

**Ottawa West
Four Rivers**
ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM



ÉQUIPE SANTÉ ONTARIO
**Ottawa Ouest
Quatre Rivières**

Patient, Family, and Caregiver Partnership and Engagement Strategy

Community Engagement
Framework

June 2022



Terminology

Many different terms are used to describe patients, clients, residents, (chosen) families, and caregivers. For this framework, and to reflect the values of partnership and collaboration that are at the centre of our Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT identity, we have decided to use the term **'Lived Experience Partners'** throughout this document.

Within our OHT, the term **'Health System Partners'** includes providers, teams, and/or agencies who deliver primary care, home care, community support services, mental health, addictions, and substance use health services, diagnostic services, public health services, paramedic services, acute care (hospitals), long-term care, and palliative care.

"It's important to make sure that the patient engagement framework becomes a part of the way things are done every day in our organizations and health care systems."

- OHT Partner

Dear members of our communities,

Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) present an opportunity for groups of providers, in partnership with lived experience partners, to reimagine an integrated system of care for Ontarians. At Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT, we believe in a collaborative vision that requires us to look beyond traditional and historical relationships and structures. We envision a simplified and coordinated healthcare and community support system for all members of our diverse communities.

Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT is excited to launch our new Patient, Family, and Caregiver Partnership and Engagement Strategy, also known as our 'Community Engagement Framework'. This new framework was created with input from our lived experience partners, health system partners and communities.

This value-based blueprint for participation and engagement is rooted in best practices and is intended to capture the unique realities of the communities we serve. We would like to sincerely thank everyone who participated in this process. You have helped us develop a framework that reflects our commitment to listening, learning, and continuously improving engagement with our communities.

We are committed to ensuring that you, the members of our communities, are at the centre of everything we do. Your participation and involvement are critical to our success and will be woven into our work to gain momentum and maintain long-term impact. We are always open to new input and encourage you to connect with us via [our public website](#) if you would like to be involved.

This framework will be a living document that evolves as our OHT evolves. We plan to revisit it regularly in partnership with our lived experience partners, especially as we gain a better understanding of our communities, their needs, and the best methods to engage with them.

We are excited to roll up our sleeves and put this framework into action.

Sincerely,



Amy Boudreau
Co-chair of the Collaborative Leadership Committee



Chris LeBouthillier
Co-chair of the Collaborative Leadership Committee



Nadia Prescott
Executive Transformation Lead

Ottawa West Four Rivers
ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM



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“It’s important for everyone involved in patient engagement to expect to learn something from each other, about the situation at hand, and how things may be better.”

- OHT Partner

Background

About Ontario Health Teams (OHTs)

The Ontario government is building a connected health care system centered around patients, families, and care partners to:

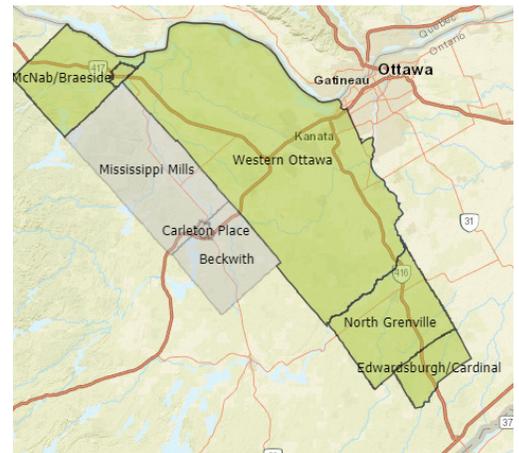
- Strengthen local services,
- Make it easier to navigate the system,
- Create seamless transitions between providers.

Ontario Health Teams were introduced to provide a new way of organizing and delivering care that is more connected with local communities. OHTs are groups of health system partners that are accountable for delivering coordinated care to a defined population. OHTs are not geographically based, rather, every Ontario resident is linked to an OHT using the physician networks that they use most frequently. Within OHTs, the goal is to have health system partners work as one coordinated team – no matter where they provide care.

About Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT

Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT brings together over 60 health system partners providing services to our population across a vast geography of urban, suburban, small-town, and rural areas. Our catchment area extends from Ottawa West as far south as North Grenville (Kemptonville and Spencerville) and as far west at McNab/Braeside (Arnprior).

We represent a diverse population and will work together to help the people in our communities live their healthiest lives.



Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT's Vision:

A simplified and coordinated healthcare and community support system for all members of our diverse population.

