



Abstract Title: Discussion groups for patient and public engagement

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Introduction

Patient and public engagement (PPE) is a core element of collaborative health research in Canada. Through PPE, persons with lived experience of a health issue contribute to research on that issue. As PPE in research continues to develop, innovative and appropriate methods are needed. Care must be taken when planning engagement activities to ensure the expertise of patients, the public, and communities is applied to inform project decision-making. The Author uses discussion groups in PPE and has drafted guidelines for their use. Discussion groups are planned and delivered using distinct methods that differentiate them from traditional qualitative focus groups.

Methods

The Authors will describe discussion group activities, the differences between discussion groups and focus groups in qualitative research, and steps for planning and conducting these activities. Emphasis will be placed on identifying key design criteria that must be met to ensure participants are engaged as contributors to project decision-making, rather than research subjects as in traditional qualitative focus groups. These design criteria include: planning of logistics (location, recruitment, and dissemination), developing a question guide, and outlining a plan for applying patient / public input to project decision-making.

Outcomes

This presentation will provide participants an opportunity to learn about how to plan and conduct discussion group activities and gain a greater understanding of the differences between traditional qualitative focus groups and discussion groups for PPE. Opportunity will also be provided for participants to ask questions regarding to use of discussion groups in their own engagement activities.

Conclusion

Innovative methods, new tools, and capacity development are needed to advance PPE in collaborative health research. This session introduces one tool that can be used to engage patients, the public, and communities as contributors rather than as subjects of

research. By sharing this information, the Authors actively advances the field of patient-oriented research promotes methodologies that strengthen connections between PPE and health research.

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