



# Consumer engagement in research

## Top 10 tips for researchers

***“We are all coming from different experiences, backgrounds and professions, we absolutely need to encourage the practice of questioning and clarification”***  
**Keely Bumsted-O’Brien, consumer representative**

Providing an environment to build integrity and credibility enables people from different perspectives to contribute with a shared focus. Some ways of achieving this can be through feedback and encouragement, ensuring inclusion through good communication, making background knowledge or insights available to all, and clear language and explanations where possible. Other points to consider for meaningful engagement:

1. There is mutual benefit in starting a conversation.
2. Relationships take time. Engage early.
3. Knowledge imbalance contributes to a power imbalance.
4. Providing publications for background reading helps inform an understanding of the discussion topics.
5. The role of the research team is to enable effective contribution. Organise regular meetings with the consumers to build a working relationship.
6. Someone being silent in a meeting does not necessarily mean they have nothing to say. Provide an opportunity for further discussion outside the meeting.
7. Small group discussions take the pressure off consumers trying to contribute to a sometimes complex, unfamiliar and time-limited discussion.
8. How much does the project incorporate consumer input? If not, ask for it with specific questions.
9. When asking questions, allow time for consumers to prepare responses. Sending questions in advance can help with this.
10. Encourage consumers to ask questions and check in with them informally to ask how they are going.

More resources are available through the [Consumer Engagement Toolkit\\*](#), for example the Program Manager checklist, Committee Chair checklist and Consumer checklist.

\*<https://www.viccompcancerctr.org/consumer-engagement/>