



## Consumer and Community Participation Fact Sheet M01: Planning Participation

Taking the time to plan properly for consumer and community participation will ensure you get the best results throughout the research project. It is important to note that your plan does not have to be detailed as it is likely to change once you begin to engage with consumers and community members. Having a plan will provide you with a guide for starting the participation activities. Allow yourself time to consider the following questions:

### Why are you involving consumers and the community in your research?

- Decide what you want to achieve from the participation before you proceed with planning the participation activities. What role do you want consumers and community members to have in the project?

### What level of participation do you want to achieve?

- One size does not fit all.
- The level of participation may change at different times of the study. Using the ladder of participation (Fact Sheet T03) may help to decide which level is appropriate.

### What stage of the project do you want consumer and community participation to occur?

- You may choose to involve consumers and community members at any or all stages of the research project (Fact Sheet T02). It is important to remember that participation can be started at any stage of the research but starting early will ensure the best results.

### Who are the consumers and community members that you could involve?

- Consumers, community members or carers that have experience of the condition or situation that you are researching.
- Community members who may benefit from or be influenced by the research, or who were uniquely placed to contribute to the research.
- A consumer and community representative is not a participant in a focus group, an in-depth interview or participant in a research study.

### How will you find them?

- Consumers and community members can be found through a variety of ways such as: consumer and community organisations, personal contacts and networks or discussions with colleagues and other researchers. It is always good to make personal contact as early as possible with people you want to join the research team.

### What methods will you use to enable consumer and community participation?

- Decide what method you want use to achieve the level of participation you are aiming for and will add most value to your project (Fact Sheets M02 - M12).
- Allow enough time for participation activities to be carried out.
- You might also consider using more than one method at different stages of the project.

**Consider training needs for both consumers and community members and researchers.**

### What resources will you need?

- Plain language summary of research (Fact Sheet M11), summary of research protocol, draft Terms of Reference, plain language PowerPoint presentation.
- Training opportunities/support for all team members.
- Budget – honorariums for out-of-pocket expenses (parking, child-minding), refreshments.
- Time - plan, manage and coordinate processes involving communication, meeting procedures, provision of documentation.
- Administrative support - note taking and records of meetings, circulation of agendas and documents.

