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**Being a Committee Chair**

**What should you consider?**

*The Chair of a committee or working group plays a critical role in enabling effective consumer engagement. This applies to the Chair’s commitment to the leadership they model through their own practice in engaging with consumer representatives, and through enabling a consumer voice and contribution within the actual meeting context.*

*For guidance and tips for your own consumer engagement practice as a Committee Chair, the following checklists assist you to integrate effective consumer engagement into a project and, in so doing, optimise outcomes.*

**How are consumers involved in your committee?**

* Consumer role(s) have been considered across the spectrum of program development, implementation and evaluation.
* You work with the project team to define each consumer role (the nature of the work required; anticipated time commitment; duration; and the skills, interest and expertise needed).
* You advocate for the appointment of at least two consumers for committee roles to enable: continuity of representation; peer support; and reduce the power differentials inherent in the highly specialised areas within which we work.
* Have a Terms of Reference for the committee in place to enable consumers (and all other members of the committee) understand the scope and nature of their role.
* Periodically review the involvement of all members of the committee – think about diversity and representation and not just in the consumer roles. Determine what points of view to capture and what skills, experience or voice should you be drawing on.

**How do you support consumers to make a meaningful contribution to your committee?**

* Meet with each new consumer as part of their induction process to:
  + provide them with information about the committee – purpose, timeframes, membership.
  + answer any questions.
  + start developing a relationship - hear their personal story, understand their professional background and interests, their experience in consumer roles, their advice on how we make this work.
  + encourage and welcome their active participation in the committee and feedback on the process and outcomes.
  + provide contact details.

**What things are you aware of during a committee meeting?**

* At the start of meetings, do you warmly welcome consumers to the committee and acknowledge their contribution and commitment to this process as equal partners bringing a critical point of view to the discussions and decision making?
* Do you acknowledge that jargon and language can be a barrier to consumer participation? Invite consumers (and others) to ask questions or seek clarification during committee meetings.
* During meetings, do you actively defer to the consumer– to ask for their point of view?
* Do you take informal opportunities that arise before and after meetings to check in with consumers? Do you ask whether anything needs clarification, seek feedback on how they felt, what they need? Do you provide them with feedback when they have brought an important consideration to light, or personally thank them for their time and contribution?
* Do you actively liaise with the project manager to review feedback received from consumers and identify areas for improvement?
* Do you share information and liaise with colleagues who are chairing other committees to reflect upon and improve your practice?