

Activity 9.1: Supporting Committee Operations with a Small PC/PB Support Staff

TIPS FOR TRAINERS



Suggested Use

Use this activity after your presentation on *Planning Council/Planning Body Operations*.



Time

About 75 minutes:

- 5 minutes to form groups and describe the activity
- 30 minutes for small group work
- 30 minutes for presentation and discussion
- 5-10 minutes for sum up



Materials

- Handout for Participants: Supporting Committee Operations with a Small PC/PB Support Staff



Knowledge or Skill Development

Increased awareness and knowledge about the role of PC/PB support staff in committee operations, and specific strategies for managing committees efficiently so that staff have time for other necessary tasks. This knowledge is most important in EMAs and TGAs with limited budgets and staffing, but can benefit any PC/PB regardless of its size or resources.

Activity Steps

1. Review the situations listed. If any of them are not relevant to your PC/PB, eliminate or revise them.
2. Divide participants into small groups of 4-6 people, by counting off. Distribute copies of the Handout for Participants.
3. Ask the small groups to select a **facilitator** to coordinate the work of the group and participate, and a **recorder/reporter** to take notes summarizing the discussion and present the small group's work to the full group.
4. Give the small groups about 30 minutes to discuss all the situations. (If you want to reduce the length of the activity, assign each group only one or two situations.) Give them a warning when they have 5 minutes left.
5. Ask one group to provide a 2-3 minute summary of its discussion about the first situation. Give other members of that group a chance to add or clarify. Then ask the rest of the groups to add, agree, or disagree. Next, ask a different group to respond to the second situation, and continue the process until all situations have been discussed.
6. Ask the group what they learned from this activity, and summarize key points.



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HANDOUT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Instructions

1. Work in your small group, choosing a **facilitator** to coordinate the work of the group and participate, and a **recorder/reporter** to summarize your group's work and present it to the full group.
 2. Individually review the situations provided below. For each situation, consider:
 - Does the approach suggested in the situation make sense?
 - If yes, how would you implement it?
 - If no, what might be done instead?
 3. Now work as a group, discussing each situation and how you would deal with it. Use the information presented during the training and your own knowledge and experience.
 4. You have 30 minutes.
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Situation 1: Number of Committees

Your PC/PB has seven standing committees: Executive, Consumer, PSRA, Needs Assessment/Integrated Planning, Care Strategy, Membership, and Bylaws/Policy. Supporting all these committees is extremely time-consuming, considering planning, meetings themselves, and follow up. The Co-Chairs suggest that the number of committees be reduced by at least two, perhaps by merging committees.

Situation 2: Committee Process

Your Bylaws specify use of *Robert's Rules of Order*. Parliamentary procedure is used in full PC/PB meetings, but committee meetings tend to be far less formal. A veteran Committee Chair suggests changing the Bylaws to call for use of a less formal consensus model in committees, except when they are engaged in a formal process like PSRA. This would be easier for newer members and could reduce the level of staff support needed during committee meetings.

Situation 3: Minutes

Your PC/PB has always had equally formal, detailed minutes for both the PC/PB and its committees. Staff have been standardizing the format to make minutes easier to prepare. You use a consensus model for most committees and often there are no formal recommendations to the Executive Committee. Every committee has two Co-Chairs. In order to give staff more time to devote to PC/PB orientation and training and technical planning tasks such as needs assessment, the Chair suggests that committee Co-Chairs be trained to take minutes except when formal recommendations to the Executive Committee and PC are expected, in which case the PC/PB support staff would take minutes. Meetings will still be recorded so that staff can edit minutes if needed.

Situation 4: Planning Tasks

The PC/PB is planning a major needs assessment effort this year, including a PLWH survey. Only about \$10,000 is available for this task. That is not enough to hire an expert consultant to manage the process, and staff time is limited. One of the providers suggests arranging for a graduate student to assist the PC/PB, and perhaps do it through an internship or field placement where the student receives academic credit. The Chair of the Needs Assessment Committee has a Master's degree in Public Health (MPH) and the PC/PB support manager has a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW), so one of them might provide supervision. A full semester placement might be possible. Several Executive Committee members have close university ties, and they offer to make the needed contacts.