For Residents, By Residents

Supporting Your Home's Residents' Council

A Resource Guide for Residents' Council Leadership Teams, Residents' Council Assistants and Administrators

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This resource guide is dedicated to Ontario's Residents' Councils' leadership teams and to every team member who has supported their home's Residents' Council over the years and contributed to its advancement and success.

"No acts of kindness are ever wasted."
Aesop

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SECTION 1: PREAMBLE

For Residents, By Residents

SECTION 1

Inside you will find…

1.1. Introduction to the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils

1.2. Residents' Bill of Rights

1.3. Acknowledgements

1.4. How to Use this Resource Guide

1.1 The Ontario Association of Residents' Councils

Who We Are

The Ontario Association of Residents' Councils (OARC) is a non-profit association formed in 1981 by residents, to act as a collective voice for Residents' Councils in all long-term care (LTC) homes in Ontario.

OARC's Mission

We empower Ontario long-term care residents to understand their rights, share their lived experience, and inspire a better tomorrow. We do this by working together with our partners to educate stakeholders, build a collective voice, and create positive culture change.

OARC's Vision

Every long-term care resident in Ontario shapes the place they call home.

OARC's Values

Compassion – We demonstrate compassion by developing caring relationships that are built on acceptance, trust, and honesty.

Dignity - We embrace the inherent dignity of all people and respect their right to be valued and accepted without judgement.

Inclusion – We are committed to ensuring that all residents are engaged and heard.

Collaboration - We know that we can accomplish more when we work together to achieve shared goals.

FOR RESIDENTS, BY RESIDENTS - INSPIRING A BETTER TOMORROW.

OARC Governance

The Board of Directors are committed to strive for a greater collective impact of OARC's vision and mandate. Directors represent expertise and knowledge from fields across the LTC spectrum and beyond, including Resident Leaders.

The OARC provides a strong, unified network through which the activities of individual Councils are enhanced. This is vital to their continued existence and effectiveness.

1.2 Residents' Bill of Rights

In Ontario, the rights of residents in LTC homes are protected through the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (FLTCA).* These rights have been strengthened and expanded to reflect our province's fundamental values. The rights are listed below and, for ease of understanding, some include clarifications from a booklet developed by the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly entitled, "*Every Resident: Bill of Rights for people who live in Ontario long-term care homes*."

Residents' Bill of Rights

RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT

1. Every resident has the right to be treated with courtesy and respect and in a way that fully recognizes the resident's inherent dignity, worth and individuality, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.

2. Every resident has the right to have their lifestyle and choices respected.

3. Every resident has the right to have their participation in decision-making respected.

RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

4. Every resident has the right to freedom from abuse.

5. Every resident has the right to freedom from neglect by the licensee and staff.

Every license long-term care shall ensure that the following rights of residents are fully respected and promoted. [2021, c. 39, s. 3(1)]

Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that the required information is posted in the home, in a conspicuous and easily accessible location. [2021, c. 39, s. 85 (1)]

RIGHT TO AN OPTIMAL QUALITY OF LIFE

6. Every resident has the right to communicate in confidence, receive visitors of their choice and consult in private with any person without interference.

7. Every resident has the right to form friendships and relationships and to participate in the life of the long-term care home.

8. Every resident has the right to share a room with another resident according to their mutual wishes, if appropriate accommodation is available.

9. Every resident has the right to meet privately with their spouse or another person in a room that assures privacy.

10. Every resident has the right to pursue social, cultural, religious, spiritual and other interests, to develop their potential and to be given reasonable assistance by the licensee to pursue these interests and to develop their potential.

11. Every resident has the right to live in a safe and clean environment.

12. Every resident has the right to be given access to protected outdoor areas in order to enjoy outdoor activity unless the physical setting makes this impossible.

13. Every resident has the right to keep and display personal possessions, pictures and furnishings in their room subject to safety requirements and the rights of other residents.

14. Every resident has the right to manage their own financial affairs unless the resident lacks the legal capacity to do so.

15. Every resident has the right to exercise the rights of a citizen.

RIGHT TO QUALITY CARE AND SELF-DETERMINATION

16. Every resident has the right to proper accommodation, nutrition, care and services consistent with their needs.

17. Every resident has the right to be told both who is responsible for and who is providing the resident's direct care.
18. Every resident has the right to be afforded privacy in treatment and in caring for their personal needs.

