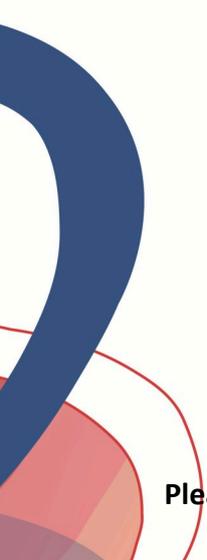


Week 4: Introduction to Committees





Introduction to Committees

Objective:

To identify types of committees and what general committee skills are needed.

To develop a range of tools and skills for consumer representation.

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References and Further Reading:

MHJHADS – About Us (Flyer)

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/services-and-programs/mental-health/mental-health-services>

Meeting Terms and Processes

Agenda.....

.....

Minutes.....

.....

Chair

.....

Terms of Reference

.....

Attachments.....

.....

Secretariat.....

.....

Feedback form

.....



Image courtesy of Ambro at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

For more information about committee terms:
MHJHADS Common Acronyms-
Abbreviations



Health, Alcohol and Drug Services Division of the Health Directorate.

The Network recruits and supports consumer representatives on committees from the **Health Directorate**, as well as **some community organisations**.

Most mental health consumer representative positions are on committees within the **Mental Health, Justice**

Information about the Division and what it is doing is available at:

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/services-and-programs/mental-health/mental-health-services>

What does the Health Directorate do?

It provides a range of health services to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Health Directorate sets health policy; plans the delivery of health services; while ensuring these services meet community needs.

Health Directorate also funds a range of non-Government organisations to provide healthcare services to the people of the ACT and surrounding region

For more information see:

https://www.act.gov.au/browse/act-government/act-government-directorates/health_directorate

Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services (MHJHADS)

- *MHJHADS include the following programs:*
 - *Adult Community Mental Health Services*
 - *Adult Acute Mental Health Services*
 - *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services*
 - *Justice Health Services*
 - *Rehabilitation and Specialty Mental Health Services*
- *Provides health services directly and through partnerships with community organisations*
- *The division works in partnership with consumers, carers, and a range of government and non-government service providers.*
- *Consumer and carer participation is encouraged in all aspects of service planning and delivery*

Levels and Types of Committees: Operational Committees and Working Groups

...tend to meet more frequently, often **fortnightly**.

They may be **ongoing**, or set up for particular **projects**, such as developing design proposals for the Canberra Hospital Expansion Plan, or Mental Health Month. These committees and working groups are '**hands on**', generally less formal than the other committees and provide greater opportunity for discussion of the issues.



Notes:

"It is essential that the consumer voice is heard at the strategic as well as the operational level of the health system. Everyone else may be a consumer but they also wear other hats. The consumer representative is the only person whose sole focus is on consumers and they are able to say things that they others can't."

Melissa Cadzow

Doggett, Jennifer (May 2015), "Unique and essential": a review of the role of consumer representatives in health decision-making, Consumers Health Forum of Australia.

Levels and Types of Committees:

Mid-Level Policy/Operational Committees

...generally operate across the Division, or include an oversight function, and often meet **monthly**.

The staff members tend to be leaders of relevant areas. These committees usually operate fairly **formally**, but with more time for discussion than the higher level committees.

Mid-level committees may be **ongoing**, such as committees that review and develop the Division's Policies and Standard

Operating Procedures, or its publications. Mid-level committees are also often created for a particular **project**, such as the Mental Health Complaints Guide and the ACT Safe Haven Cafe.

Mid-level committees tend to report to or make recommendations to a higher level committee – for example, the **Restraint, Seclusion, and Restrictive Practices Review Committee** reports to the **Adult Acute Mental Health Services Governance Committee**.



Notes:

Levels and Types of Committees: Strategic Committees

...or **high level committees** operate at a management level and meet **monthly** or **quarterly**.

They often oversee development or implementation of a broad policy direction or plan. They usually operate quite formally, and tend to receive reports from operational committees or areas, and are often asked to endorse proposals or documents.

They can involve a lot of reading, and can have limited time for deep discussion of issues.

These high level committees are a very important checkpoint where consumer representatives can make sure that consumer issues have been considered before final decisions are made. They are also an opportunity to communicate with senior managers.

