

# Engagement Key Principles

## 1 Appropriate

The right topic, and someone you trust is asking you the questions.

- **Everyone is different**, and every topic is different, so methods should be adaptable.
- **Understand the people** and the organization you are engaging with.
- **Surveys** are best when you have **specific questions** to be answered.
- **One-on-one** conversation is best for generating new ideas.

## 2 Transparent

You know the purpose of the questions and what will happen with the information.

- **You understand** the question.
- **Set realistic expectations** about what can be accomplished with this engagement.
- **Use open ended questions** that start with "What, how, describe, tell me..."

## 3 Inclusive

Everyone who has a stake in the topic or issue is welcome to participate.

- Don't make **signing up** in advance a **requirement** of being involved.
- **Go to where the people are** with "pop-up" conversations.

## 4 Respectful

You are respected and input is important no matter who you are or how you present.

- Sometimes **survival** is more important. **Engagement can wait.**
- People's **time is valuable.**
- Let them know how their input will make a difference.

## 5 Safe

You feel safe, both physically and emotionally.

- Have a **warm** and **friendly** approach.
- **Building trust** is important in engagement!
- **Involve peer support** facilitators and **researchers.**

## 6 Responsive

The results are shared with you, and commitments are honoured.

- **If lots of engagement** has been done with this group, let them know **how this is different.**

## 7 Consistent

Regularly check in with you, not just once.

- **Provide training** for people to be involved in **collaboration** and **decision making.**

# Engagement Approaches

## 1 Inform

- **WORD OF MOUTH**  
Through staff, volunteers outreach teams, peer support, or people you know.
- **PEER SUPPORT WORKERS**  
Trusted people that can spread the word!
- **PRESENTATIONS**  
Online videos, podcasts, in person.
- **PRINTED MATERIAL**  
Posters, pamphlets, handouts, flyers, ads in the newspaper, billboards, Megaphone Magazine.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA**  
Be agile and open to different paths! Text messages, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and Youtube.
- **APPS & WEBSITES**  
Client section on your website, create an app.
- **STORYTELLING**  
Shared through social media, online, in writing, or in-person.

## 2 Consult

- **FOCUS GROUPS**  
A small group (6-8 people) discusses ideas and generates opinions.
- **INTERVIEWS & CONVERSATIONS**  
Face-to-face, and a great way to generate new ideas.
- **MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING**  
Goal oriented method of interviewing that allows the client to direct change.
- **SURVEYS**  
Efficient way to gather information from a large number of participants.

## 3 Involve

- **TENANT MEETINGS**  
Regular (monthly) meetings for two-way conversations.
- **WORKSHOPS**  
Larger engagement sessions, often 3 hours to full day.
- **COMMUNITY LIAISONS**  
Expert 'bridge builder' that advises organizations about an underrepresented community.
- **COMMISSIONS**  
A group of people that advises organizations about an underrepresented community.

## 4 Collaborate

- **PARTNERSHIPS IN DECISION MAKING**  
Clients sit on the board of directors, advisory committees, and task forces.
- **ADVISORY COMMITTEES**  
A group of people that advises about decision making.

## 5 Empower

- **SPEAKERS' BUREAUS**  
People are provided training on how to tell their story.
- **DECISION MAKING**  
A group of participants/clients are tasked with making decisions.
- **PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING**  
A democratic process for spending part of a public or organizational budget.
- **TRAINING**  
Train clients to develop their advocacy and leadership skills.



# People With Unique Needs

## People With Disabilities

- Give **extra time** when needed.
- **Go to them**, instead of making them travel to you.
- Timing should work with the **bus schedule**.
- The space must be **accessible**.
- Give option to **participate online**.

## People With Drug or Alcohol Dependencies

- Pick a **location that works** for them.
- **Afternoon meetings** work best, if they are staying as a shelter or sleeping rough.

## Youth & Young Adults

- Use **creative engagement** methods, art music, dance, radio, theatre.
- Have '**eye catching**' promotional materials.
- Don't be afraid to tackle **complex issues**.
- Use **online forums** and **social networks**.



## People With Mental Health Issues

- Be **respectful, honest** and a **good listener**.
- Be understanding; **acknowledge hallucinations**, but don't pretend you see them too.
- Give the person **their space** when they need it.
- **Respect their input**. They may not agree with everything you say.

## Indigenous People

- **Meet with an Elder** ahead of an engagement, and invite them to be involved.
- Partner with **indigenous organizations**, include culturally sensitive practices.
- Consider using "**talking circles**".
- Acknowledge the **traditional territory**.
- Ask people who are coming **who else to invite**.