We aim to achieve this by helping people access the right care, at the right time, in the right place by transforming services and putting the person's needs and preferences first. Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT is committed to working in partnership with lived experience partners and have adopted a philosophy of **“nothing about me, without me.”**

Community Engagement Framework

This framework guides Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT to ensure the lived experiences and expertise of all partners drives the co-design of changes in our processes, practices, and policies. This co-design is what we believe will create a more integrated health care system resulting in better health outcomes for the communities we serve.

There are four fundamental elements to our framework:



Who informed the framework?

Your voices and experiences are crucial to building healthier communities. To develop this framework, Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT received input from many people as we work to reflect what our communities expect and deserve from us as an OHT.

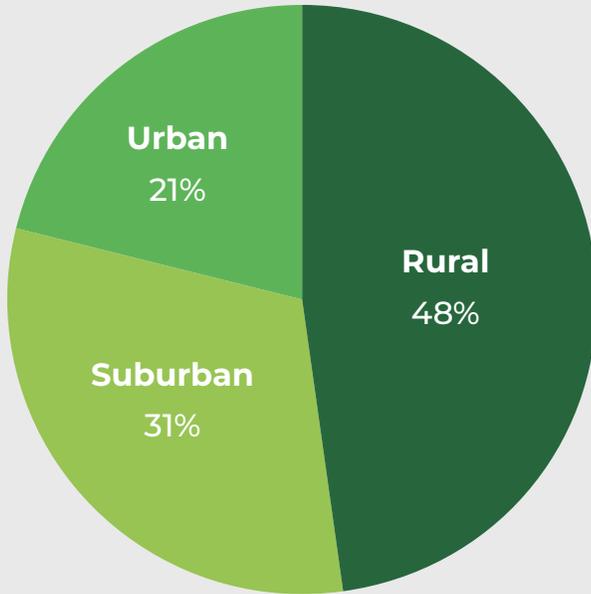
Over three months, **over 200 individuals** provided input through:

- Focus group sessions with lived experience and health system partners.
- Interviews with people from our OHT partners who have experience in community and partner engagement within their respective communities.
- Survey responses from health system partners and their engaged lived experience partners.
- Survey responses from you, the people of our communities. The survey was disseminated in both English and French.
- Interviews with other OHTs to learn from their experiences

This framework will be a living document that will evolve with our OHT. We plan to revisit it regularly, with our lived experience partners, as we gain a better understanding of our communities and their needs. We are committed to providing ongoing opportunities for our communities to participate in improving local care.

In our initial public engagement survey, we heard from:

People across our region:

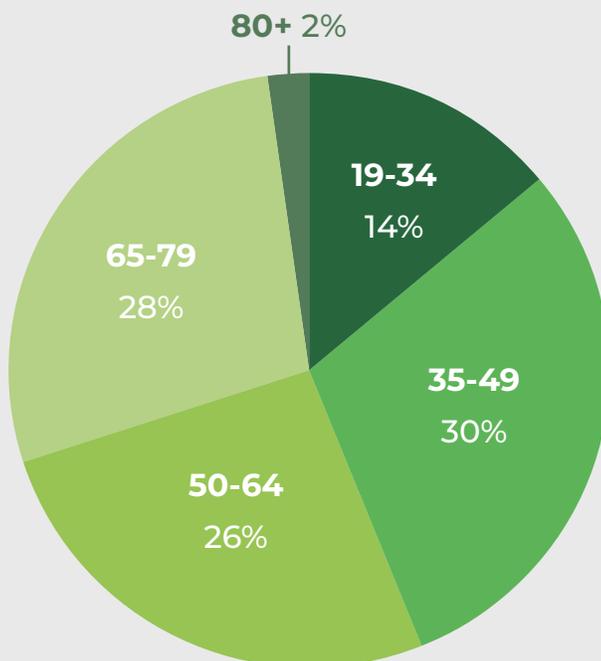


We know that **83%** of Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT population includes Ottawa West and we remain committed to supporting rural communities that comprise **17%** of our population.