Examples are the **Adult Acute Mental Health Services Governance Committee**, which oversees the implementation of the Mental Health Services and the **Executive Strategy and Business Planning Committee**, which oversees the operations of the Mental Health, Justice



Notes:

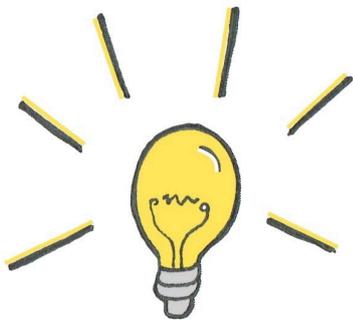
Characteristics of Committees

Type of committee	Working Group	Mid-level	Strategic
Frequency			
Discussion/ use of lived experience			
Skills			
Benefits/ challenges			
Required Reading			
How Formal			
Other			

Video Notes: Participating in Committees

This video discusses various types of committees and the role that consumer representatives have on them.

Watch to the video take note of what you find helpful for participating on committees:



CRP Video: *Participating in Committees*

What people think about Participating on Committees

There's a formal structure to the way the meetings happen, and there is also a lot of information that you need to know beforehand and that they do actually refer to in the meetings.

Being on one committee, as well as building up your confidence, builds on your knowledge as well so you can apply that to other committees.

I really enjoy the process, and knowing that what I'm doing and saying at these meetings is being heard and it's contributing to positive change.

It really helps if you are passionate about the area. If you're thinking about a committee that will suit you that's a very important thing... the more passionate or interested we are in a subject, the more likely we are going to participate more fully and contribute more positively to that experience.

What I think:

The more representation we get on committees, the more of a voice we have to say what is right and what could be improved for the rest of the community.

Looking After Yourself

What is Self-Care?

Self-care means doing things on purpose to take care of your mental, emotional, and physical health. It's about making choices that help you feel well, stay balanced, and keep going—especially when life gets busy or stressful.

Self-care looks different for everyone. It's personal. What works for you might not work for someone else, and that's okay. It's about finding what helps you feel grounded and supported in all areas of your life—so you can meet your goals and commitments without burning out.



Why Self-Care Matters

Think of yourself like a watering can.

You want to support others and help them grow—but you can't pour from an empty can.

Self-care is how you refill. It gives you the energy, focus, and strength to keep going—mentally, physically, and emotionally. When you take time to look after yourself, you're better able to show up for others in a meaningful and sustainable way.

It's not selfish—it's essential. And it's one of the most important parts of being a strong, supportive mentor.

I think one of the most important things to remember when you get involved in any social movement is Self-Care...

There are many things in the world that need to change, but if we don't take care of ourselves and make our involvement sustainable we're not going to contribute in a lasting way.

Ask yourself:

- What are the sorts of things that I do to keep positive, energetic and well?
- Am I aware of early warning signs that I might be becoming unwell?
- What helps me when I experience these?
- How can I remember to do things that help?
- Who else might I talk with to debrief challenging experiences while acting as a consumer representative?
- What aspects of my **lived experience** need to remain confidential and secure, as a precaution to maintain my wellbeing?

The CRP Coordinator is available to support you in your self-care. They can discuss the strategies and any support you might need with you.

Complete the Advocacy Fitness Worksheet handout. Use it to help you fill out your Self-Care plan on the next page.

- What are some ways that I practice self-care?
- What can I commit to trying in the next month?

Activity: My Self-Care Plan

Fill your self-care plan with activities that you enjoy and that support your wellbeing.

Physical	Psychological
Emotional	Spiritual
Relationships	Workplace/Volunteering
Overall Balance	
What might get in the way?	
What negative strategies do I need to avoid?	
Who can I go to when I need to talk? (Family/Friend/Network)	
If I implement the plan, how might I feel?	

...seek the help that you need when you need it and don't just bottle things up or don't feel that your level of frustration and disappointment gets the point where you can't go and talk to someone, ..., talk to people in the network someone you trust, someone who knows, who will listen to you in a way that's very supportive and empathetic.

Introduction to Committees

Give it a go!

Think about what you learned about Committee Skills and how committees work.

What did you find the most interesting? Find most useful?
Practical? Want to learn more about?

What do you want to apply once you start consumer representation on committees?

Something I want to take away from this module:

