



Strengthening Med Safety in Long-Term Care



Resident and Family Engagement

"I have had an opportunity to become acquainted with my doctor, and he with me. That rapport, that bond and relationship is critically important for me and for many other residents in long-term care."
Barry, resident in long-term care, Ontario.

Residents in Ontario's long-term care are the heart of every home. They have reached a stage in their life where they need to rely on others to support and to care for them, and while there are some residents who cannot be autonomous in their own care, there are many who are able to self-advocate and make decisions for themselves in their medication management. Engaging residents is essential to increasing medication safety and this initiative aims to support you, with resources and education, to do so authentically. Collaboration between staff and residents gives the best possible chance for safe medication experiences.

"I would like to be on the committee that decides how they are going to reduce errors so that I can add the resident's voice..." Devora, resident in long-term care, Ontario.

Toolkit

This toolkit has been designed for all staff in long-term care homes in Ontario as a landing place to find resources and information to support resident and family engagement in the home. Whether this practice is already embedded in your setting or whether you are looking for ways to increase engagement, there is information in the following pages that will support any improvement efforts and/or projects.

“The most positive medication management experience that our family had while Mom was in LTC was when we observed her speaking with her pharmacist. The friendly rapport and the patience the pharmacist showed Mom was very reassuring.” Quote from a family caregiver.

Why is this resource needed?

This information has been collected to support you as you work towards helping to strengthen medication safety in long-term care (LTC) by providing resources, guidance and best practices to enhance the engagement of residents and families. Collaboration is key. Working together with residents and families, will help medication systems in long-term care to be safer. This guidance will not only help you learn how resident and family engagement leads to a stronger medication safety system, but it will support that learning by linking you to tools and resources that will help you to facilitate and strengthen this engagement.

How does this resource work?

This information will help you to reflect on how residents and their family are currently involved in their own medication management and will offer tools and resources to support your efforts to continuously improve this important aspect of their care.

Before you begin, reflect on these questions:

How would you rate your home’s overall approach to resident and family engagement in their medication management?

- It is evident in daily practice
- It is there in theory but not in practice
- It is something we are looking into

At what stage would you say your home is at in engaging residents and their family in their medication management?

- Well established
- Established and progressing
- Just beginning
- Not yet started



Now that you have had a chance to think about the present, think about what your next step is towards making medication systems stronger in long-term care. The tools that follow will support your continuous improvement.

Patient engagement is important because there are health outcomes that are directly associated with enhanced resident and family engagement. These can include:

- higher resident satisfaction
- better clinical outcomes
- higher staff satisfaction

When working in a long-term care home it is very important that there is collaborative spirit. Staff, administrators, residents and families should work together to reach these important outcomes.¹

¹ Bowers N, Nolet K, Roberts, E, et al. [Implementing Change in Long-Term Care: A Practical Guide to Transformation](#). University of Wisconsin–Madison, School of Nursing; 2007. Accessed September 22, 2014.

“...the LTC home is to be the residents’ home, a home in which the residents’ physical needs are met, as well as their social, psychological, and spiritual needs; a home in which residents are – and feel - safe and secure; and a home in which residents are treated with respect and are able to maintain their sense of dignity.”

Honourable Eileen E. Gillese, Commissioner of the Long-Term Care Homes Public Inquiry

What is meaningful resident and family engagement?

Health Quality Ontario developed a Patient Engagement Framework and the goal of it was to develop *“a strong culture of patient, caregiver and public engagement to support high quality health care.”*

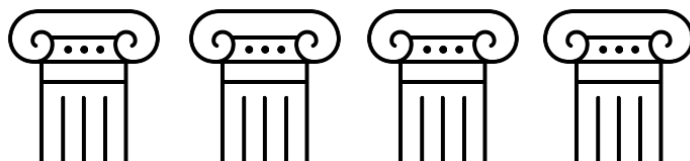
They state that there are six principles that define a strong culture of engagement between patients, their caregivers and health professionals. These principles will help to ensure engagement activities are meaningful to everyone involved. (Do you see these reflected in your home?)