19. Every resident has the right to,
    i. participate fully in the development, implementation, review and revision of their plan of care,
    ii. give or refuse consent to any treatment, care or services for which their consent is required by law and to be informed of the consequences of giving or refusing consent,
    iii. participate fully in making any decision concerning any aspect of their care, including any decision concerning their admission, discharge or transfer to or from a long-term care home and to obtain an independent opinion with regard to any of those matters, and
    iv. have their personal health information within the meaning of the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* kept confidential in accordance with that Act, and to have access to their records of personal health information, including their plan of care, in accordance with that Act.

20. Every resident has a right to ongoing and safe support from their caregivers to support their physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing and their quality of life and to assistance in contacting a caregiver or other person to support their needs.

21. Every resident has the right to have any friend, family member, caregiver or other person of importance to the resident attend any meeting with the licensee or the staff of the home.

22. Every resident has the right to designate a person to receive information concerning any transfer or any hospitalization of the resident and to have that person receive that information immediately.

23. Every resident has the right to receive care and assistance towards independence based on a restorative care philosophy to maximize independence to the greatest extent possible.

24. Every resident has the right not to be restrained, except in the limited circumstances provided for under this Act and subject to the requirements provided for under this Act.

Note: On a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor, paragraph 24 of subsection 3 (1) of the Act is amended by striking out "restrained" and substituting "restrained or confined". (See: 2021, c. 39, Sched. 1, s. 203 (3))

25. Every resident has the right to be provided with care and services based on a palliative care philosophy.

26. Every resident who is dying or who is very ill has the right to have family and friends present 24 hours per day.

RIGHT TO BE INFORMED, PARTICIPATE, AND MAKE A COMPLAINT

27. Every resident has the right to be informed in writing of any law, rule or policy affecting services provided to the resident and of the procedures for initiating complaints.

28. Every resident has the right to participate in the Residents' Council.

29. Every resident has the right to raise concerns or recommend changes in policies and services on behalf of themself or others to the following persons and organizations without interference and without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal, whether directed at the resident or anyone else:
    i. the Residents' Council.
    ii. the Family Council.
    iii. the licensee, and, if the licensee is a corporation, the directors and officers of the corporation, and, in the case of a home approved under Part IX, a member of the committee of management for the home under section 135 or of the board of management for the home under section 128 or 132.
    iv. staff members.
    v. government officials.
    vi. any other person inside or outside the long-term care home.

> Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that there are written procedures that comply with the regulations for initiating complaints to the licensee and for how the licensee deals with complaints. [2021, c. 39, s. 26]

1.3 Acknowledgements

Have you ever experienced challenges in establishing, maintaining or supporting your home's Residents' Council? We hope that you will find the

information in this resource guide to be helpful in addressing your questions and challenges, in order to maximize your Council's effectiveness.

We encourage the Residents' Council's leadership team, the Residents' Council assistant as well as home Administrators, to use this guide as a source of creative ideas to help strengthen and support your home's Council. The guide borrows heavily from our experiences and our work, as well as from what hundreds of residents, team members and colleagues have taught us over the years since OARC was formed. It reflects a collection of ideas and best practices from provincial and international groups, and we would like to thank and acknowledge all of our contributors.

We especially want to thank the members of OARC's Advisory Group, a dedicated group of residents and team members who work with the Residents' Councils in their respective long-term care homes and who generously volunteered their time to develop the content for the original publication of this resource guide. We would also like to thank OARC's former Executive Directors for their pioneering endeavors, ideals and vision. Additional material for this resource guide was developed through consultation with the Ontario Family Councils' and residents and team members from the following homes: Village of Aspen Lake, Thornton View LTC, Sunnyside Home, Pleasant Manor Retirement Village, Extendicare Bayview, Woods Park Care Centre, Bob Rumball Home for the Deaf, and Providence Manor. Everyone's comments, ideas and practices shaped the development of this guide, and we appreciate the commitment they have shown in helping our province's Residents' Councils flourish.

OARC gratefully acknowledges the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) for its ongoing support of OARC activities and programs, including the development and distribution of this guide.

Advisory Group Membership for the Original Publication of this Resource Guide:

The Advisory Group consisted of OARC team members, long-term care home residents and team members. We are appreciative of their efforts and hard work to create this essential guide to forming and maintaining effective Residents' Councils in long-term care homes.

1.4 How to Use this Resource Guide

This resource guide is designed to be user-friendly and comprises four main sections:

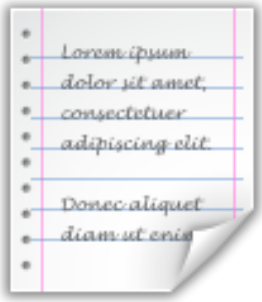
1. **Section One: Preamble**

2. **Section Two: Supporting the Establishment of Your Residents' Council**
3. **Section Three: Supporting the Operations of Your Residents' Council**
4. **Section Four: Supporting the Sustainability of Your Residents' Council**

Each section explores topics meaningful to a Residents' Council, while also respecting the unique needs of the resident's home. As you read each topic, begin to think about how it applies to your home. What information do you think could be useful? Are there any suggestions that you believe could help to improve the effectiveness of your Residents' Council or strengthen relationships within your home?

