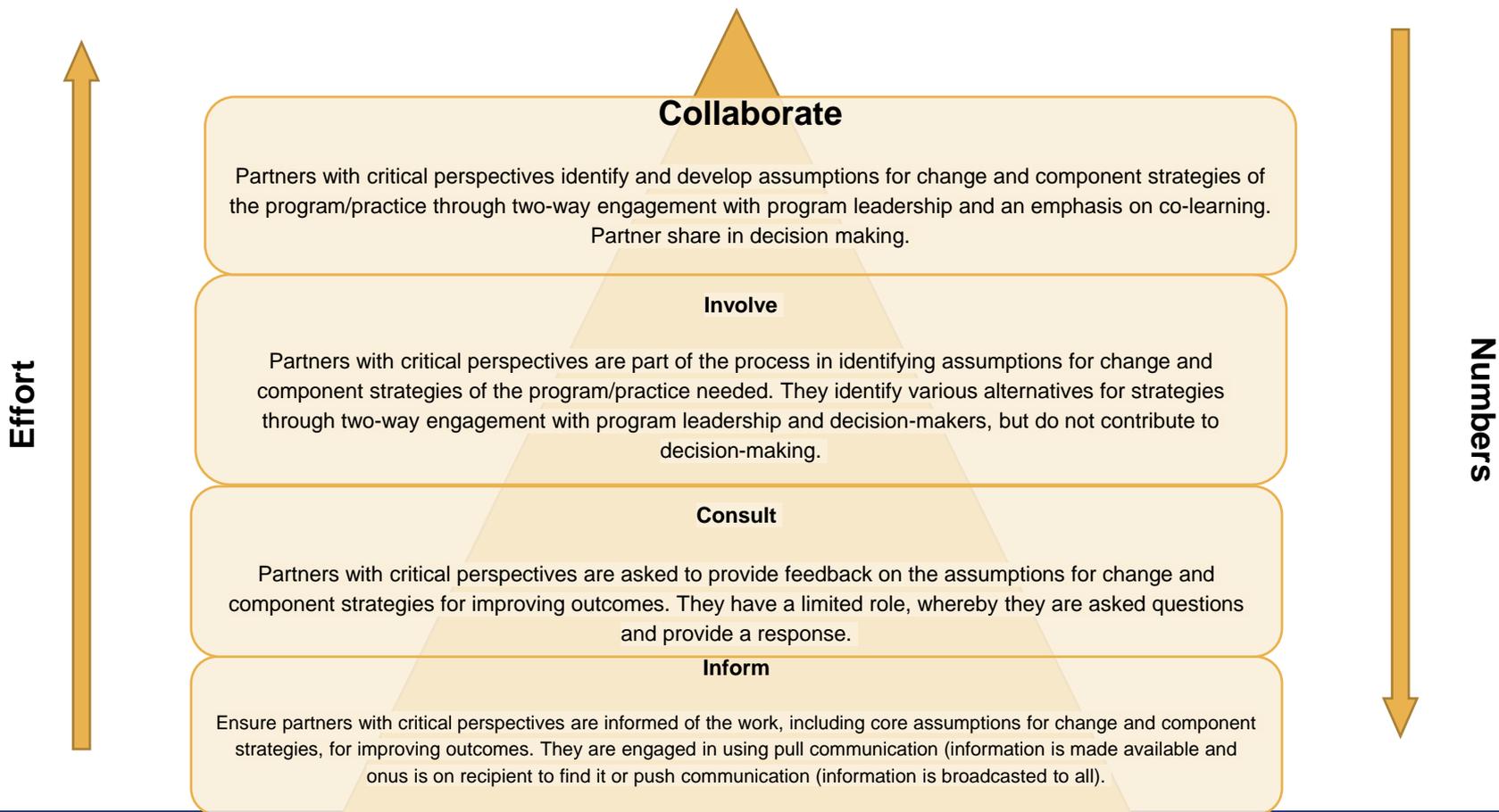
Levels of Engagement



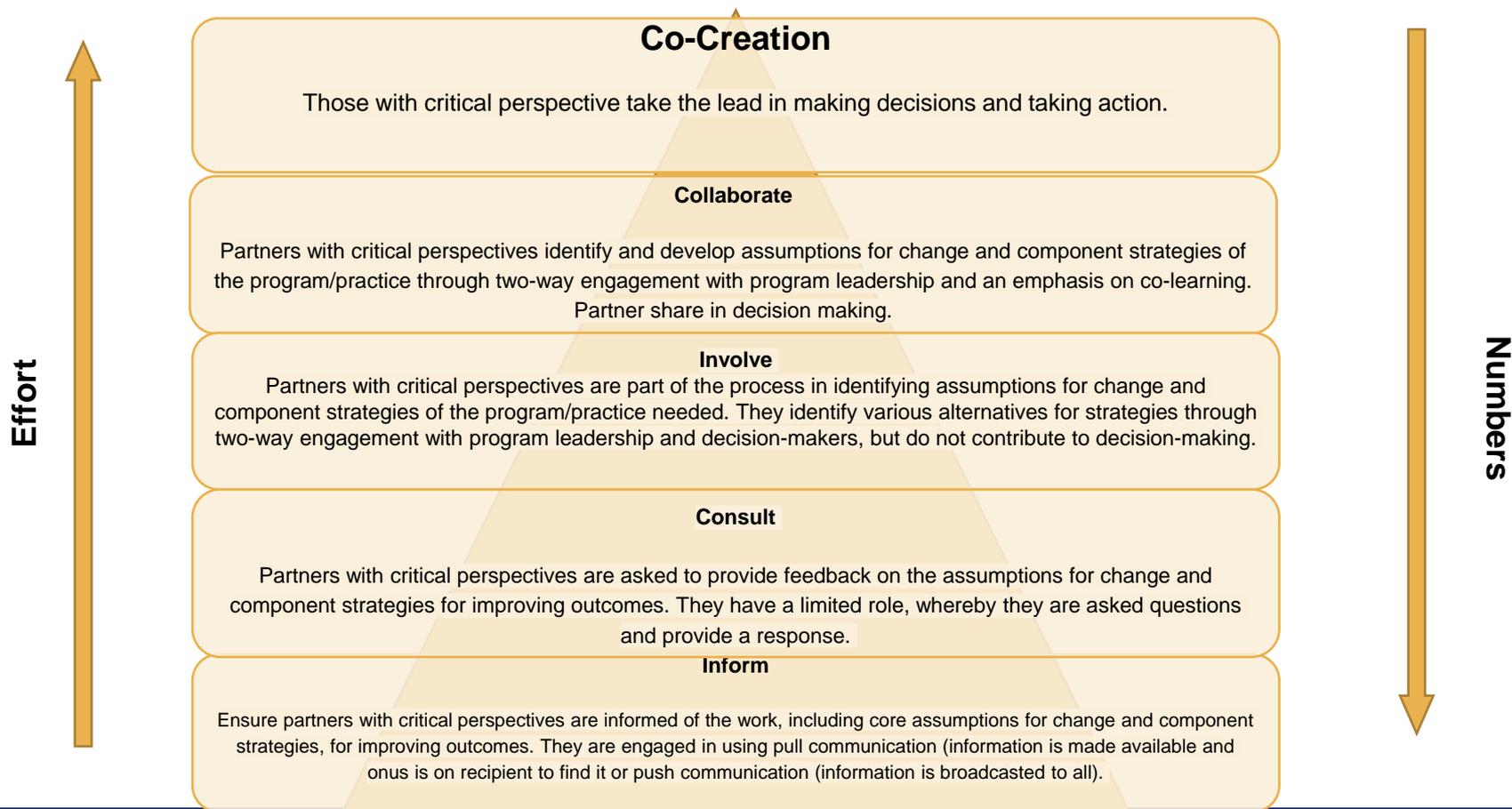
Levels of Engagement



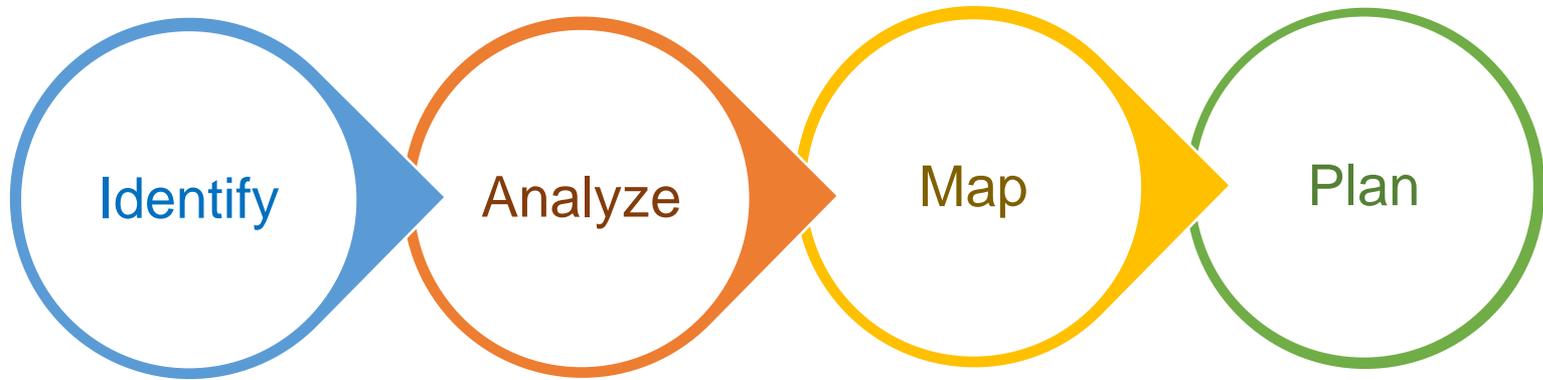
Levels of Engagement



Levels of Engagement



How: Identifying and Engaging Critical Perspectives



Based on the work of NIRN and CES: <https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation>



Engaging Critical Perspectives



[Guidance for Engaging Critical Perspectives](#)
[Plan for Engaging Critical Perspectives Template](#)





Practice & Discussion



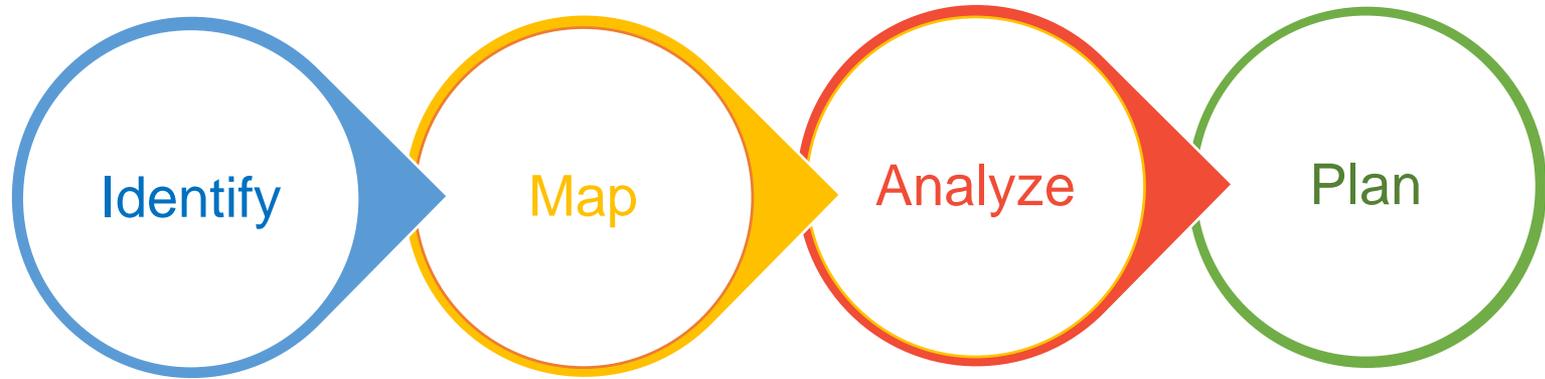
Practice & Discussion

Consider an innovation that you are currently implementing...

- Have you considered these levels of engagement?
 - If not, where could they have been considered?
- How would you explain this tool in your own words?
 - Could you clarify time vs. effort?