- Partnership (authentic, mutually beneficial relationships)
- Learning (expect to learn about each other’s perspectives)
- Empowerment (ability to express needs and perspectives without fear of reprisal; also, informed decision making)
- Transparency (honesty from healthcare professionals and organizations)
- Responsiveness (health care professionals and organizations act upon the voices of residents and caregivers)
- Respect (professionals and organizations demonstrate respect for their resident and caregiver partners by actively showing appreciation for time, ideas, lived experience) When residents are engaged through a variety of approaches, for example, through consultation and collaboration, then the goal of high-quality care becomes attainable.²

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has recently released a policy on [Patient Partnered Care](#). They support the CMA Patient Voice definition of Patient Partnered Care: An authentic and equity informed collaboration between decision makers; patients, healthcare providers and informal caregivers, built upon four team-based pillars.

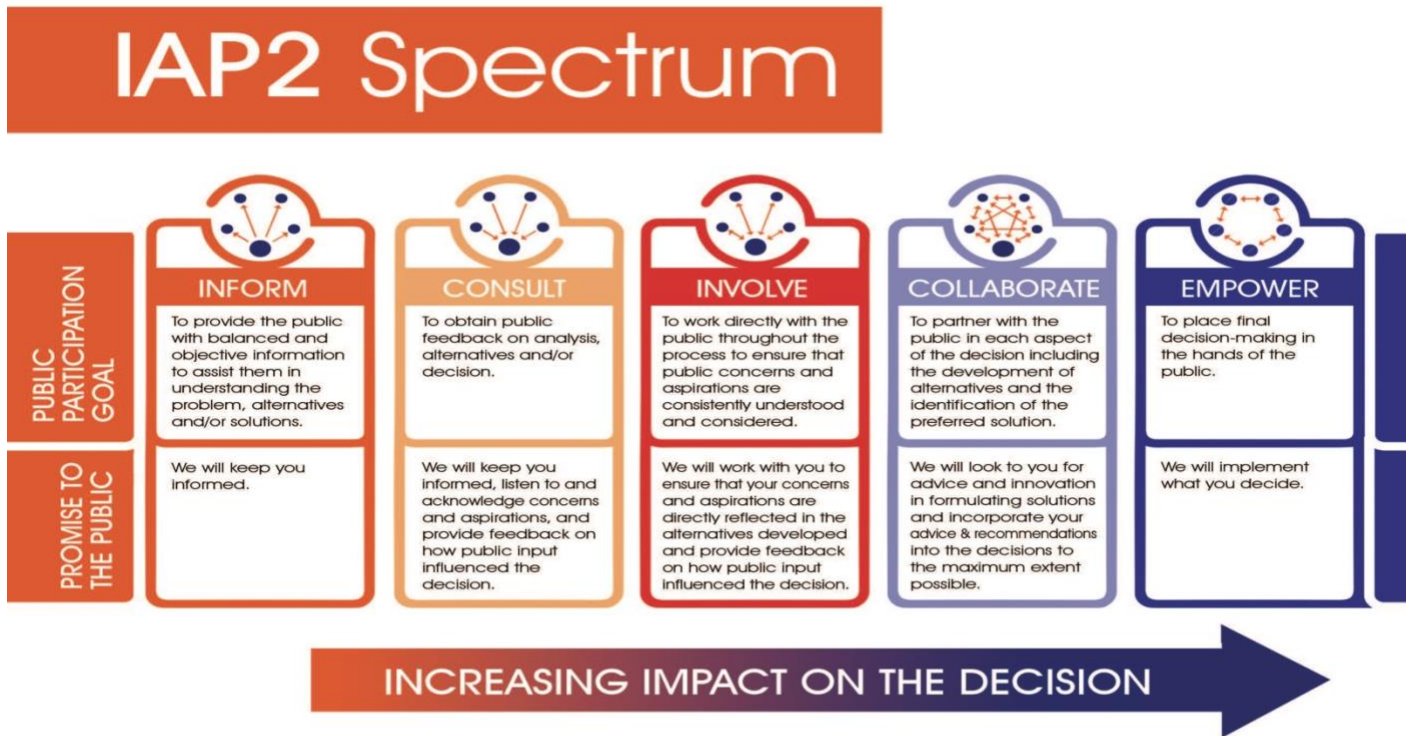
1. **Collaborative leadership:** Clear team roles are jointly defined, and one primary facilitator healthcare professional supports efforts toward mutually agreed upon goals and tasks. Roles and team membership are regularly reviewed and remain flexible based on the tasks required.
2. **Communication:** All team members have access to the same clear, concise, and essential information including the mutually agreed upon tasks and actions. Information is shared and received with clear handover and regular team huddles are arranged.
3. **Situation monitoring:** Team members cross-monitor each other and regularly evaluate progress towards shared, agreed upon goals. Challenges and pivots are anticipated, additional support is requested as needed and resources are used wisely. Trends among the continuous improvement of team processes can also inform broader systemic change/decision-making.
4. **Share decision making/mutual support:** Decisions are made collaboratively as a team in order to respectfully achieve collective goals. Members are supported in being assertive when necessary (e.g., safety concerns) and conflict is effectively managed. Trust is essential and all share responsibility for team achievements.