As you read through the guide, you will find many additional resources, such as checklists, sample agendas and templates. The most current versions of OARC tools and templates referenced in this guide can also be accessed online at www.ontarc.com. Most tools are available in a range of font sizes to best meet the needs of your Council members. You may photocopy, print and/or customize any of these resources to suit your needs, except for the Residents' Bill of Rights, which is provincial legislation and cannot be altered. We also encourage you to add your own documents, such as copies of policies or official Council documents, at the end of the section that contains related topics.

It should be noted that the suggestions in this resource guide are not rules that must be strictly followed, nor are they intended to provide a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all approach. Rather, the guide discusses different issues you may experience and presents several ideas that you may decide to try.



Taking Notes

In Section One, you will find one blank, lined sheet of paper for taking notes. You can photocopy this page, if you need additional paper.

Our Home's Policy or Law?

Please speak with your home's management team to find out what practices are the policies of the home /organization. This will help you to differentiate home-based practices from practices required by law.

Helpful Icons Used in this Resource Guide

The following icons are used throughout this guide to highlight important information and helpful ideas for you to consider with your Council.

This icon appears next to legislative requirements that **must** be in place in your home.

This icon can be found beside information the Staff Assistant may find helpful.

This icon suggests inserting copies of documents specific to your home.

This icon shares a story about an experience relevant to Residents' Councils.

This icon appears next to key information that is important, but not critical.

This icon can be found beside information about money.

This icon points to helpful tips and suggestions from OARC.

This icon flags recommended questions from OARC.

Glossary of Terms Used in this Resource Guide

Board of Directors: Refers to a type of Residents' Council's leadership team made up of the Council's Executive and all Home Area Representatives. Each Council is responsible for recording these positions in their Bylaws. The Board of Directors is responsible for the general administration of the Council.

Executive: Refers to the team of residents elected or officially appointed to serve as Officers for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Council.

Home Area Representative: Refers to a resident who has been elected or recruited to represent a particular area of the home, such as a floor or residential neighbourhood, at Residents' Council meetings. Each Council is responsible for recording this position in Bylaws.

Home's Management Team (also known as a management team): Refers to the people who have managerial and administrative responsibilities enabling them to support residents and team members, while ensuring that the day-to-day operations of the home are strong and stable.

Leadership Team*: A broad-spectrum expression that refers to every type of leadership structure a Residents' Council may choose to adopt. Council members are responsible for determining the composition of their leadership team, which may take the form of an Executive, a Board of Directors, Shared Leadership, or any other leadership structure that performs the responsibilities of the people who lead the Council's operations. There are many variations on this model. r

**For ease of reading, this guide uses "leadership team" as a generic term referring to all possible structures.*

Licensee: Refers to the person who holds the licence for the home. A licensee may assign a designate who assumes responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the home. The designate is typically the home's Administrator or Executive Director.

Resident: Refers to a person living in a particular place—regardless of length of stay—either for an extended period, such as in a convalescent, respite or rehab home, or permanently in a LTC home.

***Robert's Rules of Order*:** The authoritative guidebook on parliamentary procedure designed to help anyone smoothly conduct orderly meetings in a fair manner. The book can be purchased at a bookstore, or you can familiarize yourself with Robert's Rules of Order here: https://robertsrules.com/

Staff/Team Members: Refers to all persons employed by the home and is inclusive of your home's management team.

Residents' Council Assistant: The term used to describe the person who assists the Residents' Council as requested. This person is not a member of the Council and they are not part of the Council structure. If the Council determines that assistance from a team member is needed, the LTC home licensee is required to appoint a Residents' Council assistant who is acceptable to that Council through a negotiated process with the Council. Duties may include (but are not limited to) assisting with agenda preparation, organizing the meeting space, recording minutes, facilitating discussion, and assisting with elections. The intent of the LTCHA is for the home to appoint a non-managerial staff member to fulfil the role of Residents' Council assistant. If the assigned Council assistant is not acceptable to the Council, the Residents' Council Executive and the administration discuss possible alternatives. The acceptance of a Residents' Council assistant should be documented in the minutes of the meeting during which the decision was made. The OARC Minute template provides an opportunity for Councils to review the suitability of the assistant on an annual basis (recommended).

