BRITISH
COLUMBIA | Ministry of Health

Developing, Supporting and Maintaining Resident Councils and Resident and Family Councils

IN LONG-TERM CARE HOMES

Contents

Introduction

This booklet was developed by the Ministry of Health to assist residents who live in long-term care, their families and/or the residents' representatives in long-term care homes to set up, operate and maintain positively functioning Resident Councils (RCs) and/or Resident and Family Councils (RFCs). For simplicity, this booklet will refer to RCs and RFCs jointly as "Councils".

Every person living in a licensed long-term care home, along with their family and/or the person's representative has the right to participate in a Council.

Councils can contribute to positive changes in the quality of life of residents and help to ensure that all voices are heard. The goal of this booklet is to assist residents and their families/representative to set up and maintain a positively-functioning Council. The booklet also contains ideas that may be helpful for existing Councils.

This booklet is arranged in four sections:

▸ *The first section* provides an overview of what Councils are and what they can do.
▸ *The second section* of this booklet describes the role of legislation and regulation, reviews the purpose of Councils and describes their intended benefits.
▸ *The third section* provides information to help create, operate and maintain a Council.
▸ *The final section* provides resources, including samples of documents to assist with Council meetings.

What are Family Councils and Resident and Family Councils?

Family Councils and Resident and Family Councils are organized groups of residents, or residents and their family members and/or representatives. Councils meet on a regular basis to maintain and enhance the quality of life of residents through peer support and education and provide voices for residents and families to improve the experiences of all residents.

TYPES OF COUNCILS

Resident Council: A forum for residents in LTC homes that meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of interest in their daily lives in the home such as meals and daily activities.

Family Council: A forum for families and representatives of residents that meet on a regular basis to maintain and enhance the quality of life of residents through peer support and education and provide voices for residents and families to improve the experiences of all residents.

Resident and Family Council: Similar to Family Councils this is a forum also includes residents along with their families and representatives as members.

Some homes have both a Residents' Council (RC) and a Resident and Family Council (RFC). Each of these has a different focus. RC members may be more interested in issues like meals and daily activities, while RFCs may focus more on peer support, education and broader activities like outings to restaurants or parks.

In addition to local councils, there are Regional Resident and Family Council Networks (Regional Councils) and a Provincial Forum. These forums serve to promote and facilitate communication between local councils, health authorities and the Ministry of Health to enhance the quality of life for residents in care homes.

Regional Resident and Family Council Network (Regional Council): A health authority led regional meetings of local council chairs to discuss successes, common issues of concern, share experiences, problem solve and develop and implement broad regional solutions. There may be more than one Regional Council in each health authority based on geography or other relevant factors.

Individual Resident and/or Resident and Family Council chairs in British Columbia will be invited to participate in a Regional Council which is co-chaired by the health authority and a local council chair. This is a forum to discuss successes, common issues of concern, share experiences, problem solve and develop and implement broad regional solutions to challenges. Health authority home and community care staff and licensing officers will also be invited to attend these meetings. The Regional Councils will report up to the Provincial Forum.

If the families or residents are having challenges establishing a Council, the local Regional Council can provide support and resources. This may be especially helpful in smaller homes.

Resident and Family Councils BC (RFCBC): The Ministry of Health has established a provincial group in which the Regional Councils, health authority long-term care leadership and Ministry of Health licensing leadership meet to discuss systemic issues and proposed system change. The RFCBC is accountable to the Minister of Health.

Being part of a Council provides an opportunity to contribute to make living in the care home a better experience for residents and families (or the person's representative) and to be involved in the lives of their loved ones. Because Councils may be organized in a variety of ways so that they meet the unique circumstances of each home, each Council is governed and operated by its members. For example, a Council may have elected positions and operate formally, or they may operate much less formally and make decisions and recommendations by consensus. It is recommended that each Council have a Chair and a co-Chair.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A COUNCIL?

Councils are established to provide residents and/or their family members (or the person's representative) with an opportunity to provide insights and advice and to represent the collective interests of residents. Councils provide a network of support, encouragement and information sharing to new residents and their families as they navigate their new life in a home.

Councils may provide a forum for the residents and their families (or the person's representative) to discuss matters relating to living in the care home. These may include any requests for changes or concerns they may have as well as any solutions that they may wish to propose to the operator.

Councils should provide a forum for members to promote the quality of life for residents through discussion, education and event planning. For example, Councils may wish to bring in a guest speaker who has expertise in a subject matter that is of special interest to residents and other members, or they may wish to organize special events or celebrations.