We were pleased to have the rural voices represented in our engagement survey:

Ottawa West	42%
Arnprior	13%
North Grenville	9%
Carleton Place	8%
Almonte	6%
Kemptville	6%
Other	16%

Adults of all ages:



We know we have work to do to ensure the diversity of our communities is represented within Ottawa West Four Rivers' activities. Contributors to our engagement survey included people who identified as:

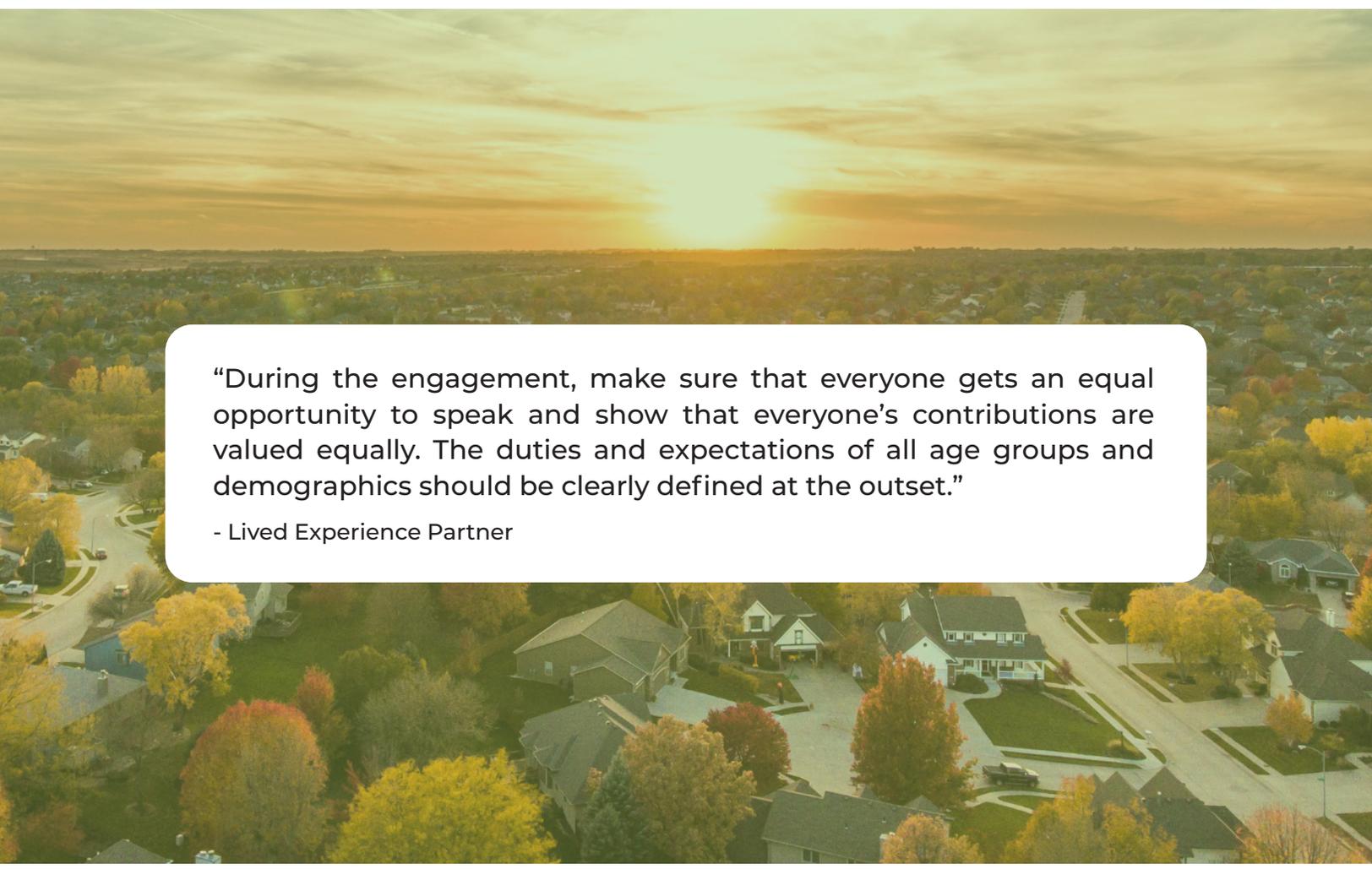
Francophone	3%
First Nations, Métis, Inuit	3%
Newcomer to Canada	2%
Racialized community	2%
2SLGBTQIA+ communities	5%
Experiencing financial challenges / Unemployed / Underemployed	9%

What we heard

The input we gathered was foundational to understanding how we, as an OHT, can approach engagement with lived experience partners. The engagement activities conducted to date highlighted some of the things that work well for our communities, barriers that exist, and how the OHT must consider different approaches to engage diverse populations. Input shared also highlighted for us what meaningful engagement might look like, including when to engage various groups, what topics to engage them on, and how best to engage them.

