SPINAL CORD INJURY CANADA
LÉSIONS MÉDULLAIRES CANADA

McGill

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Peer Support Evaluation Toolkit

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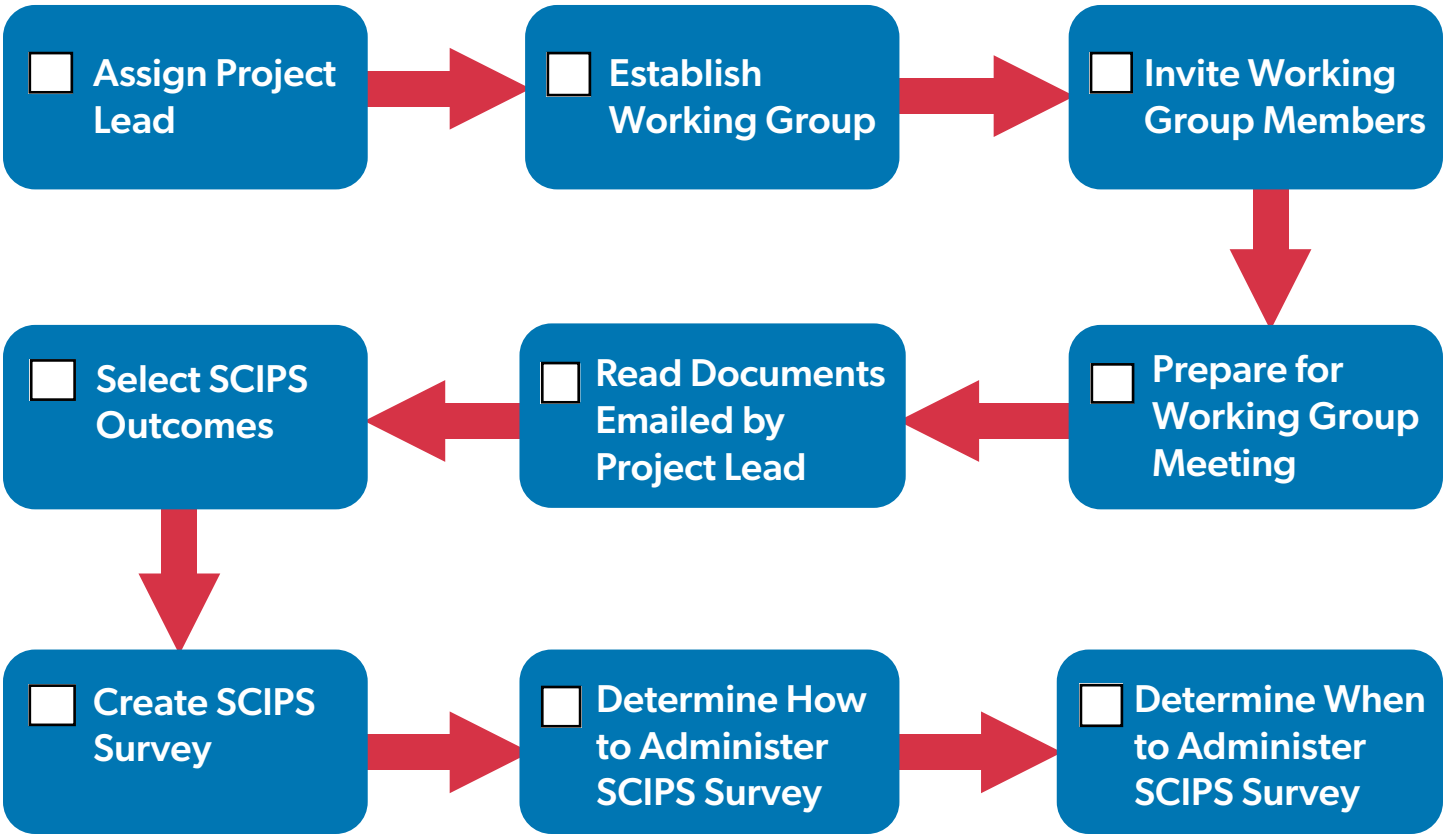
PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This SCI Peer Support Evaluation Toolkit takes you through the process of creating and administering a personalized SCI Peer Support Survey comprised of outcomes that have been identified as important by Canadian SCI community organizations.