These four pillars support a team-based culture that is important for patient-partnered individual health decision-making, designing or redesigning care delivery systems and research.



² <https://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/pe/ontario-patient-engagement-framework-en.pdf> Ontario’s Patient Engagement Framework Creating a strong culture of patient engagement to support high quality health care.

The [International Association for Public Participation](#) (IAP2) has developed a spectrum for public participation based on a set of core values and is guided by a code of ethics. On the spectrum, there are participation goals and promises to the public. What goals does your long-term care home set for resident and family participation and what can be promised to them? How can movement on the spectrum be improved or impacted?



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iap2.org

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Communication

It is critically important for there to be clear communication between all members of the health team, including residents and their families. Medication errors can happen when there is miscommunication between parties. It is important that you assess each resident's health literacy which means, how they are able to access, comprehend, evaluate and communicate information. It is very important that during this process, you use plain language and avoid medical terms and acronyms. This [Plain Language checklist for Providers](#) gives excellent strategies and examples for using plain language which aims to make health information easier for residents and caregivers to understand and use. To ensure that the resident or family member has understood information, an effective tool is the teach-back method. This is where you ask the resident to explain to you or to show you what they have understood from your conversation. You can then determine if true understanding has occurred or if information must be repeated. Have ["What Matters to You"](#) conversations each and every day with the people you support or care for because patients are the true experts on their own needs and experiences. Asking, listening and responding to what matters to patients is a key feature of person- and family-centred care.

³ Bowers N, Nolet K, Roberts, E, et al. [Implementing Change in Long-Term Care: A Practical Guide to Transformation](#). University of Wisconsin–Madison, School of Nursing; 2007. Accessed September 22, 2014.

Culture

When we use the word “culture,” we are referring to patient safety culture. Patient safety culture is:

“...shared values (what is important) and beliefs (what is held to be true) that interact with a system’s structures and control mechanisms to produce behavioural norms. It influences patient safety directly by determining accepted practices and indirectly by acting as a barrier or enabler to the adoption of behaviours that promote patient safety. Understanding the components and influencers of culture and assessing the safety culture is essential to developing strategies that creates a culture committed to providing the safest possible care for patients.”

[Canadian Patient Safety Institute \(CPSI\)](#)

Patient safety culture and resident and family engagement are closely intertwined and are reciprocal. When engagement increases, culture matures, and as culture matures, engagement opportunities become more evident and authentic. They become the fabric of the home. Gathering [patient stories](#) can be impactful to share among staff and can help build trust and relationships between patients, caregivers and health care professionals.

The [5 Steps to Successful Engagement](#) by the Change Foundation. You can print this poster and hang it where all staff and residents can see it, for example a message or performance board.



Activity

Study the charts below and then reflect on the questions that follow.