SECTION 2: SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUR RESIDENTS' COUNCIL

For Residents, By Residents

SECTION 2

Inside you will find…

Introduction

2.1 What Is a Residents' Council?

2.2 Functions and Powers of a Residents' Council

2.3 Legislation and Residents' Councils

2.4 Cultivating Rich, Collaborative Partnerships

2.5 Three Classic Models for Your Residents' Council Structure

2.6 Staff Assistant's Learning Needs Self-Assessment

2.7 Qualities of an Effective Residents' Council

2.8 Establishing Your Residents' Council

2.9 Establishing Your Residents' Council's Leadership Team

2.10 Developing Your Residents' Council Bylaws

2.11 ADDENDUM: Insert Home-Specific or Official Council Documents

Introduction

Section 2 will help you to better understand the role of a Residents' Council in your home, how the laws contained within the Fixing Long-Term Care Act (FLTCA 2021) empower residents, and the value of mutually supportive partnerships. This section will also give you ideas to consider when looking at establishing and strengthening your Council.

We will start by:

- Defining what a Residents' Council is and what it is meant to be. We recommend that Councils be individualized to reflect the specific needs of the residents they serve.
- Examining the essential functions and powers of a Residents' Council.
- Highlighting legal requirements under the FLTCA, which are relevant to your Residents' Council.
- Describing the qualities found in an effective Council.
- Describing the three basic structures used by many Councils.
- Thinking about the necessary collaborative partnerships to help you nurture a culture of positive, mutual support within your home and during your Residents' Council meetings.
- Exploring the process of starting or renewing your Residents' Council and encouraging other residents to get involved in their Council.
- Exploring the roles taken on by various people on, and connected to, the Council.
- Examining the importance of creating and maintaining a set of Residents' Council Bylaws to govern Council activities.
- Defining the role and responsibilities of a Residents' Council assistant to the Residents' Council.
- Encouraging Residents' Council Assistants to assess their learning needs to better support the Residents' Council.

We have included helpful tools, sample documents and templates for use in your home. This guide is also available on the OARC website at: www.ontarc.com. Consider adding your home-specific documents relating to the topics mentioned in the above list at the end of this section.

2.1 What Is a Residents' Council?

Your Residents' Council is a formal advisory body, independent of the home and other Councils. Residents' Council meetings are regularly scheduled to ensure continuity and enhance resident attendance. Council meetings provide the opportunity for residents to participate actively in matters that affect their daily lives and where they can exercise decision-making autonomy. Councils attempt to cultivate a safe environment that encourages unity, partnership and mutual support, to contribute to increased quality of living for all residents in the home.

All residents living in a home are members of their Residents' Council and are encouraged to attend meetings, get involved in Council activities, vote in elections, and volunteer to serve on their Residents' Council leadership team.

The Council provides residents with wonderful opportunities to use their talents and wisdom to enrich their experiences. Council members regularly meet to talk about their needs, preferences and concerns. They advocate for protecting residents' rights and for shared concerns to be resolved. They support and inspire each other, contribute to improving services and policies in order to create a person-centred community within the home, and plan various fun things to do which residents find enjoyable.

> Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that a Residents' Council is established in the home. [2021, c. 39, s. 62 (1)]
>
> Only residents of the long-term care home may be members of the Residents' Council. [2021, c. 39, s. 62 (2)]

A Council meeting should not be considered a social gathering or part of a therapeutic activity.

Across Ontario, Residents' Councils are flourishing thanks to the generous contributions of residents and team members. To truly represent its membership, Councils are not expected to be identical even though all Residents' Councils have the same legislative powers under the FLTCA. Each Council is encouraged to reflect the unique needs and values of its residents. A Residents' Council in any format is always valuable regardless of how it is structured, its size, the formality of its activities, or the perceived pace by which it

operates. If the intention of your Council is being carried out, then your group is an official Residents' Council.

Why Are Residents' Councils Mandatory in every Ontario Long-Term Care Home?

Our government recognizes the value and influence of your Residents' Council in sustaining a mutually supportive community where residents have a stronger collective voice and a reciprocal cooperative relationship with their home's management team. These legal requirements serve as an added protective measure to ensure your home's management team continues to be accountable for nurturing a positive living space designed around your needs, choices and preferences, so that all residents may equally enjoy a quality of living that is meaningful to them.

While the FLTCA does not specify the frequency with which meetings are to be held, the intent is that residents come together regularly as a Council. OARC recommends that Residents' Councils meet monthly to provide the foundation for ongoing, open communication among members of the Council and with management.