It's important to remember that you should only create an SCI Peer Support Survey to evaluate your peer support services as a whole and NOT to evaluate member experiences of attending a "one time" event (e.g., a summer picnic). If your organization provides different peer support services (e.g., peer support, peer mentorship, online peer support) you may consider creating unique surveys for each stream.

SCI Peer Support Evaluation Toolkit Flow Chart & Checklist

The flowchart below outlines the steps you will take as you use this document to create a customized peer support survey for your organization. As you go through the document it's recommended that you refer to the flowchart and check off each step to ensure that no steps are missed.



ABOUT THE SCI PEER SUPPORT SURVEY ITEMS & TOOLKIT: DEVELOPMENT & BENEFITS

Development of the SCI Peer Support Survey Outcomes

Over a 5-year period, a pan-Canadian team of SCI community-based organizations and researchers collaborated to investigate and come to consensus on the most important outcomes for SCI peer support services.

Through this research process we identified and selected 20 important outcomes to be used for organizations to create their own customized survey to evaluate their peer support services.

The outcomes and their definitions were agreed upon by an expert panel of Canadian SCI organization staff and people with lived experience.

- As such, when creating your own customized survey using these outcomes, the language/wording of each outcome must remain as they are in the table below.

Outcomes	Definitions
Understanding/Feeling Understood	Sharing with someone who "hears me" and "gets what I am saying"
(Reduced) Isolation	Feeling (less) lonely
Normalization	Having the knowledge that others have had similar experiences
Community Engagement	Integration and participation in the community
SCI Knowledge	Having new information and an understanding of living with spinal cord injury
Rehab Transition Skills	Learning tips and tricks for transitioning out of rehab (e.g., finding/adapting housing, finding/adapting, transportation, etc.)
Health Skills	Learning tips and tricks for maintaining your health (e.g., managing muscle spasms, skin care, etc.)
Self-care Skills	Learning tips and tricks for self-care (e.g., dressing/undressing, bowel/bladder care, personal grooming, etc.)
Independence	One's self-sufficiency
Belief in Oneself	One's belief in their capacity to achieve things in the future
Confidence	Feeling self-assured about one's own qualities/capabilities
Dignity	A sense of worth in oneself
Resilience	The capacity to recover from difficult situations
Coping	Having strategies to minimize or tolerate stress
Positive Attitude	A positive way of thinking or feeling about life
Perseverance	One's ability to do something despite facing difficulties
Hope	One's expectations that good things will happen
Mental Health	Having positive feelings about one's psychological state
Happiness	Feeling pleasure and contentment with life
Quality of Life/Well-being	One's standard of health, comfort, happiness, and overall wellness

Benefits of Creating & Implementing an SCI Peer Support Survey

- Evidence-based survey that can be included in year-end surveys to assess the impact of peer support services
- Standardized items that are comparable across years, services, and organizations
- Flexibility in the outcomes an organization wants to assess
- Help test new methods/modalities of services (while comparing with current/previous services)
- Provide data showing how members are benefiting from the peer support services
- Contribute information to the organization to support funding applications to maintain peer support services

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROJECT LEAD

The Executive Director/CEO/Organization Lead should appoint one employee as the Project Lead. As the Project Lead, there are three important duties that you should undertake to ensure the process of creating your survey is as smooth as possible:

1. Familiarize Yourself With All Documents

Take time to carefully read through this entire document prior to disseminating it to your team members. Additionally, you should familiarize yourself with the SCI Peer Support Evaluation Toolkit Example Document prior to sending any documents to your team.

2. Establish a Working Group

After reviewing the above documents, it is time to establish a working group that will help create your organization's survey. When establishing your working group its important to consider who you view as knowledgeable about your peer support services. The size of your working group is up to you but consider keeping it to a small group of individuals who you believe will work well together. It is recommended that you (the Project Lead) be part of and lead the working group.