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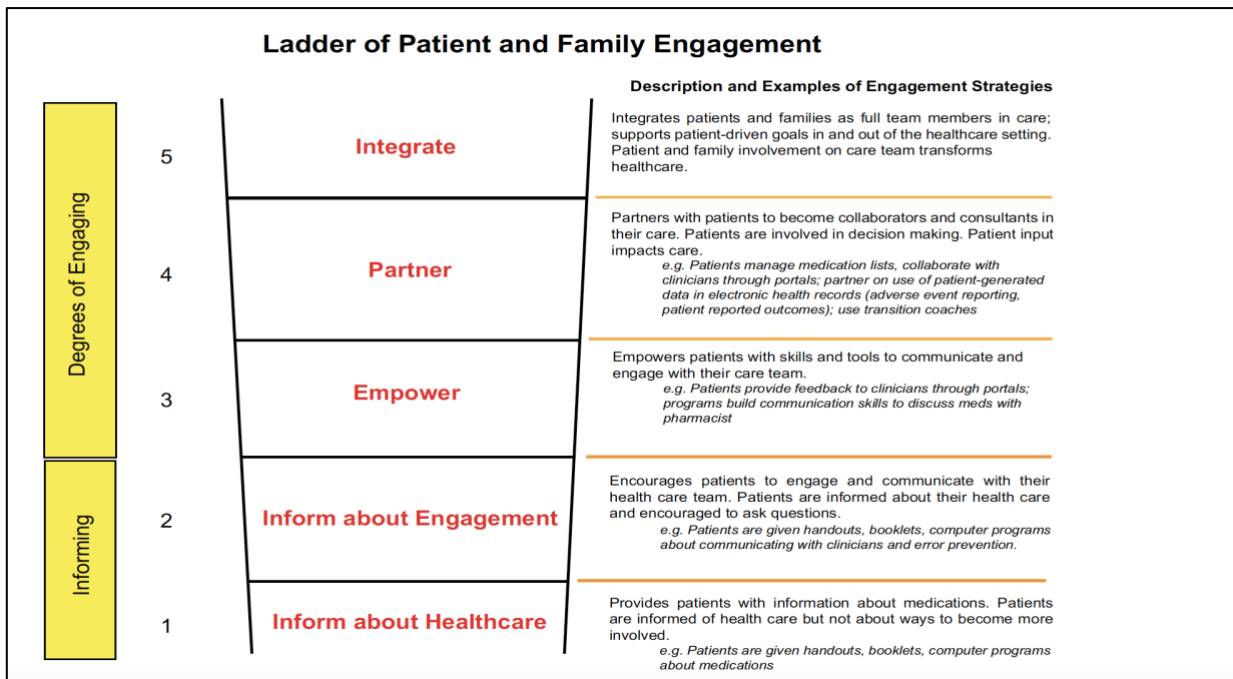


Table 1. Patient safety culture maturity levels

Maturity Levels	Approach to Improving Patient Safety Culture
Pathological	No systems in place to promote a positive safety culture
Reactive	Systems are piecemeal, developed only in response to occurrences and/or regulatory or accreditation requirements
Calculative	Systematic approach to patient safety exists, but implementation is patchy and inquiry into events is limited to circumstances surrounding specific event
Proactive	Comprehensive approach to promoting a positive safety culture exists; evidence-based intervention implemented across the organization
Generative	Creation and maintenance of a positive safety culture are central to mission of the organization; organization evaluates the effectiveness of interventions and drains every last drop of learning from failures and successes and takes meaningful action to improve

In your care setting, how many committees or quality improvement projects have residents and family members authentically involved?

Where are you and your home on the ladder?

How will you climb it?

How would residents and their families view your culture?

Would they agree with your self-evaluation?

Have these conversations with your colleagues and work together to find ways to climb the ladder and to improve patient safety!

⁴ Busch, Saxena. "Putting the Patient in Patient Safety Investigations: Barriers and Strategies for Involvement." Journal of patient safety Publish Ahead of Print (2020)

⁵ Patient Safety Culture Improvement Tool: Development and Guidelines for Use. Mark Fleming and Natasha Wentzell

How do we measure resident and family engagement?

In order to continuously improve, there has to be a starting point and tools to help you measure your progress and to make plans to move forward. At the beginning of this toolkit, you were given an opportunity to reflect on current practices in your setting and how you might strengthen the medication safety system. One tool that is available for free is the **Public and Patient Engagement Evaluation Tool (PPEET)**. It is a generic tool to help organizations assess their engagement activities and can be used as it is, or as a model of a specific use, such as resident and family engagement in medication safety. It consists of:

1. an **organization** questionnaire to assess the organization's capacity for, and culture of public and patient engagement.
2. a **participant** questionnaire to obtain participants' assessments of key features of the engagement activity that they have participated in, and
3. a **project** questionnaire to assess the planning, execution and impact of the engagement activity after it has been completed.

