

Tips and Tools for Academic Educators

Who Wish to Engage Persons/People Living with HIV as Patients in Education

Why involve people living with HIV (PLWHIV) in programs to educate health professionals?

Patients are truly experts by experience, and bring different perspectives and stories to the patient–professional partnership. People living with HIV report their active involvement in educating health professionals positively impacts on their personal teaching skills, self-awareness, personal understanding of HIV and overall confidence. Health professionals value interactions with PLWHIV educators who provide great potential to promote the learning of patient-centred practice, interprofessional collaboration, community involvement, shared decision making and how to support self-care. Students gain benefit from interactions with the same patients over an extended period to observe, discuss and reflect on how health and illness change over time.

Selecting Excellent Facilitators

- Determine learning objectives to help provide a knowledge framework.
- Create a “job description” outlining expectations of the role and characteristics of ideal candidates which include:
 - the willingness to share experiences and an understanding that their life story is part of the education role
 - an openness to answering questions within what would be considered reasonable for educational objectives while maintaining personal boundaries
 - comfort with challenging thinking in a positive and thoughtful manner
 - ability to create a safe place to talk about difficult issues, where everyone is respectful of each other
 - has reflected upon their personal experience and is able to communicate constructively with an interest to advance healthcare professional education

Engaging and Preparing PLWHIV Facilitators in Education

- Invite PLWHIVs to help guide the development of the educational program at onset including core values of collaboration and the guiding principles for implementation.
- Identify time commitment expected of facilitators – engagement over time builds greater trust and stronger relationships.
- Identify communication options, including with other facilitators and students, even when the educational program is less active.
- Provide advanced orientation and training in the program’s educational methods but avoid prescribing individual teaching methods (this risks diminishing the authenticity of the individual’s experience).
- Recognize the valuable role PLWHIVs play as educators through their unique experience.

- Assist in the creation of an environment of openness and sharing of information.
- Use timelines during educational activities to create a frame of reference relevant to PLWHIV experience.
- Provide tools for student-facilitator communications for when questions arise.
- Request input on the other materials or resources used by PLWHIV that have been helpful to them to share with learners.
- Look for opportunities to engage at the community level. Explore how involvement in educating health professionals helps PLWHIV organisations in the community.

PLWHIV Co-Facilitation with a Health Care Provider

Co-facilitation (two facilitators working together), is an excellent way to bring different perspectives and styles that can be complementary to the other co-facilitator's style. Providing information about health care provider's professional roles will assist in co-facilitation collaboration. Partnering PLWHIV with health care provider facilitators is beneficial to better understand roles and reinforce PLWHIVs as educators and professionals as collaborators to the learning process.

Want more information?

Realize (formerly Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR))

1240 Bay Street, Suite 600

Toronto, ON, Canada M5R 2A7

Telephone: (416) 513-0440

Fax: (416) 595-0094

Email: info@hivandrehab.ca

References and to read more:

Solomon, P., Guenter, D., Stinson, D. (December 2005). **People with HIV as Educators of Health Professionals.** *AIDS Patient Care and STDs.* Vol. 19 (12): 840-847.

Solomon, P. **Student perspectives on patient educators as facilitators of interprofessional education.** (2011). *Medical Teacher* Vol. 33(10):851-853.

Cheng, P.T.H., Towle, A. (December 2016). **How patient educators help students to learn: An exploratory study.** *Medical Teacher* Vol. 0(0): 1-7.

Towle, A., Godolphin, W. (2015). **Patients as teachers: promoting their authentic and autonomous voices.** *The Clinical Teacher.* 12: 149–154.

Solomon, P., Salbach, N., Gervais, N., Sinclair, L. (2015). **Rehabilitation Can Help You Do That: Facilitator Manual. A workbook to how rehabilitation services can help you deal with your HIV related challenges and live the life you want.** Hamilton, ON: McMaster.