3. Invite Working Group Members

Once you have decided who will be part of your working group, email the group members and attach this document as well as the SCI Peer Support Evaluation Toolkit Example document. Instruct your group members to read through all documents prior to your proposed meeting date.

a. You may choose to send your working group additional documents that you feel important for them to read prior to your meeting date.
b. You may want to instruct group members to re-familiarize themselves with the main values and goals of your organization's peer support services.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKING GROUP

The two main purposes of the working group are to a) collectively determine which outcomes from the SCI Peer Support Outcomes Table your organization wants to include in the evaluation of your peer support services and b) determine how your organization will administer your survey. To accomplish these goals your working group will engage in the following three activities:

1. Select SCI Peer Support Outcomes

a. Go through each outcome listed in the SCI Peer Support Survey Items table below and discuss whether your peer support services are intended to impact that outcome.

b. If you decide that the outcome is important to evaluate, then check off the selection box in the far left column.

c. Once you have gone through all 20 outcomes you should have a list of outcomes selected that you have decided are important for your organization to evaluate.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- ☐ **Consider the total number of outcomes that allows you to evaluate the key aspects of your peer support services while not overburdening your members.**
- ☐ **Focus on the specific outcomes that are related to the type/stream of peer support services you are evaluating (e.g., if your organization offers peer mentorship AND peer support then the outcomes might be different for each stream).**
- ☐ **Select outcomes that your peer support services are intended to impact instead of outcome you are simply "curious" about.**

SCI Peer Support Survey Items

The following questions are intended to get your perception of the general impact of the [peer support program]. When answering these questions, please think about your whole experience with this program from your first to most recent recalled interaction with members of the [peer support program].

Selection	Outcome	Items	Responses				
☐	Understanding/ Feeling Understood	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I feel _____ understood.	A lot less	Less	As	Somewhat better	Better
☐	Community Engagement	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I participate in programs, activities or events in the community _____.	Much less often	Less often	As often	More often	Much more often
☐	(Reduced) Isolation	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I feel _____ in my experience with my spinal cord injury/disability.	A lot less alone	Less alone	As alone	More alone	A lot more alone
☐	Normalization	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I am _____ to see that other individuals with spinal cord injury/ disability have experienced similar difficulties/challenges.	Much less likely	Less likely	As likely	More likely	Much more likely
☐	SCI Knowledge	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I learned _____ about spinal cord injury from my peer supporter/ mentor.	Nothing	Very little	Something	Quite a bit	A great deal

Selection	Outcome	Items	Responses				
☐	Rehab Transition Skills	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I learned _____ from a peer supporter/mentor on how to transition to community living (e.g., housing, transportation, etc.)	No tips and tricks	Very few tips and tricks	Some tips and tricks	Quite a few tips and tricks	A lot of tips and tricks
☐	Health Skills	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I learned _____ from a peer supporter/mentor on how to maintain my health.	No tips and tricks	Very few tips and tricks	Some tips and tricks	Quite a few tips and tricks	A lot of tips and tricks
☐	Self-care Skills	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I learned _____ from a peer supporter/mentor on how to do self-care activities (e.g., dressing, bowel/bladder care, grooming etc.)	No tips and tricks	Very few tips and tricks	Some tips and tricks	Quite a few tips and tricks	A lot of tips and tricks
☐	Independence	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I feel _____ independent.	Much less	Less	As	More	Much more
☐	Belief in Oneself	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I feel _____ to reach my goals in life.	Much less capable	Less capable	As capable	More capable	Much more capable
☐	Confidence	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I am _____ that I can accomplish most things I set out to do.	Much less confident	Less confident	As confident	More confident	Much more confident
☐	Dignity	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], my sense of worth in myself is _____.	Worse	Somewhat worse	About the same	Somewhat better	Better

Selection	Outcome	Items	Responses				
☐	Resilience	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I am _____ to bounce back quickly from difficulties or setbacks.	Much less likely	Less likely	As likely	More likely	Much more likely
☐	Coping	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I am _____ to cope with the stresses/demands of my spinal cord injury/disability.	Much less able	Less able	As able	More able	Much more able
☐	Positive Attitude	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I am _____ to look at things in a positive way.	Much less likely	Less likely	As likely	More likely	Much more likely
☐	Perseverance	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I am _____ to keep going when problems arise.	Much less capable	Less capable	As capable	More capable	Much more capable
☐	Hope	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I feel _____ hopeful.	Much less	Less	As	More	Much more
☐	Mental Health	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], my mental health is _____.	Worse	Somewhat worse	About the same	Somewhat better	Better
☐	Happiness	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I feel _____ happy.	Much less	Less	As	More	Much more
☐	Quality of Life/ Well-being	Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], my quality of life is _____.	Worse	Somewhat worse	About the same	Somewhat better	Better

