

Our Voices, Our Stories: A Patient Journey Initiative

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On June 9 and 10, 2022, the School of Nursing and School of Social Work at Ontario's Lakehead University, in partnership with Wounds Canada, and with funding from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, hosted Our Voices, Our Stories, a national person-centred conference. This conference was aimed at raising awareness among researchers, scholars, practitioners, policy makers, community leaders, civil servants and politicians—about the needs and challenges of, and barriers to, health and social care faced by individuals living with complex wounds.

The goals of the conference

were to:

- share individual and family stories of balancing everyday life while living with complex wounds
- advance intersectoral exchanges between academic researchers in the social sciences, humanities and health science disciplines; and with researchers, practitioners and policy makers from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors

Over the course of two days, 191 participants took part in 17 interactive sessions that involved eight research-based presentations, six patient and patient-advocate stories of lived experience and four co-creation

sessions in which participants worked together to identify emerging themes and opportunities for action.

This unique event held space for the sharing and exploration of patients' and patient-advocates' stories of navigating social life and Canada's health-care systems to access wound care services. Together, conference participants listened to and learned from one another while sharing insights about the patient experience, the impact of a wound on one's life and opportunities to strengthen wound care. On the last day of the conference, participants were invited to a collective action session focused on creating ways to strengthen and





improve wound care, and to create a pathway toward a person-centred approach that will help improve outcomes for all Canadians.

When combined, the shared stories, reflections and dialogue converged around several key areas of focus, including advocacy, change, collaboration, wound specialists, barriers, cultural safety and accessibility. Within these areas of focus, examples of emerging themes included the need for greater:

- advocacy and awareness surrounding wounds in Canada
- wound care education for care providers, patients and patient advocates
- cultural safety and cultural competence education, practices and policies
- standardization of wound-related best practices that focus on a person-centred care model
- collaboration and communication between disciplines, and among care providers, patients and their advocates (e.g., family members)
- shifts within health care and wound care away from a bio-medical model and toward a holistic person-centred model

- local community co-production of community-based wound care services
- easy and timely access to specialized wound care services across jurisdictions

Next Steps

Conference partners are now moving into the next phase of this long-term project by transforming each of the areas of focus discovered at the conference into a roadmap for concrete actions while continuing to collect and promote patient stories. Any proposed actions will consider the ways in which the stories, experiences, research, reflections and insights that were shared at the conference and gathered afterward can inform efforts towards a national person-centred wound care strategy.

While the 2022 Our Voices, Our Stories conference has concluded, our work as a wound care community continues. For a full report on the conference, summaries of the sessions and links to the patient story videos, please visit www.woundscanada.ca/health-care-professional/publications/

[publications-supplements](#). To become involved in, and stay informed about, proposed next steps, please visit [Our Voices, Our Stories](#). 

Call to Action

Do you have patients who would like to share their stories? At Wounds Canada, we believe in prioritizing the voices and stories of the patient. That's why we would love to hear about their experiences as persons living with, or at risk of, wounds or as care partners for someone living with wounds. The more diverse stories we can compile, the better equipped we are to do what we do best: advocate for and provide education about wound prevention and management. Please encourage your patients to go to www.woundscanada.ca/patient-or-caregiver/patient-stories/share-your-patient-caregiver-story and share their story!