

(Name of Organization)

(Name of Family Advisory Council)

Terms of Reference

Definition of Family

- In this document the term “family” broadly includes persons, such as close friends, providing care to loved ones with mental illness and/or substance use. A family member includes immediate family and/or individuals a client considers to be their family, whether or not related by marriage, common-law partnership, or any legal parent-child relationship.

Role

- The (name of family advisory council) provides input from families in order to (insert desired results of the council for your organization).
- Share their unique stories, experiences, opinions, and perspectives in order to strengthen engagement of patients, caregivers and the public in important local health planning decisions and policies.
- To enhance the principles of Patient and Family Centered Care and help strengthen the quality and safety of patient care for all.

Goal

- The (name of family advisory council) works to ensure that the family perspective is always considered and incorporated in organizational policies, practices, committees, initiatives, activities, research, and events through co-design principles.
 - *Goal example: ...improve both client and family-centred mental health and addiction care and enhance client and family experiences across (name of organization) and within the community.*



Responsibilities

- Bring the broader family experience as partners in client care to committees, policies, practices, and partnerships and to foster family inclusion and improved outcomes for clients and families at (name of organization).
- Promote the delivery of family-centred care practices and initiatives as well as assist in implementing organizational change designed to promote client and family-centred care.
- Propose client and family-centred research, as well as effective ways to translate knowledge into practice.
- Collaborate with the (another given council) on proposals to advance client and family mental health and addictions care and experiences at (name of organization) and in the community.
- Advise on strategies to enhance and strengthen partnerships with families at (name of organization). In this context, the Chair will sit as an observer on (name of organization) Board of Trustees and participate in all relevant Board activities.
- Align the (name of family advisory council)'s work with organizational plans such as the Strategic Plan, Client and Family-Centred Care Framework, Quality Improvement Plan, etc.
- Develop an annual budget and work plan to submit to the Senior Management Team
- Represent families at internal (name of organization) events and relevant external events and consultations.
- Participate in relevant staff recruitment processes.
- Host education sessions in collaboration with staff on the role and value of the (name of family advisory council).
- Host public events in collaboration with mental health professionals on the value and impact of client and family-centred care and engagement with families.
- Serve as a bridge between (name of organization) and community for knowledge exchange.
- Foster membership continuity and actively promote new membership.
- Build relationships with key stakeholders to improve access, care and experiences of clients and families at (name of organization) and in the community.
- Other duties as required.



Membership

- A person wishing to become a member of the (name of family advisory council) can contact (email address).
- The (name of family advisory council) will comprise up to (insert number) family members and up to (insert number) staff representing the various programs across (name of organization) for a total of (insert number) advisors.
- The (name of advisory council) will strive to have an equal representation of family advisors and agency representatives on the committee
- Membership is open to families who have, or have had, a loved one with mental illness and/or substance use and addictions.
- (Name of family advisory council) members use their experience to improve the overall care at the (name of organization) and at a regional community level or systems level analysis.
- (Name of family advisory council) members must apply and be accepted as volunteers at (name of organization).
- (Name of family advisory council) members shall be able to contribute (x) hours per month on council activities including attending monthly meetings on a regular basis.
- A membership may be terminated by the decision of the (name of family advisory council) executive committee if the member has not contributed for an extended period, e.g., not attending (x) consecutive meetings of the (name of family advisory council) or not considered to be working within the agreed mandate of the (name of family advisory council).
- Members at large who have participated on hospital in other similar committees (not sure if we should specify hospital per say here) committees, etc. will be considered first for (name of family advisory council) membership at time of rotation or leave of absence (LOA) coverage requests.
- Members may request a leave of absence (LOA) for a period during which they will not be able to attend meetings. The LOA will then not count against their term.

Decision Making

- Decisions will normally be by consensus of members present.
- Contentious issues may need to be settled by a majority vote of members present (if x or more) or otherwise using an email vote by current members.



Executive and Positions

- The (name of family advisory council) Executive will comprise of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and a Secretary. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will act as a convener of meetings. In case of urgency the Chair and/or the Vice-Chair may make administrative decisions, reporting back on these at the next meeting.
 - Consider agreeing to using Co-Chairs with one hospital representative and one Caregiver Advisor representative as equal partners to improve the foundation for collaboration for the project.

Terms of Office

- The term of office for all members will normally be (x) years, with an option to renew for an additional two-year term.
- The Past Chair shall remain as a member of the (name of family advisory council) for a further year upon completion of the tenure as Chair.

Frequency of Meetings

- The (name of family advisory council) will conduct (x) meetings per year or as needed at the call of the Chair and/or Vice-Chair.
- Agendas for meetings will be drafted by the Secretary with input from the Chair and/or the Vice-Chair, with a call for items to all (name of family advisory council) members at least (x) days prior to the meeting.
- Meeting minutes will be the primary responsibility of the Secretary with the final approval by (name of family advisory council) members at the following meeting.

Resources

- The (title of staff member) will act as a liaison between the (name of family advisory council) and the Senior Management Team.
- Requests are made through the (title of staff member) and will be approved as needed for the facilitation of (name of family advisory council) activities.
- (Name of organization) will ensure office space is made available to the (name of family advisory council) Chair and members as required.



Reporting

- The (name of family advisory council) shall report annually on their activities to the Senior Management Team via the (title of staff member) and the lead Caregiver Advisor as a joint presentation.

Adapted from the Terms of Reference of the Family Advisory Council at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre. May 2021.