2. Create Your SCI Peer Support Survey

Now that you have a list of outcomes, you want to evaluate you are ready to create your organization's survey. For a visual example of this activity please refer to the SCI Peer Support Evaluation Toolkit Example.

a. Find the outcomes that your working group selected as being important in the SCI Peer Support Survey Items table above.

b. Copy the "Items and Responses" of each selected outcome into the SCI Peer Support Survey table below.

c. Do this for each outcome that your working group identified as important.

SCI CANADA CORE OUTCOMES

- ☐ **In 2024, SCI Canada federation members agreed to include the following 3 Core Outcomes in their surveys: *Reduced Isolation, Quality of Life/Well-being, Community Engagement***
- ☐ **We have included the 3 Priority Outcomes in the table on the next page. Continue to add your organizations additional outcome to complete the survey.**

SCI Peer Support Survey Items

The following questions are intended to get your perception of the general impact of the [peer support program]. When answering these questions, please think about your whole experience with this program from your first to most recent recalled interaction with members of the [peer support program].

Items	Responses				
Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I participate in programs, activities or events in the community _____.	Much less often	Less often	As often	More often	Much more often
Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], I feel _____ in my experience with my spinal cord injury/disability.	A lost less alone	Less alone	As alone	More alone	A lot more alone
Thinking about my experience with the [Peer Support Program], my quality of life is _____.	Worse	Some-what worse	About the same	Some-what better	Better

3. Determine How to Administer Your SCI Peer Support Survey

Determine WHO: As a group you have now created your organization's survey for your peer support services. Now you must determine HOW you will administer the survey. First you should determine WHO in the organization will lead the administration of the survey to your members. If funding allows for it, hiring an external evaluator to administer the survey would be best practice. However, if funding for an external evaluator is not available then discuss the questions below with your group to determine which staff member could complete this task. Provide your answers in the blue boxes.

Which staff member(s) are required to communicate with members to promote participation in the survey?

Names/Roles:

Which staff member(s) will be responsible for administering the survey?*

Names/Roles:

**Ensure staff is properly trained to administer survey within your organization.*

What strategies to promote participation can be given to the staff administering the survey?*

**Peer support staff advocating for survey participation might be more genuine and elicit greater response.*

Determine HOW: We now recommend that your team discusses the best modality through which you will administer the survey. Online surveys and telephone surveys are likely the two most feasible options (over pen-paper and in-person). Below is a comparison table which shows advantages and disadvantages of administering the survey online versus over telephone. It's important to remember that your organization can choose to do a hybrid approach of online AND telephone AND pen-paper as this may allow you to engage more members.

Online vs. Phone

METHOD	BIAS ON RESULTS	BURDEN ON STAFF	PACE OF COMPLETION	SUPPORT NEEDED TO COMPLETE
ONLINE	Members are able to answer questions with no pressure or bias	Low burden on staff	Members complete survey at their own pace	Members do not have access to immediate or real-time support if they have questions
PHONE	Members could feel pressure to answer questions more positively	High burden on staff	Members complete at forced pace	Members can ask staff for clarity on questions

Determine WHEN: Lastly, we recommend that your group determines when or how often your organization members will respond to the survey you have created. Below is a comparison table for describing the frequency of administering the survey monthly/quaterly and bi-annually/annually across four dimensions (i.e. ease of data management, difficulty of member recall, program optimization, and burden to staff & members).

