

INSPIRE's Community Engagement Learning Network

Session #1: Aligning community engagement with organizational priorities

Featured presenter: PFCCpartners

April 2025

Every month, the Community Engagement Learning Network will bring together a nationwide team of community engagement (CE) professionals and people with lived experience to host group discussions about improving CE efforts, present best practices for launching and maintaining CE initiatives — drawn from experts in the field, and foster community-building among participants.



Key takeaways

- Aligning community engagement (CE) initiatives with organizational priorities helps to increase the opportunity for impact.
- An important first step in working toward alignment is to define the scope of a specific initiative/project. Scope is a way to focus the efforts.
 - What are you trying to do (e.g. reduce medication errors)?
 - Who is it that the project is going to impact (e.g. all patients in a health system, or people with a specific condition)?
 - What is the strategic plan of that organization, or of that project?

- Specifically, how can partnerships with people with lived experience be informative and beneficial to meeting your end goals?
- Who is responsible for driving the work?
- There are many possible “lanes of engagement.”
 - Creating different approaches to CE ensures the best fit for specific projects and options that best meet the individual needs, preferences, and bandwidth of community members/people with lived experience.
 - Allowing people with lived experience to self-select into the lane that makes sense for them is an inclusion strategy that builds the diversity of the people and perspectives at the table.

Lanes of engagement	
Survey	Listening session
Interview	Quality and/or safety initiative
Focus group	Quality and/or safety committee
Patient family advisory councils	



Action steps

For people with lived experience

- As you sit on advisory committees and partner with organizations, ask for information about the organization’s priorities.
 - Do they have a strategic plan?
 - How do they see their CE work fitting in?
 - Where are the most meaningful opportunities for community input to make a difference?
- Request information about the scope of projects you are asked to advise on.
 - What are the goals? What role will you play?
- Request that leadership join an upcoming meeting (if they don’t already) so you can be a partner in identifying specific opportunities where your input can lead to meaningful change.

For professionals leading CE

- Engage leadership and other staff champions to identify key strategic priorities and identify the specific ways people with lived experience can bring insights that help to achieve success in these areas.
- Utilize different “lanes of engagement” to create appropriate, impactful, and diverse opportunities for working with people with lived experience.
- Capture and share back specific examples of how CE has helped to achieve progress on strategic priorities to share with leadership, colleagues, community members, and the people with lived experience who contributed to the work.

“You might select an information gathering activity first, because you just don't have enough information about what the problem is...But then take that into true co-design, where everyone is contributing to designing a solution.”



Resources for additional learning

- [A roadmap for effective community engagement in healthcare: Final report from INSPIRE Phase 1](#): INSPIRE Phase I Final Report and Supplemental materials
- [Advisory Councils Transformed \(ACT\) Framework](#)
- [PFAnetwork](#): a nationwide community of patients, family caregivers, and community leaders reinventing healthcare through authentic partnerships

inspire partners

Organizations



People with lived experience



Alan
Coker



Burt
Pusch



Laura
Carroll



Rebecca
Esparza



Savina
Makalena



Stephanie
Burdick