Capacity Bridging: Establishing Meaningful Collaboration between Peer Researchers and Academic Researchers for Knowledge Translation in a Research Study

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Background
- There are still areas of a research study (e.g., data analysis, interpretation, and knowledge translation) where people with lived experience can be further involved
- Our capacity bridging framework connects the expertise of peer researchers and academic researchers in an environment of shared learning and reciprocity to enrich the impact of a research project

Addressing the Gap
- We designed a course to teach peer researchers about study design and data analysis
- Peer researchers utilized their lived experience to guide development of research questions and interpret findings
- The course ran biweekly for 6 weeks with 9 peer researchers from Ontario

Figure 1 Capacity Bridging Framework connecting the expertise of peer researchers and academic researchers
Peer researchers guided data analysis by asking questions derived from three areas of lived experience:

- Peer-to-peer interview experience
- Personal experience with HIV stigma
- Supporting advocacy in their region

Academic researchers led a data analysis course covering key research topics:

- Research data terminology
- Asking research questions
- Data analysis process
- Understanding visual representations
Knowledge and understanding of quantitative data improved by approximately 60-70%.

Peer researchers were satisfied with the design and content of the course.

Figure 2 Knowledge and understanding of aspects of a data analysis before and after the training.

Figure 3 Evaluation of course design and content.
Peer researchers appreciated being further involved in research:

“I’m really glad this is an ongoing learning opportunity. This part of research hasn’t been offered to PRAs and I find it fascinating”

“I found the content really interesting and would be interested in continuing learning about other aspects of research”

Lessons learned and next steps:

1. Capacity bridging led to an uptake in engagement and deeper feelings of belonging in the research study.

2. Peer researchers helped to increase understanding of the data and added richness to the findings.

3. Scaling up the training to more peer researchers across the country will be key for HIV stigma reduction efforts.