CREATING INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE: DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING CONSUMER LEADERSHIP

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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 be 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

CABS DO NOT MAKE POLICY. THEY ADVISE.
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.

See “Creating Healthy Group Dynamics” section
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 want to feel they are integral to the organization, not an afterthought.
CONSUMER LEADERS ARE VOLUNTEERS

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

- Planning
- Recruiting
- Training
- Managing
- Evaluating

See our practice brief for more tips!
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
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What does your CAB do well?
- What are you proud of with your CAB?
- What challenges has your CAB overcome? How?
- What challenges is your CAB facing now?
- What resources or supports would be helpful?
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
CONSUMER RESOURCES

Visit the Council Website
QUESTIONS?

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