Because Councils are voluntary organizations, each will be slightly different depending on the skills, interests and needs of their members. Some will be small, informal, and meet occasionally, while others will be larger, more formal, and may meet more regularly. Some may organize events and raise funds to buy something special for the care home and some will be very active in the regional and provincial networks.

The goals of a Council are determined by its members, and their understanding of the needs of the residents. Within a mandate to promote the collective interests of residents, a Council may focus their activities on many different areas such as:

▸ Providing information, resources, support and encouragement to family caregivers and/or residents;

▸ Welcoming new residents and families with a formal introduction process;

▸ Discussing issues of concern and seeking solutions to problems that arise; and,

▸ Identifying opportunities to enhance quality of life and working on projects that will be of benefit to residents and family caregivers.

Although many residents are eager to participate in Councils, others may not be interested in joining a Council or may be unable to do so. If residents are not able to participate in a Council, a family member or a personal representative may attend on their behalf. The membership of councils is intended for those who either live in the care home or they are a family member or personal representative of someone living in the care home.

Some care homes have combined resident and family councils, others will have only a resident council or a family council and some will have both a resident council and a family council.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A COUNCIL?

Councils give residents and families and/or the resident's representative the opportunity to:

▶ Work together, support one another and share experiences;

▶ Generate ideas and develop initiatives to improve quality of life for residents;

▶ Communicate concerns and propose solutions to the home's operator with one voice;

▶ Follow up on proposed solutions;

▶ Have a voice in decisions about the home that affect them or their loved ones;

▶ Provide educational opportunities to Council members through guest presentations, sharing resources and information sharing; and,

▶ Through the regional and provincial networks, work to address systemic issues and create quality improvements in long-term care.

Here are some examples of what a Council can do to improve the quality of life of residents:

▶ Create ways to welcome and support new residents and their families;

▶ Help new families understand the home's policies and practices, how they can raise concerns and who they can turn to if they have questions or ideas;

▶ Plan and support special events (e.g., musical groups, special dinners, seasonal activities, outings to parks or restaurants);

▶ Advocate for improvements within the home such as enhancements to common areas and for improvements outside the home such as better transportation access; and,

▶ Link with the Regional Resident and Family Council Networks to share best practice ideas, identify systemic concerns and get support, as needed.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION WHEN THERE IS NO COUNCIL

While establishing a formal Council may not always be possible, informal communication is still needed. Families are encouraged to reach out to the manager of the home if they are interested in establishing a Council.

The Seniors Advocate will accept calls from families with any concerns or questions about developing or getting support from the home's management for family and resident councils. To speak with someone, call her office at 1 877-952-3181.

Legislation

All long-term care homes licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* are inspected by local health authority community care licensing programs. Medical Health Officers and Licensing Officers are responsible for ensuring that all licensed community care facilities follow the legislation and regulations by conducting regular inspections and investigating complaints.

Homes may also be licensed under the *Hospital Act*. Under the *Hospital Act*, there are requirements for Hospital Inspectors to inspect licensed homes.

The Residential Care Regulation applies to all licensed homes.

WHO CAN SET UP A COUNCIL?

Residents can set up a Residents Council independently. Any individual resident, family member or group of family members can also set up a Residents and Family Council.

The Residential Care Regulation requires the operator to offer support and assistance to help residents and families set up and operate a Council.

If no Council has been set up, this opportunity must be provided by the operator of the home at least twice per year.

WHO CAN BE A MEMBER OF A COUNCIL?

To be eligible to be a member you must be a resident, a family member (or a resident's representative). Residents may belong to both a Residents Council and a Resident and Family Council if both are established.

Some residents may not have a family member who is available or interested in participating in a Council. In this case, the resident may be represented by a close personal friend.

Care home staff, management and anyone who does not have a family member (or represent a resident) residing in the home, are not eligible to be members of a Council.

STAFF ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Other than the meetings required to be held with Councils in the Regulation, care home representative or other staff members may attend meetings only by invitation of the Council.

Some homes may have a liaison appointed to the Council, such as a Social Worker or a member of the recreation team, if the Council requests support. The home will provide other resources and support, as requested. This staff member must be someone that is approved by the Council.

At times, it may be helpful for an appointed care home staff member to attend so that they can listen to the concerns raised by residents and family members and help resolve issues. One option is to invite the staff member to attend only part of the meeting for a particular agenda item so that members can discuss issues both amongst themselves and with staff. It is important to keep track of all issues, concerns and suggestions raised so that they can be communicated to the home's manager.