“Lived Experience partners are a valuable resource of information that should be appreciated, accommodated, and supported. In the absence of resources allotted to them or a sense of belonging, they will quickly lose hope in their roles as partners.”

- Lived Experience Partner

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood during sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The houses are mostly two-story structures with dark roofs, surrounded by trees with autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

“During the engagement, make sure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak and show that everyone’s contributions are valued equally. The duties and expectations of all age groups and demographics should be clearly defined at the outset.”

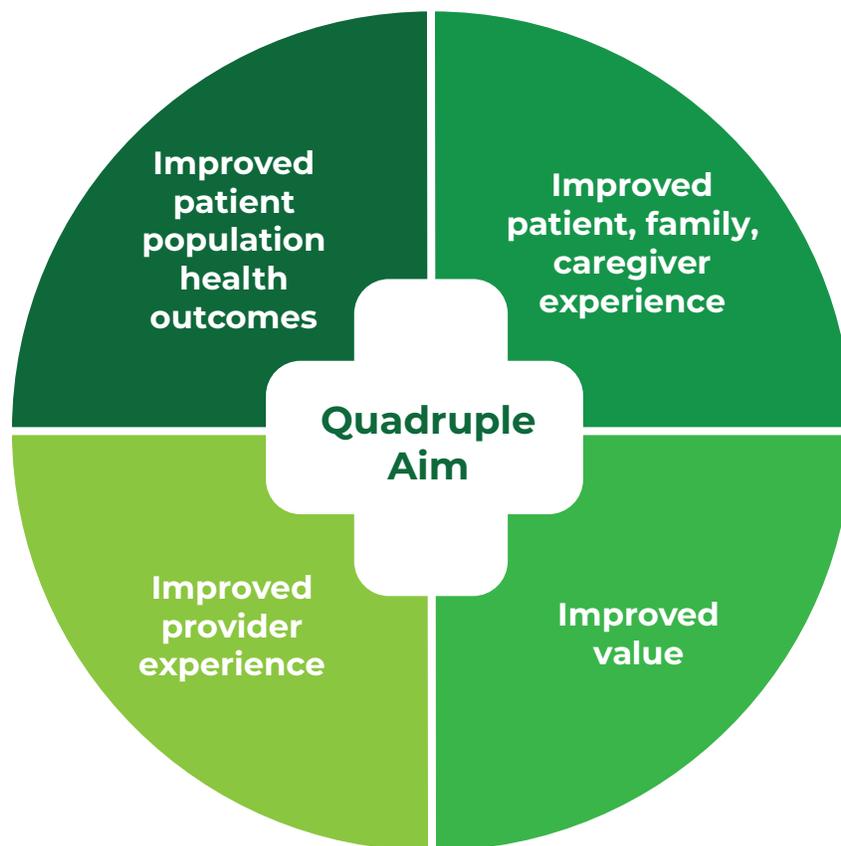
- Lived Experience Partner

Our Goals for Engagement

Our main engagement goal is to guarantee that health system improvements are co-designed with lived experience partners to ensure that care honours our regional differences and meets the unique challenges of our communities, without exception.

We will do this by:

- Conducting meaningful lived experience partner engagement that is collaborative and reflective of your values and opinions about how care should be delivered.
- Providing access to community engagement opportunities that are equitable, representative, and inclusive of our diverse communities.
- Ensuring that the **Quadruple Aim** goals are achieved in partnership with those with lived and living experience and expertise.



The **Quadruple Aim** is an internationally-recognized framework that designs and delivers an effective health care system.

Reference: Province of Ontario - Vision for health care in Ontario

Our Guiding Principles



1. We commit to working in partnership with the communities we serve without exception.

- Regularly **engage with all communities**, diverse groups of people, and marginalized populations through a health equity lens. We will seek to fully **understand and address the root causes of health inequities** in our communities.
- **Match the skillsets, interests, and time commitment of members** of our communities with the appropriate types of engagement.
- **Provide adequate education and capacity-building opportunities** to enable effective participation when needed and if appropriate.



2. We will ensure engagement is purposeful and meaningful.

- **Ensure transparency** - we will communicate and share information early, often, and clearly.
- **Engage people in a timely and continuous way** from the beginning and throughout the entire healthcare co-design process.
- **Provide a safe environment** and listen closely as people openly express their needs, perspectives, preferences, and concerns - recognizing that at times anger at the system may be expressed due to past harm.
- Support **active listening** among members, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, and learn to apply information in ways that generate positive change.