If too much time passes between meetings, tracking successes and challenges in the home will be difficult. Relationships between residents and management thrive best when communication is open, transparent and frequent.

What Are the Benefits of a Residents' Council?

The involvement of a Residents' Council in influencing change in your home's community, strengthening relationships, and honouring residents' voices is multidimensional. As an effective vehicle for transforming lives, Councils offer residents the opportunity to shape their home's culture and positively contribute to creating a place of mutual support with fellow residents and with staff.

Residents' Councils help to…

- Improve communication within your home. Councils can help residents stay informed by sharing factual information and helping dispel rumors.

- Promote fellowship. Through regularly scheduled meetings and by working together for the common good, residents have a chance to get to know one another better, appreciate each other's individual qualities, and nurture meaningful relationships within their home.
- Identify actual or potential issues early on when it is easier to address them.
- Empower residents to feel comfortable, while participating in the daily decision-making process of their home.
- Maintain and strengthen resident ties with their external community.
- Provide a comfortable atmosphere to work through new challenges and explore opportunities for personal growth. For example, residents who might not have participated in activities or projects before may choose to get more involved in Council activities by volunteering to serve in a leadership position for the first time, or on a subcommittee, or by working behind the scenes to support their Council.
- Serve as a safe sounding board where residents can raise concerns, share ideas and express their opinions.
- Encourage members to work cooperatively as a team.
- Advocate for residents through a unified voice.
- Offer a unique perspective of the home's operation, seen through the eyes of the people who are using the services provided.
- Bring forward suggestions on how to address issues and improve their home's services, policies and activities.

2.2 Functions and Powers of a Residents' Council

Experience has taught us that quality of living is deeply rooted in a supportive community and cemented by meaningful human connections that respect each of us as individuals. Councils are an opportunity to provide a safe and mutually supportive community for all residents, as only residents are members. Residents are encouraged to express themselves and share their experiences with each other, while shaping and contributing to the spirit of their home. Your Council may focus on whatever members choose to undertake, whether it be specific short-term projects or areas for improvement within the home.

How Your Council Can Support Quality of Living in Your Home

Although Councils may focus on different things, which largely depend on the interests and goals of its members, they tend to share a common purpose. In general, a Residents' Council's function is to:

- Create an environment where residents feel safe expressing their concerns and experiences.
- Build a sense of community and friendship among residents in which personal connections and the understanding of one's unique position as a resident can flourish.
- Promote an atmosphere which honours the spirit and rhythm of each resident's life.
- Foster a respectful culture of mutual support among residents and with the home's management and team members, where working together collaboratively forms the very fabric of your home.
- Promote an atmosphere that maximises each resident's special skills and potential.
- Encourage all residents to be active decision-makers in their own lives and to let others know what has meaning and importance to them.
- Create an environment where residents feel safe expressing their concerns and experiences.
- Safeguard the rights of all residents and advocate for their concerns.
- Gather news and information from team members on issues that impact residents or may be of interest to all, to ensure that all residents are informed of, and involved in, changes that may affect them.

- Discuss concerns and generate solutions to problems in the home.
- Work with the home's management team to collaboratively make decisions that enrich the services offered to residents, the practices of the home and its surroundings.
- Address special interests (e.g., food/dietary subcommittee) and work on projects identified by residents.

Powers of All Residents' Councils

The provincial government has awarded specific powers to your Residents' Council, to recognize the need for mutual support through each home's Council. The legislation requires homes to assist their Councils in exercising these powers without any restrictions or interference.

As described in the FLTCA, your Residents' Council has the power to...

- Advise residents of their rights and obligations under the FLTCA.
- Advise residents of the rights and obligations of the home.
- Attempt to resolve disagreements between residents and the home's management team.
- Sponsor and plan fun social activities for residents.
- Work in partnership with external community groups and volunteers on resident activities.
- Advise the home of any concerns and recommendations related to how it operates.
- Provide advice and recommendations to the home, based on residents' suggestions for improving care or their quality of life.
- Report directly to the MOHLTC resident concerns and recommendations.
- Review the detailed allocation of funding provided by the MOHLTC and local health integration networks (LHINs) and the amounts paid by residents to the home.

- Examine the operations of the home, which includes reviewing financial statements and inspection reports/summaries.
- Review the results of satisfaction surveys and make recommendations to the home's management team, so that results are acted on.
- Review scheduled times for meals and snacks and select alternate items for the menu.
- Provide advice on how your home's satisfaction survey is developed, how it is to be administered, and how the results of the survey could be implemented. In reviewing the results of satisfaction surveys, the Council can recommend to the home's management team, any changes that would be beneficial to the general population.

