

# Citizen engagement in evidence synthesis

Insights from McMaster Forum Citizen Panel for Evidence Synthesis citizen partners



## Recruitment & onboarding

- Citizen partners value:
  - reviewing the detailed “researcher request form” that includes why the synthesis is being done, how it will be used (if known), their role, and timelines
  - engaging in virtual onboarding sessions that allow them to meet the research team, discuss the project scope and process, review their engage in each step, and ask questions
- Communicating with citizen partners is enhanced by prioritizing openness and valuing diverse perspectives, and avoiding using acronyms and highly technical language



## During the synthesis

- Citizen partners prefer:
  - providing feedback via a shared document where they can view feedback from other citizen partners (with clear instructions on how to share comments in the shared document)
  - having a small number of questions and prompts (both generic for any evidence synthesis and specific to the topic addressed) to guide their review of the evidence synthesis
- Providing resources and training are essential for supporting citizens to provide meaningful feedback and possible optional training opportunities



## Dissemination

- Important to provide:
  - feedback from the research team on citizens’ comments, and including an explanation for why some comments were not used is especially helpful for improving citizen engagement
  - acknowledgement of citizen contributions in the final report
  - a final project update, including a link to the report when published
  - a clear and easy process for compensation



## A final note to research teams

- Emphasize that:
  - citizen engagement is feasible, valuable, and impactful, even in short timelines
  - lived experience provides unique insights, identifies gaps, and improves communication
  - collaboration should be open and exploratory—don’t assume limitations
  - multidirectional learning is important—citizens bring real expertise

Citizen partners’ key words to describe their experiences of participating in evidence syntheses  
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We are grateful to our citizen partners for sharing their experiences and their insights about meaningful engagement in evidence syntheses.



Health Forum