“Just as the goal of many is to bring care to the community where they are at – **engagement sometimes must go there as well.**”

- OHT Partner



3. We will uphold and champion the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism in everything we do using Ontario Health’s Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework.

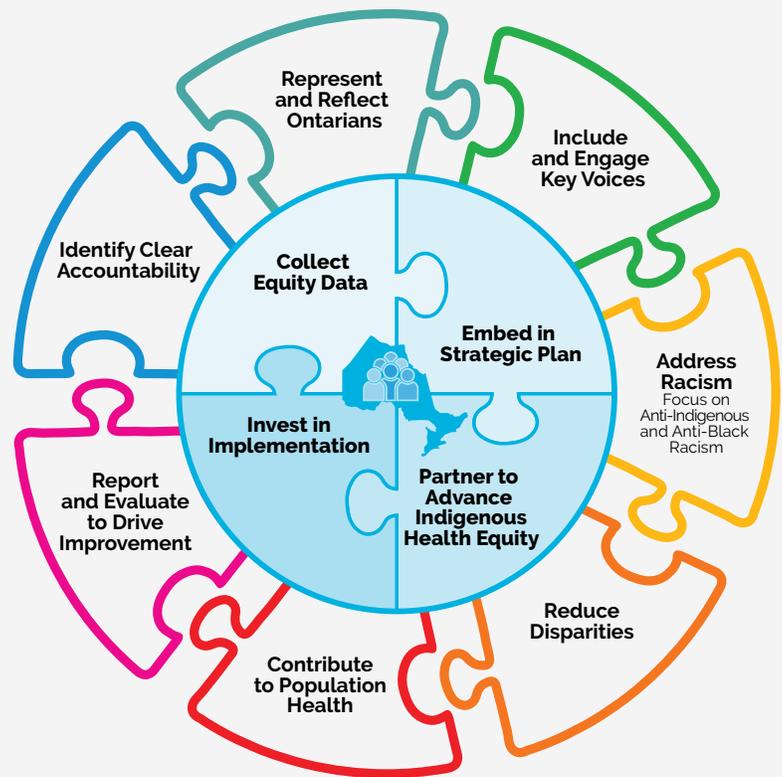
- Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT **will champion this framework** to ensure that all 11 areas of action are enacted in the work that we do.
- Commit to **reducing inequities** in the health care system and address racism and discrimination.
- **Celebrate diversity and inclusion**, recognizing that our organizational cultures need to be equitable to contribute to better outcomes for the communities we serve.
- Encourage and consider **effective representation of the public** in each engagement, especially those groups that tend to remain silent, are reluctant to engage, or who experiences barriers to engagement.

Ontario Health's Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework

With a focus on addressing anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism

11 Areas of Action

- Collect Equity Data**
Set up systems and supports to collect, analyze, and use equity data to report findings and inform future decisions
- Embed in Strategic Plan**
Ensure efforts to address equity, inclusion, diversity, anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism are at the highest priority for the organization
- Partner to Advance Indigenous Health Equity**
Recognize that strong relationships with Indigenous leadership and communities - founded on respect, reciprocity, and open communication – are critical in ensuring that the new health care system in Ontario reflects and addresses the needs of Indigenous peoples.
- Invest in Implementation**
Apply the financial and people resources needed for success and ongoing sustainability
- Identify Clear Accountability**
Establish and assign "who" is responsible for "what"
- Represent and Reflect Ontarians**
Strive for all levels of the organization to reflect the communities served
- Include and Engage Key Voices**
Listen to the staff and communities and include their ideas and feedback into the design, delivery and evaluation of programs and services
- Address Racism** Focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism
Identify and address discriminatory practices and procedures in all forms and all levels using targeted approaches
- Reduce Disparities**
Use data and best practices to establish standards, identify disparities and implement corrective action through a focus on access, experience and outcomes for the population
- Contribute to Population Health**
Work with other arms of government and agencies in planning services to improve the health of the population
- Report and Evaluate to Drive Improvement**
Publish Framework metrics publicly with all reports including an equity analysis



For more information, go to: ontariohealth.ca





4. We will work to remove barriers to engagement through careful and thoughtful planning.

- **Be clear about why we are engaging** with our communities, including the goals of engagement, the processes of engagement, the types of input sought, and how input will be used.
- Build relationships that **enhance our understanding of the needs and preferences of our lived experience partners**. Plan each engagement to align with their unique needs, wishes, and desires.
- **Offer compensation** in a variety of forms to allow for and reinforce the value of participation. Examples include but are not limited to stipends, childcare, caregiver support, respite, and meals.



