



Visible engagement is a signal, not the whole story

When visible engagement changes, pause before assuming people are less interested. The number you can see may not tell you what people are experiencing.

These are possibilities to explore, not conclusions about your organization.

Awareness

They may not know the opportunity exists, or may not see how it applies to them.

Access

They may want to engage but face barriers related to work, caregiving, transportation, technology, language, timing, cost, location, eligibility, or another constraint.

Privacy

They may have questions about what information is collected, how it is used, or who can access it.

Safety

They may worry that visiting a location, completing an intake form, or sharing personal information could create risk for themselves or someone in their family. In communities experiencing heightened immigration enforcement, accessing services people are otherwise eligible for may no longer feel safe.

Previous Experience

A previous experience with the organization may make them less likely to return.

Changing Needs

Community needs may have changed while the program or service stayed the same.

Lower visible engagement does not automatically mean lower need, lower interest, or lower trust in your mission.





Start with what you actually know

Before interpreting the change, separate evidence from assumption. Choose one area where your organization is noticing a shift, then work through both columns as a team.

What do we know?

What can you support with actual information?

Illustrative examples

Program attendance declined 18% compared with last year.

Fewer families are completing intake.

Volunteer sign-ups are down while requests for services are up.

What are we assuming?

What explanations have we started treating as facts without enough evidence?

Illustrative examples

People are less interested.

We need to promote the program more.

The program is happening at the wrong time.

What is one thing we need to understand before deciding what to change?

An assumption is not necessarily wrong. It simply needs to be tested.



Need support making sense of what you're seeing?

Tiny Ripples can work alongside your team to examine the data, listen to the people involved, and determine where it makes sense to focus next.



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