



Understanding the Framework

How does the Framework help me involve consumers?

The Framework will set you on a pathway for working effectively with consumers—preparing your organisation and your consumers to work well together for years to come.

Committed organisations

Following the Framework guidance, begin by looking at your organisation's readiness.

Is yours a committed organisation, ready to work with consumers?

'Committed organisations' show their commitment to meaningful consumer engagement by integrating consumer involvement in all aspects of organisational practice, processes and systems, from governance structures through to service delivery, policy development, research and evaluation.

Has your organisation considered the following issues?

- Governance - are consumers involved in your governance structures?
- Cultural engagement – do you work with diverse consumers?
- Clear objectives – do you have clear objectives when involving consumers?
- Resources and support – do you have financial and human resources dedicated to consumer engagement?
- Education and training - do you know what training is available to staff and consumers?
- Facilitation - do you facilitate consumer engagement across the organisation?
- Research, data and evaluation – do you involve consumers in research and evaluation?

Capable consumers

Next, take a look at your consumers and their support and training.

What is a capable consumer? Do you know how to help your consumers develop the knowledge, skills and experience required? 'Consumer knowledge, skills and experience table'

Consumers are supported, trained and selected for their capability to engage meaningfully and advocate effectively for people affected by cancer. Bringing their knowledge and experience as a person diagnosed with cancer, a carer, a family member or survivor leads to increased experiential learning for all engaged. Consumers who are trained and well prepared are able to look beyond their personal experience and provide a broad consumer perspective, and represent the views of those unable to represent themselves or those with poor outcomes.

Are the following statements true of your organisation's consumers?

They:

- have a direct experience of cancer
- are motivated to improve outcomes for others
- develop their skills and capabilities to meet their role
- grasp the context of their involvement and have an understanding of the different types of involvement
- undertake learning and development opportunities in consumer participation, and share their knowledge and expertise through contributing to conferences and journals
- seek support in their role through consumer organisations, networks, support groups, etc.
- support other consumers to actively participate.

Inclusive groups

Now it's time to think about your staff teams and combined staff/consumer groups.

Does your organisation work in (have) inclusive groups that clearly understand the value of each member and how they contribute to achieving their goals?

Effective consumer engagement occurs in groups or teams and, therefore, education of those teams in the benefits and practicalities of consumer engagement is important.

Professionals who understand the value of consumer engagement have access to educational opportunities where they learn how to incorporate the consumer experience into their activities.

Leaders in the organisation can assist by championing the benefits of consumer engagement and by involving consumers as respected, equal members of the team. This will encourage well-developed, mature and effective groups.

Are the following statements true of your organisation?

- there are consumer involvement champions among your staff
- professionals show respect for and value the contribution of consumers
- consumers are considered equal members of the team
- professionals and consumers attend professional development opportunities together
- professionals communicate effectively and respectfully with consumers.

Shared focus

Finally, you will bring all of the consumer engagement work together effectively around a shared focus.

Do your capable consumers—supported by strong systems and processes—participate as equal team members with professionals to achieve clear objectives?

The desired objectives are mutually agreed in these groups, and used to monitor and sustain the effectiveness of the consumer engagement.

Consumers and professionals supported by best practice systems and processes, work together to act for mutual benefit. The purpose, goals and outcomes of the group are well described and understood by all participants.

Performance measures are developed to facilitate learning and build knowledge in consumer involvement.

Are the following statements true of your organisation's consumers?

They:

- participate in improving information and support options in cancer control
- work together with professionals to ensure safety and quality in cancer services
- are involved in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of research
- participate in policy development
- collaborate with professionals to develop performance indicators relevant for consumer engagement.

