

Exemplary Practices within Organizations that have Dedicated Resources towards Learning and Implementing Methods that Best Engage Patients and Families

A Review of Patient Engagement: Catalyzing Improvement and Innovation in Healthcare

Reviewed by Mireille Brosseau, Program Manager, Patient Partnerships, Health Standards Organization, Ottawa, ON

Just last year, as I was preparing to speak to MHA students about patient engagement, a nurse practitioner with whom I shared an office pulled off a few visuals and notes from the printer. She handed them to me and said: “Here, these must be yours, they are full of buzzwords ...”.

I couldn’t help but feel a bit slighted. I’d spoken to dozens of groups about “patient engagement” and “co-design.” I had always received positive feedback about the clarity and energy with which I spoke about these concepts, and explored with audiences the value and relevance of patient and family engagement. Yet here we were, sitting in an organization that valued its history and culture of patient and family-centred care. I had to acknowledge that, despite the fantastic work being done in many organizations across Canada and internationally, the patient engagement movement is still very fragile.

Patient Engagement: Catalyzing Improvement and Innovation in Healthcare is a superb account of exemplary practices within organizations that have dedicated resources towards learning and implementing methods that best engage patients and families. As I read through each chapter, I heard and felt both the celebratory and fragile natures of these “engagement-capable environments.”

Furthermore, the book clearly demonstrates that even the best of these organizations recognize the need for constant vigilance and ongoing effort. What resounded most with me were the words of Glenn Robert in the introduction about his vision for “the next stage of the journey:”

Patient Engagement: Catalyzing Improvement and Innovation in Healthcare

Edited by G. Ross Baker, Maria Judd and Christine Maika

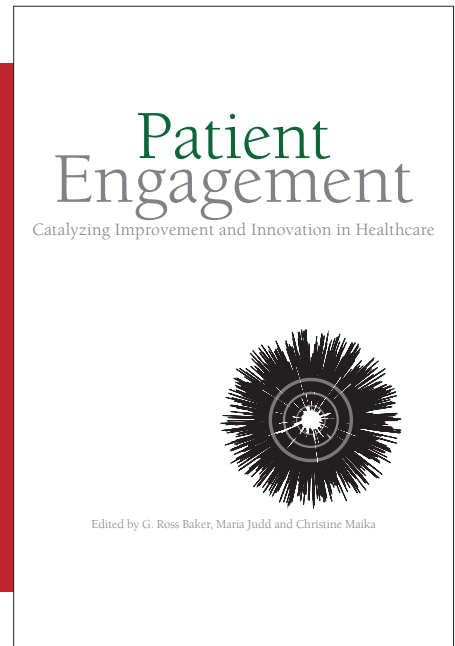
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“That image is not of staff striving to engage patients in ever more meaningful ways, but of patients and staff having collective ownership of efforts to improve their shared healthcare services; power residing not in any stakeholder group, but within the process of co-production/co-design.”

The field of patient engagement is now bursting with frameworks, road maps, tools and resources that will support engagement efforts, as long as these are secondary to the vigilance and commitment of patients and their healthcare partners to finding and living in the sweet spot of this “collective ownership.” What that looks like, I have yet to discover fully. I am confident however that now more than ever, I am prepared, along with many others, for the next stage of the journey.

Now at Health Standards Organization (HSO), I am working alongside a patient expert to support patient partnerships in the co-design of health standards and assessments. The work is new, although provoking and already in constant evolution; but, even within the turbulence, something about it feels right and solid. I look forward to the next book about this stage of the journey.



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