

Advisor on a Council

Overview

On behalf of Alberta Children's Hospital (ACH), we would like to thank you for becoming a volunteer patient and family advisor (referred to as an advisor) on one of the site's advisory councils.

Advisors are youth, parents, and/or caregivers who typically have experience using the services of ACH. As an advisor on a council, you will play a vital role in providing a voice on ACH policies, processes, and delivery of care practices based on your life and health experiences. We value your time, energy and input/feedback, and hope that your experience participating on the council will be meaningful and rewarding.

This document provides some information to help orientate you to your role as an advisor on a council. If at any point during your council experience, you have questions or concerns contact ACH PFCC council coordinator. We are here to support you!

Refer to your council's **Term of Reference** for specific information on the council's purpose, structure, membership, etc.

Patient- and family-centered care (PFCC) is an approach to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of health care that is grounded in mutually beneficial partnerships among health care providers, patients, and families. It redefines the relationships in health care by placing an emphasis on collaborating with people of all ages, at all levels of care, and in all health care settings. PFCC care leads to better health outcomes, improved patient and family experience of care, improved staff satisfaction, and wiser use of resources.

At ACH, we work towards upholding the four principles of PFCC: dignity and respect, information sharing, participation, and collaboration. For information, visit the Institute for Patient-and-Family-Centred Care.

Pre-Meeting Tips

- Ensure meeting dates and times are in your calendar.
- Confirm if you are attending or not able to attend a council meeting.
- Review the agenda prior to the meeting, including any supporting documents.
- Contact the PFCC council coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.
- Request advisor coaching from your PFCC council coordinator if needed.

During the Meeting Tips

- Come with a willingness to share your opinions, perspectives, and experiences.
- Ask to define jargon or acronyms.
- Be a good listener and be open to hearing about other's experiences.
- Be willing to learn about system opportunities or constraints.
- Speak up when you have a question or a concern.
- Share what you liked and didn't like at the meeting.
- Practice self-care as needed.



- Share an experience that aligns with what is being discussed.
- Keep it brief and to the point.
- Only share what you feel comfortable sharing.
- Avoid using any names of healthcare providers.
- When talking about an experience that didn't go well, don't complain, state the facts, and offer suggestions on how the experience could have gone better

Example phrases an advisor can use when their experience and/or perspective is different than what is being shared by other advisors:

- "I am not sure if others have the same experience/view but here is my perspective..."
- "That hasn't been my experience..." and then respectfully share your experience.
- "I don't have the same view based on my experiences..."

“Being kind, being compassionate, being respectful does not make you weak. More often, it’s the harder path to take.”— Liza M. Wiemer

After the Meeting Tips

Note: The PFCC council coordinator logs each member's time for the meeting in the AHS volunteer database.

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Send any further reflections to your PFCC council coordinator.
- Ask for a debriefing session if you need one.
- Take time for yourself to recharge.
- Log any additional time spent preparing for the meeting or other council activities outside of the meeting.

Refuel and Recharge

Being an advisor requires a degree of openness and vulnerability to share parts of your healthcare experience to support the discussion. For many families, receiving care from the healthcare system can be a stressful time. Recounting past experiences, even if they were positive experiences, can bring up a variety of feelings and emotions. Some expected and some not expected. This is normal!

Below are different strategies to consider to help you manage any thoughts, feelings, or emotions that might arise after a meeting.

- Schedule a debriefing with your PFCC staff coordinator
- Practice some mindfulness breathing exercises
- Exercise - e.g. walk, run or stretch
- Listen to your favourite music
- Connect with a fellow advisor (peer support) or a friend
- Journal your thoughts
- Reflect on what you have accomplished

🔍 **Questions or Concerns?** ✕

Don't hesitate to reach out to your council PFCC council coordinator or email achfcc@ahs.ca