

Common Concerns and Responses

Engaging Caregiver Advisors can be a daunting experience; however, when the conditions for a successful relationship are considered and laid out in advance, collaboration can be an incredibly rewarding experience. The most important thing to remember is that Service Providers and Caregiver Advisors share the same goals and can improve each other's interest when collaborating instead of competing.

The following tables offers guidance on the most frequently experienced fears and how best to address them for Service Providers and Caregiver Advisors. Some of these may not be applicable for all organizations.



Table 1: Service Providers Concerns and How to Tackle These Concerns

Service Providers Concerns	How to Tackle These Concerns
Who are the advisors?	Often times, Service Providers and Caregiver Advisors have not met prior to working together. Take time to introduce yourself and get to know each other's expertise/experiences. It is important to understand that there is a process for individuals to become advisors. Trust that those who are interested in the project have stepped forward to actively participate.
How do we deal with the expectations that advisors may have?	If Caregiver Advisors are included from the beginning, Service Providers and Caregiver Advisors can discuss and agree on roles and expectations If Caregiver Advisors cannot be included from the beginning, offer opportunities for the project lead or committee chair to connect one-on-one with the Caregiver Advisor before the first meeting. Give Service Provider and Caregiver Advisor time to ask questions, clarify the purpose, timeline, expectations, and prepare for the first meeting.
What is the role of a Caregiver Advisor?	Caregiver Advisors provide perspectives that they draw from their own / loved one's health care experiences. They represent the expectations and views of those who's loved ones have experienced the organization's services. They have experienced the services and have firsthand knowledge of where improvements could be made.
What if sensitive and confidential information needs to be discussed in front of Caregiver Advisors?	Caregiver Advisors at the Organization sign a confidentiality agreement; therefore, information may be shared.
What if the Caregiver Advisors try to take over the meeting?	The Chair will ensure everyone has equal speaking turns during the meeting and demonstrate that everyone's contributions are equally valued. Additionally, clear roles and expectations should be outlined at the onset to create boundaries for all participation. Caregiver advisors are there to co-design programs and system improvements.
How should you handle difference of opinion?	Be prepared to listen to different perspectives with curiosity or as an opportunity to learn something new. Attempt to work out differences as equal peers. If these differences cannot be resolved, please consult with the service providers liaison.



Service Providers Concerns Continued	How to Tackle These Concerns
Caregiver Advisors do not understand the workings of the hospital or institution.	Caregiver Advisors have lived experiences and have a working knowledge on the organization that can and should be drawn upon. A lack of information is an opportunity to share and educate (both Service Providers and Caregiver Advisors alike). Remember that Caregiver Advisors are eager to learn and be a part of the committee and be part of the solution.
We don't want Caregiver Advisors to learn about our shortcomings.	Caregiver Advisors are aware that the organization is not perfect. They live these "shortcomings" every day and can provide a new perspective for effective strategies in overcoming them. They have a desire to engage and help create a better organization, process, and care. Service Providers and Caregiver Advisors are part of the same care team. Keep in mind that Caregiver Advisors sign a confidentiality agreement and are expected to keep conversations within the committee, project, or council confidential.
We're not ready to include others yet. We want to get things started and will invite Caregiver Advisors to join when the time is "right"	As best practice shows, including advisors at the beginning will ensure the timeliness and efficiency of the initiative. Time will not be wasted in going back to re-work decisions made before their involvement. It's better to include Caregiver Advisors as early as possible for the best outcomes.
What if involving Caregiver Advisors early in the progress prevents project progress/objectives?	<p>With the contribution of these advisors, projects may take on a new and more effective direction. Caregiver Advisors who are engaged from the onset will also understand the challenges along the way. Caregiver advisors are partners in this project who are looking out for the common interest that will improve outcomes for all involved.</p> <p>A willingness to enter into this partnership can result in a very meaningful collaboration to produce the best results for all stakeholders.</p>



Caregiver Advisor Concerns	Response
How can I prepare for my first meeting?	<p>It is recommended to ask who is on the committee and research who might be involved. Chairs/co-chairs should provide the information you need for your first meeting. Try to read as much information ahead of time on the direction, or issues being addressed, so you arrive prepared and ready with effective solutions.</p> <p>In general, depending on the project/working group, the providers will have an invested interest in improving services in their area of expertise. Feel free to ask for the names of the staff on your committee or project. Trust that those who are interested in the project have stepped forward to actively participate.</p>
How do we deal with the expectations that service providers may have for us? Do they understand the role of an advisor?	Every project, council, or committee should recognize the role of Caregiver Advisors and have a specific expectation of their involvement. Feel confident in your role (working in pairs makes things easier). Providers may not know what to expect, but working respectfully and providing your valuable perspective will improve the initiatives being undertaken.
What if Service Providers are reluctant to share information, stating that it is confidential?	You can remind them that Caregiver Advisors at the Organization sign a confidentiality agreement; therefore, information may be shared.
What if the Service Providers prevents Caregiver Advisors from contributing to the meeting?	The Chair will ensure everyone has equal time to contribute. Additionally, clear roles and expectations should be outlined at the onset to create boundaries for participation. If you do not feel as if your contribution is being valued, speak with the Chair privately to discuss your concerns. Ensuring that both providers and caregivers are previously educated on PFCC (Patient and Family Centred Care), will promote inclusive and beneficial discussions.
What if there is a conflict with a committee member?	Be prepared to listen to different perspectives and approach conflicts with curiosity or as an opportunity to learn something new. Attempt to work out differences as equal peers. Where attempts to resolve conflicts have been exhausted, please consult with the Liaison.
How will I know the organization’s structure?	The staff liaison or committee chair will provide you with an organizational map, outlining program heads, committee chairs, etc.
What if I don’t understand medical acronyms or abbreviations?	The Liaison or Chair will give you a list of commonly used acronyms and their descriptions.

