



Integrating Diverse Viewpoints Into a Team Vision TIP SHEET

To guide decisions and activities, and to help team members work well together, team members need a single, shared vision for a research study. A vision statement should be created by the entire team through open discussion that values all team members' viewpoints. This tip sheet offers guidance on developing a shared vision statement that is inclusive of their collective interests, assumptions, expectations, and ideas. Ideally, teams should use these tips in the order in which they are presented.

Sample Vision Statement:

Understand the effect of social support on cancer care outcomes by using the best available science and working collaboratively with patients and other stakeholders.

How can teams integrate diverse viewpoints into the team's vision statement?

- 1 Identify and prioritize interests among team members.** Team members may come to the study with specific ideas about what the study should address based on their own experiences. Openly discussing what is of most interest – and most important – to all team members will help identify and prioritize areas of overlap to include in the shared vision statement.

Try this: Ask all team members to write responses to two questions on a flipchart or virtual whiteboard (**Note:** You may want to tailor these questions to be a little more specific, for example, to reference a population or condition):

- Why is this study important to you?
- What about the topic is of most interest to you?

After all team members have written their response, invite them to say more. Doing so will allow team members to identify common interests that can then become the focus of a shared vision statement. Teams can also identify differences that may be important to discuss and understand to be able to agree on a vision statement.



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2 Discuss team members' views and assumptions about research. Members of multi-stakeholder teams bring their own experiences, beliefs, and assumptions about research. Discussing and clarifying these beliefs and assumptions can help team members understand how they approach research. Teams can use this shared understanding of what a research study can accomplish to create a vision statement that embodies their beliefs about research.

Try this: The [toolbox dialogue](#) approach uses a set of questions or statements to understand how team members think about research. Team members can respond to these questions on their own or in pairs, and then discuss their responses with the team.

Discuss team members' views and assumptions about research.

Examples of questions include:

- What motivates you to be part of a research team?
- How do you identify a research question?
- What approach or methods should be used to find the answer to a research question?
- What is most important to you in designing a study?
- What are issues we need to keep in mind that might influence or bias the research?
- What type(s) of evidence is most credible to you?

3 Discuss how team members define success for the study. Team members join research studies for different reasons and have different expectations about what they want the study to accomplish. Discussing their shared and unique expectations can help team members better understand each other and how they define success. Teams can then use this information to shape their vision statement.

Try this: Ask each team member how they define success for the study and what they would like the study to do. For example, do they want the study to generate new knowledge, solve a problem, or both? Team members can record their expectations and jointly decide which are within the scope of the project. This will help them decide on which ones to include in the vision statement.



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- 4 Determine how team members want to work together to achieve their shared vision.** Team members must be able to work well together and maintain a healthy team culture to achieve their goal. The shared vision statement should reflect how the team wants to work together.

Try this:

- If the team has already agreed upon its team norms, discuss how to capture them in its vision statement. Teams may want to choose one or two norms to include (e.g., respecting multiple points of view) or choose a word or phrase to summarize their team culture (e.g., collaborative, open-minded).
- If the team has not agreed upon its norms, discuss how they would like to work together. For example, consider the following discussion questions: (1) How do we want team members to interact with each other? and (2) How would we want others to describe our team culture?

- 5 Draft a shared vision statement.** Using the information generated above from Tips #1– 4, begin drafting a vision statement. Each team member should participate in drafting the statement and agree with it.

Try this:

- Focus on drafting segments or pieces of the statement rather than trying to draft the entire statement. Teams can do this as a group, or team members can break into pairs to draft segments and then share with the group. Allow time for team members to discuss and understand the segments.
- After all team members have contributed to the discussion, put the segments together into one or two statements. Then, the team can work together to express its shared vision in one concise and clear statement.

- 6 Review and revise the draft vision statement.** Once a draft vision statement has been developed, the team should reflect on, discuss, and revise it to be sure it is inclusive.

Try this: The [boundary technique](#) is a set of questions that helps team members uncover assumptions that could overlook key aspects of the problem. Stakeholders play a key role in uncovering assumptions, for example, about power, motivation, or knowledge. After using the boundary technique, teams should have an improved understanding of any assumptions underlying the draft vision – and their implications – and a sense of how to revise the vision statement to make it more inclusive.