

# Conducting Patient Oriented Research in a Forensic Psychiatric Facility: A Case Study of Patient Involvement



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**Patient oriented research (POR)** is new to the healthcare research landscape in Canada, and has not yet been applied to the forensic field.

POR focuses on the patient in the context of the whole person and has been defined as a “continuum of research that engages patients as partners, focuses on patient-identified priorities, and improves patient outcomes” (SPOR, 2014).

The **POR Level of Engagement Tool (PORLET)** was developed by the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient Oriented Research to help determine the degree to which a project is patient-oriented.

Milestone is our **case study** of the initial year of our POR project consisted of our multidisciplinary team partnering with the RPC therapy dog programs and recruiting patient advisors (2 who are not incarcerated). We undertook a survey of patients and staff asking about the topics they think we need to know more about to benefit RPC patients (and reciprocally offered a dog themed magazine/book/holiday card). We then recruited 2 more incarcerated patient advisors and shared the themes with CSC.

We originally planned **World Cafes** integrating the therapy dogs for data collection uptake and reciprocity but this did not happen because of COVID. They will take place in the future.

We identified **benefits, challenges and next steps** with applying the Patient-Oriented Research Level of Engagement Tool.

1. Patients are Partners: Level 5, but with institution related restrictions

**Challenge:** Empowering patient advisors disempowered by forensic system **Next Step:** Further relationship-building

2. Patient Identified Priority: Level 4 achieved

**Challenge:** Supporting patient advisors’ leadership within the pandemic **Next Step:** Work with patient advisors to increase their leadership roles

3. Outcomes important to patients: Level 4 achieved.

**Challenge:** Engaging with other stakeholders (e.g. family members, staff) **Next Step:** Continue engagement efforts, using Frisch et. al.’s (2020) competencies to inform stakeholder engagement

4. Team is multi-disciplinary: Level 5 achieved.

**Challenge:** Communication and cultural responsiveness **Next Step:** Clarity of roles and involving Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and decision-makers

5. Aims to integrate knowledge into practice: Aim for Level 5, to be determined.

**Challenge:** Empower patient advisors to direct KT efforts **Next Step:** Expand patient advisory group

## CONCLUSION

Forensic psychiatric patients can provide insightful knowledge based on their lived and living experiences of mental illness to improve the prison health care system and practices.

We are learning each day we are involved in this evolving field, and our learning curve will continue when we can engage in person in the forensic facility. That said, attempting this project during COVID has highlighted for us unique key areas for improvement.

## REFERENCES

Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR). (2014). Patient Engagement Framework. Retrieved from <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48413.html>.

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