See pages 31-48 for a full account of specific rights, roles and responsibilities under the FLTCA.

2.3 Legislation and Residents' Councils

Long-term care in Ontario is governed by the FLTCA and the associated Regulations 245/22. The Regulations provide details which support the act.

Current legislation recognizes that a LTC home is a resident's primary home and requires all homes to operate in a manner which respectfully preserves each resident's individuality, independence and dignity within a secure, safe and comfortable atmosphere, while supporting their physical, psychological, social, spiritual and cultural needs.

The legislation is focused on building a culture of resident-centred care and on helping residents live their lives to the fullest extent possible. In recognition of the importance of Residents' Councils in promoting better quality of living for residents, the government has changed the legal status of Residents' Councils. As of July 1, 2010, Ontario requires every LTC home to have an established Residents' Council. Moreover, all residents are considered members of their home's Residents' Council by virtue of being a resident living in that home.

Councils are expected to have opportunities to be consulted and have greater involvement in their home's activities and decision-making processes. This enables residents to significantly influence the quality of services they receive, the way they are treated while living there, and the different ways they can get involved in how their home operates.

What Do the Numbers Mean at the Beginning of a Legislative Requirement in the Act and Regulations?

Written law is composed of numbered sections, cited as sections 1, 2, 3, etc. Many sections are further divided into two or more subsections, cited as subsections (1), (2), (3), etc. Some sections and subsections also contain clauses (cited as clauses (a), (b), (c), etc.), subclauses (cited as subclauses (i), (ii), (iii), etc.), paragraphs (cited as paragraphs 1, 2, 3, etc.) and subparagraphs (cited as subparagraphs i, ii, iii, etc.). Further levels of divisions are possible, although they are rare.

Fixing Long Term Care Act, 2021, & Ontario Regulation 245/22

The FLTCA is rooted in the philosophy of resident-centred care. The act strongly supports collaboration and mutual respect among residents, their families, home management, team members and volunteers, to ensure that the care and services provided will meet the needs of residents and enable them to live their lives to the fullest extent possible.

This part of the guide addresses specific clauses within the FLTCA outlining the rights, roles and responsibilities of residents as members of Residents' Councils. OARC has provided brief explanations in blue text to assist you in understanding these critical aspects of the law. You are also encouraged to insert your home's relevant documents pertaining to this section. See the suggested list on page 37.

Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021

Residents' Bill of Rights

3. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that the following rights of residents are fully respected and promoted:

> The owner and/or administrator of every long-term care home must ensure that everyone working and volunteering in the home knows, respects and promotes the Residents' Bill of Rights.

29. Every resident has the right to raise concerns or recommend changes in policies and services on behalf of himself or herself or others to the following persons and organizations without interference and without fear of coercion, discrimination or reprisal, whether directed at the resident or anyone else,

i. the Residents' Council,

> As a resident, you have the right to raise concerns or recommend changes to policies and services, on behalf of yourself or any other resident. Your comments can be confidently raised and discussed at Residents' Council meetings, and you can do so:
>
> - without any interaction or involvement from any manager, team member, volunteer or resident.

- free from fear of anyone using their power or intimidating behaviour towards you, or anyone else, in trying to prevent you from speaking up.
- free from fear of discrimination from anyone because you spoke up.

This applies to all residents in your long-term care home.

28. Every resident has the right to participate in the Residents' Council. 2021, c. 39, s. 3 (1).

Mission statement

4. (1) Every licensee shall ensure that,

(a) there is a mission statement for each of the licensee's long-term care homes that sets out the principles, purpose and philosophy of care of the home: and

Every long-term care home has a mission statement that states the purpose, the principles and philosophy of care of the home. Residents' Council members should be aware of this statement and understand the home's goals. the principles, purpose and philosophy of care set out in the mission statement are driven by the primary goal of providing quality care that is resident-directed and safe.

(c) the principles, purpose and philosophy of care set out in the mission statement are put into practice in the day-to-day operation of the long-term care home. 2021, c. 39, s. 4 (1).

Homes are responsible for putting their stated purpose, principles and philosophy of care into practice.

Collaboration

(3) The licensee shall ensure that the mission statement is developed, and revised as necessary, in collaboration with the Residents' Council and the Family Council, if any, and shall invite the staff of the long-term care home and volunteers to participate. 2021, c. 39, s. 4 (3).

The administration in the home is responsible for working together with the Residents' Council, Family Council and any team members or volunteers who

wish to participate in the development or revision of the home's mission statement.

Updating

(4) At least once every five years after a mission statement is developed, the licensee shall consult with the Residents' Council and the Family Council, if any, as to whether revisions are required, and shall invite the staff of the long-term care home and volunteers to participate. 2021, c.39, s. 4 (4).

