

Handout: Stakeholder engagement methods

This handout is based on excerpts from O’Haire et al. (2011) (description of all methods except Co-creation workshops) and Bertini (2014) (description of Co-creation workshops).

Stakeholder engagement methods

Sources:

O’Haire, C., McPheeters, M., Nakamoto, E., et al. (2011)

Methods Future Research Needs Reports, No. 4. Rockville: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US). Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK62556/>

Bertini, P. (2014). Co-creation: methods & approaches. Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140530181242-144684-co-creation-methods-approaches/>

Focus/working groups. A planned discussion in a small (4 to 12 members) group of stakeholders facilitated by a skilled moderator. This is designed to obtain information about preferences and opinions in a relaxed, non-threatening environment. The topic is introduced and, in the ensuing discussion, group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments. The moderator may use some predetermined questions as prompts to encourage discussion or to return the conversation to the intended focus of the discussion.

Citizens’ juries. Used to elicit the views of members of the public about a variety of health and other issues. Based on the principles of “deliberative democracy” and active citizenship, they aim to promote decision-making based on the process of ‘careful consideration,’ debate, and respect for different viewpoints. They bring together diverse members of the public as jurors who are given information relevant to the issue under debate by “expert witnesses,” (innovators, patients, health care policy-makers, and clinicians) and the discussion has a facilitator or moderator present to guide the process. The session can include small and large group priority-setting exercises based on actual examples of technologies under consideration for assessment by local and national bodies. The end result is often a written report authored by the jurors, which can also take the form of a questionnaire with juror responses.

Town meetings. Individuals residing in a specific geographic area are invited to a public meeting to discuss issues relevant to their community. Often, this meeting is announced by the local media and attended by residents as well as other individuals including state and local officials, health care providers, researchers, manufacturers, and topic experts. In general, everyone is offered the opportunity to speak in a relaxed environment, the meetings are often loosely organised and used to identify and make a broad list of research topics/interests. Voting to prioritize research items may also occur.

Co-creation workshops. A workshop focused on making rather than listening, where all participants collaborate and contribute to find and create ways to address the needs through creative knowledge sharing and constructive activities, and where the team is invited to negotiate and agree on the best solution that satisfies all stakeholders. Because co-creation involves meaning making, negotiation and

consensus, a facilitator and a number of facilitation techniques and approaches are required, e.g. mapping the ecosystem, urgency axis for prioritization, various stickers-based and brainstorming techniques, etc. Once the team has defined the solution, the project staff are in charge to develop the idea towards a more advanced stage by keeping in touch and asking for ongoing feedback from the participants through various means, including more workshops.

Nominal group technique. Structured problem-solving or ideas-generating activity in which individuals' ideas are gathered and combined in a face-to-face, non-threatening group environment. The process is intended to promote creative participation in group problem-solving. Each member of the group is invited to express their opinions that are used to generate a list of priorities. Members may be asked to vote or rank priorities from the list either formally or informally. The voting process may occur multiple times. The nominal group technique is designed to promote the free exchange of opinions and the generation of a list of priorities in a structured and non-hierarchical discussion forum (maximizes creative participation and ensures balanced output while utilizing each participant's experience and expertise to reach consensus on complex topics). The purpose is to provide structure to a group discussion when the group is facing the challenge of reaching agreement on complex topics.

Delphi technique. The Delphi technique uses a series of consecutive questionnaires to determine the perceptions of a group of individuals. The Delphi method allows respondents to communicate their opinions anonymously. Each questionnaire is considered a round. The method is often used to prioritize research/topics. For example, Hauck and colleagues conducted the following study to identify research priorities of clinical staff working with the community:

Round 1: This questionnaire was used to create a list of five important questions relating to future research in care for children in this community. Content analysis was used to analyse and summarize the responses and develop the second questionnaire. All issues were discussed, assigned a general category, and then described as a research topic.

Round 2: The clinical staff was asked to prioritize the research ideas/suggestions using a 7-point Likert-type response format, with one indicating a low priority and seven the highest priority.

Round 3: The top 10 research topics were identified. Both clinicians and clients were asked to rank the topics identified.