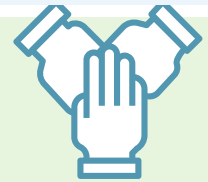


Some disagreement is inevitable and healthy among members on a research team. In fact, productive disagreement – which focuses on understanding differences between ideas and not the person sharing the idea – allows team members to work together to find effective solutions. However, personal conflict between team members – which involves personal judgments about team members – is not productive or healthy. When not carefully managed, personal conflict can affect team cohesion and productivity, make team members uncomfortable, and reduce engagement. To foster a productive team environment, team members can work to minimize personal conflict while creating a respectful space for diverse perspectives and ideas.



1 **Teams with a culture of mutual respect for different perspectives** are able to engage in productive discussions and be more effective.

I think it is most important to listen to and respect different perspectives. I feel like the best group decisions and actions are made when a variety of points of view can be considered. Our group doesn't always agree across the board but what we do all have in common is respect for one another. In my view, that is the most important foundation for an effective team.

– Patient/Family Member

We reiterated each time we met how important [partners'] input was and also pointed out specific examples of where their input changed the study.

– PCORI-funded Researcher

The project leader's perspectives and explanations were objective. He did not put forth any influence that would have derailed an open discussion. More than a few times we had some heated discussions and it was good to have someone who can put each opinion/perspective into a focused direction, so that each idea is respected and accepted.

– Patient/Family Member



2

Adopting a problem-solving approach can help teams engage in honest and productive discussions.



Another area with considerable discussion was the use of random assignment of study participants to a factorial arrangement of intervention groups. Researchers felt it was imperative to the study design. Stakeholders felt that it was important to allow participants to choose the intervention they would receive. The PCORI Methodology Standards were shared with stakeholders, and the team collaboratively discussed the strengths and weakness of random assignment. The discussion of participant assignment was an area of significant disagreement, debate, dialogue, and education. In the end, the team agreed on a random assignment design.

– PCORI-funded Researcher

You have to find people who will invest their time and ideas and can listen and not get discouraged. You just have to remember that you are a small piece of a large project – you’re listening and trying to help them address problems. Make positive suggestions to help solve the problems.

– Patient/Family Member

Providing an atmosphere of open discussion is key. I think critical discussion is fine, as long as there is acceptance of different ideas with the goal of productive discourse.

– PCORI-funded Researcher