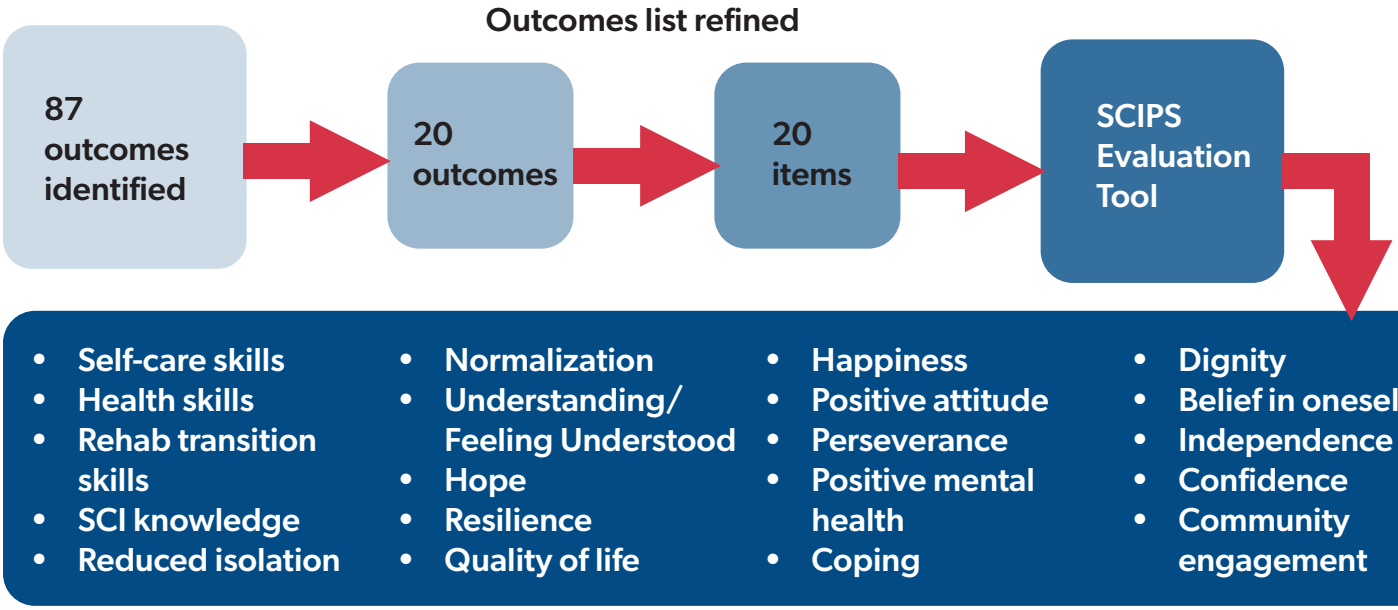
Monthly/Quarterly vs. Bi-Annually/Annually

FREQUENCY	DATA MANAGEMENT	MEMBER RECALL	PROGRAM OPTIMIZATION	STAFF & MEMBER BURDEN
MONTHLY/ QUARTERLY	More data to manage	Recalling peer interactions is easier	Higher program optimization	Higher burden on staff & members
BI-ANNUALLY/ ANNUALLY	Less data to manage	Recalling peer interactions is harder	Lower program optimization	Lower burden on staff & members

APPENDIX: RESEARCH THAT SUPPORTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCI PEER SUPPORT SURVEY AND TOOLKIT

The Evidence-Based Process to Determing the 20 Outcomes of SCI Peer Support

Over a 5-year period, a pan-Canadian team of SCI community-based organizations and researchers collaborated to investigate and come to consensus on the most important outcomes for SCI peer support programs and services. For more details of the research process and other SCI peer support research visit, www.mcgill.ca/scipm.



