

PLEX Engagement in Research

Community of Practice

January 2026: Lessons learned by a research team new to engaging people with lived experience in randomized controlled trials

This document provides a summary of engaging people with lived experience (PLEX) in randomized controlled trials.

Key Presentation Points

- The PLAN trial is an international multicentre randomized controlled trial which aims to evaluate whether lidocaine infusion can prevent persistent pain after breast cancer surgery
- Involving PLEX in the PLAN trial helped shape recruitment tools and strategies to demonstrate gratitude
- Both PLEX and research staff experience a learning curve when collaborating on a research project

What did we discuss?

- **Funding:** Funding remains a challenge in PLEX engagement, particularly in situations where you need funding to develop the clinical trial, but also need funding to engage and compensate PLEX. Potential solutions include seeking smaller pots of funding such as the CIHR Planning and Dissemination Grants.
- **Remaining flexible:** Although PLEX engagement occurs ideally during the planning, doing, and sharing stages of research, if opportunities arise to involve PLEX in only certain phases of the research project it remains worthwhile.
- **PLEX bring perspectives that can change recruitment processes:** PLEX provided feedback regarding the challenges with understanding and making decisions regarding joining a clinical trial. This feedback launched the development of a recruitment video to supplement the written consent form.
- **Show gratitude:** Incorporating ways to show gratitude to patients and PLEX for their contributions is important. The team discussed the implementation of a “Thank You” video.
- **Collaborate with the Research Ethics Board:** Working together with the ethics board facilitated incorporating PLEX feedback (e.g., creating a recruitment video) while also balancing ethical (e.g., balanced language, fairness, risks) and regulatory requirements for clinical trials.
- **Plain language is critical:** Many consent forms for clinical trials contain jargon and large amounts of information. Using plain language helps support patients in making informed decisions.

Relevant Resources on PLEX Engagement in Research:

1. [PLAN Trial Video](#): A link to the PLAN trial recruitment video.
2. Plantrial@uhn.ca: A link to the PLAN trial email for any questions or concerns about the trial.