Every five years, the administration of your long-term care home is responsible for re-examining the current mission statement to determine if revisions are needed. In doing so, the administration must engage in discussion with, and seek the advice of the Residents' Council and Family Council, as well as any team members, volunteers or other stakeholders who wish to contribute. The administration is also responsible for extending an invitation to these people to participate in this collaborative process.

PART IV: COUNCILS

Residents' Council

(Sections 62-64 are displayed chronologically in the FLTCA under PART V, COUNCILS.)

62. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that a Residents' Council is established in the home. 2021, c. 39, s. 62 (1).

Only residents

(2) Only residents of the long-term care home may be members of the Residents' Council. 2021, c. 39, s. 62 (2).

Licensee duty to meet with Council

69. If invited by the Residents' Council or the Family Council, the licensee shall meet with that Council or, if the licensee is a corporation, ensure that representatives of the licensee meet with that Council. 2021, c. 39, s. 69.

Attendance at meetings – licensees, staff, etc.

69. A licensee of a long-term care home shall attend a meeting of the Residents' Council or the Family Council only if invited, and shall ensure that the staff, including the Administrator, and other persons involved in the management or operation of the home attend a meeting of either Council only if invited. 2021, c. 39, s. 69.

- The licensee, usually through their designate (the home's Administrator), must ensure that they, or any other manager/team member, do **not** attend a Residents' Council meeting unless invited. Residents' Council meetings are for **residents only.** Any other person must not attend the Council meeting unless invited. This is to ensure residents can meet privately to discuss any of their experiences as a resident, in a safe, secure environment among their peers.
- All Council members need to be in agreement with a guest being invited to a meeting. Guests may be invited to attend a meeting for a specific purpose and then asked to leave while the Council continues their business, or guests may be invited to attend a meeting for a specific purpose and then permitted to stay for the duration of the meeting. Council members make this decision **prior** to extending the invitation.

Powers of Residents' Council

63. (1) A Residents' Council of a long-term care home has the power to do the following:

1. Advise residents respecting their rights and obligations under this Act.

   Council members/residents have the right to ask for and understand their rights and obligations under the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021.*

2. Advise residents respecting the rights and obligations of the licensee under this Act and under any agreement relating to the home.

   Council members/residents have the right to ask for and understand the rights and obligations of the licensee/owner under the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021,* and any other agreement relating to the home, such as the agreement the home has with their local health integration network.

3. Attempt to resolve disputes between the licensee and residents.

   Council members have the right to use their collective voice to attempt to resolve an issue between the home administration and a resident or residents.

4. Sponsor and plan activities for residents.

   Council members have the right to plan activities for residents and, if there is a cost involved, Council will use its Residents' Council funds to pay for the activity.

5. Collaborate with community groups and volunteers concerning activities for residents.

   Council members have the right to work together with community groups and volunteers on activities of interest to residents and make their own arrangements.

6. Advise the licensee of any concerns or recommendations the Council has about the operation of the homes.

   Council has the right to advise the owner/administrator of any concerns or recommendations they have about the operation of their home.

7. Provide advice and recommendations to the licensee regarding what the residents would like to see done to improve care or the quality of life in the home.

   Council has the right to provide advice or recommendations to the owner/administrator regarding what the residents would like to see done to improve care or the quality of life in their home.

8. Report to the Director any concerns and recommendations that in the Council's opinion ought to be brought to the Director's attention.

   Council has the right to report directly to the Director of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Performance Compliance and Improvement

Branch any concerns and recommendations that the Council believes should be brought to the Director's attention.

9. Review,

   i. inspection reports and summaries received under sections 152,

      A copy of all inspection reports issued by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Performance Compliance and Improvement Branch that concern your home is sent directly to the President of the Residents' Council. These reports are intended to be shared at Residents' Council meetings.

   ii. a written plan for achieving compliance, prepared by the licensee, that the Director has ordered in accordance with clause 155 (1) (b) following a referral under paragraph 4 of subsection 154 (1).

   iii. the detailed allocation, by the licensee, of funding under this Act, the *Local Health System Integration Act, 2006* and the *Connecting Care Act, 2019* and amounts paid by residents,

   iv. the financial statements relating to the home filed with the Director under the regulations or provided to a local health integration network or to the Agency, and,

   v. the operation of the home.

      The Residents' Council has the right to review any of the above reports or statements whenever requested. OARC suggests that Councils extend an invitation to the home Administrator to attend a Council meeting for the purpose of having an open discussion about each document on an annual basis.