It is considered a best practice to have an "in camera" session at the end of each meeting which means there are no staff present. This will allow for a frank and open discussion between members who may not wish to speak, or be uncomfortable speaking, with staff present.

Preparing and Planning Regular Meetings

There are various ways to distribute Council information such as: e-mail, newsletters or posters in elevators and on bulletin boards. For example, the Council might decide to develop a brochure or poster that is always available and on display at the home.

Meeting Notice

Make sure that the meeting date, time and place is clear on the meeting notice. This notice must be displayed prominently in the home so residents and families can see it. The notice needs to be in a font that is easily read by persons with limited vision.

Meeting Schedule

Establish a regular meeting schedule to maximize participation (i.e., the last Monday of each month from 3:00 to 4:30 in an easily-accessible location within the home). Some sites may have meetings in the evening or on the weekend to allow more people to attend.

Agenda

It is important to send out an agenda and any other meeting materials in advance to give members time to think about the items before the meeting.

Agendas should allow time for:

▶ Territorial acknowledgement

▶ Welcome of new members;

▶ Review of the agenda;

▶ Review of previous minutes;

▶ Update any action items from previous meetings;

▶ New business;

▶ Discussion of items for the next meeting's agenda; and,

▶ The last 30 minutes of each meeting should be held "in camera" to allow for private discussion with no staff present to allow for a full and frank discussion amongst members.

Recruiting Members

To attract as many members as possible, consider ways to involve family members who may have difficulty attending a meeting in person because of time or distance.

Some ideas to address these challenges include:

▶ Keeping meetings short and focused;

▶ Holding teleconferences or web-conference meetings (such as Skype, Microsoft Teams or Zoom);

▶ Try different meeting times, such as evenings or weekends;

▶ Choosing a time of day, week or month when family are already at the care home;

▶ Establishing a private Facebook (or other social media platform) group; and,

▶ Scheduling a meeting before or after a home event that gets large attendance such as a party or barbeque.

Communicating with Residents and Families

After each meeting, the meeting notes should be distributed in a timely way and should be posted in an area that is highly visible in a public area of the home. The meeting notes need to be in a font that is easily read by persons with limited vision.

There are several options for distributing meeting notes to members and to others who may be interested including websites, bulletin boards or email distribution lists.

Maintaining the Momentum

Once a Council is established it is important to maintain the momentum. Groups need a common purpose, structure and a way to determine success. People volunteer for activities that are meaningful to them and their community and are much more likely to stay engaged when they feel their efforts have made a difference.

To encourage the Council to be successful, it is important to:

▶ Agree upon common goals and develop a purpose statement for the group;

▶ Develop simple terms of reference for the group;

▶ Establish a way for members to stay connected with each other and the group as a whole by way of a newsletter, email, phone tree or a Facebook group;

▶ Communicate with care home staff and determine who will be the staff liaison and what that involves;

▸ Ensure there is an agreed upon way to run meetings and an agenda that includes "next steps";

▸ From the group's goals, determine action items and assign individuals or working groups to carry out those actions;

▸ Create time on the agenda for reporting progress on projects and action items; and,

▸ Report and celebrate successes.

Establishing an Inclusive Environment

Councils are formed to promote a supportive and collaborative forum where residents, family members and the staff liaison (if one has been requested) can discuss issues, develop plans and work together to provide a respectful, collaborative, caring environment for the people who live there, their families and staff.

A welcoming environment will help to encourage participation and strengthen the Councils ability to function. A welcoming atmosphere makes meetings more comfortable for everyone. Some ideas to consider for making people feel welcome include:

▸ Greeting new members and making introductions

▸ Wearing name tags

▸ Providing refreshments

▸ Providing new members with a welcome package that includes a membership list, Code of Conduct, Terms of Reference, Residents Bill of Rights etc.

It is important to remember that residents and families/representatives of residents come from all walks of life. Councils must ensure that no form of bullying, harassment, discrimination, racism or other violations of basic human rights are permitted at any time. Members should feel safe discussing issues and concerns at all times.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

Once there are people interested in participating in a Council, the group should determine what type of structure works best for them. The 'executive' and 'leadership team' models are two options. At a minimum, Councils should have a Chair and a co-Chair.

