

# Creating a model to engage marginalized women in health care program planning: The AWESOME Project

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## BACKGROUND:

Patient engagement (PE) is a potential tool for decreasing inequities by helping programs identify and address the needs of patients who have the greatest barriers to care. However, without actively including vulnerable populations in the PE process, it can reinforce existing inequities by reproducing social marginalization. A PE strategy that draws on a diversity of patients' assets and strengths may result in more accessible and acceptable programs and increase providers' understanding of vulnerable patients' complex needs.

## PURPOSE:

To this end, the Advancing Women's Equity through a Strategy of Meaningful Engagement (AWESOME) project is building a model to engage women whose voices have not traditionally been heard in healthcare planning - including women of low socioeconomic status, new immigrants, and refugees - which is intended for use in various service areas across Fraser Health (FH).

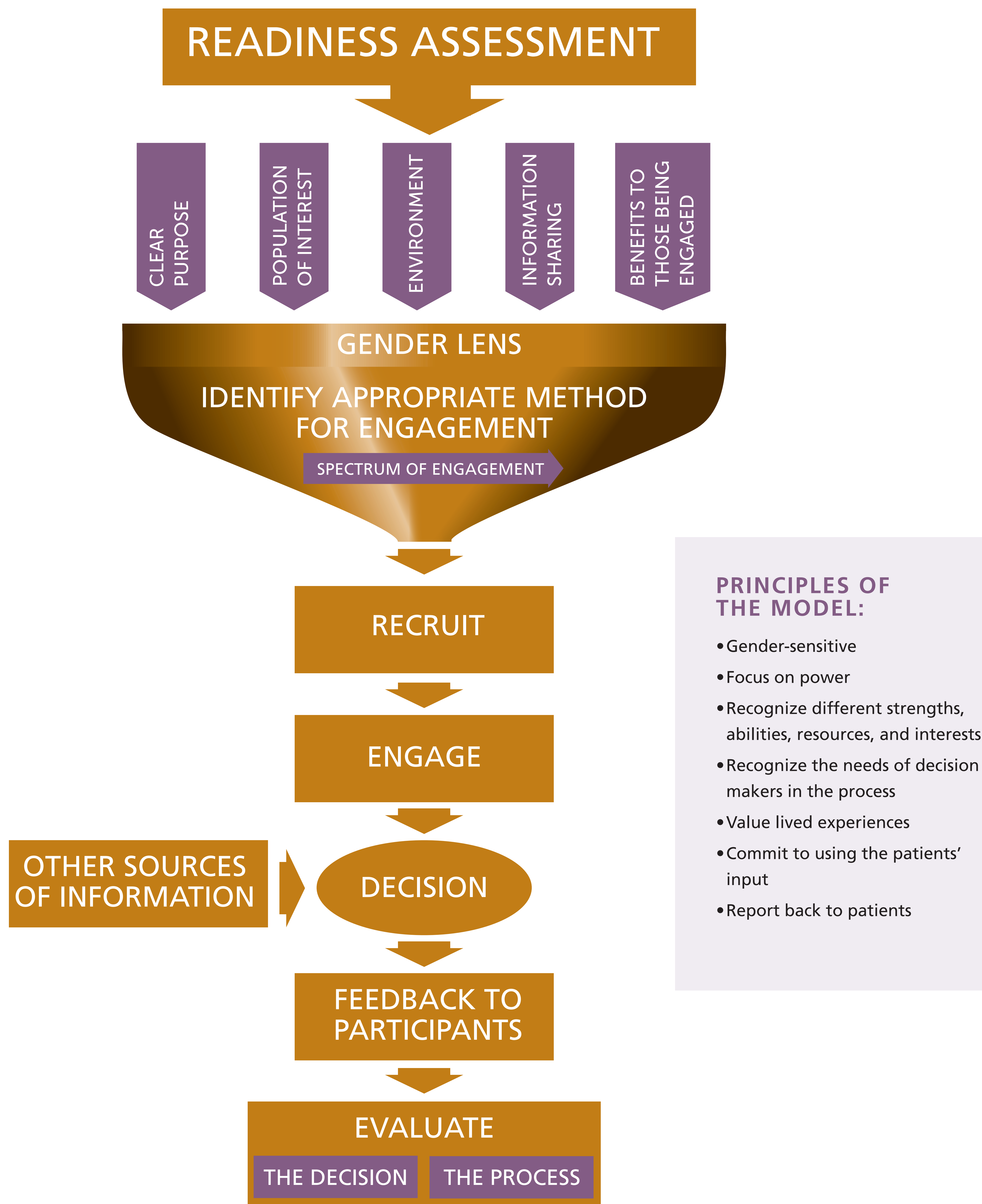
## PROCESS:

This gender-sensitive model is being developed based on data gathered through interviews and focus groups with marginalized women and healthcare decision makers, and a sex- and gender-based analysis of the existing PE literature. The model presented here is our first iteration of a model on which we welcome feedback and suggestions.

## NEXT STEPS:

The model is being piloted and evaluated in two FH programs:

- the creation of a Public Health Family Visiting program to support vulnerable mothers and babies
- the standardization and redesign of diabetes education in Primary Care.



## PRINCIPLES OF THE MODEL:

- Gender-sensitive
- Focus on power
- Recognize different strengths, abilities, resources, and interests
- Recognize the needs of decision makers in the process
- Value lived experiences
- Commit to using the patients' input
- Report back to patients