

PATIENT-CENTERED OUTCOMES RESEARCH TRAINING MANUAL

Helping Researchers
Initiate and Maintain Patient-Engaged
Research Teams
(Cystic Fibrosis Case Study)

Contents

i.	Introduction.....	1
ii.	References Informing Training Manual.....	12
iii.	Step 1: Prepare.....	17
iv.	Step 2: Launch.....	29
v.	Step 3: Implement.....	42
vi.	Step 4: Monitor & Sustain.....	56

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PCOR

Introduction

Contents

Training Manual Development Details.....	1
Training Manual Development Group.....	2
Training Manual Community Advisory Board.....	2
Overall Coordination.....	3
Writing.....	3
Funding.....	3
Abbreviations.....	3
Glossary.....	3
Background.....	4
Overview.....	4
Goal.....	6
Defining PCOR.....	6
PCOR Defining Principles.....	7
The Benefits of PCOR.....	8
How Engagement Is Defined.....	8
Engagement in the Cystic Fibrosis Community.....	9
Avoiding Tokenism.....	9
Methods.....	10
Development of PCOR Training Manual	10
Recruitment of Training Manual Community Advisory Board.....	10
Conceptual Framework.....	10

Training Manual Development Group

Emily Godfrey, MD, MPH

Project Lead, Associate Professor, University of Washington, Department of Family Medicine

Molly Pam, BSc

Patient Partner

Brittany Rattiliff, MPH

Research Scientist, University of Washington, Department of Family Medicine

Molly Ruben, MPH

Research Coordinator, University of Washington, Department of Family Medicine

Morhaf Al Achkar, MD, PhD

Associate Professor, University of Washington, Department of Family Medicine

Training Manual Community Advisory Board

Bray, Leigh Ann, PhD, RN, CNL, CNE, Assistant Professor of Nursing, Associate Scientist Cystic Fibrosis Research Center, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Clancy, JP, Vice President of Clinical Research, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Goralski, Jennifer L., MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics, Division of Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Hadjiliadis, Denis, MD, MHS, Paul F. Harron Associate Professor of Medicine, Perelman School of Medicine and Program Director of Adult Cystic Fibrosis Center, University of Pennsylvania

Heath, Michele, BS, CCP, Caregiver Partner

Kessler, Larry, ScD, Professor of Health Systems and Population Health, University of Washington School of Public Health and Director of Regulatory Oversight, UW Center for Dialysis Innovation

Ladores, Sigrid, PhD, RN, PNP, CNE, FAAN, Associate Professor and Director of PhD Program, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing

Langfelder-Schwind, Elinor, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

McDaniel, Anthony, Patient Partner

Mentch, Laura, Ed.M., Patient Partner

Pruit, David, Patient Partner

Putman, Melissa, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Internal Medicine, Division of Endocrinology Boston Children's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital

Ramos, Kathleen J., MD MS, Assistant Professor, Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine, Department of Medicine, University of Washington

Vaeth, Siri, MSW, Executive Director of the Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute (CFRI)

Vignola, Lauren, BSc, Patient Partner

Walker, Patricia, MD, Mount Sinai Beth Israel CF Center Director

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Overall Coordination

The University of Washington Department of Family Medicine - Emily Godfrey (Project Lead). Molly Ruben and Brittany Rattiliff provided coordination and logistical support.

Writing

This guide was created through a collaboration between the University of Washington, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute, clinicians, researchers, patients, and caregivers from the Cystic Fibrosis (CF) community. The first draft of this training manual was written by Emily Godfrey, Molly Pam, and Brittany Rattiliff. Drafts were reviewed and input was provided by Morhaf Al Achkar, Molly Ruben, and our Training Manual Community Advisory Board throughout the development process.

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This work was funded through the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Eugene Washington Program Award (10569-UWASH). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of PCORI.

Abbreviations

CAB: Community Advisory Board

CF: Cystic Fibrosis

CFF: Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

CFReSHC: Cystic Fibrosis Reproductive and Sexual Health Collaborative

CFRI: Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute

PCOR: Patient-Centered Outcomes Research

PCORI: Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute

Glossary

Champion: Individuals who advocate for and support implementing a new program, policy, or process. Effective champions are generally respected members of the institution and research team, have some authority to direct resources to support implementation, and possess a personal commitment and passion for seeing the innovation fully implemented.

Cystic Fibrosis - Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a progressive, genetic disease characterized by sticky mucus that damages the lungs and digestive system, causes lung infections, and limits the ability to breathe over time.

Engagement: Performing or recruiting others to accept an authentically valued role in the research process.

Partner – Individuals who are directly affected by a disease, disability or condition. For the purposes of this training manual, we will use partners to represent non-researcher stakeholder types. Partners represent patients, caregivers or community members.

Project Lead – The lead researcher and primary contact for the research project. Usually, this person is employed by an academic institution, but partners can also be Project Leads. In this manual instead of using the term “Principal Investigator” (PI), we use “Project Lead” to denote the person leading the project because it is a more widely understood term by community and other stakeholders.

Stakeholder – Stakeholders generally include patients, caregivers, clinicians, researchers, community advocates, and other community members.

BACKGROUND

Overview

Building the capacity of patients, clinicians, and researchers to participate equally in patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) is essential to creating meaningful partnerships that lead to improved patient care, knowledge, and resources. Partner engagement on research teams improves the relevance of research, increases stakeholder trust in research and the researchers. Engagement enhances mutual learning by partners and researchers about each other and improves adoption of the research findings.

This document is geared towards researchers and healthcare providers working within academic institutions. Because institutional and program environments vary so greatly, it is possible that some guidance may not be applicable in every setting. Our overall goal is that the individual PCOR champions reading these pages will benefit from and use this PCOR Training Manual as a starting point at their institution to help ensure successful engagement of new stakeholders onto the research team. This Training Manual cannot replace one-on-one coaching, and some users may benefit from additional guidance from a qualified and skilled mentor in patient-engagement methodology. This Training Manual is primarily informed by patients, caregivers, community members and researchers that represent the Cystic Fibrosis (CF) community. CF is a multi-organ, chronic, genetic disease that primarily affects the lungs. CF affects approximately 30,000 people in the United States. Throughout their lives, many individuals with CF manage their disease with daily respiratory treatments and by taking multiple medications. Although previously a disease with a relatively short life expectancy, most individuals with CF today live well into adulthood due to medical advances with treatments and medications.

People with CF, their caregivers, and other stakeholders are critical players in this work and in the development of this PCOR Training Manual. While this PCOR Training Manual is not directed at patients, caregivers, and other stakeholders, we believe the patient/caregiver voice is critical to this manual to inform researchers and providers about what to know when approaching and interacting with patients/caregivers as authentic partners on research teams. Our Training Manual Development Group chose to work with the CF community because of its long-standing history of patient participation in research and stakeholders' efforts to bring the patient voice into research. We have had the great fortune of working with the CF community over the last several years to help build capacity in PCOR or patient-engagement methodology. For this reason, examples given in this PCOR Training Manual are from the CF community. This PCOR Training Manual and its lesson for patient engaged research, however, is a valuable resource and guide for all audiences that wish to build and foster patient and stakeholder engagement, regardless of their representative disease or community.

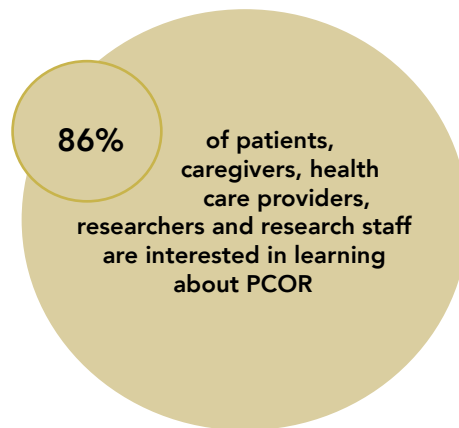
Below is an example of the power of patient-engaged research that fueled a larger movement throughout the Cystic Fibrosis community over the course of just several years.

Due to their improved health status and living well into adulthood, many adult women and pregnancy-capable persons with CF began to contemplate pregnancy and parenthood. Few felt they had enough information to guide them as to whether pregnancy was safe. When women with CF came together in 2016, they had many unanswered questions related to sexual and reproductive health. These adult individuals with CF met with multidisciplinary clinicians and researchers to discuss how CF-specific female health concerns had become central questions in their lives. Accordingly, this initial group formed the Cystic Fibrosis Reproductive and Sexual Health Collaborative (CFReSHC) (www.cfreshc.org) which created patient-centered research priorities related to women's health. By 2020, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CFF) Therapeutic Development Network (TDN) created the Women's Health Research Working Group, which includes individuals with CF as key stakeholders.

CFReSHC and the CFF Women's Health Research Working Group demonstrate the benefits of and the rapid pace by which engaging patient/caregiver-partners on research teams can identify research gaps, determine research priorities, and develop infrastructure to move research priorities forward.

The Training Manual Development Group conducted a survey in the Cystic Fibrosis community in 2019 and found that 86% of 170 researchers, healthcare providers, patients, and caregivers were interested in learning more about how patients/caregivers could act as key stakeholders on research teams. Survey respondents also mentioned the need to have specific, authoritative guidance for how best to incorporate partners onto research teams, serving as the impetus to create this particular Training Manual.

What we learned when we surveyed the Cystic Fibrosis Community...



Top three training topics patients, caregivers, health care providers and researchers wanted to know more about included how to...

Patient/Caregivers

- Openly communicate with researchers
- Build trust with researchers/providers
- Share expertise with researchers

Researchers/Health Care Providers

- Include outcomes that matter to patient/caregivers
- Partner with patient/caregivers
- Select relevant research topics

Goal

The goal of this Training Manual is to promote patient engagement by increasing the number of PCOR research teams and improve the quality of participation of the patients, caregivers and other community stakeholders who engage with researchers. This PCOR Training Manual aims to do this by providing discrete steps, tools, and resources that teams can take to successfully integrate and maintain partners in research.

Ultimately, we hope this PCOR Training Manual contributes to a comprehensive PCOR training program that can be used longitudinally by current and new research teams across the nation, thereby promoting the effectiveness and impact of patient engaged research into the future.

Defining PCOR

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR), otherwise termed as “patient-engagement” or “patient and public involvement,” entails meaningfully engaging patients, caregivers, community members, and other stakeholders (such as clinicians, payers, and policy makers) as partners throughout the research process. PCOR is increasingly gaining traction among clinical research teams within other specialties in the United States. Partners are valuable to include on research teams because they provide expertise in living daily with the disease or condition being studied. **Ideally, research teams using PCOR methodology invite partners to bring ideas and questions based on their lived experience, with researchers then sharing a variety of possible approaches to study these questions.** Through this exchange, partners begin to understand the research process more fully and can move towards authentically participating in all phases of research.

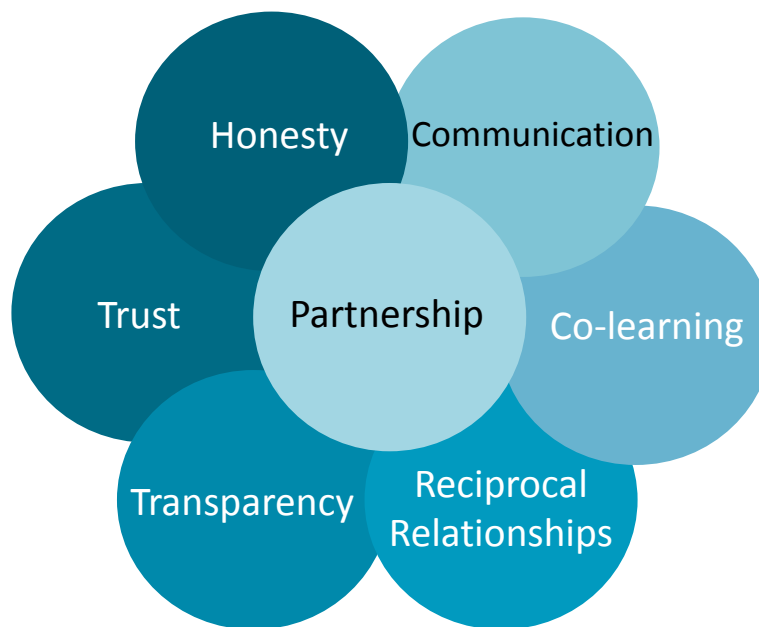
PCOR is different from traditional research. In traditional research, researchers come up with the research questions, study design, and collect data from research participants/patients. PCOR shifts this dynamic and creates a space where patient/caregiver-partners are equal members of the team. As partners, patients, caregivers and community members help guide the study from an idea to results. For example, a PCOR research study may have focus groups, with the patient/caregiver-partners helping design, run, and interpret findings from the focus groups

Table 1. How PCOR augments traditional research		
	Traditional Research	Patient-Centered Outcomes Research
Research Objective	Based on epidemiologic data and funding priorities	Patient input in selecting relevant issues
Study Design	Based on scientific rigor and feasibility	Includes scientific rigor, but with patient-partner input to ensure study design is culturally acceptable
Grant Writing	Conducted by PI and research team without any patient involvement	Researchers collaborate with patient-partners during the entire grant process (Question--> LOI--> Application--> Implementation--> Dissemination)

Adapted from the Colorado Foundation for Public Health and the Environment, Patient & Community Engaged Research Webinar. June 25, 2015.