Considerations

Several factors will influence what type of organizational structure will be most appropriate for the Council. Factors to consider include: the type of setting, the needs of the residents, the level of involvement from the appointed staff liaison and volunteers, the mix of family members and/or the person's representative wanting to be involved and the size of the home.

Executive model

The Executive model requires the election of people into formal positions (e.g., Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary) that have defined responsibilities.

Benefits include:

▶ Clearly defined roles—for some people, it is more comfortable to know exactly what their responsibility is.

▶ Familiarity—people may recognize the formal structure from other contexts such as participating on boards.

A disadvantage is that it can be intimidating for people who don't have a lot of experience as members of groups that use formal processes, or roles, so fewer people may be willing to volunteer for the positions.

Leadership Team model

This structure is less formal but has a group (the leadership team) that leads and shares responsibilities. A leadership team usually consists of 3 to 6 members, but this can vary depending on the situation. Councils should have at a minimum a Chair and a co-Chair. This structure may work better in homes with fewer residents.

Benefits include:

▶ Shared responsibilities—work does not fall on any one person.

▶ Collaboration and learning—people may feel inspired by working together.

▶ Playing to the strengths of the team—members do what they enjoy or are skilled at.

▶ Better representation—this structure tends to have a larger, more diverse group of Council members.

▶ Easier to recruit participants—because the structure is less formal, it is easier to encourage people to step in. Participants may also find joining less intimidating.

▶ A disadvantage is that it takes more time to rebuild after the leadership team changes after a member resigns or their loved one no longer resides at the home.

Filling Leadership Positions

In the development stage of a Council, leadership positions need to be established. A Chair and co-Chair need to be selected. These positions should be for 2 years term to ensure continuity. Over time as a Council becomes more established, it is best practice

to hold elections every 2 years, or when there is a vacancy, to give all members the opportunity to participate in leadership positions.

Formalizing leadership roles begins with people indicating interest in specific positions. A process will need to be developed to determine the election of the executives. An option to conduct elections is a person indicating their interest in a position by submitting a written expression of interest to the group. The group then casts a secret ballot to determine the preferred candidate for each position if there is more than one.

DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Coming to an agreement or consensus is needed in order to plan and carry out activities and to resolve issues. There are different models that Councils can consider adopting.

Consensus-based decision making

Consensus-based decision making is based on a formal process of consensus building, where members of the group actively participate in finding a solution together that all makes all members feel comfortable. Decisions reached by consensus reflect the thoughts and feelings of the group as a whole, rather than just the majority. The advantage of consensus building is that it can result in decisions that have been thoughtfully deliberated and incorporates diverse experience and views. Building consensus may produce the best possible decision given the configuration of interests that have come together.

Voting System

Another model is the more formal majority rule system. In this model, every Council member gets one vote among a list of options. An agreement is based on the option that gets the most votes. The benefits of this model include quick decision-making and that it is easy to understand how a decision was made. A disadvantage of the approach is that the viewpoints of some members will be excluded.

Comparing Consensus-building vs. Voting System

The advantage of consensus-based decisions as compared with majority rule voting is that it avoids a fundamental problem often associated with voting. Majority rule voting may unintentionally result in a split or division in a group, a satisfied majority and disgruntled minority, a sense of winners and losers.

ENSURING THAT EVERYONE'S VOICE IS HEARD

Not all residents or other Council members may feel comfortable speaking up in a Council meeting. This could happen for many reasons. To encourage input from people at Council meetings, consider:

▶ A friendly reminder at the beginning of each meeting that Council is a safe, inclusive space to share ideas;

▶ Brainstorming solutions (no bad ideas);

▶ Dividing members into small groups to talk about an issue before discussing it as a large group;

▶ Setting up an informal subgroup to look at a specific issue and to bring their recommendations to the larger group for discussion; or,

▶ Encouraging those who do not wish to speak up in a meeting to discuss concerns with the Chair, co-chair, staff liaison or social worker on an individual basis.

▶ Members may prefer to share their input in writing or through an interpreter after the meeting.

▶ Holding an in-camera session for 30 minutes of each meeting without staff present.

In addition, situations will arise that are outside the Council members' comfort zones or knowledge base. While these situations may be awkward or uncomfortable, they need to be dealt with right away or they can disrupt meetings as well as the Council's effectiveness.

RECRUITING COUNCIL MEMBERS

There are several ways residents, family members and/or the person's representative can be recruited and encouraged to join a Council. Once potential members understand the purpose, benefits and activities of establishing or participating in a Council, they may be more likely to participate.