How: Stakeholder Engagement Process



Based on the work of NIRN and CES: <https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation>

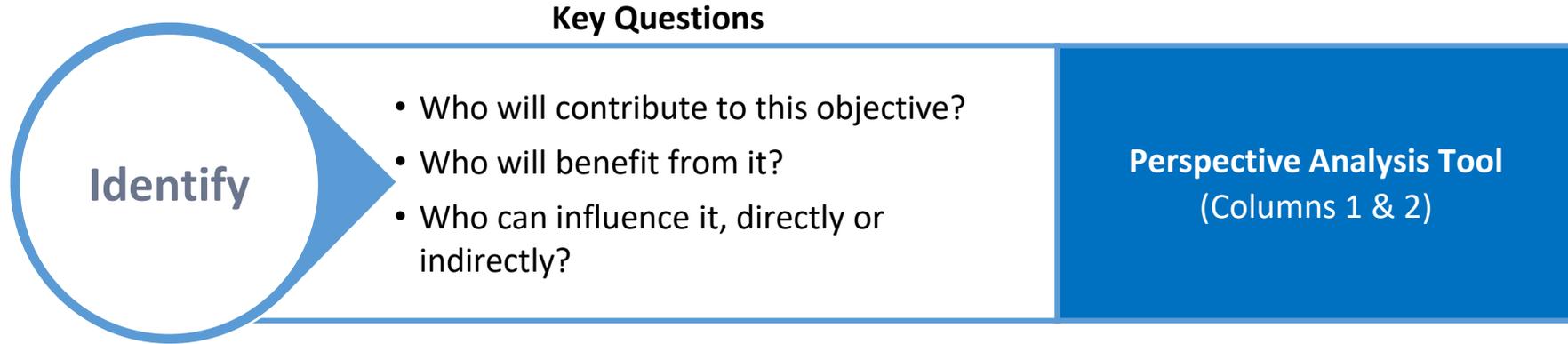


Explicitly Plan for Engaging Critical Perspectives

Plan for Engaging Critical Perspectives Template						
Identified need for change:						
Why is engagement from additional partners important to your initiative:						
Identify (Perspective)	Identify (Who)	Map Level of Engagement	Potential Barriers to Engagement	Facilitators of Engagement	Plan for collaboration (include how and by when)	Responsibility



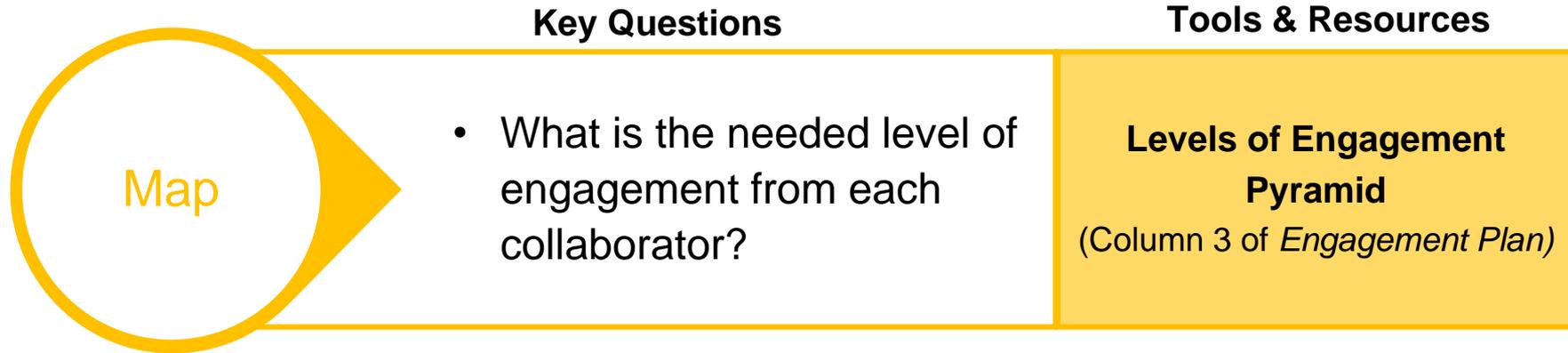
Step One: *Identify*



Based on the work of NIRN and CES: <https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation>



