



Health Care Engagement Framework

An opportunity to contribute meaningfully



1. Why a health care engagement framework?

At Horizon, our engagement mechanisms ensure people have an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the organization and observe how their contributions move our organization forward.

This means contributing advice or ideas that lead to improved people-centred health care policies, programs and services and patient engagement. Across the country and internationally, engagement is recognized as a best practice in health care to support data-driven and evidence-based decision making. Engaging people in decisions creates and maintains trust, while generating support, both of which are necessary to create long-term, meaningful organizational change.

Our formal engagement mechanisms follow a set of guiding principles aligned with Horizon's values, to ensure the appropriate engagement occurs and advice and ideas from participants are always brought forward to decision makers for consideration.

This framework guides and informs all formal engagement processes initiated or led by Horizon. It assists in determining when and how to engage, who should be engaged, who should lead that engagement, how to report on the advice and ideas, and how to report back to participants.

What is Engagement?

Engagement is a people-centered, intentional, and thorough process of working with community, staff, stakeholders, patients, families and organizations to shape actions, impacts and decisions focused on health and well-being.

Engagement refers to the span of activities that support the involvement of patients, clients, families, residents, community groups, health providers, and businesses in influencing the problem solving, planning and decision-making processes and in shaping and addressing issues that impact the health and well-being of the community. It is an essential element of influencing meaningful change and requires careful planning to identify participants from the community.

Engagement is grounded in relationships, trust and Horizon's Guiding Principles. A meaningful engagement process must effectively involve staff, community partners, service providers, community groups and individuals, to influence Horizon's work on strategic health care priorities.

2. Guiding Principles

Horizon's guiding principles are rooted in our values and define what makes engagement meaningful. Engagement practitioners will consider each of these principles in their engagement process.

Clarity

Clearly define the purpose and expectations for engagement so that participants understand what participation level is required, and how their advice and ideas may be used.

Mutual Respect and Value

Create an environment conducive for constructive and productive conversations that allow for curiosity, compassion and listening. Place great value on the lived experiences, diverse perspectives and contributions of others.

Inclusion and Diversity

Use engagement methods that align appropriately with stakeholder needs. Equitably include diverse people and voices that address power imbalances, reduce barriers to participation, and extend the reach of perspectives in the conversation. Be aware of cultural differences and avoid tokenism.

Support

Use engagement methods that align with participant needs and budget availability to ensure accessibility to allow people to engage meaningfully with the health system. A lack of transportation, child care, internet access, working hours, etc. should not be a barrier to participation.

Resources and Capacity

Allocate adequate and appropriate time, resources and budget so information can be shared in a manner that can be understood by the public and engagement participants. Use facilitators who have the appropriate skills, guidance and training.

Communication and Planning

Plan ahead and involve people early in the engagement process. Provide clear, frequent and relevant information to encourage participation and always allow adequate time for feedback.

Influence, Impact, and Reporting

Be clear about how advice and input will be collected, measured and used in decision making. Explain how the results of the engagement process will influence outcomes and change within Horizon.

Openness, Honesty and Transparency

Be open, honest and transparent in all communications and information sharing throughout the engagement process to allow for a greater understanding of the decision-making process, resource limitations, and other constraints that affect engagement.

Trust and Credibility

Honour commitments and be accountable for the engagement process. Trust and credibility in Horizon will increase, establishing safe and caring environments that allow for ongoing and meaningful dialogue with communities.

3. Roles and Accountability of Horizon staff Pursuing Engagement

This health care engagement framework applies across the organization to all staff for formal engagement processes.

Horizon follows a step-by-step process for planning and implementing meaningful engagement programs. These steps include:

1. Identify if the situation is one where engagement cannot be conducted due to privacy, patient safety or confidentiality reasons.
2. Define purpose, review principles, and ensure clarity of scope and objectives.
3. Ensure our approach is inclusive and we have considered who will be interested and affected.
4. Identify and address barriers to participation and align project or program with engagement process.
5. Commit to a level of influence and choose methods that work for the organization, the issue and participants.
6. Set clear communication objectives and share information that people need to participate in an informed way.
7. Conduct outreach about the opportunity to participate.
8. Gather participant input using appropriate methods.
9. Understand and consider input and reflect on how it will impact decisions and outcomes.
10. Evaluate the process, ensure it aligns with Horizon's Health Care Engagement Framework, and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.
11. Report on results, decisions and outcomes of engagement with transparency and openness.
12. Implement decisions.

4. Continuum of Engagement

There are many different ways to look at engagement. It is an interaction between Horizon as an organization and the people it serves, works and partners with.