PCOR Defining Principles

We adapted the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute’s (PCORI ’s) core principles for establishing authentic partnerships with patient/caregiver-partners. The principles our team uses to create authentic partnerships include communication, co-learning, reciprocal relationships, transparency, trust, and honesty.



What We Mean By

Partnership. The contributions of patient/caregiver-partners are valued and compensated fairly. Reasonable expectations of time commitments of all members are honored. The unique needs of patient and community partners are respected and accommodated.

Communication. How individual team members will communicate with one another is decided as a team. Communication should feel seamless and easy for every team member, including patient and community partners.

Co-learning. Patient/caregiver-partners are supported in learning and understanding the research process. Researchers take time to learn about PCOR and the experience of living with the disease or disability. Researchers actively engage patients and other stakeholders in the research process. Talent, experience, and contributions of all partners are welcomed and honored. Partners learn the basics and process of research. Time is given for team members to ask questions when partners don't understand something.

Reciprocal relationships. All roles on the research team are defined collaboratively, clearly stated, and shared among team partners. Decision-making is shared. Responsibilities are defined and rotated among all members. Over time each partner helps create the agenda, facilitate, and record notes for team research meetings.

Trust. Transparency. Honesty. Major decisions are made within the group. Information is shared readily with all partners. Take time to learn about one another on the research team to support the working relationship. Team members are committed to open and honest communication. Try starting each meeting with a check-in or icebreaker. This helps the team to get to know one another and build rapport. When a partner has a concern, the team members give space to discuss it in a meeting so that the team can work through it.

The Benefits of PCOR

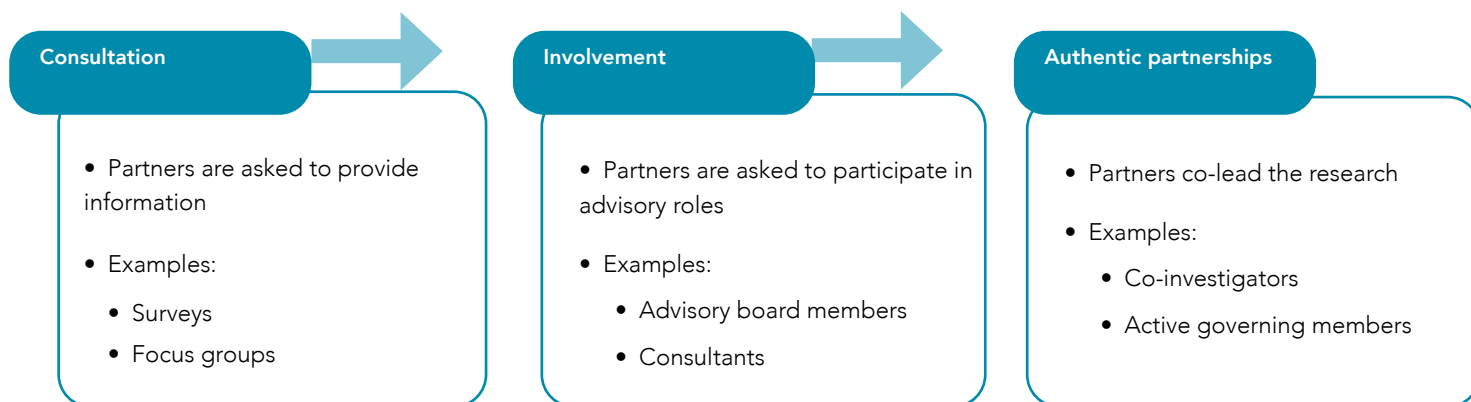
A PCOR approach makes research more applicable to patients by including them as members of the research team, rather than as individuals to recruit as research subjects. PCOR has been shown to help researchers more successfully recruit research participants and meet enrollment targets in studies. PCOR also builds collaborating skills for both researchers and community members. PCOR has been shown to improve research quality, increase patient trust in both the research and researchers, and positively affect health outcomes.

How Engagement Is Defined

Patients and caregivers can engage with PCOR research teams at different levels. Engagement can range from being as informal as informing or consulting, to including positions that are more formal, such as having established partnerships (see image below). It will be important for research teams to clearly articulate the level of engagement they are wanting from their partners and to communicate these expectations in recruitment materials (see "Inviting Patient Partners" in our Launch Guide).

Most funding agencies will want to see details regarding how teams plan to meaningfully engage partners throughout the proposed project. Such details can include responses to the following questions:

- How do you plan to identify and engage partners on your research team?
- Do you show that the roles of partners are part of formulating the project's questions and design, and that they are participating in the project conduct and dissemination of the results?
- What are the roles proposed for partners in the dissemination or implementation plans?



Engagement In The Cystic Fibrosis Community

Since the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CFF) started engaging patients and caregivers in research nationally in 2014, patients and caregivers have given input on research priorities, care guidelines, CFF programs, and policy. While CFF does not actively facilitate PCOR, researchers may recruit partners through Community Voice and Research Voice so that patients can help inform their projects. In 2021, CFF also created its first patient-centered study, called HERO-2, to assess the impact of Trikafta® modulator therapy on the daily medications and treatments of people with CF.

The depiction below represents different levels of engagement through activities within the CFF's Community Partnerships department.



How do patient or caregiver partners in your community currently participate in research?

Avoiding Tokenism

Tokenism is defined as the practice of making only perfunctory or symbolic efforts to engage patients, caregivers, or community members. Research teams can avoid tokenism by incorporating the following practices:

1. **Engagement Structure:** Ensure there is more than one partner on the team
2. **Intent:** Engage partners throughout the duration of the research project
3. **Relationships:** Create a team environment that builds trust between researchers and stakeholder partners

METHODS

Development of PCOR Training Manual

This PCOR Training Manual builds on an educational needs assessment conducted in early 2019 among research, patient and caregiver members of the Cystic Fibrosis community. The Training Manual Development Group created a pilot training program based on the findings from the educational needs assessment. Four separate training sessions were provided to almost 60 members of the CF community between April and October 2019. Attendees who evaluated the program requested a guide that provides specific steps to successfully incorporate patients and/or caregivers onto research teams. This Training Manual came out of that request and has been developed with input from diverse members from the CF and PCOR community (i.e Training Manual Community Advisory Board). Members on this board include researchers, patients, and caregivers with some knowledge about the importance of patient engagement in research teams. Our Training Manual Community Advisory Board included 15 members. We aimed to enroll about 6 patients/caregivers, 6 researchers/providers, and 3 advocacy stakeholders from the CF community.

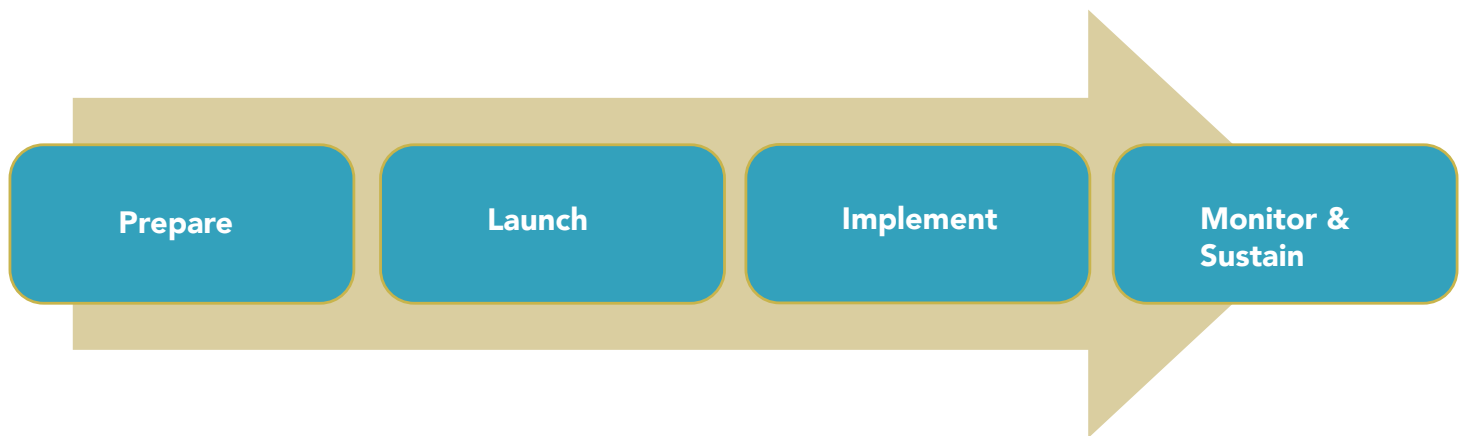
Recruitment of Training Manual Community Advisory Board

To recruit members, we developed and disseminated flyers via listservs from CFF (Community Voice; provider listservs), CFRI (weekly newsletter), Attain Health Foundation, National Organization of African Americans with Cystic Fibrosis (NOAACF), CFReSHC, and through universities such as the University of Washington and the University of Pittsburgh.

To ensure diversity, especially with patient and caregiver stakeholders, our recruitment materials included a questionnaire to collect demographic information such as education level, age, time zone (for geographic distribution), race/ethnicity, gender identity, and type of community (ex. urban, rural, suburban, small town). We also asked about prior experience working on research teams (not as a research subject) and interest in PCOR or patient-engaged research. Finally, to screen for applicants who were committed to our project goals, we asked applicants to review and provide feedback on our Engagement Guide <https://familymedicine.uw.edu/pcor-guide/engagement-manual/>

Conceptual Framework

The development of this Training Manual is guided by the Quality Implementation Framework (QIF). The QIF identifies four phases of implementation, which we have adapted to the following steps: (1) Prepare, (2) Launch, (3) Implement, and (4) Monitor & Sustain.



Step 1: Prepare: This is the first step for the PCOR champion to obtain buy-in and investigate institutional rules and regulations regarding partners participating on research teams.

Step 2: Launch: In the second step, the PCOR champion uses the Launch Guide to invite partners onto the research team and create a space for effective partnerships. It also provides suggestions for team agreements.

Step 3: Implement: In step three, the PCOR champion uses the Implement Guide to lead the newly formed PCOR team on putting together grant applications and integrating partners into each stage of the research project.

Step 4: Monitor & Sustain: In the last step, the Monitor & Sustain Guide provides suggestions for supporting success, handling disagreements, adding new partners to the team, and implementing continuous improvement of the PCOR team.

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PCOR Training Manual

Step 1: Prepare

This section is tailored primarily to PCOR champions to learn skills and investigate institutional policies that will help set the stage for the successful incorporation of patients and caregiver partners onto their research teams.

For the purposes of this document, when the term “partners” is used, it is inclusive of patient, caregiver and community partners.

Prepare Includes:

1. Identifying a PCOR champion
2. Completing PCOR training for researchers
3. Gaining leadership and institutional buy-in
4. Inviting patient/caregiver-partners onto the research team

This table of contents is a starting list of steps for this stage, which you can adapt for your needs.

Prepare Activities	
What is meant by PCOR, co-production, and patient engagement.....	18
A PCOR champion.....	18
PCOR training for researchers.....	18
Training in facilitation skills.....	19
Leadership and institutional buy-in.....	20
Find resources to support foundational work.....	20
Assess for organizational readiness.....	20
Communicate the need for and benefits of PCOR.....	20
Look into Human Subjects Protection Office (IRB) stakeholder policies.....	22
Gather information on how to compensate outside community members.....	23
Institutional information technology (IT) security.....	23
Prepare Supplement.....	24

WHAT IS MEANT BY PCOR, CO-PRODUCTION, AND PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

Patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) is a type of research that includes patients, caregivers and/or community members as valued partners on research teams and encourages them to participate fully in all aspects of the study. Other terms used for PCOR include “patient and public engagement.”

PCOR has been shown to improve research quality, increase patient trust in both the research and researchers, and positively affect health outcomes

Co-production focuses on creating a space and a product together with partners. The result is something that has received equal input from both researchers and partners.

Patient engagement is how patients and caregivers are included on research teams.

Champion is an individual who advocates for and supports implementation of a new program, policy, or process. Effective champions are generally respected members of the institution and/or research team, have some authority to direct resources to support implementation, and possess a personal commitment and passion for seeing the innovation through to completion.

A PCOR CHAMPION:

- Gets trained on patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR), community-partnered research, and the science of engagement research
- Builds skills in group facilitation
- Finds funding or time to support foundational work needed to build a well-functioning engagement team
- Works with institutional leadership to familiarize themselves and team regarding institutional policies about community partners working on research teams

HELPFUL HINT

It is important to know what your goal is in bringing patients, caregivers and/or community members to the team. This will help inform which level of partner engagement your team seeks (see p. 8).