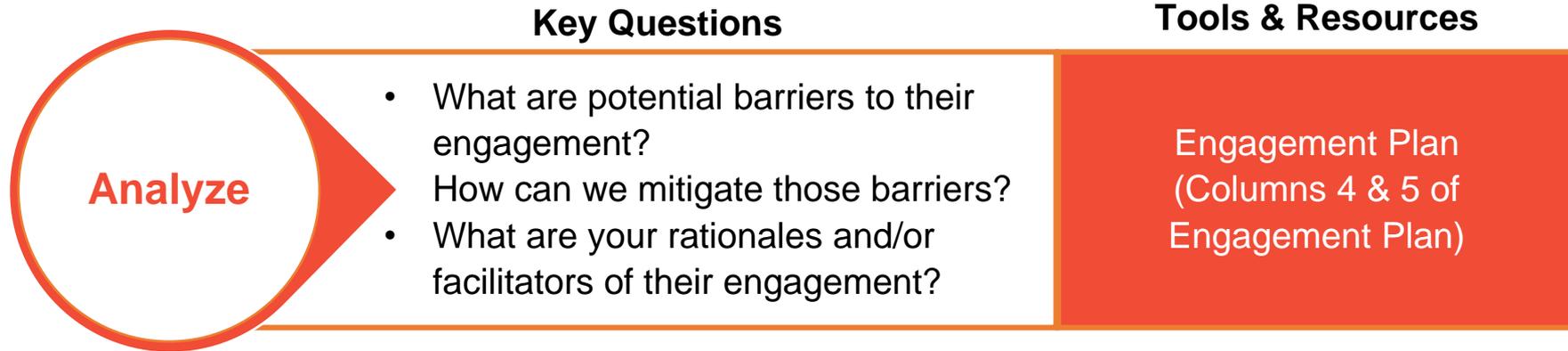
Step Two: *Map*



Based on the work of NIRN and CES: <https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation>



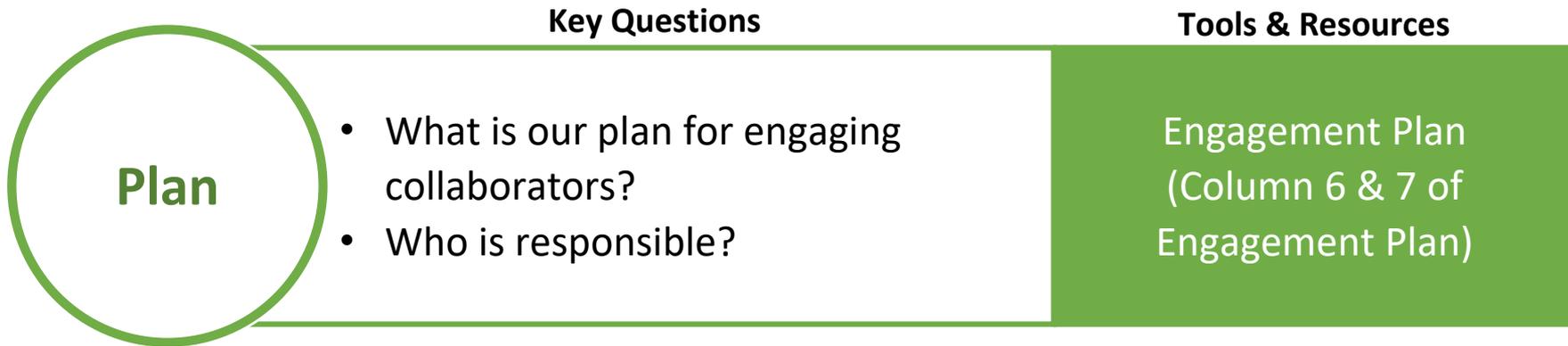
Step Three: *Analyze*



Based on the work of NIRN and CES: <https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation>



Step Four: *Plan for Engagement*



Based on the work of NIRN and CES: <https://www.effectiveservices.org/resources/ces-guide-to-implementation>



Step Four: Plan for Engagement

Plan for Engaging Critical Perspectives Template

Identified need for change:

Why is engagement from additional partners important to your initiative:

Identify (Perspective)	Identify (Who)	Map Level of Engagement	Potential Barriers to Engagement	Facilitators of Engagement	Plan for collaboration (include how and by when)	Responsibility



Reflection

Let's reflect upon how you have engaged with critical perspectives in previous work.

Was there anything you should have considered that would have empowered higher levels of engagement?





Next Steps



Action Item

After our practice and discussion of the Engaging Critical Perspectives Tool, can you identify one action step you plan to take back to your setting?



Resources:

[Guidance for Engaging Critical Perspectives](#)

[Plan for Engaging Critical Perspectives Template](#)



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