

Creating Policies and Procedures

Having a defined organizational structure can help ensure that the CRCG operates smoothly, even during unexpected situations such as a leader leaving. Designated policies and procedures may:

- Decrease burnout by evenly distributing essential CRCG tasks among leaders and members.
- Increase membership and attendance by clearly outlining member responsibilities and expectations.
- Assist with more organized meetings.
- Allow the CRCG to concentrate on being more person-centered and family-focused.

Creating the CRCG's organizational structure as a group may help increase member buy-in and participation. CRCGs can revisit any elements of their structure at any time and adjust them to meet the CRCG's current needs.

Mission

A mission statement sums up the CRCG's reason for being. It explains intentions, priorities, and values to those inside and outside the group. It is a brief statement that will guide and help the CRCG stay focused on the things that are most important.

A mission statement is created by answering the following questions:

- What does the CRCG do?
- Who does the CRCG serve and what do they get out of it?
- What do we want the CRCG to accomplish?
- How does the CRCG help the individuals and families it serves?
- What do we want to get out of the CRCG for ourselves?
- What values, standards, or goals drive the work of this CRCG?

Once developed, the mission statement should be periodically reviewed by the CRCG. Over time, experience and new member input may result in needing to revise the mission of the CRCG.

Bylaws

Bylaws are policies and procedures developed by the CRCG to establish basic organizational components of the group. They may be simple or comprehensive as determined by the CRCG. A bylaw example is available in the CRCG toolkit.

Basic elements in bylaws:

- Name
- Location

- Meeting information
 - Meeting frequency and duration
 - Identified facilitator
 - Identified minute and data recorder and reporter
 - Decision making method (examples: consensus, modified consensus, majority vote)
- Membership information
 - Attendance expectations and requirements
 - Filling vacancies
 - Addition of new members
- Organizational structure
 - Leadership team
 - Titles (examples: chair, co-chair, secretary)
 - Responsibilities (examples: review referrals, facilitate staffings, record minutes)
 - Length of leadership terms
 - Selection process
- Referral process
- Emergency staffing protocol
- Orientation of new members
- Review and modification of bylaws

Ground Rules

Ground rules are simple, basic rules by which the group has agreed to operate. These rules reflect statements about individual behaviors that are encouraged to make the meeting effective for all participants. Consider reminding the group of the ground rules prior to the start of each meeting.

Examples of Ground Rules:

- Meetings will start and end on time.
- Avoid personal attacks and the use of labels.
- Listen with understanding to what others have to say.
- Avoid sidebar conversations.
- Encourage everyone to participate.
- Monitor your own "air-time."
- Be concise.
- Don't interrupt.
- Stay on subject, stick to the agenda.
- Silence cell phones or pagers.
- Be respectful of all attendees, especially person(s) being served.
- Use non-judgmental language.
- Avoid acronyms.