

An Advisory Committee Work Plan: Getting Started

Initial Steps for Starting a Council

Professionals, stakeholders and family members you need to help define the purpose of your advisory committee and get support and/or commitment.

List Names, organization and contact information here:

One of the factors for ensuring success in an advisory council is support and commitment from senior leaders. Who are the senior leaders from whom support and commitment are needed?

Name

Role

Contact Info

Draft a purpose for your advisory council here (These should be your preliminary ideas about a purpose. The council members should be engaged to draft a purpose for the advisory council so they own it):

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Next Steps for Starting a Council

What stakeholders want an advisory council? Be specific. Those listed are examples.

- Board of Directors:
- Senior Leaders:
- Professionals:
- A blend of consumers/family members who receive care

Meeting Logistics

How might the council meetings be structured?

- Time of Day—ask families and professionals about times that work:
- Meeting time—frequency (monthly, quarterly, etc.):
- Meeting place—where:
- Refreshments

What support does your advisory council need?

- Staff liaison (list name):
- Secretarial —who might provide this:
- Budget—consider developing a budget to cover the following:
(list dollar amount estimates, if possible.

- Food/Beverages
- Printing
- Postage
- Interpreter/translation services
- Parking/Transportation
- Childcare support (if needed)
- Stipends for members

Advisory Council Subcommittees

Some councils identify work that could be done by a subgroup of the council.

They will do the work and bring their plans to the council for input and sometimes, approval. Are there any subcommittees that you might need or wish to have?

Examples are:

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|------------------|-----|----|
| • Education | Yes | No |
| • Communication | Yes | No |
| • Membership | Yes | No |
| • Facilities | Yes | No |
| • Family Support | Yes | No |
| • Newsletter | Yes | No |

Operating guidelines

Develop a set of draft bylaws or operating guidelines—the council will determine the final bylaws or operating guidelines. They need to be tailored by your advisory council to the needs of the council. (Sample bylaws published in *Developing and Sustaining a Patient and Family Advisory Council*, available from the Institute for Family-Centered Care, www.familycenteredcare.org)

What do you want included in the guidelines?

Membership:

Number of council members

- Family/young adult members
- Professionals
- Member terms—define the number of years you expect someone to commit as a member (both professionals and family members).
- Example: 50/50 mix of 1 year and 2 year terms

Attendance expectations—define how often you expect members to attend.

- Example: 75% of meetings or 3 out of 4 meetings

Recruitment—Where and how you find members for the advisory council.

Where will you maintain the list of potential advisors for the advisory council and other collaborative initiatives? It is wise to maintain a computerized database of names, addresses, interests, etc. so you can easily track additional family members who become involved. Ask staff to recommend families whom they believe may be effective advisors. Contact peer support groups in the community or groups that are affiliated with the clinical programs at the agency. Review satisfaction surveys for individuals who have constructive ideas to share for improving care experiences.

Sources/contact persons for the recruitment of family advisors.

Name

Role

Contact Info

Selection of members

Selection criteria to consider:

- Able to listen to differing opinions and share different points of view.
- Share insights and information about their experiences in ways that others can learn from them.
- See beyond their own personal experiences.
- Show concern for more than one issue or agenda.
- Respect the perspectives of others.
- Speak comfortably in a group with candor.
- Interact well with many different kinds of people.
- Diversity of backgrounds

Orientation of Advisory Council Members

Many new members may never have served on a council or participated in collaborative projects with staff. Preparation and support are key factors to success.

Advisory Council Specific Orientation may include:

- The organization's history, mission, and values.
- Overview of facilities and services.
- Brief presentation by a family leader who has served as council member or in other advisory roles. This person could also serve as a mentor.
- The role of the council.
- Roles and responsibilities of officers, staff liaison, family members, and professionals
- Overview of a typical meeting structure — minutes, committee reports, typical agenda.
- Practical details — where to park, what to wear, what to bring to meetings.
- Attendance expectations.

What are the objectives of your orientation?

- To build an understanding of your organization's mission, values, vision, and partnerships.
- To have families define clear "purpose" of council.
- To acknowledge that some discussions may create tension or a sense of anxiety and that respectful deliberation is important.

Maintaining and ensuring success with your advisory council.

- Tracking accomplishments: How will you track your advisory council accomplishments?
- Specific goals defined and achieved.
- Minutes.
- Agenda planning with clear closure and transition at the end of each meeting.
- Good attendance at meetings.

Celebrating success is a way to sustain a council. List ways you might celebrate successes.

- Celebratory and acknowledgement activities should be provided with genuine feeling, match accomplishments, and be meaningful to persons involved.
- Thank yous at meetings when appropriate.
- Small token gift at the end of a member's term.

Planning for barriers and how to overcome them

What barriers do you expect to encounter with establishing and maintaining your advisory council? List barriers and possible strategies to overcome them?

- Barrier:
- Barrier:
- Barrier:
- Barrier:

Agenda ideas for your first 2-3 council meetings.

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