▶ Look to other care homes to see if they have Councils and ask what has worked for them;

▶ Create some printed material that describes the benefits of a Council and set a convenient date for an informal meet and greet. Use existing newsletters or other existing resources where possible to advertise the initial meeting;

▶ Become a presence at the home and get to know the people who live there and their families and visitors;

▶ Connect with the appointed staff liaison (if there is one appointed) to ask for help in getting the message to other families by distributing or posting printed materials;

▶ Attend social events at the home and invite new family members personally;

▶ Ask people about their wish lists for the home to stimulate conversation about possible Council focus and activities to improve the quality of life for residents; and,

▶ Develop and conduct a survey to determine people's concerns and their interest or ability to participate in a Council.

▶ To ensure that new residents and families in the home are aware of the Council, the operator must advise families about any existing Family or Family and Resident Council as part of the admissions information.

GETTING STARTED

The first meeting may be an informal gathering to get acquainted with other families and/or the person's representative, and to meet the staff liaison for the home. This is a good opportunity to discuss role descriptions for leadership and members, to get people thinking about the Council's interests for learning opportunities and to ask what members want to discuss at regular ongoing meetings.

This is also an opportunity to ask families what the best times are for meetings, whether they might want an option for online meetings (i.e., Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams) and if anyone might be interested in having a dedicated Facebook or similar social media group.

TIPS FOR HOLDING PHONE, SKYPE OR TEAMS MEETINGS

1. Determine what platform/option is the preference of the group based on ease of use

2. Have people introduce themselves before they speak. This helps people know who is talking. Encourage the use of cameras.

3. Make sure you position yourself close enough to the microphone to be heard clearly.

4. Speak slowly and don't speak over other people.

5. Encourage people to mute their phones when not speaking to avoid distracting noises and use the "raise hands" button (if available) to indicate they wish to speak.

6. Have one member monitor the chat and read out comments so everyone can hear them. If the comment is related to an earlier topic in the meeting, the meeting chair can provide context.

7. Avoid having unrelated conversations in the meeting chat. They can be confusing for people to follow.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

In advance of the second meeting, it is important to develop and distribute an agenda. Agenda items could include introductions, development of a Code of Conduct for the group, leadership structure, and planning for the next meeting. A sample agenda and Code of Conduct are included in the Resources section of this booklet.

It is also important to identify who will take meeting notes for the group. Sample meeting notes and a sign in sheet are included in the Resources section of this booklet.

A Code of Conduct describes how Council members wish to interact with each other and with care home staff. It is developed by the Council members and includes items such as being respectful, being inclusive, maintaining confidentiality, valuing all contributions and listening without judgement. New Council members should be provided with a copy as part of their orientation to Council.

There are tools to help you to record attendance, organize meetings and keep track of issues raised at meetings. Examples of these can be found in the Resources section of this booklet.

▸ Attendance sheet – Allows you to track who is attending.

▸ Agenda – Helps you to stay on topic and to keep meetings on time.

▸ Minutes – Tracks topics and concerns raised at meetings and identifies items that require follow-up action.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

As the Council becomes more established, members may wish to make the structure more formal with a set of written governing principles. This is called a Terms of Reference and often describes:

▸ How the Council operates;

▸ Roles of Council members and leadership;

▸ How often the Council meets;

▸ Meeting behavior;

▸ Confidentiality;

▸ How much the home's manager or care home representative are involved; and,

▸ How decisions are made.

The benefit of having a Terms of Reference is that members know their roles and responsibilities. The document can also be used to help new Council members familiarize themselves with the operation of the Council as the membership changes over time. The Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually to make sure that it still fits with the needs of the care home and the members.

PROBLEM SOLVING: RESOLVING ISSUES WITH THE CARE HOME OPERATOR

The Council should set up a system to track issues, concerns and outcomes. This could be done by having action items in the meeting minutes that are assigned to a member to follow up on with staff. Some Councils might choose a less formal system.

Sometimes a Council is unable to come to an agreement with the operator of the home about an issue. If this happens, and it involves a health or safety concern, a Council member can call the local health authority community care licensing office and speak with a licensing officer.

The licensing officer may visit the care home to see if any regulatory requirements are not being followed. For example, licensing officers investigate complaints regarding allegations of abuse, neglect or poor cleaning. If a requirement under the Act or the Regulation is not being followed, the licensing officer will work with the care home operator to develop a plan to come into compliance and may visit the home again to ensure that the issue has been corrected.

PROMOTING AND RESPECTING DIVERSITY IN COUNCILS

To ensure that the diversity of the residents in the home is represented on the Council, it is important to be inclusive of all cultures, family statuses, lifestyles, abilities, perspectives and interests of the residents.

According to a Statistics Canada survey[1], approximately 3.3% of the population of Canada that are 15 years or older identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or two-spirited (LGBTQ2+). There is no current data on the numbers of seniors who identify as LGBTQ2+.

Due to a history of discrimination, exclusion and fear of stigmatization, not all LGBTQ2+ seniors may be comfortable to come out openly or be included in the LGBTQ community.

[1]   https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210326/dq210326a-eng.htm

Councils need to be inclusive of the LGBTQ2+ residents in the home and need to be open to having conversations that are inclusive of all residents and their families regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Residents who are LGBTQ2+ may also be estranged from biological family as a result of "coming out." In this case, many older LGBTQ2+ people will have built a close network of friends, sometimes referred to as a "family of choice" and they may be concerned that their family of choice will not be recognized as family or supported to participate in a council[2].

Indicating that your Council is LGBTQ2+ inclusive in the Terms of Reference can contribute to a safe place that can help participants to feel comfortable.

The following tips help to ensure effective representation of diversity:

▸ Invite guest speakers to discuss the topics of inclusion such as local Indigenous cultural traditions, LGBTQ2+, gender diversity and culture.

▸ Make efforts to avoid use of binary terms (i.e., male, female), where possible.

▸ Translate flyers, letters, minutes and newsletters into the languages represented in the home, as appropriate.

▸ Encourage members to have interpreters attend meetings to support them if required.

▸ Create an open and safe environment that encourages everyone to take part.

▸ Educate residents, families and staff about the different cultural backgrounds of residents in the home.

▸ Encourage the home to plan activities and events that give staff, residents and families an opportunity to share their cultural heritage.

▸ Ensure that the meeting space is accessible to all participants and provides space for mobility devices or service animals.

COMMON MEETING CHALLENGES

Two common challenges that can affect meetings are people not participating, as well as people with unproductive or challenging behaviours. This section describes some possible reasons for these issues and some potential solutions.

Situations may arise that are outside the members' comfort zones or knowledge base such as bullying or harassment. These challenges need to be dealt with right away to avoid meetings being disrupted.

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2   *https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors/forum/social-isolation-lgbtq.html*

Encouraging members active participation

Participating in meetings and groups may be a new experience for some members. In order to encourage engagement and participation at meetings the chair could:

▶ Review the meeting principles and Code of Conduct to reinforce that the Council is a safe place to share opinions and ideas;

▶ Ensure that more talkative members do not dominate discussions;

▶ Establish smaller working groups for projects and initiatives. This may be more comfortable for some members and is a good way to contribute; or,

▶ Suggest that members can meet with the Chair or co-Chair (or the appropriate person for the topic) after the meeting if they have more things they would like to discuss.

Some members may prefer to observe without speaking during meetings. People will participate in the discussion according to their comfort levels.

The Chair and co-chair consider staying for a few minutes at the end of the meeting to have a private conversation with quieter members to find out if they find the Council valuable and if they have ideas on how they might like to participate.

Challenging behaviours in meetings

The effectiveness of a Council suffers when members disrupt meetings, ignore procedures, create disputes, pursue their own interests, or are negative. Council leadership will need to manage these behaviours in meetings. Review the Code of Conduct, meeting principles and ground rules before each meeting to remind members how they are expected to act and encourage them to respect the rights of others.

A Council is a place to resolve issues and collaboratively engage in projects to improve the quality of life for all residents. Sometimes issues may resurface that the home has already done its best to address. Try to review the original issue and its resolution because:

▶ Some members may be unaware of what happened previously;

▶ New options may be available that weren't previously; or,

▶ The issue may have changed enough for the Council to re-examine it.

Remember that not all members will be satisfied with the results, and some issues may not be resolvable (for example, those that impinge on union contracts, limitations of physical environment, standards or laws that cannot be changed).

To build a positive Council, try to:

▶ Acknowledge and celebrate successes;

▶ Acknowledge past disappointments (not failures) and remind members the Council is moving forward;

▶ Emphasize concrete successes; or,

▶ Reinforce that all opinions are valuable, and the Council is strongest with a variety of ideas.