Research Process

Phase 1: Identify SCI Peer Support Specific Outcomes by

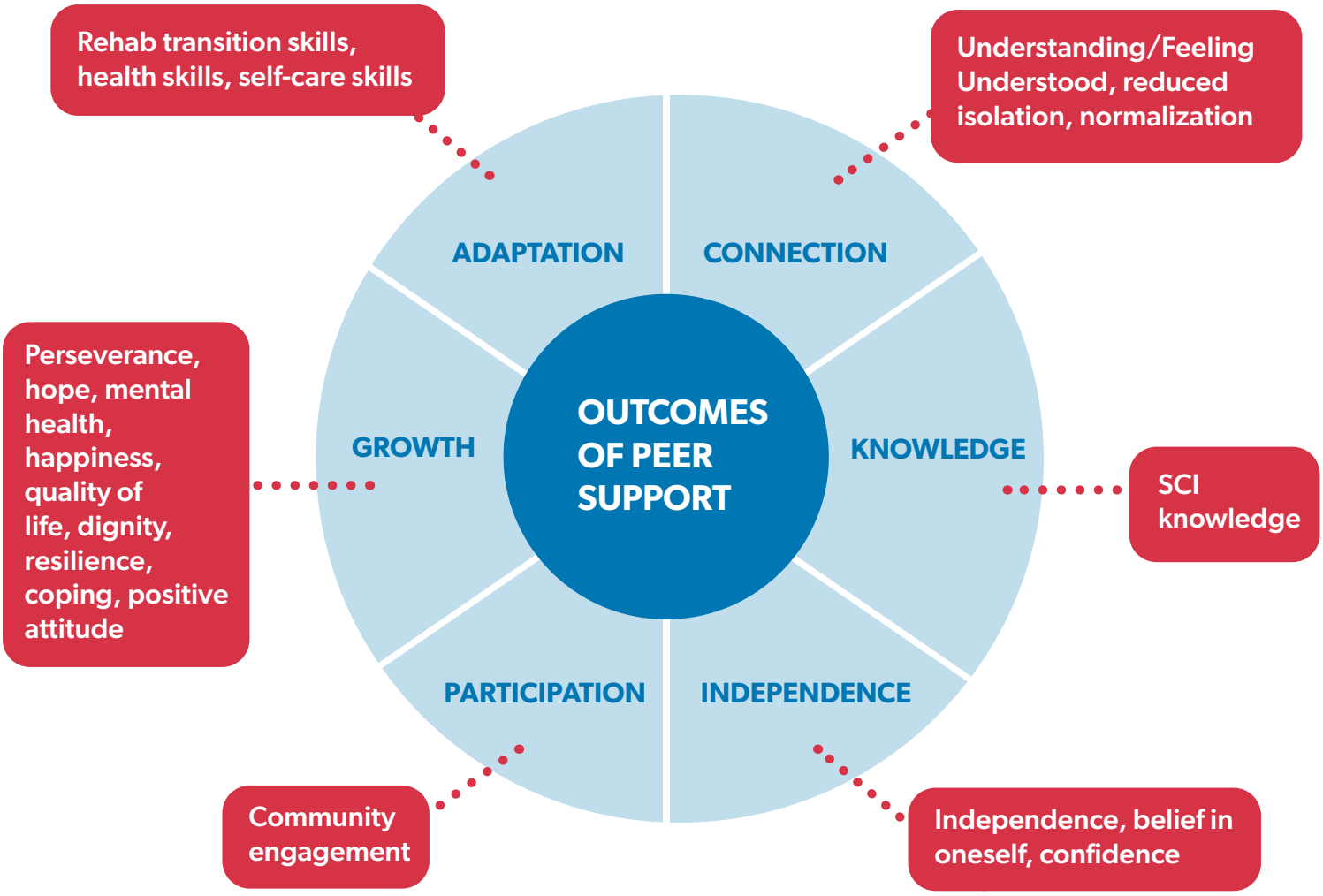
- ✓ Summarizing SCI peer support data
- ✓ Having multiple conversations with adults with SCI who received support or mentorship from a peer
- ✓ Gaining perspectives from multiple people about the impact of SCI peer support

87 outcomes related to SCI Peer Support were identified in a review

28 outcomes related to SCI Peer Support mentioned in interviews

Phase 2: Develop an SCI Peer Support Evaluation Tool by

- ✓ Selecting the most important elements that show the impact of SCI peer support
  - Across two studies mentors, mentees, and staff identified 21 outcomes as important for SCI Peer Support
- ✓ Creating the SCI peer support tool
  - Part 1: Based on a literature search, 98 items were identified as potential items for the 21 outcomes
- ✓ Identifying how SCI organizations can best use the tool
  - Part 2: Outcome refinement and item selection through ratings and consensus meetings: 20 outcomes; 1 item for each

Final 20 outcomes as per the 6 broad categories of outcomes for SCI Peer Support/Mentorship

Outcomes of Peer Support