5. We commit to responding to input with change.

- Ensure each engagement has real potential to **make a difference**, and that participants are aware of that potential.
- Establish a process to **inform participants** how their input is being used.
- Act on input and demonstrate the positive change and **long-term impact that results**.
- Acknowledge and **celebrate the impact of people's input** and contributions.



6. We commit to continuous learning, ongoing education, improvement, and evaluation to advance knowledge.

- **Be willing and open to learning** from those with lived experience and expertise.
- **Evaluate engagement activities** to ensure engagement processes are effective.
- Take the time to **reflect on successes and identify opportunities for improvement**, and then take the appropriate action.
- Provide staff with appropriate **educational opportunities** to better serve and engage our diverse communities.
- Share both positive and constructive lessons learned with the **right people**.

Engagement Types, Levels, and Methods

We will collaborate with persons with lived experience and expertise across three main types of engagement. While our methods may differ for each type, the principles of engagement will support a consistent approach to partnership with our communities.

“Based on the OHT’s needs, the level of collaboration might vary. OHT groups can agree to use these coordinated techniques, for example, help each other with distributing information.”

- Lived Experience Partner

Three main types of engagement are:



1. Personal Care and Health Decisions

Health care professionals will engage with lived experience partners in processes of shared decision-making and care.



2. Program and Service Design

Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT will engage with the intent to improve specific programs, services, or projects such as quality and safety improvement initiatives. Whether ad-hoc or time-limited, these activities will be informed by the experiences of our lived experience partners.



3. Policy, Strategy, and System Level Discussions

Ottawa West Four Rivers OHT will collaborate with lived experience partners to make system-level changes. Embedding lived experience partners in all decision-making will create a culture of co-design that will ensure changes are on-target, long-standing, and effective.

For each engagement activity, we will evaluate and determine the right level of engagement needed to ensure success:

Empower - Actively support lived experience partners as equal partners along with other stakeholders in developing the processes and structures necessary to identify issues and implement solutions.

- Continuous learning opportunities and capacity building for lived experience partners

Collaborate - Work in partnership throughout the decision-making process. Co-design improvements and participate in implementation, evaluation, and spread of these changes.

- Involvement in working groups, committees, and action teams
- Participate in decision-making tables
- Working together on an initiative or project

Involve - Work in partnership to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood, considered, and directly reflected in local healthcare alternatives and solutions.

- A pool of advisors on specific issues
- Ongoing interactions to gather in-depth and focused information

Consult - Gather information and feedback from lived experience partners to support decision-making.

- Surveys and focus groups
- Interviews
- Community townhalls
- Digital engagement platforms

Inform - Share balanced and objective information to keep individuals and communities informed and to build our understanding of issues, options, solutions, and opportunities.

- Social media posts
- Website updates
- Newsletters on the website and distributions
- Community events to meet and greet
- Public speaking events at different organizations

Our Enablers

Using these enablers, we will engage our lived experience partners in various ways to ensure we meaningfully fulfill our OHT vision.

Champion.

Champion and enact Ontario Health's Framework for Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, and Anti-Racism.

Commit.

Develop, adopt, and commit to a code of conduct for engaging with our communities without exception.

Educate.

Provide orientation sessions and educational opportunities for OHT staff, member organizations, and lived experience partners.

Build Capacity.

Support people and set them up for success through effective skillset matching and capacity building.

Diversify.

Ensure equitable representation of our communities. Make diversification a goal of recruitment.

Recognize.

Participation can be intentionally variable – individuals have different levels of availability or confidence to participate.

Leverage.

Leverage the knowledge, expertise, and strong relationships that our partner organizations have developed with their existing networks of lived experience partners.

Support.

Eliminate barriers and compensate participants.

Report Back.

Establish a process to inform on progress.

Monitor.

Monitor and evaluate engagement activities, successes, and learnings.

Value.

Find meaningful ways to demonstrate the value of contributions.

Next Steps

This framework marks the first step in our journey of engaging with our Lived Experience Partners and our communities. The road ahead is exciting but not without challenges. We are committed to listening, learning, and continuously improving so we can build a system of care that reflects the voices of our communities and addresses their health and social needs.

We welcome feedback from community members and health system partners and encourage you to reach out to use [via our website!](#)

Our next steps in this journey include:

