

# IF YOU BUILD IT, WILL THEY COME? RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

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# IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMERS ON ADVISORY AND GOVERNING BOARDS

*“The only way to effect change is to be part of the conversation”*

- Help decision-makers understand the needs and experiences of consumers from the consumer point of view.
- Monitor HCH project performance and challenge decision-makers to consider consumer-driven options for health care delivery.
- Keep governing boards focused on the needs of the special population that homeless and formerly homeless consumers represent.

# FEDERAL GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS THAT AFFECT HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS

## Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act:

- The governing board is be composed of a majority of individuals being served by the center
- **If your health center only receives 330(h)**, or HCH funding, waivers to the “consumer” majority rule can requested, but consumer participation in governance is still required.
- **If you receive 330(e) and 330(h) funds**, you do need at least one representative on the board to represent the population

# LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT

- Need to provide a number of different roles and ways for consumers to engage in the work with various intensity, time commitment, or skill set
- Allows people to find their place in the work, deepen engagement, and provides for a greater diversity of people at the table

# LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT

- **Attend events**
- **Engage in agency feedback mechanisms**
  - Feedback box
  - Surveys
  - Focus Groups
- **Participation in governance structures**
  - Consumer Advisory Board
  - Board of Directors

# CAB ACTIVITIES

## HCH Services

- Reviews and recommends program services

## Consumer Feedback

- Solicits and communicates suggestions and grievances

## Education and Awareness

- Organize or speak at community events or forums

## Policy

- Advocate throughout community for rights of consumers

# CAB STRUCTURE AND BYLAWS

Name and  
Purpose of  
Board

Membership  
and Terms

Officers and  
Responsibilities

Meetings and  
committees

Decision –  
Making  
Process

Code of  
Conduct

# 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



# REPRESENTING OTHER CONSUMERS

As a CAB member you are working on behalf of other consumers – therefore you must know what they are thinking or feeling

- Talk to consumers in the waiting room
- Talk to consumers at health center events
- Hold focus groups
- Develop consumer surveys

CABS NOT ONLY PROVIDE SPACE  
FOR CONSUMER INPUT BUT ALSO  
OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO  
DEVELOP SKILLS FOR LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY ON  
PERSONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND  
SOCIETAL LEVELS

# PERSONAL GROWTH

- Empowerment through engaging with the decision making process
- Can increase confidence in our abilities to make a difference and affect change
- CABs allow members to see the connection of their struggle with the struggles of others
- We can build on this empathy and understanding to better understand how we can support one another in the struggle

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Comfort in meeting environment
  - Developing agendas, group participation, communication, decision making
- Skill building
  - Project management, organizing, recruitment, advocacy, communication, conflict resolution
- Seeing the commonality of our struggles, how we can support others in the struggle
- Empowerment through decision-making processes

BUILDING TO A CONSUMER  
ADVISORY BOARD IS A  
PROCESS.

START WHERE YOU CAN.

# RECRUITMENT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS

The principles of recruitment, engagement, and leadership development are connected and build off one another.

- Without recruitment activities, we can't bring consumer leaders into our programs
- Without meaningful roles in leadership, folks won't engage

# PRINCIPLES OF RECRUITMENT

One-on-ones are important to build relationships, and understand people's goals and motivations. Use trauma-informed communication skills and principles of organizing

- Listen to the person's story, interests, passions, concerns
- Connect those thoughts or experiences with your work
- Discuss how their engagement can help them engage with their passions or alleviate their concerns
- Ask them to be a part of the work

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Importance of building a human connection
  - Trust, dignity and respect, sense of community
- Creating healthy relationship dynamics
  - Give choices and let them decide
  - Appear visible and approachable
  - Provide consistent follow-up and follow-through
  - Do not make promises or push an agenda
- Use of trauma-informed approaches and communication skills



# RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Outreach**
  - Ask staff for their recommendations and referrals
  - Use groups, flyers, feedback mechanisms
  - Use engaged consumers or CAB members
- **Events**
  - Develop activities that people want to engage with and are passionate about
    - Voter Registration, Homeless Person's Memorial Day, Summer Solstice, art fairs, health fairs

# PEOPLE STAY WHERE THEY FEEL RESPECTED AND VALUED

- Approach everyone with care and consideration for what they may have or may be going through
- Create environment based on values of dignity and respect for people and diversity
  - Pay attention to physical space, tone, culture and atmosphere
  - Prioritize the emotional climate over achieving tasks
- Support personal choices and shared decision-making
- Be empathetic, non-judgmental and open. People behave in ways they have learned to manage their feelings, instability, needs, or trauma.

# OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- Get creative
- Recognize and minimize engagement barriers
- Create spaces people want to engage in
- Creating appreciation for 'chaordic environments'
- Make time and space for relational meetings
- Develop organizational buy-in and support

# CONSUMER LEADERS ARE VOLUNTEERS

Organizations need to be intentional and thoughtful about creating their volunteer engagement plan

- Planning
- Recruiting
- Training
- Managing
- Evaluating

# WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

- Guiding Vision
- Short and Long Term Goals
- Resource Allocation
  - Direct costs, staff time
- Roles for staff (support staff and all staff)
- Roles for consumer leaders
  - Role descriptions should include expectations and responsibilities
- Any policy or liability issues to be addressed

# ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTS

- **Resources for meetings**
  - Consider transportation, meals, meeting space
- **Staff support**
  - Staff can share knowledge, model behavior and skills, and provide feedback
- **Space and resources for training**
  - Invite consumers to participate in organizational trainings or provide opportunities for clinicians to train consumers and share their skills
- **Opportunities to practice skills**
  - Organizing events, managing projects, leading groups

# ONE MORE TIME.. WHY CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT?

- Honors the dignity and rights of people experiencing homelessness, consistent with the missions of HCH
- Grounds decisions in the realities of people experiencing homelessness based on real perspectives and information to improve services and service delivery
- Breaks down social barriers
- Satisfies funders and legal requirements

# 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
- Organizational capacity for investment



# 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?

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