



Right Question
Institute

Legal Empowerment Program



The Right Question Strategy

An educational strategy that fosters the development of two skills:

- Asking better questions
- Participating more effectively in decisions

Why questions? Why decisions?

Asking questions is a foundational skill for thinking, learning, and taking action.

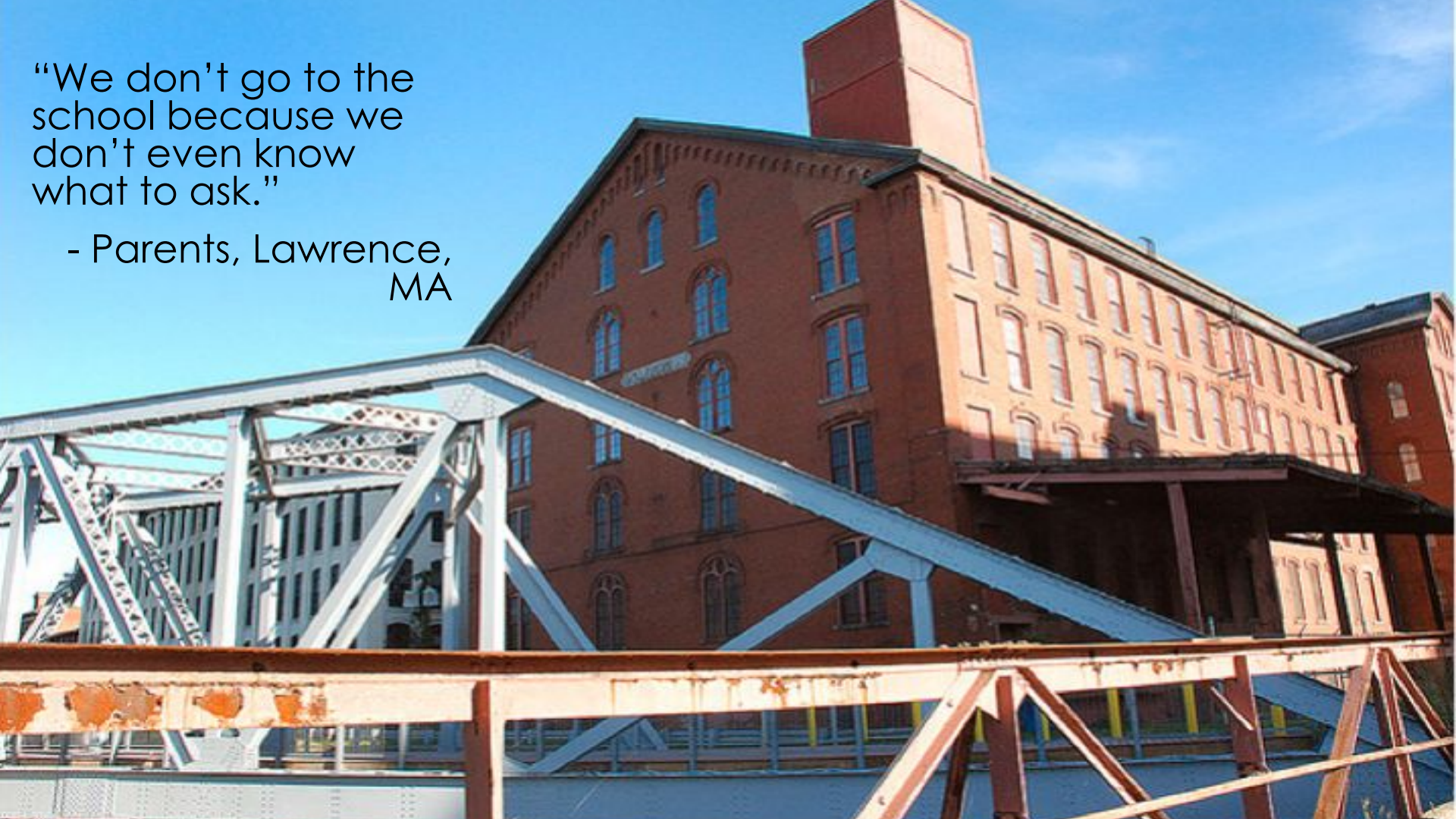
The ability to **focus on decisions** helps people become more effective and strategic.