This tool must be requested but is free to use.⁶

How can I help our residents and their families to be better informed about engagement?

A performance board is a great visual tool to display the progress being made in improvement projects within the organization. This gives the staff and residents a glance at the improvement that is being done and the change that is occurring. This information technique informs residents of the enhancements to their home. There may be notices of projects happening, special events, participation opportunities etc.



⁶ "The Public and Patient Engagement Evaluation Tool has been licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License. ©2018, Julia Abelson and the PPEET Research-Practice Collaborative. McMaster University. All rights reserved."

You can offer residents and their families tools to help them be safer with their medications.

1. CHANGES?

Have any medications been added, stopped or changed, and why?

2. CONTINUE?

What medications do I need to keep taking, and why?

3. PROPER USE?

How do I take my medications, and for how long?

4. MONITOR?

How will I know if my medication is working, and what side effects do I watch for?

5. FOLLOW-UP?

Do I need any tests and when do I book my next visit?

irmp

cps/icsp

Visit safemedicationuse.ca

[5 Questions to Ask About My Medications](#) This document helps residents and caregivers start a conversation about medications to improve communications with their health care provider. Every resident who takes medication should be made aware of this handout. If a resident is not able to be part of their medication management, please share with their essential caregiver.

[Safemedicationuse.ca](#) is a website that contains many newsletters about medication safety that are written for consumers. They are easy to understand and offer tips to prevent harm from medications. Not all of these newsletters will apply to residents in LTC, but there may be some that your resident or caregiver can use.

SafeMedicationUse.ca
SUPPORTED BY HEALTH CANADA

Medication Error Reporting is brought to you by the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada and supported by Health Canada. [About this website](#)

Medication errors happen.

We can help you, and you can help your fellow Canadians by submitting a medication error report.

Start here

I think there has been a medication error

Report an error



I think there has been a reaction to a medication

Report a reaction



More information



Did a medication error happen in the home? A resident or caregiver can submit a report of a medication error to www.mederror.ca. Every report is read and analyzed by a medication safety team. If there is contact information submitted with the report, the team will get in touch with the reporter to gather more information or to share what has been learned.

Accreditation

Accreditation can be an important factor when making informed choices in health care. It is a voluntary process in Ontario LTC homes to assess the services that they provide and can help improve the quality and safety of care for their residents. The accreditation process encourages resident and family engagement and there are standards that are directly connected to the level of engagement.

Becoming accredited means that an organization can track where they are starting from and where they are going. They can improve efficiencies, develop standardized processes, and build a culture of quality and safety. When a home is advertised as being accredited, they are seen as being committed to offering safe and high-quality services. If you are unsure if your facility is accredited, ask!

The 2 accrediting organizations in Canada are Accreditation Canada and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) Canada.

To learn more about **Accreditation Canada**, click [here](#). It's about quality improvement, every day, with everyone that walks through your door.

To learn more about the **Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) Canada**, click [here](#). Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recognizes CARF accreditation for long-term care homes and provides a funding premium to accredited homes.

Councils and associations can help support resident and family engagement efforts.

There are several associations that focus on education and advocacy for residents and their families in long-term care in Ontario.

Family Councils Ontario leads and supports families in improving quality of life in long-term care.

The Ontario Association of Residents' Councils (OARC). This association is committed to "...working together with our partners to educate stakeholders, build a collective voice, and create positive culture change." Every home is mandated to form and support a Residents' Council and to engage residents in quality improvement initiatives within the home (*Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*). This video, [Rights of the Resident](#), by OARC, will familiarize you with the Residents' Bill of Rights; practical applications of the rights; and, how they affect residents in everyday life.

AdvantAge Ontario is a community-based, not-for-profit organizations dedicated to supporting the best possible aging experience. With a focus on advocacy and education, AdvantAge Ontario works on behalf of their members to help all stakeholders understand what the not-for-profit approach means and what it can do for the future of senior care.

The Ontario Long-Term Care Association is committed to advancing the quality of long-term care services in Ontario. With advocacy and leadership as a key focus, the Association has been able to influence legislative, policy and regulatory change, support sector expansion and redevelopment, and provide educational opportunities to ensure the increasing needs of residents are being met with safe, high-quality care.