When unproductive behaviour starts to dominate meetings

Consider if complaints have more to do with the person than the process. If that is the case, they should be addressed in a one-on-one setting. However, complaints can be a sign that something is not working, and it may be necessary to:

▶ Review the meeting principles and the requirement for respectful behavior before each meeting begins;

▶ Address disruptive behaviour immediately and be firm with disruptive members;

▶ Prevent the actions of a few from dominating the entire Council;

▶ Seek out advice and mentorship from previous Council members or the home's appointed staff liaison or the operator;

▶ Refocus the Council or organizational structure or meeting format;

▶ Invite a guest speaker. Giving residents and family members opportunities to learn and understand issues that affect them can open up new solutions;

▶ Reframe discussions by asking questions: what is the main issue? What do we want to achieve? What are our next steps?

▶ Take training about conducting productive meetings, conflict resolution, facilitation or group dynamics. Many community colleges and public libraries offer related courses;

▶ Celebrate successes. This can ease frustration and encourage cooperation;

▶ Highlight positive contributions and encourage the person to participate constructively; and,

▶ Find a project or committee that matches someone's interests and that could benefit from their energy.

Resources

AGENDA

(Name of Long-term Care Home)
Resident Council (or Resident and Family Council) Meeting Agenda
(Date & Time of Meeting)
Teleconference Option: (phone #), participant code (?), chair code (?)

Topic	Time	Responsibility
Territorial Acknowledgement	5 min	Chair
Welcome, introductions, opening remarks and reminder of Code of Conduct	5 min	Chair
Approve Agenda, review action items and approval of minutes	5 min	Chair
Reports of officers, committees	10 min	Officers
Committee reports	10 min	Committee leads
Unfinished business	10 min	Chair
Business Arising	10 min	Chair
In-camera session for members[3]	25 min	Chair
Wrap up and next steps	5 min	Chair
Next meeting date and time	5 min	Chair
Adjournment		Chair

Time allotments can be adjusted to suit the needs of the Council.

3   It is considered a best practice that Council sets aside 30 minutes at each meeting without staff present.

SAMPLE MEETING MINUTES

Name of LTC home			
Meeting Minutes			
Meeting Date and Time			
Members present			
Regrets			
Topic	**Discussion**	**Action**	**Person Responsible**
Next Meeting Date and Time			

SAMPLE SIGN IN SHEET

Name of Long-Term Care Home Council Meeting

Date

In signing into this meeting, I will honour the confidentiality, Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference of the NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME Council.

By providing a phone number or email address, I agree to receive communications from the Council.

Member Name	Resident You Represent	Phone Number	Email Address

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS[4]

"This is home to your loved one"

Preamble: Individual actions of Council members reflect on the Council as a whole, therefore the actions of all members should ensure that Council maintains its high regard. The reputation and image of the Council should be considered in each member's communications and actions. The wearing of a Council "Name Tag" is a sign of service and support and indicates personal commitment to our Mission Statement.

Criteria for an effective council member:

▶ Show respect, sensitivity and consideration for all persons you meet in our Home (residents, staff, visitors and volunteers);

▶ Respect privacy and confidentiality;

▶ Avoid making judgments on any situation in the absence of all of the facts and information;

▶ Recognize that all residents are unique individuals and be sensitive to this;

▶ Respect that each resident, family member or representative has the opportunity to advocate on their own behalf. Council members should only advocate on behalf of an individual and/or their family members if:

    a) there is a barrier they cannot remove or overcome; and,
    b) with their consent.

▶ The intent of advocacy is to remove barriers that cannot be removed or overcome by the resident or family alone;

▶ Do not intervene in the care of any resident;

▶ Recognize that idle, sensational or groundless talk (gossip) about any person is harmful and hurtful;

▶ Has a clear understanding of abuse (financial, physical and emotional) and reports any suspected abuse immediately to the supervisor on duty or to the licensing program;

▶ Know and follows the policies of (name of long-term care home); and,

▶ Lead by example.

I, _____ Agree to this Code of Conduct

4 Sample Code of Conduct from the Family Councils Ontario. *https://www.fco.ngo/sites/default/files/Code%20of%20Conduct%20sample.pdf*

SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE[5]
(for Executive style committee)

<INSERT NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME>

1. NAME

The name of the organization shall be the NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME Council.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

The NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME Council's mission is to: "Improve the quality of life for all residents by promoting an atmosphere of sensitive caring and support among staff, family members and/or the resident's representative of NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME.