PCOR TRAINING FOR RESEARCHERS

Researchers can learn about PCOR through the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) at <https://www.pcori.org/engagement/research-fundamentals>. Additional resources are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Resources for researchers and partners to learn about PCOR	
Title	Content
Resources for researchers	
Community-Engaged Research: A Quick Start Guide for Researchers https://accelerate.ucsf.edu/files/CE/guide_for_researchers.pdf	Prepares researchers for future work with community-based organizations, other clinicians, or community stakeholders
Stakeholder engagement strategy selection tool https://dicemethods.org/	Web-based tool with (1) an education hub and resources to learn about stakeholder engagement and (2) an interactive selection tool to explore engagement strategies
Principles of Community Engagement (2nd Edition) https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/	NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award publication providing practical information about engaging community partners in research
Researching Health Together: Engaging Patients and Stakeholders, from topic identification to policy change https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/researching-health-together/book265162	Textbook on community engagement in health research
Resources for partners	
Preparing for Research Partnerships: Providing Training for Partnerships https://ipfcc.org/bestpractices/sustainable-partnerships/preparing/providing-training.html	A training toolkit for partners preparing for research
Resources for partners and researchers	
Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research: SPOR https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/spor_framework-en.pdf	A framework for engaging patient-partners in research
PCORI Fundamentals Training Modules https://www.pcori.org/engagement/research-fundamentals	A basic training course for partners and researchers who are new to PCOR and research
Family/Youth/Researcher Education (FYREworks) https://www.fyreworkstraining.com/	A training for both partners and researchers on how best to work together
CF Community PCOR 101 for Researchers/Providers and Patients/Caregivers https://familymedicine.uw.edu/pcor-guide/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2021/12/PCOR-101-for-CF-Researchers-and-Partners.pdf	An introductory PowerPoint presentation presented to CF community stakeholders

Training in Facilitation Skills

Training in facilitation skills ensures every member of the research team has a “voice at the table” and contributes to important decisions in their area(s) of expertise. Well-facilitated team meetings are important to help partners feel welcome and comfortable so they readily share ideas and concerns as experts who live daily with their disease or disorder. Please see the Resource for Facilitation Skill Building (Table 3) and “Facilitation Skills” supplement on page 24.

Table 3: Resources for researchers to build skills in facilitation

Title	Content
6 Essential Skills of an Effective Facilitator https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140619061555-1334077-6-essential-skills-of-a-effective-facilitator	A LinkedIn article that briefly outlines the skills a facilitator needs to be successful
Community Tool Box: Conducting Effective Meetings https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/main	Outlines four phases of an effective meeting, as written by Community Toolbox
Development team's list of effective facilitation techniques found in the Prepare Supplement at the end of this guide on page 24	A list of facilitation skills created by the same team who developed this guide

LEADERSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN

Educating institutional leaders about what “engagement research” entails and knowing your organization’s policies ahead of time streamlines workflow when research teams have partners participating on their team. The following steps prepare research teams to implement PCOR and obtain leadership buy-in at their institution:

Find Resources to Support Foundational Work

PCOR requires more time and effort than what is normally required to build a research team. Thus, PCOR champions and research teams should be prepared to divert resources to get training in PCOR methodology and understand institutional policies prior to partner onboarding and grant funding.

Assess for Organizational Readiness

The implementation science literature suggests that readiness is an essential part of successfully implementing an innovation. Engaging partners as co-producers on the research team is the “innovation” in this context. Ask your team the questions from the “Assess for Readiness” supplement on page 26.

Communicate The Need For and Benefits of PCOR

As part of assessing for readiness, research teams should be prepared to talk about the need for and the benefits of PCOR within their organization. See more in the “Benefits of PCOR” supplement on page 28.

How will you share with other researchers and your own institution the necessity of PCOR and the benefits of this type of research?

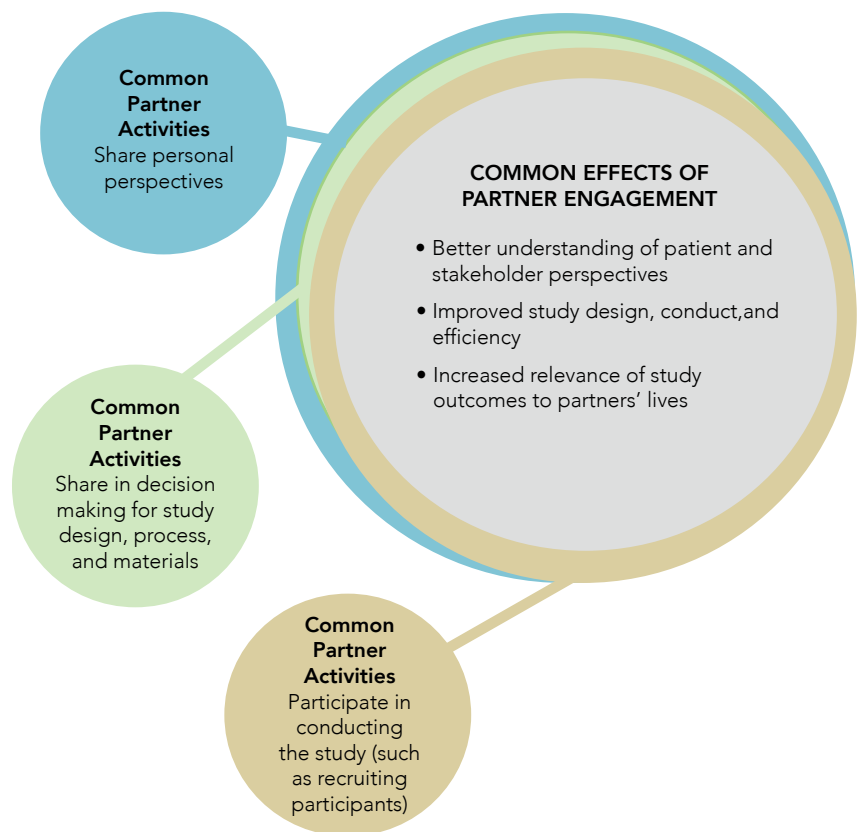
Researchers bring their subject matter expertise to the project, as well as their knowledge about research and research practices. Partners provide insights into what it is really like to live with their disease. Ideally, research teams using PCOR methodology invite patients/caregivers/community members as partners to bring ideas and questions based on their lived experience with the disease or disability, with researchers responding by sharing a variety of possible approaches to study them. With this exchange, partners begin to understand the research process more fully and can move towards co-producing throughout each phase of the project.

Partners often have other skills that may enhance the research process. For example, partners can serve in a variety of roles including as advisors, leaders of focus groups, presenters at conferences, and co-authors on publications.

A research team that was conducting a survey study about sexual and reproductive health services within CF Centers quickly discovered that each of three patient-partners on their research team had expertise, in addition to their lived experience with the disease, that they could share. One patient was a former sex-education instructor and was able to help the research team with clarifying questions asked on the survey. Another patient was tech-savvy and helped the research team get up and running with the use of online platforms for meetings, document sharing, and every day communications. The third patient partner enjoyed painting and drawing. This patient was happy to help design team logos and beautify flyers and announcements going out to community partners and other research teams.

Figure 1. A diagram of the benefits of patient engagement

This figure presents themes identified through the PCORI annual awardee reports and voluntary surveys of research partners; N=261 reports from awardees and partners.



When researchers, patients, and other stakeholders come together as partners, the result is synergistic, making the research far more impactful to partners' lives. Research done with partners is research that will be used. To read about ways partners contribute to research teams, see the supplement on page 28.

Other ways to communicate the benefits of PCOR to academic leaders is through testimonials. Using patient and researcher testimonials provides relatable faces and context to PCOR and explains why and how PCOR is valuable. See the link to the PCORI website for PCOR testimonials in the Engaging in Stakeholder Driven Research module. <https://www.pcori.org/engagement/research-fundamentals/engaging-stakeholder-driven-research>

Look Into Human Subjects Protection Office (IRB) Stakeholder Policies

Inquire about your institution's Human Subject Protection Office (or Institutional Review Board) policies regarding patients or caregivers who participate in research as partners, not as research subjects. Explain your partners' qualifications as well as their roles and responsibilities. It may also be helpful to provide your IRB with information about the benefits of PCOR and why it is important to have partners participating on research teams. See page 27 for an example of how to inform your IRB that PCOR team activity may not fall under human subjects research.

Some institutions may require that partners provide consent to participate on university-based research teams. This requirement is not ideal because it sends a subtle message to partners that they are not equal members of the research team, undermining the purpose of PCOR.

PCOR champions should also determine whether Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) training will be required for stakeholder partners who participate on the PCOR team.

HELPFUL HINT

PCOR activities that include partnering with patient and community stakeholders to develop research activities and priorities that are used for internal purposes only to help develop the team's research protocol does not qualify as human subjects research.

HELPFUL HINT

Protection of Human Subject training for patient/caregiver-partners is **NOT REQUIRED** if: Patients or other stakeholders act strictly as advisors.

Protection of Human Subject training for patient/caregiver partners **IS REQUIRED** if: Patients or other stakeholders plan to interact with study participants or data.

Some institutions accept or offer Human Subject Protection training specifically for community members, while others require community members to do the same training as researchers. Please check with your Human Subject Protection Office about what IRB training they accept.

Two potential IRB certification programs for partners are the University of Pittsburgh Community Partners Research Ethics Training at <https://ctsi.pitt.edu/education-training/community-partners-research-ethics-training/> and University of Illinois at Chicago CIRTification Program at <https://ccts.uic.edu/tools/cirtification/online/>.

Be sure to communicate with your potential partners or other stakeholders whether IRB training will be required and how many hours the training will take. Some partners will not mind having to do the training, while others may find this as a barrier to participating in PCOR activities.

Gather Institutional Policies on How to Compensate Outside Community Members

PCORI recommends compensation for all persons contributing to the research team, including partners. Compensation is a way to show you value the contribution partners bring to the study. Discuss with procurement administrators about institutional policies regarding the payment of community/partner members.

Keep in mind that patient partners may be on government assistance, supplemental security income (SSI) or on social security disability income (SSDI) and unable to earn more than a certain amount per month or risk losing their assistance. Thus, PCOR champions should be ready to provide flexible payment schedules.

Partners may need financial or other support to participate in PCOR meetings. Providing support can help diversify the types of partners participating in PCOR. For example, partners who are parents may benefit from childcare support when they attend PCOR meetings.

Institutional Information Technology (IT) Security

Some institutions ask partners to register as volunteers to obtain access to secure information. Institutions may also require partners to use an institutional email account to keep emails that contain research team correspondence or study information secure. PCOR champions should be aware of IT policies for outside stakeholders.

HELPFUL HINT

Consider compensating partners monthly instead of paying as a single sum at the end of the project. Alternatively, if approved by the Sponsor and the academic institution, offer in-kind compensation by supporting partners with conference or travel fees, headphones, or cameras for remote meetings, or other services partners might need to participate on the PCOR research team.

Congratulations, you are now prepared to start your PCOR journey. To continue, please go to the Launch section.

Example Facilitation Skills

Use the bullet points below for some first steps to take when facilitating meetings and team events:

- **Set expectations.** Create an agenda for meetings and send it out to all participants ahead of time to give people time to gather their thoughts. Start each meeting by reviewing the agenda to create an overview of the meeting.
- **Create a welcoming environment.** Use open and welcoming body language and tone of voice. Smile and welcome individuals to the meeting. Use first names, without titles, to create a level playing field. Consider starting each meeting with an ice-breaker. Create meeting ground rules together as a team (see Generating a Governance Document in our Launch Guide) that can be referred to if meetings get tense.
- **Encourage participation from all members.** At the outset of the discussion, announce how you will call on people to set the expectation that everyone will participate so that it does not feel like you are picking on any one individual. Using an ordered way of calling on people allows people who are less likely to speak up the opportunity to do so and prevents individuals from dominating the discussion.

Call on people using a Z-A name scheme, starting with the person whose first name starts with the last letter in the alphabet.

- **Create opportunities for partners to share nonverbally.** Not everyone engages in the same way. Provide options for nonverbal engagement such as asking for feedback on written surveys, study questions, and publications through shared documents. This also allows team members unable to attend a meeting the ability to contribute ideas. **Learn more about platforms you can use to share documents in our Engagement Guide at:**

https://familymedicine.uw.edu/pcor-guide/engagement-manual/manual/#tab_document-sharing

Start the conversation with a question on a shared document (ex. "What is your idea for X?"), set a timer for 10 minutes and allow people to write their ideas and +1 other peoples' ideas. Then open it up for discussion.

- **Reflection on and rephrasing of** discussion points can help some learners retain the information, clarify or summarize a point, and serve to move the discussion forward. *You can start with, "What I am hearing from you is..."*

- **Ask questions that get people talking.** They can be open-ended, follow-up, or more specific questions. Stay away from yes/no questions as they will not result in rich discussions. Resources to help research teams with communication are listed below under “Ways to encourage participation from all team members.”
- **Keep discussion on task.** If the discussion is getting bogged down in the details or is on a tangent, firmly but gently steer the discussion back to the item at hand. For example, say, “This is such a rich discussion on X point, but I want to bring us back to X topic.” You can also use meeting ground rules to empower the whole team to step in and steer the conversation back on track.
- **Maintain engagement.** Watch participants’ body language and facial expressions. Are eyes glazing over, or are they obviously doing other things on their computer, not paying attention? Are they confused? Bring them back to the meeting with a direct question, or slow down and ask if anyone needs clarification.
- **Create a continuous feedback loop** to assess how your team, including your partners, feel about the meetings. Create anonymous surveys for team members to complete regarding how they thought the meeting went, if they felt included, and whether the research team was clear in their communication.

End the meeting with a poll asking participants to rank it on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates that the meeting went poorly and 5 indicates it was excellent. Alternatively, ask your team what one word they would use to describe the meeting.

Ways to encourage participation from all team members:

- **Ask** for input from those not speaking up
- **Practice** empathy
- **Listen** attentively
- **Reflect** back what you heard

Assess for Readiness

To determine if your team is ready to begin a PCOR project, first ask yourselves the following questions:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how big of a priority is engagement for our research team? Why? What are the concerns or competing demands?
2. What does the research team hope to gain by having patients/caregivers on our research team?
3. Is the leadership, department, or institution supportive of making changes to research teams?
4. What are our priorities for types of patients and other stakeholders on our team? What are the skills and experiences of the people we are hoping to learn from and collaborate with?
5. Who will be the PCOR champions for the team?