People become more engaged, understand more, and discover their own power.

These two skills are rarely taught.

“We don’t go to the school because we don’t even know what to ask.”

- Parents, Lawrence,
MA



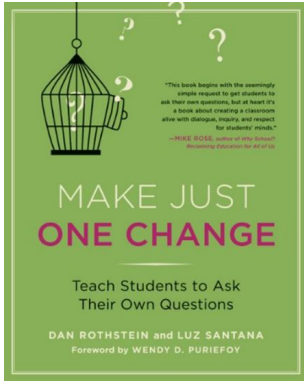


Right Question Institute

A Catalyst for Microdemocracy



HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



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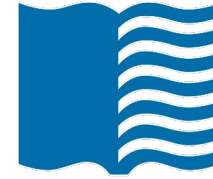
Evaluation of a Patient Activation and Empowerment Intervention in Mental Health Care

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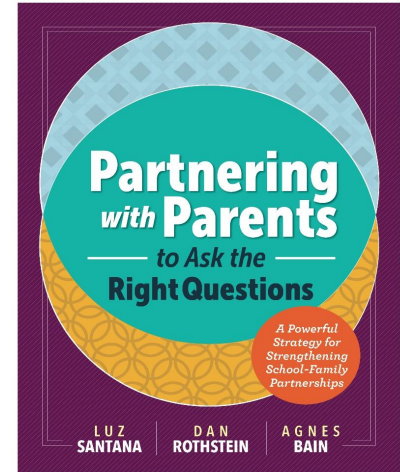
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Health Educ Behav. 2009 February ; 36(1): 138-154. doi:10.1177/1090198108314618.

Patient-Provider Communication: Understanding the Role of Patient Activation for Latinos in Mental Health Treatment

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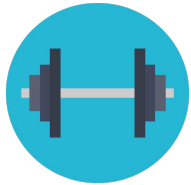
- People feel a stronger sense of **agency and voice** as they navigate systems
- They are better able to **advocate** for themselves and their families and **hold decision-makers accountable**
- Frontline service providers **partner** more effectively with the people and communities they serve



“Estás más preparado. sabes lo que quieres. Cuando sabes lo que quieres, buscas la forma de obtenerlo. [You are better prepared. You know what you want. And when you know what you want, you can look for a way to get it.]” - Nelida Herrera, Sacramento, CA



“It helps you advocate for yourself, **without feeling overwhelmed or inferior** to what someone might have. I wasn’t intimidated any more... **it makes you feel like, ‘I can do this.’”** - Alicia, Boston, MA



“I didn’t know I could ask questions at the school. But, **by doing that, I was able to get my son the services he needs.**” - Session participant who learned to advocate for her son with a hearing impairment, MA

“[I learned] to communicate better with my doctor . . . To get rid of that fear, to remove that block that sometimes is between patient and doctor that sometimes make you afraid to ask or because one thinks that [the doctors] know everything, that one is limited to say “yes” and to listen what they have to say and not having a lot of participation. **That is gone. Now I ask.**”

“The difference is that [people who have learned the strategy] have a different level of expectation, they expect that the policies will be followed through. And if they don’t get what they think they should . . . **there’s a feeling of accountability, these people are working for me.**”

Examples of applications

- Legal professionals preparing families for IEP meetings
- Social worker preparing youth for court appearances and meetings with attorneys
- GED class students advocating at the welfare office
- Community advocating for violence prevention programs

Connections to the wellbeing design principles

- Agency and wellbeing
- Communities naming overlooked barriers
- Transforming partnerships with providers
- Leveraging existing infrastructures

Thank you!

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