3. GOALS

- To inform and educate families;
- To share ideas for the purpose of problem solving;
- To maintain two-way communication between families and staff;
- To advocate on behalf of all residents and families; and,
- To provide mutual support for families and/or the resident's representative including those that are new to the home.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Members of the NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME Council Shall be:

A relative of a resident at NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME or their representative.

There are no public members on the Council.

5. OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

Officers of the organization shall be the Chairperson, Co-chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings. In the event of his/her absence, the Co-Chairperson shall preside.

The Secretary shall record the minutes of each meeting and maintain the minutes as a permanent record.

5   This is a sample Terms of Reference from Family Councils Ontario *https://www.fco.ngo/resources/sample-terms-reference-1*

The Secretary shall also be responsible for completing designated forms relating to request for administrative action by the home's management.

The Treasurer shall collect monies for the organization, disburse funds with the approval of the group and maintain the financial books as a permanent record.

If an officer can no longer perform his/her duties, the Executive Committee shall appoint a member to serve out the remainder of the term

An Executive Committee shall consist of Council officers.

Committees may be set up as needed by the Executive Committee.

6. ELECTIONS

Elections shall be held every year in March

A Nominating chairperson shall be selected by the Executive Committee, who in turn selects his/her committee to make a selection of candidates to present to the membership for election.

Members are encouraged to volunteer on their own initiative to be considered for office.

7. MEETINGS[6]

Meetings will be held on the first _____ of every month from _____

Subcommittee meetings shall be held as deemed necessary by Council members.

8. AMENDMENTS

Amendments may be made to these terms of reference at any regular meeting of the Council, by a 2/3 vote, providing the suggested changes have been read at the previous meeting.

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6   The Council members will determine the best day and time for meetings.

SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE[7]
(for Leadership style committee)

<INSERT NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME>

1. NAME

The name of the organization shall be the NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME Council.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

The NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME Council's mission is to: "Improve the quality of life for all residents by promoting an atmosphere of sensitive caring and support among staff, family members and/or the resident's representative of NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME.

3. GOALS

- ◆ To inform and educate families;
- ◆ To share ideas for the purpose of problem solving;
- ◆ To maintain two-way communication between families and staff;
- ◆ To advocate on behalf of all residents and families; and,
- ◆ To provide mutual support for families and/or the resident's representative including those that are new to the home.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Members of the NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME Council Shall be:

A resident or a relative of a resident at NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME or the resident's representative.

There are no public members on the Council.

5. LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE AND THEIR DUTIES

The Leadership group for the Council are a small group of volunteer members that agree to share responsibilities to chair meetings, take meeting notes, develop agendas and share in other work of the Council.

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7   This is a sample Terms of Reference adapted from Family Councils Ontario *https://www.fco.ngo/resources/sample-terms-reference-1*

At each meeting:

- ◆ one member of the Leadership group will serve as Chair; and,
- ◆ one member will record the minutes of each meeting and maintain the minutes as a permanent record. This person shall also be responsible for completing designated forms relating to request for administrative action by the home management.

One member of the Leadership group will volunteer as ongoing Treasurer[8] and will be responsible to collect monies for the Council, disburse funds with the approval of the Leadership group and maintain the financial books as a permanent record.

If a member of the Leadership group can no longer perform his/her duties, the remaining members will canvas the full membership for a new leadership group member.

Subcommittees may be set up as needed by the Leadership group for specific projects.

6. MEETINGS

Meetings[9] will be held on the first _____ of every month from _____

Subcommittee meetings shall be held as deemed necessary by Council members.

7. AMENDMENTS

Amendments may be made to these terms of reference at any regular meeting of the Council, by a majority vote, providing the suggested changes have been communicated to all members prior to the meeting.

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8   Not all Councils require a Treasurer if they do not fund raise.
9   The Council members will determine the best day and time for meetings.

SAMPLE FIRST MEETING INVITATION

You are invited to make a difference!
Join the \<INSERT NAME OF LONG-TERM CARE HOME>
Resident and Family Council

For the residents and the family members and/or, a representative of our loved ones who reside here.

Our first meeting will be on DATE at TIME:
Location:
Teleconference number:

Topics include:
 	
   ◆ What does a Resident and Family Council do?
   ◆ Why should I get involved?
   ◆ What works well here?
   ◆ What opportunities do we have to make it even better?

Come and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and bring your ideas! For more information, please call NAME at PHONE or by email at EMAIL.

BRITISH
COLUMBIA