

CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT: BUILDING EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

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GOALS FOR THIS WORKSHOP

- Discuss organizational and internal CAB policies and practices for effective structures
- Demonstrate guidance principles from both the Quick Guide on Consumer Engagement and the CAB Manual

IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT IN GOVERNANCE

“The only way to affect change in policy is to be part of the conversation”

- Honors the dignity and rights of people experiencing homelessness
- Breaks down social barriers and promotes egalitarian social change
- Normalizes the process of giving feedback and engaging in decision making processes
- Help decision-makers understand the needs of consumers from the consumer point of view
- Provides opportunities for personal growth for consumers



FEDERAL GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS THAT AFFECT HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS PROJECTS

Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act:

- The governing board is composed of a majority of individuals being served by the center
- If your health center is a 330(h), or HCH center, waivers to the “consumer” majority rule can be requested, but consumer participation in governance is still required.

WAYS TO FACILITATE CONSUMER REPRESENTATION

- Patient Satisfaction Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Representation on committees
- Consumer Advisory Boards
- Consumers on the Board of Directors

WHAT IS A CAB?

A group of homeless and/or formerly homeless individuals, advocates, providers, and community members brought together to improve services and delivery of care at their Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) project.

EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- **Step 1:** Conduct conversations with consumers, staff and executive leadership to think through developing the structure and processes.
- **Step 2:** Develop a proposal that outlines the strategies and scope of engagement. The plan should integrate consumer engagement processes with current decision making processes and identify necessary organizational resources.
- **Step 3:** Gather consumer, staff, and leadership feedback on questions and concerns and make any necessary changes.
- **Step 4:** Implement consumer engagement strategies and commit to ongoing evaluation.

INTENTION AND PLANNING

- The plan for engagement and incorporation into the decision making process must be clear and viable
 - Dedication of staff time and budget
 - Clarity on the process of the feedback loop is critical

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Changes in members and consistency is natural given the changing conditions of people's lives
- Competing priorities should be addressed in meeting scheduling, workflow and support systems for members
- Developing different levels and methods of engagement can be useful in offering opportunities for broad perspectives and steps to deepen engagement

PRODUCTIVITY AND WORKFLOW

- Fluctuations over time are natural depending on the environment at the health center, membership, and group dynamics
- CAB's often do well in providing direct feedback, but must be given support in understanding the broader context to develop new initiatives or engage in systems-level change
- CAB's are meant to be consumer-led, this practice and structure takes time to develop

SUPPORTS FOR ENGAGEMENT

- Creating open and accessible environments is critical, yet takes patience and time.
- If the goal is to engage an authentic voice for people using our services, agencies must consider how they are creating spaces where everyone feels safe and able to contribute in a meaningful manner
- Training and on-going education opportunities are important to be allowing consumer leaders to grow

INTERNAL STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARDS

Governing Boards

Governing Board
makes decisions

Includes professional
experts, community
stakeholders and
sample of population
served

Advisory Boards

An Advisory Board
offers
recommendations
to decision-makers

Representative
sample of
population served

CAB STRUCTURE AND BYLAWS

Name and
Purpose of
Board

Membership
and
Expectations

Officers and
Responsibilities

Meetings and
committees

Decision –
Making
Process

MEMBERSHIP

Important Questions

- Who is eligible for the CAB?
- How many members should be on the CAB?
- What is the process to become a member?

Your CAB should reflect the diversity in your HCH community:

- People who are currently and formerly homeless
- People who currently or have used the clinic's services including being inclusive of all the project's services

EXPECTATIONS

Guidance for behavior in meetings and within the clinic

Considerations can include:

- Respectful communication including not interrupting or speaking over one another
- Not being under the influence at meetings
- Attendance minimums for meetings
- Treating staff with respect and not asking for favors

OFFICERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Key question should be what needs does the CAB have that deserve a dedicated role?