Example Wording for Protection of Human Subjects Applications

The proposed work does not involve research on human subjects. This application proposes bringing patients, community members and clinicians (i.e. PCOR community) to brainstorm research questions and outcomes related to cystic fibrosis [or other disease or disability]. We will conduct discussion sessions with the PCOR community to identify and prioritize research topics and resource needs to develop research protocols that will later enroll patients as human subjects. Researchers and patients involved in the PCOR community will be invited to participate in World Cafe discussion sessions and a Prioritization Workshop. The purpose of their involvement is to serve as advisors to inform the current gaps and needs in research and resources to support patient care. These activities involve fact-collecting from individuals where questions focus on ideas, products, or policies, rather than on people or their experiences; therefore, it does not constitute human subjects research.

The Benefits of PCOR

Evidence-based research is adopted slowly by clinicians as part of routine care. In general, a PCOR approach makes research more applicable to people with a disease, disability or disparity by including them as contributing members of the research team, rather than just as research subjects. PCOR has been shown to help researchers more successfully recruit research participants and meet enrollment targets in studies. PCOR also builds collaborating skills for both researchers and community members.

By regarding patients/caregivers as content-experts, researchers are better able to gain knowledge about what the disease, disability or disparity looks like in different contexts. Patient/caregiver experiences help lay the groundwork for understanding the disease, disability or disparity comprehensively. Patient/caregiver-partners on research teams can reduce disparities and address social determinants of health, and lead to more effective interventions. Better interventions and better understanding of social contexts can, in turn, lead to improved studies.

While the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is a prominent funder of research focused on patient- and stakeholder-engagement, research funding agencies are increasingly encouraging the inclusion of patient stakeholders on grant applications by making such engagement a requirement for funding. Patient engagement is increasingly emphasized in grants funded by the NIH, CDC, private foundations, and industry/pharmaceutical companies. As more patient/caregiver-partners begin to join research teams, researchers will need skills to successfully integrate these new members. Engaging patient/caregiver-partners on research teams for the long-term requires a sustained approach to support team collaboration and to ensure principles for engagement are actualized.

How Partners on Research Teams Benefit The Study

Patient/Caregiver-partners can help with:

1. Understanding the daily challenges of living with the disease or disability being studied and patient perspectives over time.
2. Creating a lasting and mutually beneficial partnership with patients in this community.
3. Generating new ideas about research questions already being asked, and new research questions that have not been considered yet. For example, patients with Cystic Fibrosis wanted a study that would determine whether symptoms associated with their disease fluctuate with their menstrual cycles.
4. Making your research relevant. Is this what the patient community needs? Wants?
5. Recruiting other patients as study participants. Where can you recruit study participants? Are there listservs or secret Facebook groups that only people with the disease can access? Is this research other patients would want to participate in? Do the flyers contain information that will attract people to the study and make them want to participate?

PCOR Training Manual

Step 2: Launch

This section describes steps the PCOR champion can take to invite partners onto the research team and create a space for effective partnerships. It also provides suggestions for team agreements. For the purposes of this document, when the term “partners” is used, it is inclusive of patient, caregiver and community partners.

This table of contents is a starting list for this stage, which you can adapt for your needs.

Launch Activities	
Developing research partnerships.....	30
Engage partners early.....	30
Inviting partners onto the research team.....	30
Decide the number of partners to have.....	30
Create a flyer to recruit partners.....	30
Choose partners.....	30
Approaching partners in your own clinic.....	31
Creating a space for effective partnerships.....	32
Onboard partners.....	32
Create a welcoming environment.....	32
Clarify how equal partnerships will be established.....	32
Build relationships.....	33
Establishing team agreements.....	34
Address concerns about confidentiality.....	34
Articulate how decisions will be made.....	35
Write a mission statement.....	35
Create a communication plan.....	35
Establish meeting times.....	35
Other agreements related to compensation, and institutional processes.....	36
Launch Supplement.....	37

DEVELOPING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Engage Partners Early

Engage partners early so that you can gather their ideas for research questions, before the grant opportunity is identified. Early engagement allows the team to discuss team agreements and communication, which are detailed below.

HELPFUL HINT

- Engage partners early, preferably before or while developing a research proposal.
- Use a variety of sources to find and reach out to potential partners.

For an overview of Best Practices in Engaging Stakeholders, see PCORI's "Preparing Team Members for Partnership" at <https://research-teams.pcori.org/stakeholders#Practicing%20Effective%20Team%20Communication>.

INVITING PARTNERS ONTO THE RESEARCH TEAM

Decide On The Number of Partners to Have

Research teams should consider the number of partners to include on their team. Including several partners on a single research team can help diversify the patient voice and avoid tokenism.

Time off needed by partners is another consideration regarding how many partners to include on a research team. Patients may have unique circumstances that affect the amount of time they can dedicate to your team. Teams will want to have good partner representation should a partner become unavailable.

A partner on a PCOR team was hospitalized and missed a month of regularly scheduled meetings with the research team. Luckily, the team had multiple patient partners on their community advisory board who could represent the patient voice in the project, and the grant was not delayed.

The number of partners also depends on team resources. In general, we recommend starting small with 2-3 partners. Teams can grow as agreements and processes are established, specific needs to conduct the research are identified, and funding is secured.

Create A Flyer to Invite Partners

Create a flyer that outlines the partner's role on the research team. The flyer should include information about partner expectations, compensation, and time commitment. It should also include frequency of meetings and the amount of work that will be needed between meetings. It should be written in clear, easy to understand language and all acronyms should be defined.

Choose Partners

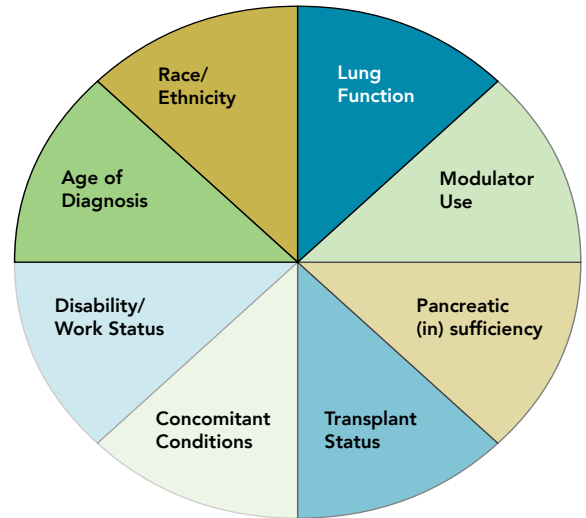
Diversifying your team can lead to new ideas and open others' eyes to different experiences that relate to the study.

Figure 2. Types of diversity in Cystic Fibrosis

Possible activities for selecting diverse partners include:

- Run an informal focus group with multiple partner applicants to see how partners interact and what skills they add to the team (i.e. some people are better at facilitation, technology use, identifying research questions, etc.).
- Work with clinics to identify partners. Speak to potential partners to ensure the work is a good fit with their interests and abilities.*
- Generate a questionnaire that asks potential partners about basic demographic information (see Figure 2). Additionally, the questionnaire can ask partners to report their skills and strengths.

*Ideas for places to recruit partners are located in the “Where to Find Partners” supplement on page 37.



Approaching Partners in Your Own Clinic or Health Care Setting

As a physician/researcher, it may be inappropriate to ask your own patients to join your PCOR team. Some patients may feel pressured to join, and this may affect how they participate and whether they feel comfortable being honest with the group.

If you do decide to ask patients within your own clinic, consider:

- How do you make the question as pressure free as possible? How can you show your patients that saying “no” will not affect their relationship with you or their quality of care?
- What is the best timing? It may not be appropriate to ask during a formal clinical visit.
- Think about who is best suited to address your patients. Consider medical assistants, receptionists, research coordinators, or existing team partners as potential team members to invite new partners onto your team.
- Invite patients as potential partners as part of an overview of the visit and follow up in a few days. For patients with complex diseases like Cystic Fibrosis, an ideal time to approach a potential patient partner may be earlier in the visit because patients are often tired and mentally drained after a long day at clinic. They are eager to get home to pick up children, eat, rest, or attend to other responsibilities.
- A patient who has known you longer and/or knows you better may be more comfortable being honest with their feelings about being invited to join a PCOR team.
- When you approach a potential patient partner, explain PCOR thoroughly. Let your potential partner know exactly what PCOR is, what you are asking of them, and why you think the potential patient partner would be a good fit.

A research coordinator wanted to invite a patient as a partner on their PCOR research team. The CF physician suggested that the research coordinator come in and explain the patient partner role to the patient while the physician was performing a nasal exam. The research coordinator opted to come back later in the visit when the physician was not there, so the patient would not feel coerced.

CREATING A SPACE FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

Onboarding Partners

Onboarding partners helps to ensure that everyone, including the partners, share common language and understanding. This sets the stage for teams to co-create successfully. Onboarding for partners includes basic research training. See Table 2 in the Prepare Guide for basic research training and PCOR training resources (p.19).

The Cystic Fibrosis Learning Network (CFLN) offers helpful resources for patient/caregiver onboarding. Information about the CFLN is included in the list of Active Learning Programs facilitated by Cincinnati Children's Hospital at <https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/research/divisions/j/anderson-center/learning-networks/active-emerging>.

Create A Welcoming Environment

Figure 3. Leveling a power differential on a PCOR team



<https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/TeamScience-SWOG-Field-Guide.pdf>

To ensure honest and open input from partners, they need to feel welcome on the research team. Knowing their voices will be heard and respected encourages participation. Developing skills to create welcoming environments helps researchers obtain participation from all team members (See "Facilitation Skills" in the Prepare Guide supplement page 24).

Clarify How Equal Partnerships Will Be Established

In PCOR, patients, caregivers and community members are active partners in research, but they may often be intimidated to speak in front of researchers. Thus, teams should incorporate processes to level the playing field so that partners feel comfortable to actively participate and offer feedback on researchers' ideas.

When we first started our PCOR team, partners were reluctant to speak freely in front of researchers and clinicians due to the fear that something said would get back to their health care providers. As a solution, only the designated PCOR champion (who was a clinician-scientist) met with partners for the first several years. The PCOR champion acted as a liaison between the researcher group and the partners until the partners felt comfortable speaking with the researchers and clinicians on the PCOR team.

HELPFUL HINT

Below are some questions your team may want to discuss to help create a welcoming environment:

- What concerns do you have about patients/caregivers as equal members of the research team?
- What are ways research team members can level the power dynamic?

Some ways to create a sense of equality with partners:

- Use first names (avoid formal titles like Dr. or Professor)
- Recognize and appreciate different talents and experiences verbally or in writing
- Encourage partners to lead activities:
 - ◊ Assign partners regular team roles, such as meeting facilitator, note-taker, and timekeeper
 - ◊ Co-present with partners at conferences
 - ◊ Empower partners to write about the project/research for non-peer-reviewed publications for their own stakeholder group

Build Relationships

Building relationships can help develop partners' comfort with the team.

When partners are comfortable, they give more information about their experiences. Building relationships creates team cohesion and helps avoid miscommunication. Strong relationships allow the PCOR team to work better together.

Start building relationships on your team as soon as possible. The entire team should participate in relationship building. Relationship building can be achieved through a variety of methods. For examples of activities, see the "Building Relationships" supplement on page 38.

Teams are motivated by passionate leaders. Share your passion about disease, disability or community you are partnering with. Passionate leaders make the work more enjoyable. They help motivate their teammates to work harder and feel appreciated.

It can be more difficult to build relationships in a virtual format because body language is harder to interpret and fewer opportunities for small talk exist. Consult the Guideline for Online PCOR Engagement for tips on how to build relationships online at <https://familymedicine.uw.edu/pcor-guide/>

HELPFUL HINT

Use the checklist below as a starting point for team agreements.

- **Communicate need/benefits of PCOR** – PCOR increases quality of research, trust between patients/caregivers & providers, empowers the community, and leads to greater health equity.
- **Outline practices that counterbalance resistance to change** – How do we recognize that being able to speak about the lived experience of having [a particular disease or disability] is an important aspect of research?
- **Create policies that enhance accountability** – Make sure there are several patient partners on each research team to avoid tokenism. Ensure members of the research team are trained in facilitation to help create a welcoming environment. Include IRB and compensation policies that relate to patients as partners, not as research subjects.

HELPFUL HINT

Think about the best teams you were a part of.

- **How did you build relationships?**
- **What part of relationship building was most effective?**
- **What components were in place when your team most productive?**

ESTABLISHING TEAM AGREEMENTS

Team guidelines can be established through team agreements, a team charter, or a governance document. Team agreements, team charter or governance documents are co-created with researchers and partners and can be updated as needed.

Documenting team agreements is important before the PCOR team begins its work. Tips for generating team agreements or governance documents are listed in the supplement on page 40.

HELPFUL HINT

For grant applications, a team charter, team agreements, or governance document can translate into an engagement plan. Having established agreements in place shows potential funders that the engagement team is already established and is a high-functioning group.

Are you unsure of what your governance document should look like? Table 4 links to governance documents from previous PCORI awardees.

