The SPARCSdm Newsletter

Standardized Process Assessment of Relationship-Centered Shared Decision-Making (SPARCSdm)

What is SPARCSdm?

This research study will help to understand the process of shared decision-making among healthcare professionals, care partners, and persons who cannot advocate for themselves and need support to communicate their wishes to others.

This will be done by designing and testing a Standardized Process Assessment of Relationship-Centered Shared Decision-Making (SPARCSdm) that can be used in healthcare settings.

Shared decision-making (SDM) is a collaborative process where patients, care partners, and their clinical team members work together to make healthcare decisions informed by science and the patient's values and preferences.

Our research shows the SDM process is unique for patients with cognitive disabilities: it involves choices that are recurrent, may not have definitive evidence, and involves care partners who speak for both their loved ones and themselves. Available assessments on SDM are not designed to capture these complexities.

Care partners (i.e. family and informal caregivers) play a critical role in the shared decision-making process since they are representatives for persons who cannot advocate for themselves. They are important voices in communicating and advocating with healthcare practitioners about treatment decisions. Our research shows care partners and practitioners struggle to engage in SDM, and can misunderstand each other.

This research project is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). AHRQ is the leading Federal agency charged with improving the safety and quality of healthcare for all Americans. AHRQ develops the knowledge, tools, and data needed to improve the healthcare system and help consumers, healthcare professionals, and policymakers make informed health decisions. www.ahrq.gov

SPARCSdm Project Aims

1. Define components of a shared decision-making observer assessment (based on our conceptual process model)
2. Conduct preliminary testing of our SPARCSdm assessment prototype.
   a. Develop a competency-based, online training.
   b. Evaluate the validity, reproducibility, and measurement precision of the SPARCSdm assessment.
3. Develop an implementation strategy to facilitate real-world testing.
   a. Conduct ongoing evaluation of project processes, products, and procedures.
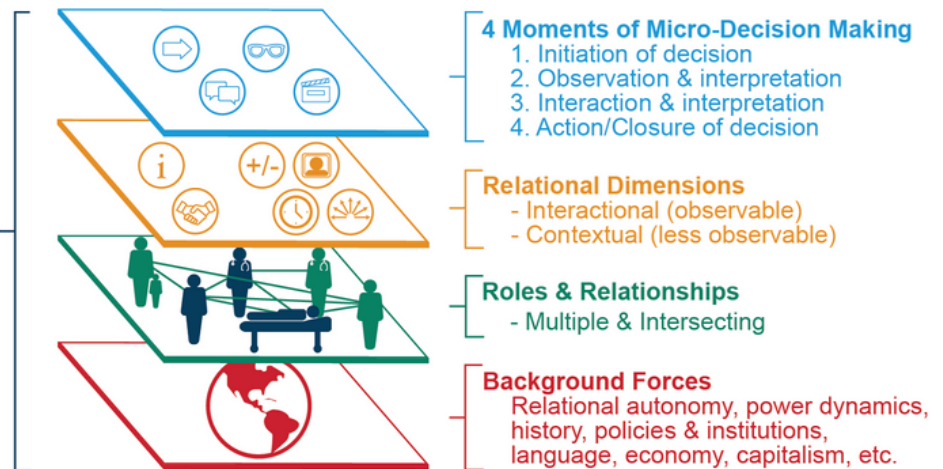   b. Create a scale-up strategy for future testing of the SPARCSdm.

The Relationship-Centered Shared Decision-Making Model (RCSDM)

We designed this model to describe the relationship-centered SDM process that occurs during micro-decisions. Future newsletters will provide more details.

Early Accomplishments

- Introduced advisory board to the project
- Received IRB approval, completed institutional agreements with collaborating sites
- Finalized observational protocol and interview guide
- Hired/trained 3 research assistants + project manager
- Identified sites for participant recruitment
- **Ready to recruit!**

Getting Involved with SPARCSdm

We are currently recruiting caregivers, health practitioners and care recipients who are unable to advocate for themselves in health care settings. If you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact the SPARCSdm team at **sparcsdm@gwu.edu**.

This study is conducted through The George Washington University (Washington, DC) and Oakland University (Rochester, MI), in collaboration with the Bedford Veterans Affair Medical Center (Bedford, MA), Lewis University (Romeoville, IL) , and Colorado State University (Fort Collins, CO) .

Team Member Spotlights

Trudy Mallinson, PhD, OTR/L

Trudy is an occupational therapist and researcher. She established the Advanced Metrics Lab (AML) in 2016 to support her primary research idea that better outcomes measurement can improve health care and inform health care policy.

Christina Papadimitriou, PhD

Christina is a sociologist who studies disability using phenomenology (lived experience and meaning-making) and equity-based approaches. She is passionate about fostering relationship-centered healthcare.

Drs. Mallinson and Papadimitriou have been working together since 2015 to design inclusive clinical assessments that are meaningful to those we serve as well as those who use them.

Advanced Metrics

https://advancedmetricslab.smhs.gwu.edu