Evaluating Research Advisory Boards

We recommend that new advisory boards conduct ongoing evaluation to track outcomes and processes, as well as for purposes of quality improvement. We provide the following packets of sample evaluation tools as a resource:

- Evaluation Tools for Members and Provider Sites includes surveys, observation tools and question guides.
- Evaluation Tools for Researchers includes surveys for researchers who may be directly involved in developing an advisory board and guest researchers who present their work to and advisory board.

Advisory boards and/or their facilitators should adapt tool formats, items, or response options to accommodate the needs of members. For instance, some member populations respond better to symbols instead of words, fewer response options, or open-ended questions. Other populations are able to respond to rating scales or more response options.

Before selecting or adapting evaluation tools, there should be an overall strategy or plan for the focus of the evaluation. The anticipated outcomes and process framework below can serve as a starting point.

Anticipated Outcomes

Advisory board members will...
- Gain confidence in talking with researchers
- Verbalize expertise (e.g., personal health or care experiences)
- Become comfortable with basic research ideas including PCOR and CER
- Trust researchers
- Report decreased isolation, increased community engagement & meaningful activity due to involvement in advisory board

Researchers/other professionals who participate in the development of (an) advisory board(s) and/or seek an advisory board's input will...
- Interact with members
- Recognize new advisory boards as a resource for their research
- Seek/receive input from members on various phases of PCOR/CER (topic selection through implementation)
- Implement research using members' input

Process Questions

Constituency and Representation
- What is your primary constituency or target population and why?
- Who are advisory board members? How many are there?
- How were they chosen? How do they represent this constituency?
- How does the advisory board share its work with the larger constituency group, if appropriate?
- What other stakeholders are engaged in the process of developing an advisory board? How many?
- How are they involved?

Resources
- What are the staff roles? How much time do they commit? Paid? Volunteer?
- What are they responsible for?
- What other resources do you use?
- How does advisory board site/leadership support development of the advisory board?

Focus and Structure
- What is the overall purpose of the advisory board/meetings?
- What topics does the advisory board address?
- How often does the advisory board meet?
- Are there any subcommittees or other advisory board activities?

Engagement
- How do you train or orient members and other participants of the advisory board? With what types of skills and/or knowledge?
- What accommodations do you provide to maximize participation and engagement by members? (to address physical, cognitive, transportation, communication, financial obstacles)
- What other information is provided to support engagement? When/how often/to whom?
- Who coordinates advisory board meetings (scheduling, reminders)?
- Who facilitates advisory board meetings and why?
- What methods are used to facilitate engagement?
- Have you developed any training or other products (describe)?
- How are members/other participants engaged in decision making?

- How do you document or evaluate the development of the advisory board (e.g., meeting notes, products, evaluation tools)? Who does that?

Outreach/Marketing/Dissemination
- How do you share the purpose, work, products of the advisory board with the broader research community?
- How to you reach out to engage individual researchers/professionals with the advisory board?
- What do you tell researchers/professionals about the advisory board?