Title	Contents
Governance document for Patient Outcomes Research to Advance Learning (PORTAL) Network (see appendices B, C, D) https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/521-PORTAL-Governance.pdf	Governance Document outlining roles, responsibilities, and decision-making
Inborn Errors of Metabolism Collaborative (IBEMC) QUEST Project Governance Document https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/QUEST-Governance-Documents.pdf	Governance document outlining roles and expectations within the team
Patient-Centered Network of Learning Health Systems (ADPCPRN) Governance Policy https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/512-AD-PCPRN-Governance-Policy.pdf	Governance policy outlining roles, expectations, and study processes

Address Concerns About Confidentiality

What do we mean by “confidentiality”?

- Patient information is protected through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). However, when patients agree to act as a partner on a research team and are compensated as such, HIPAA does not apply. During your work together, patients may disclose personal or confidential information about themselves as a way of sharing their experience as someone living with a disease or disability. This information should not be shared outside the team unless partners have given explicit permission to do so (ideally in writing).
- Team agreements should articulate partner preferences for disclosure of their name and/or photo outside the team.

A newly formed interdisciplinary research team asked three patient-partners how they would feel if their names and photos were included on the institutional departmental Facebook website. One patient-partner was happy to list her name and post her photo. The other two did not want their names or photos posted because their disease (Cystic Fibrosis) was confidential from their workplace and they feared discrimination if their employers found out about their disease. Thus, the team agreements stated that partners had to agree in writing to having their name and photos used on public facing websites prior to posting.

Articulate How Decisions Will Be Made

Team agreements should include how decisions will be made.

Power and team dynamics influence how teams make decisions and whether those decisions are made equitably. Teams should discuss their approach and process to decision making. Are there some areas where partners make decisions, but other areas where the researchers do? Groups may make decisions by voting, consensus, or a blended process.

Consensus is different from majority rule. Through consensus, an agreement is made that reflects compromise between all members of the group. Consensus should strive to be “win-win” and provide decisions to which everyone involved can agree. For more information about consensus, see Seeds for Change’s explanation on consensus decision making at <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortconsensus>

Once the PCOR team chooses how it will make decisions, practice the process early and often and make adjustments accordingly.

Write A Mission Statement

Effective teams have a shared understanding of the project, its structure, and commitments. Successful teams share a mission and purpose for the work they have come together to do. When team disagreements arise and there is a breakdown in trust, PCOR champions can help realign the team by re-focusing team members on the mission.

Create A Communication Plan

A communication plan outlines how your team shares information, and outlines which platforms will be used for meetings and messaging. Consult the “Guideline for Online PCOR Engagement” for tips on software or platforms to enhance your PCOR team’s functionality at <https://familymedicine.uw.edu/pcor-guide/>

Traditionally PCOR teams communicate in-person. Many PCOR teams had to meet virtually during COVID-19 pandemic. PCOR teams that have patients with Cystic Fibrosis must meet virtually because of infection control guidelines that restrict in-person contact between patients to avoid the spread of deadly pathogens. Virtual meetings may be better for PCOR teams who have partners from distant locations or who may not have the ability or means to travel.

A written communication plan in the team agreements includes:

- Where to meet synchronously, virtually or in person. If the PCOR team decides to meet virtually, team members may also need to agree on their conferencing platform for team meetings. Examples include Zoom, Webex or BlueJeans.
- How to best communicate with partners about questions and concerns that arise between meetings. Examples include Email, Slack, WhatsApp, or Microsoft Teams.
- Ways collaborative documents will be shared with all team members. Examples include Google Docs or Microsoft Teams.

Establish Meeting Times

Partners often have other responsibilities and may not be able to meet during typical business hours. PCOR teams that have partners who have a complex disease or disability may encounter absences due to illness. Agreements should stress that partners’ health is a priority and outline how the team will navigate alternate ways to engage partners who take time off to manage their disease, disability or other health-related matters. Partners may have personal matters unrelated to health that may need to be taken into consideration for meeting times as well.

Ways to ensure partners can regularly participate in team meetings:

- Switch up the time the team meets, or consider meeting in the evening or on weekends
- Consider different time zones. Agree on earliest and latest times members from different time-zones can meet
- Record team meetings that can be watched later and commented on by partners
- Meet individually with partners outside of regular team meeting times
- Provide written materials summarizing what occurred in the meeting

Other Agreements Related to Compensation and Institutional Processes

Team agreements should also include:

- Amounts and ways in which partners will be compensated.
 - ◇ The amount a partner is paid should be reflective of their contributions to the team or grant project. For examples, see the “Sample Stakeholder Engagement Plan” supplement on page 41, or PCORI’s Compensation Framework at <https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/PCORI-Compensation-Framework-for-Engaged-Research-Partners.pdf>
 - ◇ Consider including compensation for work done between meetings for partners who miss meetings due to illness or scheduling conflicts.
 - ◇ Delineate how partners will invoice or be paid according to institutional policies.
 - ◇ Also see “How to Compensate Outside Community Members” in the Prepare Guide (p. 23).
- Institutional processes related to IRB training or IT security (see appropriate sections in the Prepare Guide).

You have completed the Launch section.

Where to Find Partners [Cystic Fibrosis Community-specific]

1. CF Listservs and nonprofit organizations
 - a. Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute (CFRI) Weekly newsletter
 - b. Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Community Voice
 - c. Attain Health
 - d. Boomer Esiason Foundation
 - e. CF Roundtable blog and quarterly newsletter
2. General Research Listservs (you may need to budget these into your grant)
 - a. Rare Patient Voices
 - b. Savvy Coop
 - c. WEGO Health
3. Social Media
 - a. Build relationships with moderators of closed and secret Facebook groups populated by people with CF -- there are tons! You can ask your patients/caregivers for recommendations and an introduction. Some groups will not allow researchers, but your partners may be able to post for the team.
 - b. Some advice: Do not post a link to an application or survey on a public Facebook or Instagram page-- it will immediately be filled by spam bots.
4. CF Care Centers
 - a. Take the time to call less-engaged patients and families. You should never feel like you are coercing patients into joining your team. If you do, we suggest having a research coordinator or other staff member approach the patient or caregiver instead.
 - b. Recruiting at care centers can target a diverse population of people who are not plugged into CF organizations.
 - c. Use caregivers to engage the unengaged (e.g. spouses, parents).

Building Relationships

Below are ideas for how to build relationships on your PCOR team

1. Have social meetings to get to know one another, especially when integrating new team members.

- a. One way to accomplish this is to regularly schedule unstructured social meetings during normal meeting times in which you agree to talk about anything but the project. This would not be a working meeting, but a meeting to get to know each other.
- b. Another way is through structured social meetings, or “team-building events”. Experiment with online games for virtual meetings, discussion questions, or in-person activities to do together.

2. Share personal information.

- a. Researchers: do not be afraid to be vulnerable. It will help level the playing field, create a bond that keeps partners invested in the research, and humanize you as a person.
- b. It allows other team members to be vulnerable as well. This is particularly important for patient/caregiver-partners who may share deeply personal experiences and feelings about their disease, disability or disparity. Having vulnerability between team members helps create trust and honesty in the partnership.

3. Start each meeting with ice-breaker questions.

- a. Ask ice-breaker questions at the beginning of your meetings as a way to get to know one another. An ice-breaker at the outset of the meeting brings energy and fun and makes it easier to maintain momentum, investment, and interest as the meeting progresses.
- b. Finding ice-breaker questions is as easy as doing a quick Google search. Finding ice-breakers can be a task that is shared and rotated throughout the team.

Example ice-breaker questions:

- What is your favorite or most used emoji?
- If you could travel to any place in the world, without restrictions, where would you go?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
- What is your favorite item you have bought this year?
- If you had to delete all but three apps on your smartphone, which ones would you keep?
- As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up and why?

If your team does not have time for an ice-breaker at the beginning of meetings, consider other ways to get to know one another, such as “fun fact” bios. These bios should not have experience, titles, or educational background on them. Instead, they should include fun facts.

4. Address one another by first name, no titles allowed.

- a. Titles make the team hierarchical. One of the main tenets of PCOR is that partners are equal members of the team.

5. Skill share

- a. Everyone brings experiences and skills to your team, including partners. Ask team members to report or demonstrate their skill on a video call.
- b. After discussing parts of the project that need to be completed, determine who on the PCOR team has the skills to assist with certain aspects of the project.

6. Create a shared language.

- a. Agree to communicate in a way that is understood by partners (e.g. spell out acronyms when speaking or writing). Partners may have some research training but they need information that matches their level of understanding.
- b. Partners are easily confused and intimidated by lingo and jargon. This is particularly important to consider regarding partners' comfort in the partnership. Defining acronyms ensures all team members understand what is being said. The PCOR champion should check in with partners regularly to make sure they understand everything.
- c. Foster a culture of questioning. Take the time to answer partner questions about an acronym or concept they don't understand, either verbally or in the chat box of your video conference software. If you won't have time to go over it, the PCOR champion can meet with the partner after a team meeting to ensure they understand everything.
- d. Leveling the playing field fosters more honesty from partners. This is particularly important in the realm of feedback. Partners may not want to provide honest feedback on a hierarchical team. We encourage continuous feedback to improve the team and team experiences (see stakeholder survey examples in Monitor & Sustain supplement pages 64-72).

Generating A Governance Document

A governance document should include:

1. A Team mission statement
2. Guidelines about creating inclusive and respectful space (i.e. meeting ground rules). See “Example Meeting Ground Rules” on page 62
3. Agreements for how the team will communicate -- this includes video conferencing software, document sharing platforms, instant messaging, email, etc.
 - a. See our User Guide on the types of platforms and how to pick ones that meet your team’s needs at <https://familymedicine.uw.edu/pcor-guide/>
 - b. Identify a member to serve as a tech lead
4. Addressing hierarchy and creating a level playing field (this includes things like being on a first name basis)
5. Sometimes patient partners are ill and team members have to be flexible when medical issues come up
 - a. Consider: The first line of an agreement should be that the team will honor partners’ health needs
6. Frequency and length of meetings
7. Areas where patient/caregiver-partners will take a lead in activities (such as publishing in non-peer reviewed publications)
8. Partner compensation as outlined under the Prepare phase step (p. 23).
9. Evaluation (See Monitor & Sustain Step)
 - a. Discuss how frequently you will evaluate the team dynamic
 - b. Discuss if team members have other components they would like to evaluate

HELPFUL HINT

Create processes up front to allow for make-up work, a meeting surrogate, or other ways the team can keep moving forward so that partners who may need time off to address health remain engaged.

The governance document is considered a living document, and one that the group should re-visit on a regular basis. Make sure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to discuss and comment on the group vision, mission, philosophy, outcomes, expectations, and roles.

Sample Stakeholder Engagement and Compensation Plan

Below is an example of partners roles and compensation, depending on their level of engagement.

Engagement level	Participant Role	Responsibilities	Compensation
Occasional	Any interested person with CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give occasional feedback on CF project ideas and progress. • Chat on public Facebook page or answer online surveys. • Vote on priority areas for research. 	None
Medium	Engaged researchers, consultants, and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with research team to discuss patient research questions. • Help translate these questions/ideas into fundable research questions. Provide feedback on the CF project progress. • Provide ideas for how to reach the greater CF community. 	\$20/meeting
High	Equal partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive overall direction and vision of the project. • People with CF help generate research questions. • Meet regularly during CF project. Provide input on grant applications. Attend regular project meetings, provide input into recruitment plans & materials, how to display research findings. • Help disseminate findings to CF community. 	\$30/meeting

PCOR Training Manual

Step 3: Implement

This step describes how to lead newly formed PCOR teams regarding grant applications and integrating partners into each stage of the research project. We have found that having a research coordinator with excellent communication skills to help coordinate between researchers and partners is key to high-functioning PCOR collaborations.

For the purposes of this document, when the term “partners” is used, it is inclusive of patient, caregiver and community partners.

Implement Includes:

1. Planning the study
2. Conducting the study
3. Disseminating the results

This table of contents is a starting list for this stage, which you can adapt for your needs.

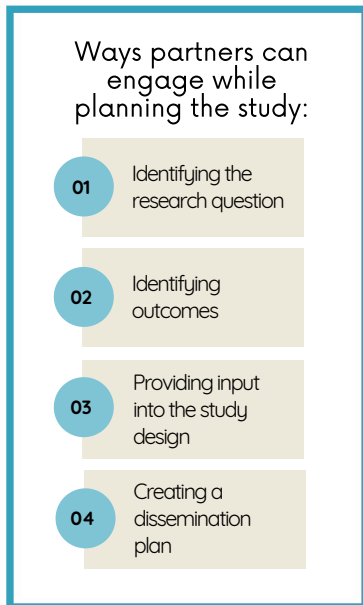
Implement Activities	
Plan the study.....	43
Formulate the research questions and outcomes that reflect patient-driven priorities.....	43
Write the grant	44
Conduct the study.....	47
Help the team stay on track to complete the grant project on time.....	47
Disseminate the results.....	48
Implement Supplement.....	49

Figure 4. Diagram of the phases of a study



PLAN THE STUDY

Think about what your study question will be, making final decisions after speaking with your partners. Find out what research questions and outcomes are most important to the community.



The first thing to do when planning a study is to brainstorm ideas with a diverse set of partners. Our team recommends hosting World Café discussion sessions on the research team’s area of interest to gather a list of questions that are most important to patients/caregivers.

