Leaders

Effective PCSG leadership is integral to sustaining effective groups and efficient meetings. Recognizing leadership qualities and strategic management of the groups as key factors we conducted interviews with 24 PCSG leaders to understand how masculine business principles and leadership styles infiltrate volunteer run not-for-profit groups.

Leader types

Most PCSG leaders were expert teachers who had grown into the role. Some men were supported by a leadership team while a few participants explained that they completed most of the work by themselves. The majority of leaders strategized to effectively communicate with attendees who had diverse levels of understandings and an array of needs. A 63-year-old man suggested the key leadership quality involved:

> *being able to interact with the people on their level. I find it – when I'm talking with kids I try and talk on their level and when I'm talking with adults, just talk on their level…. And they appreciate that. Because this guy's got university education, you know, like I have and yeah I can understand you know, or grade 5, you know, grade 6. You know I can talk that way too. And it helps set a person at ease and if you're at ease you can talk more and you will let more out. It's common sense.*

Some leaders extended their role in the meetings to take on activist work which was dedicated to raising awareness of prostate cancer and assisting with fundraising to support prostate cancer research. As a 90-year-old man explained:

> *we do everything even up to the point of, uh, fundraising if we're required and then we support, we support the cancer unit here to help out, money raising, anything that's required which, of course, will entail other cancers, not just prostate cancer but there's others.*

Leadership rewards and challenges

In terms of rewards participants suggested that helping other men and their families through prostate cancer were most valued. A 66-year-old man explained:

> *they hear things and when they come and they are just lost and we can put them at ease because you could tell him, well it is not the end of the world.*

In terms of challenges most men were concerned about leadership succession planning and /or attracting more newly diagnosed men to the group. A 58-year-old man explained a common concern among group leaders, "I was getting to the point where I did not think I could do it anymore. They said maybe you should just try and step back and let it go. I thought to myself, I do not know if I want to do that because once a group folds it probably will not start again." In terms of attracting men members a 66-year-old man explained that "most of our new members are by word of mouth or by reading something in the paper, but we do not have to my knowledge one person in our group that has been referred to by a medical practitioner."

Oliffe, J.L., Bottorff, J.L., McKenzie, M., Yuko, W., & Austin, D.E. (In progress). **Taking care of business: Characterizing the leadership and management of prostate cancer support groups**.