- Ideas:
 - Chair
 - Secretary
 - Outreach Coordinator
 - Peer Advocate

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

Consensus aims to find a proposal that all members can support and no member opposes. Consensus is not a majority vote. Consensus is based on compromise, and the ability to find common ground

Consensus requires:

- time
- active participation of all members
- communication skills
 - listening, conflict resolution, discussion facilitation
- creative thinking and open-mindedness

ENGAGING THE CONSUMER VOICE AT CAB MEETINGS

- Be mindful of task and process/relationship goals
- Summarize key points and clarifying understanding
- Set ground rules and guidelines for conduct
- Ensure all voices are heard
- Be aware of personal and group dynamics
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues
- Listen to understand, not to respond

CHALLENGES TO CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- Priorities of meeting basic needs
- Possible disengagement from systems
- Frustration with previous attempts to advocate
- Comfort telling your own story
- Overcoming stigma, fear and shame
- Education on policies, history and systems context

BENEFITS OF CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

Authentic voices of those directly impacted

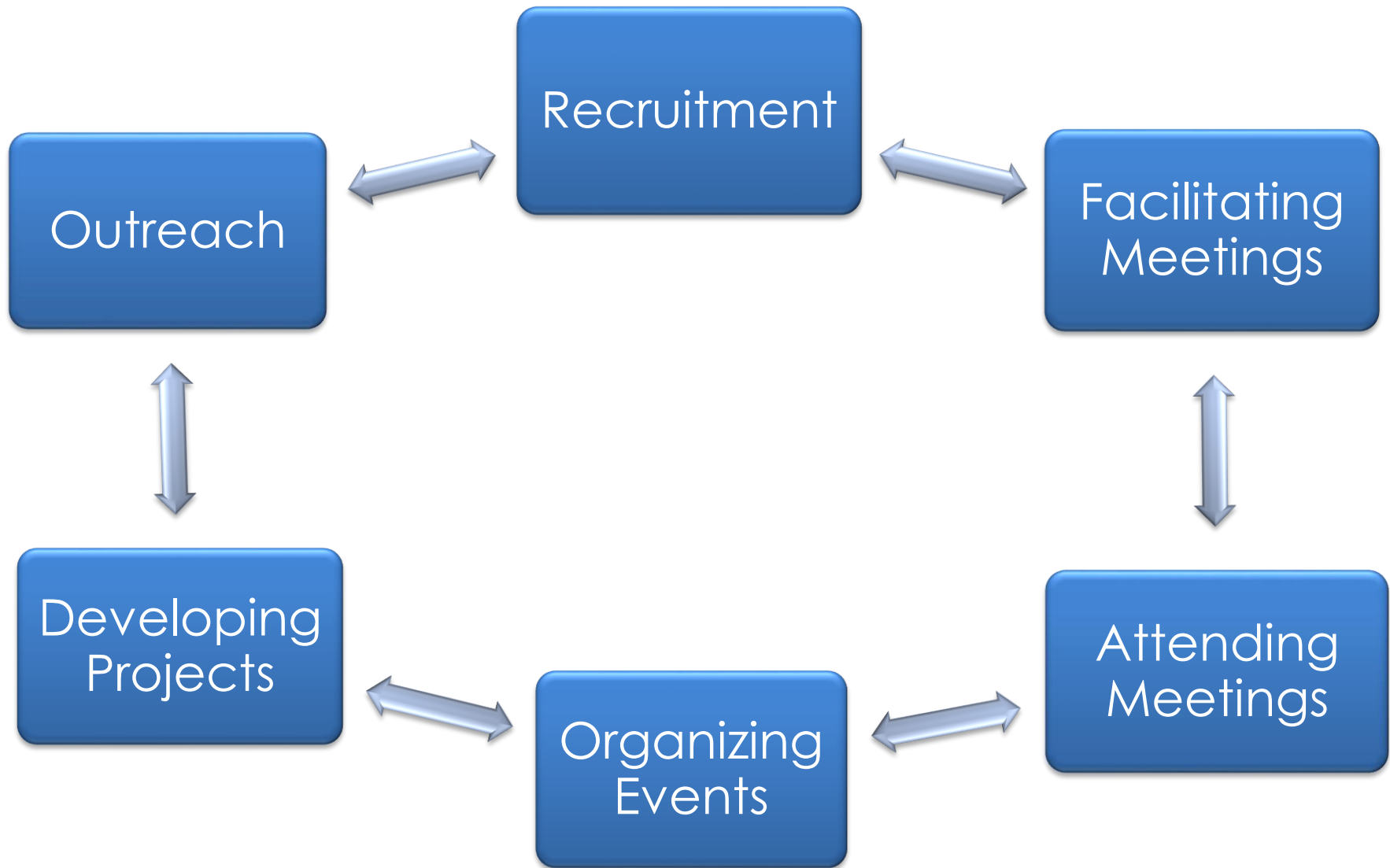
Facilitates direct conversation

Builds self-esteem, confidence, sense of worth

Instills sense of purpose and community

Demonstrates value of participation

Improves engagement with care and health



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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