This framework applies when Horizon initiates the interaction in a formal engagement process and is held accountable to the Guiding Principles.

Horizon recognizes in the exercise of engagement, it will not always initiate the engagement. Sometimes community, stakeholders or partners will initiate the conversation, advocating for change, and Horizon will need to choose how it responds to the situation. In other situations, community, stakeholders or partners will initiate the conversation and request Horizon take a seat at the table to lead together in an equal way with others at the table.

Establishing the level of influence by participants on a given issue can be complicated. It requires an internal conversation in the organization to determine what commitments can be made and kept to participants. It also requires an understanding, gained from conversation with participants about their desire to influence or impact the outcomes of an issue. It requires consideration of who should be involved, how they should be involved, and how different groups or people see their role. It requires clarity of purpose and accountability about what is done with the input from participants. It requires a delineation between technical knowledge and lived experience, and how these two types of knowledge work together to enable better decisions, and what role each type of knowledge plays in the conversation. It requires an understanding of the level of potential controversy that might result from changes, the level of impact on participants and the complexity of the issue. It also requires an understanding of the level of trust and the status of relationships with the organization or in the system.

The continuum is a tool to bring to life the Guiding Principles of Influence, Impact & Reporting, Mutual Respect & Value, and Openness, Honesty & Transparency. As you move from left to right there is an increasing level of influence by participants on the outcome. With the increase in involvement, also comes an increase in the amount of time and capacity participants are expected to contribute to the engagement.



4. Continuum of Engagement

Inform	Seek Advice & Input	Active Participation	Partnership
<p>Horizon commits to: Sharing information that meets the needs and interests of participants in open, transparent ways to support increased understanding and knowledge.</p> <p>We commit to informing and educating at every level of the continuum.</p>	<p>Horizon commits to: Leading a meaningful engagement process with clear roles and purpose. We will research and consider the issue and present our thoughts, ideas and options to you for feedback. We will listen to and learn from you, and consider how your input affects our decisions.</p>	<p>Horizon commits to: Working together with participants we will solicit your ideas, hopes, suggestions and concerns to improve programs and processes. We will use your input to develop solutions and options to make decisions that create meaningful change in the organization. We value our relationships with participants and will invest the time required to work together meaningfully.</p>	<p>Horizon commits to: Working with partners as an equal participant to cooperate, collaborate and negotiate outcomes that benefit and support all.</p> <p>We will act together as equal stakeholders in designing and implementing all facets of change resulting from the engagement.</p>
<p>Horizon looks to participants for: Asking questions and identifying what information they need to provide informed input.</p>	<p>Horizon looks to participants for: Informed and constructive participation and to provide their input for consideration.</p>	<p>Horizon looks to participants for: Open sharing so we can understand your needs and hopes, and interacting with us and other participants in respectful, thoughtful ways.</p>	<p>Horizon looks to participants for: Providing clarity on our role and purpose as a member of the group, so we can commit the appropriate resources, time and effort.</p>
<p>Methods that may be used at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites • Fact sheets • Videos • Infographics • Symposium & Briefings 	<p>Methods that may be used at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Comment Forms • Online or hard copy surveys • Open Houses • Ongoing Online Panel of stakeholders • Focus Groups • Interviews • Polling • Participant Advisors 	<p>Methods that may be used at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees and Councils • Consensus Building • Study Circles • Appreciative Inquiry summits • World Café conversations • Workshops 	<p>Methods that may be used at this level: When Horizon initiates a partnership level engagement process we may use task forces, participant panels or deliberative forums. When a partner initiates a partner level engagement, we will participate in the methods and tools they identify.</p>
<p><i>Whatever level we use to engage we will operate by the Guiding Principles, demonstrate leadership, communicate openly and look to build trust and relationships with those we serve, interact and partner with.</i></p>			

The health care engagement framework embeds a culture of meaningful engagement between Horizon and its communities and staff to improve connections and build trusting relationships. There may be certain situations (for example privacy, confidentiality or patient safety) where engagement cannot occur. In those situations we remain committed to continued accountability and transparency about why engagement did not take place.

5. Evaluation & Reporting

Horizon is committed to evaluating the outcomes of all formal engagement and has established an Engagement Steering Committee. Evaluation is important for accountability and measuring the success of engagement processes. Individuals conducting engagement are responsible for evaluating its success and reporting the results to the Steering Committee.

Horizon's Communications and Community Relations team is responsible for producing a public facing annual report on the status of community engagement within the organization. It relies on thorough planning, documentation, analysis and reporting by anyone conducting formal engagement.

