Advanced Engagement Steering Committee

Meeting Notes

September 22, 2023

*Attendance: Erin (PI), Marc (Co-PI), Sophia (Grant Staff), Missy (Grant Staff), Amy (Funder), Kate (Academic), Eddie (Academic), Lisa (Older Adult), Alice (Older Adult), Janet (Older Adult), Myrna (Older Adult)*

## Focus Group Findings

The Learning Collaborative conducted focus groups in May 2023 to understand how to improve our existing educational [video series](https://www.collectiveinsightllc.com/aging-pcor-videos) and to get ideas for new products. The Focus Group Findings report was shared in last month’s [newsletter](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sK8npp8dxJysiRFL7P-X839Vbdu2imwL/view?usp=sharing). Some key takeaways from these findings include:

* The video series could be directed at multiple audiences, especially research participants
* Future products can be successfully created with a combination of purposes
* The whiteboard format for videos is well-liked
* Consider including real testimonials in future products
* Revisit the pace of speech and visuals in existing and future products
* Revisit language to ensure research terms are defined
* Diversify the appearance of all characters

#### Video Format/Platform

Members representing the Older Adult Subcommittee updated this group on their discussion of the focus group findings, specifically related to the diversity of characters in the video series. While they agreed we can do more to be more inclusive, some felt it would be patronizing to try to include 1 of every ethnicity/culture in a single video. Steering Committee Members also discussed how the findings influence the design of future videos and felt we should:

* Find a way to infuse real-life/human characters into whiteboard videos
* Ensure the budget allows for the expense of professional looking pictures/video
* Consider splicing personal videos/ experiences into white board videos

Additional feedback on format:

* One member felt (as an older adult) there is not a need to slow the pace; felt this is a form of bias toward older adults
* Another older adult member explained she sometimes needs pace slowed due to a hearing issue, not a processing issue.

#### Video Topics

Our current videos series covers 4 benefits of engaging Older Adults in the research process, including:

* Improving research question design
* Enhancing Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review
* Ensuring recruitment is diverse and representative
* Expanding the dissemination of your research

Focus Group participants suggested the following topics:

* The “how-to” to coincide with each benefit of engaging Older Adults as research partners
* Examples of what would be missed if research was not engaged
* Testimonials of successful engagement
* Recruitment of Older Adults as research partners

Steering Committee Members discussed how these findings influence our next steps. When developing new topics, consider:

* The recognition of bias in the actual focus groups and debrief
* How bias/ agism impacting approach as a video focus
* How do you address bias when researchers themselves are bias and bring bias to the classroom
  + Play for the long game
  + Engagement in itself is intended to address bias
  + Consider a story that can illustrate how bias can harm researchers and communities that are being researched (aligns with the argument of what happens when you DON’T engage)

## Funder’s Tool Design

Our goal is to shift the research paradigm to include people with lived experience as research partners rather than merely research subjects. To do this, we must also work to change the research environment to support meaningful engagement. We proposed modifying our Academic Self-Assessment Tool to target a funder audience. During discussions with partners (including this Committee), we learned that funders are a critical audience to reach and also that a self-assessment tool may not work well in this environment. As a result of what we heard, we have:

* Worked with funder representatives 1:1 to identify challenges and opportunities for a funder-facing tool
* Learned we need a tool that encourages discussion about this topic rather than prescribing a process
* Learned we should focus on funder education as our primary goal
* Developed an outline for an infographic tool to help funders understand engaged research and how they can help expand engaged research, if they choose

Members discussed our goals for reaching funders and priority topics for a funder facing educational tool. First, members identified the need to define engaged research for funders. Second, members discussed the importance of finding ways to incentivize the funder to prioritize engagement. Members provided the following topics and considerations for future tool(s):

#### Priority Topics for Funders

* Benefits of Engagement
  + The efficacy of research
  + Sustainable impact
  + Research would be lacking without insights
  + Buy-in from community will move the research into practice quicker
  + Relate to terminology funders understand (e.g. trust based philanthropy)
* Prioritization of Engagement
  + Form follows funding. If a funder requires engagement, it will change the behavior of researchers
  + Outcomes of engagement; Is there a difference in outcomes when doing engagement?
* Budget Considerations
  + Budget needs to reflect meaningful engagement
  + Researchers have to pay for engagement (e.g. pay for food because we know there is value to engagement)
  + Consider seed funding opportunities - PCORI gives money to start the engagement process; this helps researchers engage people before they start the funded project
* Time Considerations
  + Recognize engagement takes time
  + Engagement in all phases, including dissemination, may narrow the time between when research is finished and findings are being shared
  + Researchers are pushed on their timeline and may see engagement as a bother in aging research (ageism, bias)
  + Workplans that include time for engagement

### Challenges Identified

* Sixty minute Steering Committee meetings do not allow for deep enough conversation.

Solutions Identified

* Consider extending meeting length, even if only by 15 minutes. Project staff will discuss with members.

 Next Steps

* Missy will email Alice a link to the videos and include the link [here](https://www.collectiveinsightllc.com/aging-pcor-videos)
* Sophia will resend the newsletter
* Sophia will discuss extending meetings with members