

A Guide to the PCORI Dissemination and Implementation Framework and Toolkit

Many individuals and organizations use evidence from healthcare research to make care-related decisions. Patients, caregivers, clinicians, health insurance administrators, and other stakeholders want to know which healthcare treatment options are most effective, under what circumstances, and for whom. Well-planned dissemination and implementation (D&I) activities provide these individuals and organizations with **relevant, accessible, and timely evidence-based information** to support such decisions, and can increase and enhance the use of research evidence to improve healthcare. The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) D&I Framework and Toolkit focus on effective approaches to planning and conducting D&I activities.

The Framework describes the concepts and best practices that are central to effective D&I. The Toolkit is a resource for carrying out these best practices, with **action steps and worksheets** that highlight important tasks and tradeoffs to consider. Both documents are based on a review of studies and articles on D&I in healthcare, discussions with D&I experts, and feedback from more than 300 individuals representing stakeholder groups throughout the healthcare community.

Who can use the Framework and Toolkit?

The Framework and Toolkit were developed for PCORI to use when conducting D&I activities on its own and in **collaboration with partners**. The contents of these documents are also more broadly applicable. Other interested organizations or groups may adapt the Framework and Toolkit to meet their needs and inform their own D&I efforts.

Why are the Framework and Toolkit important?

The goal of the Framework and Toolkit is to help **speed and enhance** the use of patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) and comparative effectiveness research (CER) in healthcare-related decision making, in turn leading to improve patient outcomes. The Toolkit makes existing best practices for D&I accessible and actionable, and it enables users to build on those best practices when planning and conducting D&I activities.

What evidence should I disseminate or implement using the Framework and Toolkit?

Although PCORI, its partners, and stakeholders support research that helps people make healthcare decisions, some research findings may not warrant broad D&I efforts. For example, decision makers may not want to invest D&I resources based on a single study in a new research area; they may prefer to use evidence from a **collection of studies**. The Evidence Assessment sections of the Framework and Toolkit address some of these issues. In addition, PCORI is developing a process to help users make decisions about disseminating new research evidence broadly.

When should I begin to use the Framework and Toolkit?

D&I activities and planning occur within a larger process and are influenced by the broader social, economic, political, and environmental contexts. To reflect this, the Framework and Toolkit address tasks and issues that arise in the earliest planning phases, even before the decision to communicate evidence more widely. For example, the Framework and Toolkit emphasize the value of **engaging stakeholders in the selection of research topics**, in addition to all later aspects of planning for D&I activities. Users can refer to the Framework and Toolkit throughout all stages of D&I planning.

Ongoing **stakeholder engagement is essential** to planning and executing effective D&I. Stakeholders have valuable knowledge, practical perspectives, and existing relationships with the potential users of evidence.

How should I use the Toolkit?

The Toolkit is designed to assist PCORI and its partners in planning and conducting D&I activities. It is intended as **an interactive resource** for teams of PCORI staff, partners, and other stakeholders who may use it to plan meetings, motivate and focus discussions, and inform work plans. For example, these teams can use the Toolkit worksheets to:

- Establish a starting point for planning D&I activities
- Consolidate useful information and gather additional information to plan and conduct D&I activities
- Assess the tradeoffs of different D&I approaches
- Develop plans to assess the effectiveness of D&I activities
- Outline a path forward

The Toolkit is **designed as a guide**, rather than a comprehensive or fixed rulebook. Because many factors associated with different D&I efforts vary, users are invited to adapt the Toolkit, take additional steps, skip aspects that are not relevant or that duplicate available information, and otherwise make it their own.

Where do I begin?

Although the Framework and Toolkit present five sequential D&I stages, the associated activities are not necessarily linear or chronological. Instead, D&I is **an evolving process** in which factors such as relationships, opportunities, recent best practices, and other new information can inform one another and lead to adaptations along the way. To illustrate how these factors may interact, the Toolkit includes real-world examples, called “spotlights.” To determine the appropriate starting point for your effort, refer to the D&I Toolkit Roadmap (introduced in Chapter I of the Toolkit) for an overview of the action steps and content.

D&I activities will vary based on the **context** of the research findings, related research, the setting in which the evidence will be used, and the audiences who may use the evidence.