

 Center on Society and Health
The SEED Method Toolkit:
Overview and Summary

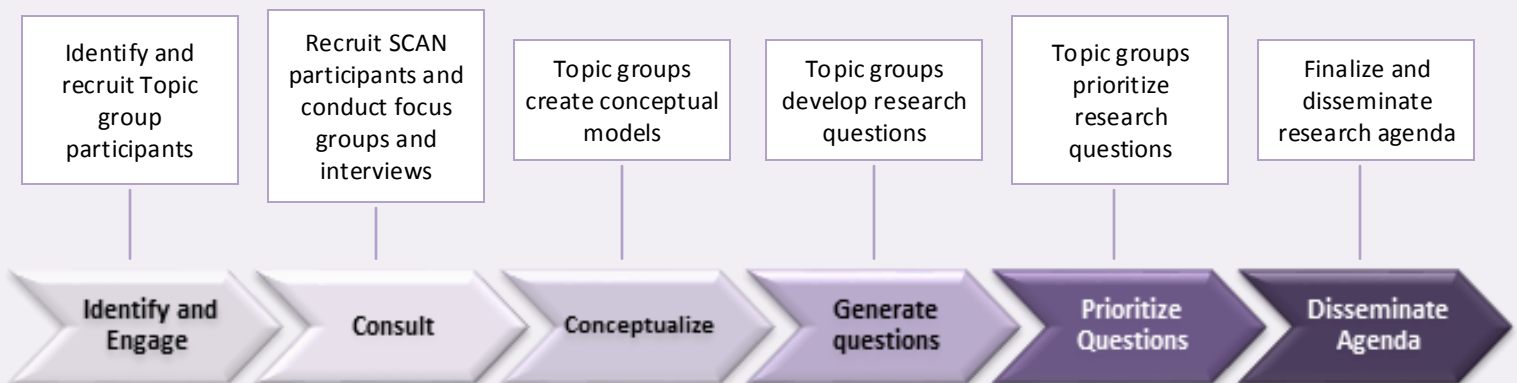


What is the SEED Method and how can it be used?

The Stakeholder Engagement in quEstion Development and prioritization (SEED) Method is a stakeholder engagement methodology that combines participatory modeling and question development with a review of available evidence. The SEED Method uses a multilevel stakeholder engagement model that is led within a participatory framework to develop stakeholder priorities, such as research topics or questions. Engagement encompasses three levels of participation:

1. A community-based participatory **Research Team** that collaboratively leads the project from beginning to end
2. Participatory **Topic Groups** of stakeholders brought together based on their experience and knowledge of the health-related topic that develop research questions
3. Consultative stakeholder participation through focus groups and interviews (**SCAN** participants)

The SEED Method was designed to take place in six steps over the course of nine months, however the method was designed to be flexible and scalable to fit with alternative timelines and objectives.



Although specifically created for the development of research questions, we encourage users to consider alternative uses of the method, such as identifying research priorities or intervention ideas, or developing participatory models as part of planning process for research projects.

Who can use the SEED Method?

- Researchers
- Organizations – including community-based and health systems
- Decision-makers
- Project teams – including coalitions

Those who wish to plan stakeholder-engaged research, involving people in multiple levels of participation, and who seek to create research priorities or agendas around a health topic would benefit the most from using the SEED method.

Customizable tools for:

- Engaging in participatory research
- Creating conceptual models diagramming causal pathways
- Developing stakeholder-generated priorities
- Using the scientific literature to refine research questions and priorities

SEED Method evaluation findings from two demonstration projects

- The SEED Method resulted in **unique conceptual models and research questions** across diverse stakeholder groups
- The final research agendas were understandable, informative, and impactful – with external stakeholders noting research questions were of interest to them/their organization and that agendas make an important contribution to research in the field
- The SEED Method process enhanced community and stakeholder capacity, including **personal growth, skill development**, and increase in **knowledge and skills** of participants
- Participants report high satisfaction with their participation in the SEED Method

What are participants saying about the SEED Method?

“I had never did anything like [this project], I’ve done things similar but not to this extent where my voice actually mattered and my opinions and what I said was taken in consideration...” - Research Team participant

“The process of developing research that’s really relevant to the kind of challenges that people are having is so important...research in general is far off base compared to what I learned from patients...” - Research Team participant

“[I liked] the group interaction, in terms of how we all assisted each other in clarifying our questions for the exercise given.” - Topic group participant

What does the toolkit provide?

An overview of the SEED Method, instructions, example documents – including timelines, meeting agendas, and powerpoint slides – and customizable templates – including organizational documents, facilitation guides, and training materials. An optional evaluation module is also included as part of the toolkit for users who would like to assess SEED Method processes or outcomes.

Who developed the toolkit?

The SEED Method was funded through a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Award (#1310-07664) to Emily Zimmerman (Principal Investigator), Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University.

The toolkit was developed by members of the SEED method team - Emily Zimmerman and Sarah Cook.

Where can I can get the toolkit?

All materials are free and available for download at: go.vcu.edu/SEED

Need additional information about the toolkit or SEED Method? Contact us at:

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