Building Effective Multi-Stakeholder Research Teams

Transcript:	Sharing a Vision Among Team Members Audio Interview

Melissa Henry: My name is Melissa Henry, a Researcher with the American Institutes for Research or AIR. AIR partnered with the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute or PCORI to develop a learning package for multi-stakeholder research teams. This short audio interview includes practical guidance and tips from patients and researchers about how multi-stakeholder teams can create shared a vision for a research study. A shared vision is a common goal about what the team wants to accomplish together. Creating a shared vision helps all team members work well together as equal partners. First, we will hear from Jennifer O'Rourke-Lavoie, a patient partner with the University of Vermont, about her team's work and what they did to address the challenges of creating a shared vision that fosters meaningful partnerships.

Jennifer O'Rourke-Lavoie: About 5 1/2 years ago our project began, and we were really the pioneers of one of the earliest, largest PCORI funded studies. And so we didn't have any of these lovely tools, and in fact I would say that there were a lot of questions about why we're engaging patients and partners. In theory, I think everyone liked the idea. But at the beginning, it was very difficult because patients were very shy and reluctant to speak up. And so one our most effective tools was, and I won't say it was a tool, it's a strategy, was creating dyads, where I would partner with one of the other research team members and that person would become someone I was very, very close with, who I could ask questions, I could share my concerns and my needs and have somebody who was really listening to what I had to share. And not just what my needs were, but what I really cared about, what really mattered.

Melissa: Getting to the heart of what team members really care about is an important step in creating a shared vision for the study that all team members understand and find valuable. Next, Melody Goodman, a researcher from New York University, will talk about how research teams can create a vision that is reflective of the diverse perspectives and needs of those on the team and in their communities.

Melody Goodman: I think we really talk about how we know when the work of the partnership is done, what would the world or our city or our community look like if our work is finished. And then we're also really realistic about the fact that people come to the table for different reasons and people have different things they want to take away from being part of the partnership and that's okay. It's okay that people bring and take different things from the partnership. And so really having a sense of when we're all done, what we're all working towards and working for helps us set long-term goals. And then from that we can work and set medium-term goals and short-term goals. But I think it's important for us to realize that having a shared goal doesn't mean everyone wants the same thing at the end. And that some partners need different things to be their final product. And that's okay in a partnership as long as we're honest and open about what that is.

Melissa: Once a shared vision has been established, how does a research team make sure that they are working towards achieving that vision? Pam Dardess, a researcher from the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care, talks about the importance of creating structures so that teams regularly revisit their goals and discuss their progress.

Pam Dardess: Yeah, I love what Melody said about we don't necessarily all want the same things and we need to be thinking about what we are all working towards and for...and one of the keys to sustaining that partnership, I think is to continuously check in to see what is, and what isn't working in regards to people's

goals. And to do this, I think it's really important that you have a planned process from the beginning because it's really easy for that check in to be a nice to have, that then gets pushed to the side when things get busy. Having that be part of the process also sets the expectation that people are going to be asked for that honest and open feedback for the purpose of making the team better and stronger. I do think it's helpful to use an approach that emphasizes strengths in addition to opportunities for improvement. So as part of the process, asking people what they've gained, what they value from their participation and what's working well, and then also ask about opportunities for expanding collaboration and making changes that would help encourage even greater participation and engagement over time.

Melissa: Thank you to Jennifer, Melody and Pam for sharing their lessons learned and guidance to help build effective multi-stakeholder research teams. For more information on this topic, including additional resources and tools, please see the Building Effective Multi-Stakeholder Research Teams Learning Package at PCORI.org.