World Café is a process of consensus building, achieved through collaboration between stakeholders. Partner/researcher duos host rooms and discussions with prompts meant to spur conversation and ideas. The goals for duos are to find the questions and outcomes that matter most to partners. In person, this is achieved through having multiple tables with no more than 4 people, accompanied by large, blank sheets of paper and markers on top of each table. A similar arrangement can be achieved virtually by separating participants into virtual rooms and by using online tools such as mural at <https://www.mural.co/> or by using the whiteboard function on Zoom.

Follow these steps for a World Café session:

1. Use researcher/partner duos to design the discussion questions and lead the groups. Example questions are available at <https://academic.oup.com/jamia/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jamia/ocab224/6408574>
2. Invite 10-15 additional patient and/or caregiver attendees to participate in discussions to identify research questions and study outcomes.

Note: There will be more patients and caregivers participating at this stage than on your PCOR team, but a group of this size will help you to gather diverse input. If your PCOR team does not already include the number of partners desired, this session can be used as an opportunity to determine the interest of and invite potential partners.

3. Allow attendees to reflect on the ideas generated during the discussion session and prioritize top research ideas and outcomes for the research team at the end or at a separate follow-up meeting.
4. Please note: activities at this stage are not considered human subjects research, especially if researchers do not plan to publish their findings from informal focus groups or World Cafe sessions. In this capacity, partners are not research subjects, but are acting as advisors to inform the forthcoming research project. See p. 22 for additional information about institutional IRBs.

Formulate Research Questions and Outcomes That Reflect Patient-Driven Priorities

The priority list from World Café or other brainstorming techniques can be used to translate partner ideas into fundable research question(s). Please refer to the supplement “Turning Partner Ideas Into Fundable Research Questions” on page 49. In table 5 below, we present three patient-identified topics (left column) related to reproductive health and cystic fibrosis and how PCOR researchers and partners together turned them into fundable research questions (right column):

Turning Patient Ideas Into a Research Grant

Table 5. Examples of ideas from patients with cystic fibrosis that were collaboratively turned into fundable research questions

Patient-Identified Topic Area	Fundable Research Questions
Parenting and pregnancy decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the impact of lung function on pregnancy?• What is the impact of lung function over time after pregnancy?• What does parenting with CF look like?
Perimenopausal/menopausal stage of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it safe/beneficial for women with CF to take hormone therapy after menopause?• Do women with CF enter menopause earlier than women without CF?
Contraceptive use and CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does hormonal birth control interact with CF medications?• What are the long-term effects of hormonal birth control use on women with CF?

HELPFUL HINTS

Sometimes patients and caregivers provide research ideas that are not feasible. In this case PCOR champions must explain why a particular question is not feasible. Help engage the partners in reframing the question so that it is succinct and measurable. Alternatively, PCOR champions and other research team members may have their own research questions they want to pursue that don't align with what the partners prioritize. PCOR champions and researchers should be flexible by prioritizing research questions from stakeholder partners.

Write The Grant

Grant writing usually requires a flurry of activities that may be unsettling to partners. Set expectations about grant writing early.

Clarify roles prior to writing the grant

- Most of the grant writing is likely to be completed by the Project Lead and researchers, with partners serving as advisors.
- The Project Lead should decide whether the partners can take a lead on one or more pieces of the grant writing, such as dissemination of findings to the patient or caregiver community.
- Grant applications should include a stakeholder engagement activity plan as part of the research study. See the "Sample Engagement Plan" supplement on page 51.
- Partners will likely need to write and submit a short biosketch along with the researchers. See p. 46 for additional tips to support partners with biosketches.

After writing a grant, a partner wanted to understand the process more fully because some components they wrote were changed by the Project Lead. The partner was surprised, and even a bit hurt. The Project Lead met with the partner to review and explain some of the changes that were made in the writing. The meeting helped the partner understand the grant process and improve their grant-writing skills. The meeting also led to greater satisfaction with the process and team relationship. As the team wrote more grants, the Project Lead preemptively explained changes in the grant application, which led to meaningful discussions with the partners such that partners felt their contributions were helpful and important.

Ways to help keep partners engaged during grant writing and set expectations about likelihood of funding:

1. Identify parts of the grants that a patient/caregiver-partner may be able to write. Patient/caregivers know their community well and often can give important feedback about how best to recruit research subjects or how to disseminate the results.
2. Consider having a research coordinator work closely with partners on certain sections of the grant such as how partners will be engaged in the project.
3. Check back regularly with partners about the progress of the grant submission. Let partners read parts of the submission with the understanding that the Project Lead may choose not to implement all the feedback by the partners. *Make sure to communicate realistic expectations to partners.*
 - a. Patients and other stakeholders are often unaware of the time it takes to hear back about a grant, only to find out it was not funded. It is imperative that you share these possibilities with your team. A funding rejection can be discouraging, but if possible, turn this into a positive learning experience that the team can use to grow. This will help to make it feel less like a loss.
4. Partners are often key players in the grant, so it is important to set expectations early and plan for other smaller grant activities for the team to work on while waiting to hear back about a grant application.

Writing an engagement plan

Many grants involving patient-partners require an engagement plan. An engagement plan spells out most items in your team agreements (see Launch Guide), including when and how your team partners will be engaged within each phase of the study.

How to write an engagement plan:

- Provide a roster of organizational stakeholders or individuals who are advising the study team (include 3-5 sentence bios).
- Articulate the structure of your engagement with patients and caregivers, including communication plans (see Launch Guide).
- Provide an "activities timeline" that includes descriptions of researcher/partner activities, frequency, and purpose (see Stages of studies and potential partner activities table below.)
- Outline how often the team plans to meet.

If you're unsure about an engagement plan structure or details, start with PCORI's Engagement Plan Template at <https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/PCORI-Updated-Engagement-Plan-Template.pdf>. For examples, see the "Sample Stakeholder Engagement Plan" supplements on pages 52-53.

Table 6 outlines examples of activities partners may participate in for each phase of research.

Table 6. Stages of studies and potential partner activities	
Study Stages	Activities of Patient/Caregiver Partners
Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review pilot results and provide feedback for changes to the study • Review survey questions and other data collection forms
Data Collection and Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help create and disseminate recruitment flyers • Receive updates about enrollment progress and advise as needed • Present updates about progress of research study to healthcare providers and patients/families/community
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss interpretation of findings and the study's conclusions • Provide input about how to best present the study findings so they are understandable to a wide audience • Assist with qualitative analysis (this may require additional training)
Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create compelling and understandable summaries of research and findings for patients/families/community • Identify organizational groups/committees and community groups that should be informed about study findings • Help write and edit publications for peer-reviewed journals • Present findings to healthcare providers and patients/families/community

Assist Partners With Writing A Biosketch

Most biosketch templates required by granting agencies are suitable for academicians who are able to populate the biosketch with their educational, honorary, funded and peer-reviewed endeavors. Patients, caregivers and community members may not have such accolades and may feel like they are unqualified to be on the research team if asked to complete the biosketch on their own. Thus, it is important for PCOR Champions to assist partners with completing their biosketches. We encourage teams to interview partners about their current and past roles, education, any peer or non-peer reviewed contributions or lectures, prior grants/project they participated on and their vision and philosophies. Doing this helps highlight the partner 's contributions to the team and allows the team research coordinator to create a draft from which the partner can then finalize their biosketch for the grant submission. See page 55 for sample wording of a biosketch for a community partner.

Debrief about the grant writing process after submission

Gather feedback from team members (researchers and partners) after the grant is submitted.

- Send a confidential survey or host a meeting to discuss what worked well/didn't work well with the grant writing process.
- Incorporate feedback into team processes. Make sure team members review and agree on these changes before writing the next grant.

CONDUCT THE STUDY

Once the grant is funded, the team can get to work.

Help The Team Stay On Track To Complete The Grant Project On Time

Ways partners can engage while conducting the study:

- 01 Assisting with data collection
- 02 Advising on study participant recruitment and retention strategies
- 03 Developing the study materials
- 04 Advising on how to present findings for lay audiences

- Meet regularly with the whole research team, including the partners.
- Create a detailed plan of tasks with due dates.
- Review the timeline regularly and adjust accordingly.
- Consider using project management tools/software.
- Keep in mind that getting behind on project tasks or milestone deadlines can be stressful for partners because often their schedules do not allow for “quick turn-arounds” or “working until the work is done”.
- Be open to new tasks partners can undertake that had not been considered in early planning.

Tips to help teams organize projects:

- Use the PRINCE2 method to help with the organization and control of projects. It is not specifically designed for research studies, but can be tailored to fit your study’s needs. PRINCE2 Training options are found here: <https://www.prince2.com/uk>

- Other tools for keeping your study on track and managing tasks include using a Gantt chart or other technologies through websites and programs such as Smartsheet at <https://www.smartsheet.com/s/pm-templates-gallery> and Click Up at <https://clickup.com/project-management/task-management>.
- If you introduce new tools for team use, make sure every team member has been oriented to how to use those tools.

Ways to maintain the project timeline:

- Think ahead about potential roadblocks: which roadblocks might occur and what strategies can the Project Lead suggest to handle them?
- Include “padded” time for parts of the study that may take longer than expected (plan to start the more difficult aspects of the project earlier than what the grant timeline may have proposed).
- Determine if tasks can be shared.
- Facilitate team members directly talking to one another if one team member needs information from another. There is a tendency for members on the research team to develop “backroom” discussions, especially with new partners on the team. PCOR Leads should be cognizant that they may need to facilitate direct conversations between researchers and partners when the group is still learning to work together.

DISSEMINATE THE RESULTS

Ideally teams have already considered their dissemination plan during the planning phase.

As the study progresses, the PCOR team can build a dissemination plan using the “Dissemination Tool” supplement on page 54. The tool asks PCOR teams to consider:

Ways partners can engage while disseminating results:

- 01 Co-authoring and/or co-presenting findings at scientific conferences
- 02 Co-authoring manuscripts for scientific journals
- 03 Writing articles in community publications
- 04 Posting published papers in community forums, blogs, and facebook groups
- 05 Helping with other activities identified in the dissemination plan

- Primary, secondary, tertiary communities to reach.
- How messages will be tailored to each community.
- What channels will be used to reach those communities.

Review the PCORI website for examples of how to create a story about your findings: “PCORI Stories” at <https://www.pcori.org/impact/pcori-stories>. PCORI includes written and video testimonials from both patient-partners and researchers.

- Consider disseminating your research using audio at <https://www.pcori.org/research-results/pcori-stories/changing-conversation-about-intellectual-developmental-disabilities> and video at <https://www.pcori.org/research-results/pcori-stories/engagement-awards-teams-ride-momentum-research-projects>.
- Examples of PCORI researchers who have shared their content can be viewed here: <https://www.pcori.org/research-results/pcori-stories/spreading-communication-plan-improve-patient-safety-hospitals> and at <https://www.pcori.org/research-results/pcori-stories/using-personal-health-characteristics-to-develop-individualized-and-personalized-treatment>

Recognizing the involvement of patient/caregiver stakeholders in scientific publications is key to building and maintaining trustful relationships.

- Partners can write up the study in non-peer reviewed publications or on social media for their respective communities. For individuals with CF, these might include: CF Roundtable, CFF Community blog, and CF News Today.
- For an extensive overview of dissemination, please see the PCORI Dissemination & Implementation Toolkit at <https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/PCORI-DI-Toolkit-February-2015.pdf>

Our CF PCOR team conducted a survey study to examine what healthcare providers, patients, caregivers and other advocates thought about patient-centered outcomes research. As data collection and analysis were underway, the PCOR team discussed the different communities that may be interested in the findings. We used the Dissemination Tool to identify primary and secondary audiences. Partner members had ideas about how to post study findings on blogs or social media platforms and who would be the primary team member to disseminate those findings. The team made plans for researchers and partners to submit poster presentations to conferences and present as a dyad. The researchers prioritized writing peer-reviewed publications, while the partners identified and took the lead in writing for community-specific publications.

You have completed the Implement section.

Turn Partner Ideas Into Fundable Research Questions

This tool provides additional instructions and guidance to help develop a Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) Question. CER compares one type of treatment to another and is frequently used in PCOR. This tool is based on the PICOTS framework (Population, Intervention, Comparators, Outcomes, Timing, and Setting). More information about PICOTS can be found in this article: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3430448/>. Much of your research should utilize the PICOTS framework and we highly encourage you to share the article link above with your project partners as you work on your research questions together.

Population	<p><i>What is the patient population of interest?</i></p> <p>Prior to identifying your CER question(s) you should be able to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are intervention effects expected to be homogeneous or heterogeneous between different subgroups of the population? What subgroups will be considered in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, etc.? How will patients be recruited for the study?
Intervention	<p><i>How will your CER question and study translate into meaningful real-world situations?</i></p> <p>Prior to identifying your CER question(s) you should be able to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your intervention evidence-based? How will patients access the evidence-based intervention? What will the costs of the evidence-based intervention be? Who will implement the evidence-based intervention? Why is your study design the best way to answer your CER question?
Comparator	<p><i>What are the alternatives?</i></p> <p>Prior to identifying your CER question(s) you should be able to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why are these comparators the best for your patient population? What benefit does each comparator provide? What data proves the efficacy of each comparator? What modifications to each comparator might make them more appropriate for the population of interest? How will a study of these comparators help patients make decisions in the healthcare system?

