

Sharing the Experience of Living with Diabetes in Emergency Housing Shelters Using Participatory Filmmaking

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Background

- People experiencing homelessness encounter a lack of diabetes awareness and resulting stigma from staff and other clients in emergency shelters, and members of the public
- Educational interventions that increase individuals' knowledge about stigmatized health issues have been shown to successfully reduce stigma and the resulting feelings of isolation, guilt, and shame
- One approach to raise awareness is participatory filmmaking, where communities participate in all stages of the film creation process to share their stories
- This approach to filmmaking can result in a compelling communication tool that can motivate individuals to reflect on their beliefs and spark conversations among the public and decision-makers.

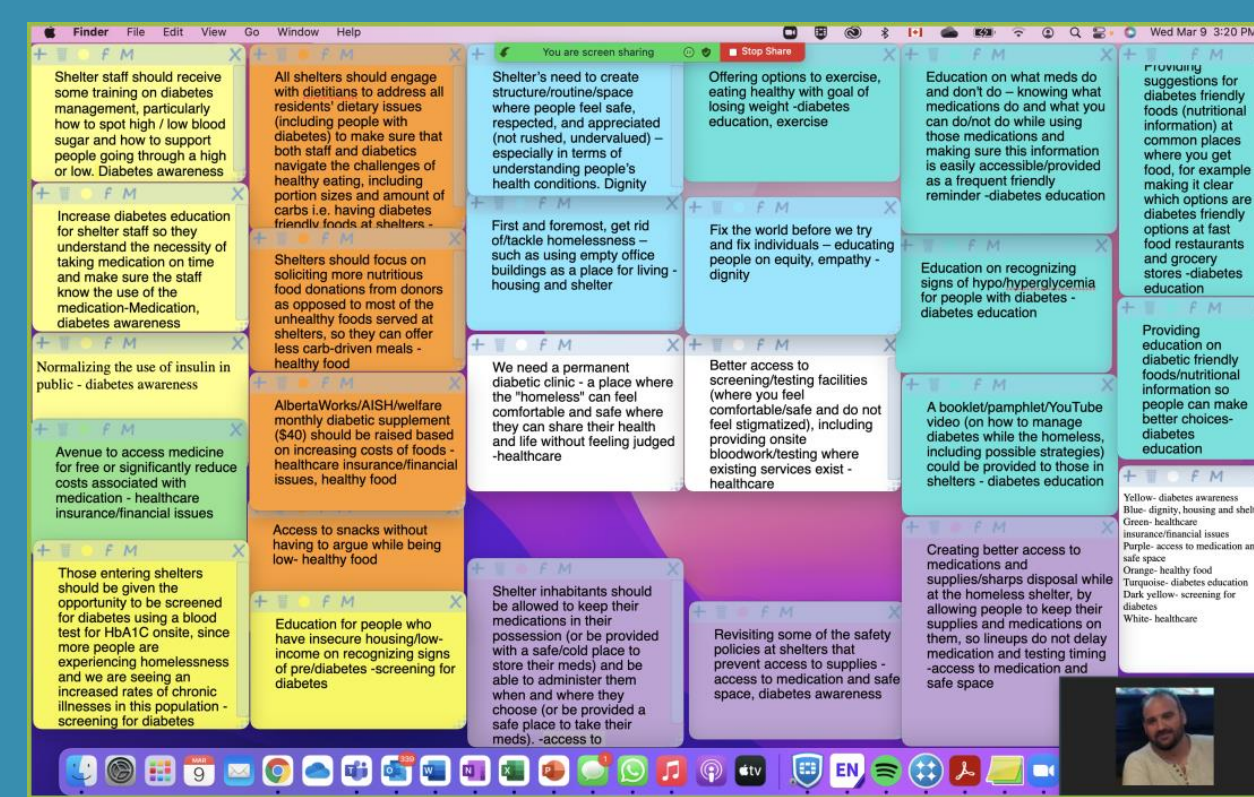
Process & Outcome

1 The Calgary Diabetes Advocacy Committee (CDAC) consists of:

- 4 co-researchers and 1 peer researcher/graduate student with diabetes and lived experience of homelessness
- 3 research staff
- 1 diabetes specialist



2 A virtual priority-setting activity to answer the question "What would make it easier for people who are experiencing homelessness to manage their diabetes?" led us to focus on diabetes awareness and stigma



3 Participatory Action Research Goal: Use participatory filmmaking to produce a creative film that highlights the lack of awareness of diabetes in emergency shelters and the impact it has on clients living with diabetes

4 Pre-production: Collect & reflect on stories and expertise with:

- 5 people with diabetes and lived experience of homelessness
- 2 endocrinologists
- 3 emergency shelter staff
- 1 professional scriptwriter & 1 film production manager
- 3 research staff



- Scriptwriting, casting, & location scouting

5 Production

- Local production company with 20 crew members filmed across four locations in four days
- CDAC and shelter consultants on site to provide expertise



6 Post-production

- Viewing of rough cut
- Serial rounds of edits
- Picture lock
- Sound, color, and light editing

7 Outcome

We produced a 40-minute narrative film that follows a client with diabetes and a new staff member as they navigate the same day in an emergency shelter

The film amplifies the voices of the CDAC co-researchers, highlighting the difficulties around:

- food access
- medication storage
- experiencing low blood sugars
- potentially devastating effects of a lack of diabetes awareness

Conclusion

- The film will be screened across Canada to members of the public, healthcare providers, researchers, and shelter staff
- Special screenings of the film will take place in strategic venues across Canada possibly sparking discussion among decision-makers about potential solutions that address the challenges highlighted in the film
- We anticipate the film will increase viewers' knowledge about the diabetes-related challenges clients and shelter staff face in shelters
- Our hope is that by widely disseminating this production, we may be able to contribute to a reduction in stigma for people with diabetes who are experiencing homelessness

EDI and SGBA+ Considerations

- CDAC co-researchers have diversity in their diabetes experiences (type 1 vs. 2), homelessness experiences (e.g., shelters and couch surfing), genders, and races.
- Our transdisciplinary team involved shelter staff, academic researchers, and filmmakers of various ages, genders, and races.
- We consistently reflected on principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the filmmaking process, including during character development and through the choice of language in scriptwriting, casting decisions, and filming logistics.