Outcomes	<p><i>What are the outcomes and endpoints of interest?</i></p> <p>Prior to identifying your CER question(s) you should be able to answer the following questions: Why are these outcomes important to your patient population? What will the impact of these outcomes be in the healthcare system? How will you measure the outcomes? How will you share your findings with the research, patient, and stakeholder communities?</p>
Timing	<p><i>What is the time frame needed to implement the evidence-based intervention and assess outcomes?</i></p> <p>Prior to identifying your CER question(s) you should be able to answer the following questions: Are stakeholders interested in short-term or long-term outcomes? Why is this an appropriate time frame for your patient population? Is the time frame realistic for the funding period and budget? Why is the time frame realistic for getting to robust research outcomes?</p>
Setting	<p><i>What is the setting of interest (e.g., hospital, private practice, community, etc.)?</i></p> <p>Prior to identifying your CER question(s) you should be able to answer the following questions: Why is this an appropriate setting for your patient population? How is the setting appropriate for the time frame and budget? How is the setting realistic for translating outcomes into a real world setting that is meaningful to patients? How is the setting the most appropriate place to conduct this research?</p>
CER Question	<p>Write your CER question here. Then describe the details in the lines below. Be sure to use PCORI's guidelines for writing research questions: http://www.pcori.org/get-involved/suggest-patient-centered-research-question/how-write-practical-useful-research-question.</p>

Sample Engagement Plan

Example: Key Activity Timeline

Meeting Activity	Frequency	Setting/Method	Purpose
Fill in the meeting or type of activity taking place	Fill in the frequency of either the meeting or activity (e.g., monthly, quarterly, as needed)	Detail the setting for meetings or the methods for the activity	Write about the purpose and intent of the meeting or activity
e.g., Community Advisory Board Meeting	e.g., Quarterly	e.g., Community public library in person	e.g., Year 1: input on protocol development, finalizing outcome measures; Year 2: recruitment strategies; Year 3: Data analysis and dissemination
e.g., Patient/Caregiver Advisory Board	e.g., Monthly for the first 6 months, then quarterly, with an annual combined meeting of entire study team	e.g., Monthly and quarterly meetings on Zoom web conference platform; Annual meetings in person at varying locations, one year at Medical Center, one year at community based organization.	e.g., First 6 months: refine study protocol and outcome measures Quarterly: provide project status updates including preliminary data analysis, recruitment challenges, refinement of patient-facing materials Annual: shared decision making on larger study design and implementation issues, dissemination planning, preliminary data analysis

Adapted from <https://www.pcori.org/sites/default/files/PCORI-Updated-Engagement-Plan-Template.pdf>

Sample Stakeholder Engagement Plan for Grant Applications

The table below is an example of how stakeholder engagement can be outlined in a grant application. It includes the level of engagement, activities, and compensation.

Engagement Level	Participant Role	Responsibilities	Compensation
Occasional	Any interested person with CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give occasional feedback on CF project ideas and progress; • Chat on a public Facebook page, or answer online surveys. • Vote on priority areas for research. 	None
Medium	Engaged researchers, consultants, and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with research team to discuss patient research questions. • Help translate these questions/ideas into fundable research questions. Provide feedback on the CF project progress. • Provide ideas with reaching the greater CF community. 	\$20/meeting
High	Equal partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive overall direction and vision of the project. • People with CF help generate research questions. • Meet regularly during CF project. Provide input on grant applications. Attend regular project meetings, provide input into recruitment plans & materials, how to display research findings. • Help disseminate findings to CF community. 	\$30/meeting

Sample Stakeholder Engagement Plan From Cystic Fibrosis Reproductive and Sexual Health Collaborative (CFReSHC)

The three tables below can be used as a model of how to articulate your PCOR team's stakeholder engagement plan for research grants.

Who?

Source	Type	Address	Website	Program, Service or Activity
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation	National	Bethesda, MD	www.cff.org	Community and Research Voice Initiatives
Cystic Fibrosis Research, Inc.	National	Redwood City, CA	www.cfri.org	Annual Conference
Cystic Life	National	Arizona	www.cysticlife.org	Online community

Why?

Provide rationale for why you have listed the organizations in the WHO table

Source	Why we are engaging with this stakeholder organization?	Anticipated benefit of engagement?
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation	The CFF has multiple resources for CFReSHC	1. CFReSHC patient-partners are organizing and hosting a mini-conference about sexual and reproductive health for patients with CF. This is the crux of our Collaborative and a much desired topic about which women with CF would like more information.
Cystic Fibrosis Research, Inc.	1. Weekly e-blasts	1. We hope to use e-blasts to disseminate new findings or workshops we generate through CFReSHC.
Cystic Life	1. Well established on-line community with CF patients, caretakers, and advocates.	Enhances our lines of communication with the greater CF community.

How?

Source	Contact Person	Role we hope stakeholder will play in CFReSHC partnership?
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation		Assist with dissemination of our findings.
Cystic Fibrosis Research, Inc.		Provide avenue for dissemination, help CFReSHC recruit more members
Cystic Life		Provide an avenue for dissemination of our findings or activities to the greater CF community.

Dissemination Tool

<Project title>

The table below can be used to articulate your PCOR team's dissemination plan for research grants.

Project Background				
Project Objective				
Project Findings (brief)				
PRIMARY TARGET AUDIENCE:				
OUTREACH PURPOSE				
PRIORITY POPULATION 1	KEY MESSAGES & CONTENT	DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS	RESOURCES REQUIRED?	RESPONSIBLE PARTY?
	Key Message 1:			
	Key Message 2:			
	Key Message 3:			
PRIMARY TARGET AUDIENCE:				
OUTREACH PURPOSE				
PRIORITY POPULATION 2 (OPTIONAL)	KEY MESSAGES & CONTENT	DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS	RESOURCES REQUIRED?	RESPONSIBLE PARTY?
	Key Message 1:			
	Key Message 2:			
	Key Message 3:			
SECONDARY TARGET AUDIENCE:				
OUTREACH PURPOSE				
PRIORITY POPULATION 3	KEY MESSAGES & CONTENT	DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS	RESOURCES REQUIRED?	RESPONSIBLE PARTY?
	Key Message 1:			
	Key Message 2:			
	Key Message 3:			
TERTIARY TARGET AUDIENCE:				
OUTREACH PURPOSE				

Sample Wording for Community Partner Biosketch

XX is a [role] at the [community partner organization] with a diverse background in [state background]. XX has ventured into impactful collaborations stemming from active engagement in the public health field to promote [health topic], advocacy for equitable health resources allocation in the XX community, and commitment to coordinate efforts and abilities to increase the population's health literacy. To further enhance health decision-making capacities and quality of life outcomes, XX has also obtained her [state degree] in [major subject or focus] at [state name of educational institution]. XX continues to envision a social justice movement to support healthy lifestyle changes through education-driven voluntary behavior change activities and implementation of grassroots level interventions with a holistic approach to health and wellness.

PCOR Training Manual

Step 4: Monitor & Sustain

The Monitor & Sustain Guide provides suggestions for supporting success and implementing continuous improvement. The guide contains examples of surveys that the team can disseminate to gather information about how the researcher/stakeholder relationship is going, whether equal partnership is being maintained, and where teams may need to adjust to improve their processes.

For the purposes of this document, when the term “partners” is used, it is inclusive of patient, caregiver and community partners.

Monitor & Sustain Includes:

1. Supporting the PCOR team
2. Evaluating engagement
3. Handling disagreements
4. Continuing engagement

This table of contents is a starting list for this stage, which you can adapt for your needs.

Monitor & Sustain Activities	
Supporting the PCOR team.....	57
Evaluating engagement.....	57
Consider including a process evaluator.....	57
Assess inclusion.....	58
Handling disagreements.....	59
What to do when there are conflicting opinions.....	59
Continuing engagement.....	60
Celebrate successes.....	60
Evolving partner roles.....	60
Expanding the partnership.....	60
Planning future grants.....	61
Monitor & Sustain Supplement.....	62

SUPPORTING THE PCOR TEAM

PCOR champions should continuously support the PCOR team throughout the project. To do so, consider implementing the following:

- Frequently review the team's mission statement and project goals.
- Review team agreements before every meeting (For ideas for creating meeting team agreements, see the "Example Meeting Ground Rules" supplement on page 62).

During team interactions, PCOR Champions should:

- Apply best practice guidelines for participation in meetings and other team interactions (see "Agreements for Meeting Behavior" supplement on page 63).
- Encourage team members to assume any contribution has a positive intent.
- Recognize potential tension between research productivity and team inclusion:
 - ◊ Stay focused on getting tasks done and meeting milestones, but be flexible when things change, such as a partner being out with illness or taking care of an ill family member.
 - ◊ Take into account partner needs and inputs.
 - ◊ While partners strengthen the project, recognize that adjusting elements of the research project based on partner feedback takes time and can potentially delay meeting project milestones.
- Lead by example – create an environment where everyone is treated respectfully.
- Continually find ways to reduce hierarchy.

HELPFUL HINT

PCORI has recommendations for best practice guidelines for participation when speaking in front of the group. These include:

1. Use I-statements (e.g., I think, I believe)
2. State your goal
3. Pros and cons to your point of view
4. Contextualize (where is your point of view coming from?)

EVALUATING ENGAGEMENT

Having a system in place to regularly evaluate the PCOR engagement process is critical to team sustainability.

Consider Including A Process Evaluator

This could be anyone on your team or a consultant/ambassador who has experience with PCOR.

Team evaluation can occur in the following ways:

- Process evaluation measures your project progress and efficacy.

- Consistent project evaluation can help your team discover problems before they arise and help you to redirect when they do.
- A process evaluator will help your team determine if your study is having the effect you intended.
- Process evaluation helps determine if your study is reaching the correct population and if you are having the intended results.
- For more information about process evaluation and methods of process evaluation for community-based teams, review this article: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.27.021405.102207>
- Distribute a confidential stakeholder/partner survey at regular intervals.
 - ◊ For smaller research groups, see example stakeholder survey questions in the “Example Short Stakeholder Survey for Small Groups 1 & 2” located on pages 64 and 65.
 - ◊ For larger stakeholder groups and groups with diverse stakeholder members, see the “Example Extensive Partnership Survey for Large Groups” starting on page 66.
- Have regular one-on-one check-ins with partners.
- Be flexible to respond and change course to improve experiences.
- Evaluate every meeting at the end using the Whip Method (explained below) or another feedback process. Feedback can be provided verbally, in writing, or through another method that works best for the PCOR team.

HELPFUL HINT

Establishing a process to assess partnership is important. An increasing number of publications with studies that include partners are asking authors to articulate the impact of partner engagement and how this impact was evaluated. Publishers also expect to see critical reflections from researchers about what went well or poorly with partners on the team.

Assess Inclusion

Part of evaluation is assessing for inclusion. PCOR champions want to ensure that all partner voices are heard. Below are some questions you can ask partners to assess for inclusion:

- How has your unique perspective been incorporated?
- Have you felt heard?
- Have you been treated as an expert of your own experience?
- How do you think your participation has changed or enhanced the project?

HELPFUL HINT

The Whip Method is a form of evaluation that can be incorporated at the end of meetings. The Whip Method asks participants to reflect on what went well, what went poorly, and their feelings throughout the meeting. After this brief reflection, everyone on the team is asked to sum up how they felt about the meeting in one word. This method of feedback can help you gauge your team’s engagement and energy. An example of the Whip Method can be found at this link:
<https://www.leadstrat.com/dysfunction-prevention-technique-bring-the-whip-to-your-meeting/>

HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS

Over time, friction can occur between PCOR team members.

- Plan ahead: PCOR champions should talk to team members privately to find out how they react to discord as individuals (see Thomas-Kilmann information below). This will help the PCOR Champion be better equipped to facilitate a productive conversation and help address conflict on the team.
- Deal with disagreements openly and often, with the goal of turning disagreement into productive learning and negotiation. Use it to help create common understanding for the partnership.
- Use disagreements to bring new information, or reframe an idea, issue, or course of action, which may help your project move forward.

HELPFUL HINT

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument gives 5 styles for handling conflict, including collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, competing, and compromising. The PCOR champion should be aware of their conflict handling style, as well as those of members on their team. It will help the PCOR champion determine when to use each style and how they handle conflict personally. Note: disagreement should occur for the betterment of the study, but avoid personal attacks. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ralph-Kilmann/publication/265565339_Thomas-Kilmann_conflict_MODE_instrument/links/558c15d908aee43bf6ae1917/Thomas-Kilmann-conflict-MODE-instrument.pdf

What To Do With Disagreements and Conflicts:

- Help team members think critically
- Reframe the disagreement
- Ask members to back up their thinking with reasonable arguments
- Recognize that disagreements cannot necessarily be resolved in a single team meeting
- If disagreements persist, consider bringing in a mediator, either from your university or someone outside to help the team work through it and avoid resentments

HELPFUL HINT

Disagreement, whether it is dissenting opinions, world views, or personalities can be frightening to people, and thus, they may ignore or gloss over it. PCOR champions should be ready to bring conflicting opinions into the open and discuss them. Encourage team members to resolve their differences by learning from each other and putting their ideas together.

A partner felt frustrated with a lack of communication and information shared by the members of the primary research team. After some tense team discussions, the PCOR Champion decided to bring in a mediator from the university. The mediator met with the team and helped the team develop processes to post queries to all team members so that all members, including partners, felt like they were included and informed. All members of the team were satisfied with the mediation and the work was able to proceed without further conflict.

CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT

Celebrate Successes

- Review and celebrate processes that are going well within the PCOR team
- Encourage partners to write about and share team successes with their respective communities, and post links on social media. Tag well-known community stakeholder accounts in posts and ask them to re-post
- Always send thank-you letters when you receive support—no matter the type of support, large or small
- Communicate regularly with your stakeholders so that they understand the value and impact of their support

Evolving Partner Roles

As the PCOR team moves forward, the role of partners may evolve. Some partners leave the project due to a change in health or circumstance and thus, the team may need a replacement. The team may expand to include new partners, budget allowing. For partners who leave the team, consider following up personally to find out why. It is helpful to check in with partners who have missed meetings without notifying the team lead to understand whether the current arrangement is meeting their needs. Partners may also want to stay involved with the team but in a less-committed role (See levels of engagement on page 41).

HELPFUL HINT

When a project ends or a partner leaves, make sure to thank them for their time, effort, and expertise. You can send them an e-card signed by everyone on the team, or a handwritten thank you note, or something else to show your appreciation.

Expanding the Partnership

One way to recruit new partners onto the research team is to ask the current partners to help invite, interview, and select new partners.

You may find if your team has been in place for some time, it can be difficult to onboard new partners. Make sure to review “Onboard Partners” and “Create a Welcoming Environment” (page 32) in the Launch Guide when new partners join the team.

At these junctures, revisit team agreements and norms to ensure new partners understand how the team currently functions. This gesture also provides your new partner an opportunity to express how they would like to participate on the team.

Another idea is to pair an established partner with the new partner as a “buddy”. This can help make the new partner feel welcome and comfortable on the research team. The buddy can check in with new partners, speak to them between meetings, and help explain what the study is and their role on the team.

Planning Future Grants

Before the study is finalized, the team should take some time to think about whether or not they want to continue working together on future funded projects. It often makes sense to continue with the same team and partners due to the amount of time and expertise that went into building trustful, productive relationships. Some questions PCOR champions should consider to assess future plans include:

- Are there additional patient-directed research questions that warrant further study?
- Do the current partners have the interest, capacity, and/or skills for the next grant?
- Do research team members and partners see the value of co-production to meet the PCOR team's objectives?
- Is the team able to study the impact of partner engagement on research findings?

Even if the team is not continuing with another project together, partners often stay involved as co-authors when manuscripts are submitted, which can be months after the project concludes.

You have completed the Monitor & Sustain section.

Example Meeting Ground Rules

Ground Rules for Meeting Logistics

- 1. Send out the agenda in advance.** The meeting planner should prepare and distribute the agenda and pre-work before the meeting takes place. The agenda should be sent out 5 days in advance. Documents for review should be sent out a week in advance. Keep the meeting focused on moving through the agenda items.
- 2. Include timestamps on the agenda.** The meeting planner should include how much time each item is expected to use, in order to keep the meeting running smoothly.
- 3. Assign meeting roles.** Assign a note-taker, time-keeper, and facilitator for all your meetings. Rotate roles each meeting; create a calendar a few meetings in advance to keep track of roles. The facilitator should be mindful of cultural/language differences and group dynamics, while also asking relevant questions and managing time.
- 4. Follow the agenda template.** Write out meeting objectives at the top of the agenda. Clearly mark which agenda items will require information sharing, information gathering, or making a decision.
- 5. Start with the most important items.** The agenda should include the most time sensitive or pertinent items early in the meeting to ensure there is sufficient time to discuss.
- 6. Remind participants of rules for meeting behavior.** The facilitator should briefly state the ground rules for meeting behavior at the top of the meeting.
- 7. Start and end meetings on time and arrive at meetings punctually.** Respect each other's time. Start on time even if all participants are not present.
- 8. Prepare adequately for the meeting and participate fully.** Meeting attendees will have read, reviewed pertinent documents, gathered information or input, or simply assessed their own thoughts and ideas prior to the meeting. The team will accommodate accessibility requests from the group to ensure that everyone can participate fully.
- 9. Debrief at the end of the meeting.** Conclude the meeting by summarizing main points, confirming decisions, reiterating next steps, and having all participants rank the meeting on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Discuss any ratings of 3 or lower as a group or in a separate, private conversation.

Agreements for Meeting Behavior

- 1. Treat everyone with respect.** We will express our opinions responsibly, focusing on the issues and not on personal differences, and speak both honestly and kindly.
- 2. Not interrupt each other.** We recognize that we all sometimes interrupt, either by mistake or to build on others' statements. However, we will strive to allow each person the space to finish his or her thoughts.
- 3. Express ourselves completely and concisely.** We recognize the value of each other's input and time.
- 4. Engage with each other's thoughts, ideas, and opinions.** We recognize the value and richness of a meeting when everyone has a chance to participate. We will graciously engage with opinions different from our own.
- 5. Stay focused on the topic under discussion.** We will stay focused on the agreed upon topics unless the group makes a conscious decision to alter the agenda.
- 6. Intervene immediately if you believe things are running off track.** We are all empowered to gently and firmly intervene if another participant is off-topic or acting out of sync with the ground rules. For example, the facilitator may choose to send someone a private message during the meeting if they believe that someone is leading the meeting off track.
- 7. Do not multitask** (do other work) during the meeting, unless this has been previously discussed with the group.
- 8. Use the mute button** when you are not speaking to prevent the transmission of background noise.
- 9. Speak up** or comment in the chat box to get attention if you have something to say.
- 10. Turn on your video** whenever possible.
- 11. Say hello** and introduce yourself if you are calling in and we cannot see your face.

Example Short Stakeholder Survey for Small Groups 1

Please state your agreement with the following statements:

1. Team members in the group respected my opinion

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	
Agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree

2. I spoke up as much as I wanted to in the group

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	
Agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree

3. There was enough time to discuss all the relevant issues

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	
Agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree

4. The facilitator ensured that all opinions were considered

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	
Agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree

5. I understood the issues well enough to participate as much as I wanted to

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	
Agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree

Example Short Stakeholder Survey for Small Groups 2

1. Have you received all of the information you would like to receive about the current research project?
2. Have you been able to provide all of the feedback that you would like to share about the current research project?
3. Has the research team adequately responded to the feedback you have shared?
4. How would you describe your role on this project to others?
5. How has your experience been so far compared to your expectations?
6. How can we improve our ability to incorporate your knowledge and recommendations into current and future research?
7. For each of the following types of communication, please indicate if you would like more or less:

• Meetings	More frequent	Same	Less Frequent
• Emails	More frequent	Same	Less Frequent
• Telephone	More frequent	Same	Less Frequent
• Other (please specify):	More frequent	Same	Less Frequent
8. Please share any other comments you have about this experience and how we can improve it.

Example Extensive Partnership Survey for Large Groups

Background:

To help evaluate your partnership, we offer this easy-to-use Partnership Assessment Survey. The assessment was developed by the Colorado Foundation for Public Health and the Environment and uses components of assessments developed by Community Development Consultants of New York City, Health Resources in Action of Boston, MA, and Carl Larson, PhD. It should take around 20-30 minutes to fill out and then as long as needed to analyze and discuss the results.

Instructions:

Word: If your partnership is technology averse, or would like to fill the survey out together at a meeting, feel free to print out the survey.

At the end of the survey, you can input the corresponding scores for each section into the Total Score box and then use those scores to calculate the percentage for each section. You can then use those scores to make recommendations on where your partnership may need the most work.

Partnership Assessment Survey	Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	N/A (Do not count)
A. PARTNERSHIP VISION, MISSION AND GOALS						
Taking into account what is happening in our patient community, our partnership periodically reassesses and updates its:						
1. vision statement (your dream)						
2. mission statement (what you're going to do)						
3. goals						
Our health topic local, regional, and national stakeholders (non-partnership members) have been informed of our partnership's:						
4. vision statement						
5. mission statement						
6. goals						
SECTION POINT TOTAL: _____						
B. COLLABORATION/COOPERATION						
7. Projects and activities are culturally appropriate						
8. Our partnership has one or more patients, researchers, and stakeholders who regularly attend meetings						
9. All members are welcome in our partnership regardless of economic status, gender, sexual orientation, race, age, or education level.						
10. Our partnership utilizes the resources and information of other organizations that can help our patient population, such as training workshops						
11. Our partnership utilizes working sub-groups, councils, or panels when necessary to accomplish key objectives						
12. There is adequate recognition and compensation for member contributions, both big and small						
SECTION POINT TOTAL: _____						

Partnership Assessment Survey	Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	N/A (Do not count)
C. PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE, PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES						
Meeting Organization and Structure						
Our partnership meetings:						
13. Have written agendas and minutes						
14. Use a facilitator						
15. Happen regularly (e.g. monthly, quarterly)						
16. Actively engage all members						
17. Actively engage the diverse skills and backgrounds of its members						
18. Occur at a convenient time and place for most members, especially patients						
19. Have translation services if requested						
Partnership Structure						
Our partnership:						
20. Has a committee structure to implement goals and objectives						
21. Has a plan for how partners are selected and succeed one another						
22. Has a clearly defined plan of action						
23. Has a core planning (steering) group						
24. Has a governance document that is distributed to all members						
25. Has an organizational chart						
26. Has a recruitment plan for recruiting and sustaining members						
27. Has a long-term sustainability plan						
Partnership Processes, and Procedures						
Our partnership has a clear process:						
28. For decision-making (e.g. group vs. leadership)						
29. For problem-solving and conflict resolution						
30. For new member orientation						

Partnership Assessment Survey	Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	N/A (Do not count)
Our partnership has written expectations/descriptions:						
31. For roles, responsibilities, and participation of members						
SECTION POINT TOTAL: _____						
D. PARTNERSHIP COMMUNICATION STRATEGY						
Our partnership:						
32. Surveys members' interests, needs, and concerns and shares results with the partnership to guide the project						
33. Communicates the partnership's activities/decisions to all members						
34. Has developed a system for communicating our work, mission, vision, and goals back to the broader patient population/community (non-partnership)						
SECTION POINT TOTAL: _____						
E. PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION						
35. At the beginning of each tier, your partnership reviews the workplan to develop goals and activities to accomplish during that tier						
36. After each project or tier, the partnership evaluates and reflects on how it went to learn from the experience						
37. Your partnership has conducted a skills assessment of its members						
38. Plans of action outline tasks, who will do them, and by what target dates						
39. Your partnership celebrates its achievements						
40. Activities are evaluated in relation to our partnership's vision, mission, and goals						
SECTION POINT TOTAL: _____						
F. PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS						
Our entire partnership:						

Partnership Assessment Survey	Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	N/A (Do not count)
41. Demonstrates knowledge of the partnership building process						
42. Demonstrates skill in writing proposals and obtaining funding and resources						
43. Encourages collaboration and negotiation						
Leadership:						
44. Has appropriate time to devote to the partnership						
45. Plans effectively and efficiently						
46. Demonstrates flexibility in accepting different viewpoints						
47. Promotes equal status and collaboration among members						
48. Shares leadership opportunities (i.e., rotate the chairing of a meeting between members)						
49. Is adept in organizational and communication skills						
50. Makes a conscious effort to share leadership by developing new Project Co-Leads, especially among patients						
51. Is willing to support the decisions and recommendations of our partnership						
Partnership members (non-leadership):						
52. Are committed to our partnership's mission						
53. Have a variety of resources and skills to offer						
54. Clearly understand their roles						
55. Actively plan, implement, and evaluate activities						
56. Are regularly involved in meetings and/or activities						
57. Feel a sense of accomplishment						
58. Have benefited from participating in our partnership						
59. Level of turnover does not significantly disrupt our partnership's progress						

Partnership Assessment Survey	Strongly Disagree (0)	Disagree (1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	N/A (Do not count)
SECTION POINT TOTAL: _____						
G. INCLUSION						
Entire partnership:						
60. Divergent ideas/opinions are respectfully expressed and listened to						
61. All populations in our patient population are represented in our partnership						
Researchers & stakeholders in our partnership:						
62. Encourage patients to come up with their own ideas						
63. Display a willingness to accept and nurture patient leadership						
64. Share decision-making with patients and listen to them seriously						
Patients in our partnership:						
65. Have a high degree of trust in each other						
66. Have a high degree of trust in the partnership's leadership						
67. Are given serious work to do						
68. Have full access to information needed to make decisions						
69. Have opportunities to discuss their concerns about group decisions						
70. Can openly discuss their values, mindsets, and underlying assumptions						
71. Have an equal voice in the decision-making process						
72. Are excited about their involvement						
73. Take initiative in working on projects						
74. Are given major responsibilities for specific tasks						
75. Help one another in developing new skills						
SECTION POINT TOTAL: _____						

Survey Section	Total Score	*Total Possible	Percent	*Note – Subtract 4 points from the Total Possible in a section for each time you used “N/A”.
A. Partnership Vision, Mission, and Goals	0	24		
B. Collaboration/Cooperation	0	24		
C. Partnership Structure, Processes, and Procedures	0	76		
D. Partnership Communication Strategy	0	12		
E. Partnership Evaluation	0	24		
F. Partnership Members	0	76		
G. Inclusion	0	64		
Total of All Sections	0	300		

If you scored between:

0% – 49.9% - Uh oh! Your partnership needs an overhaul on this section.

50% – 79.9% - Close! Take a look at each question in this particular section to see how you might improve.

80% - 100% - Congratulations! Your partnership is running smoothly. Keep up the good work!