10. Exercise any other powers provided for in the regulations. 2021, c. 39, ss. 63 (1), 10.

Detailed allocation

211. For the purpose of subparagraph 9 iii of subsection 63 (1) and subparagraph 7 iii of subsections 66 (1) of the Act, "detailed allocation" means the reconciliation report for a calendar year submitted to the Minister and to the Home and Community Care Support Services and the auditor's report on that reconciliation report.

Council has the right to review the Annual Reconciliation Report submitted to the Minister and to the home's local health and community care services network along with the associated auditor's report. OARC suggests that this take place at the spring/June meeting, as the calendar year for homes to report is March 31st.

Duty to respond

(3) If the Residents' Council has advised the licensee of concerns or recommendations under either paragraph 6 or 8 of subsection (1), the licensee shall, within 10 days of receiving the advice, respond to the Residents' Council in writing. 2021, c. 39, s. 63 (3).
***See Regulation Section Reporting and Complaints

Residents' Council Assistant

64. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall appoint a Residents' Council assistant who is acceptable to that Council to assist the Residents' Council. 2021, c. 39, s. 64 (1).

Residents' Councils have the right to receive help and support from a team member who is **acceptable** to the Council members. Securing this person, who serves as an assistant to the Residents' Council, should be a negotiated process with the home Administrator. It is not appropriate for the Administrator to assign this responsibility to a team member without having first discussed this with the Residents' Council's leadership team.

Duties

(2) In carrying out his or her duties, a Residents' Council assistant shall take instructions from the Residents' Council, ensure confidentiality where requested and report to the Residents' Council. 2021, c. 39, s. 64 (2).

The Residents' Council assistant has a pivotal role in most Council operations. The assistant is effectively working for the Council while in this role, not the long-term care home. This person is not a member of the Council and they are not part of the Council. If it is determined that assistance is required, an acceptable person is secured through negotiations with the Administrator. Duties may include, but are not limited to, assisting with agenda preparation, organizing the meeting space, recording minutes, facilitating discussion, and assisting with elections.

Licensee to co-operate with and assist Councils

68. A licensee shall co-operate with the Residents' Council, the Family Council, the Residents' Council assistant, and the Family Council assistant and shall provide them with such financial and other information and such assistance as is provided for in the regulations. 2021, c. 39, s. 68.

No interference by licensee

70. A licensee of a long-term care home,

(a) shall not interfere with the meetings or operation of the Residents' Council of the Family Council;

(b) shall not prevent a member of the Residents' Council or Family Council from entering the long-term care home to attend a meeting of the Council or to perform any functions as a member of the Council and shall not otherwise hinder, obstruct or interfere with such a member carrying out those functions;

(c) shall not prevent a Residents' Council assistant of a Family Council assistant from entering the long-term care home to carry out his or her duties or otherwise hinder, obstruct or interfere with such an assistant carrying out those duties;

(d) shall ensure that no staff member, including the Administrator or other person involved in the management or operation of the home, does anything that the licensee is forbidden to do under clauses (a) to (c). 2021, c. 39, s. 70.

Immunity – Council members, assistants

72. No action or other proceeding shall be commenced against a member of a Residents' Council or Family Council or a Residents' Council assistant or Family Council assistant for anything done or omitted to be done in good faith in the capacity as a member or an assistant. 2021, c. 39, s. 72.

This clause relates to an action or proceedings against an individual, not the long-term care home (licensee). There will be no action or other proceedings (legal action, for example) against a member of either the Residents' Council or Family Council, nor their respective assistant. If that person, in their capacity as member or assistant, works in good faith in the conduct of his or her duties, no proceeding or action can be taken against that person.

Duty of licensee to consult Councils

73. A licensee has a duty to consult regularly with the Residents' Council, and with the Family Council, if any, and in any case shall consult with them at least every three months. 2021, c. 39, s. 73.

OARC believes that the intent here is to promote regular communication and develop a mutually respectful working relationship between Residents' Council members and the administration. Meeting every three months provides the administration with an opportunity to update the Council on the home's quality improvement work, along with any other items of mutual interest.

Regulations

74 (1). The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations for carrying out the purposes and provisions of this Part. 2021, c. 39, s. 74 (1).

Specific inclusions

(2) Without restricting the generality of subsection (1), the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations,

(a) requiring a licensee to assist in the formation of Residents' Councils and Family Councils, and governing the assistance that the licensee is required to provide those Councils. 2021, c. 39, s. 74 (2).

(b) respecting and governing the duties of Residents' Councils and Family Councils;

(c) defining "detailed allocation" for the purpose of subparagraph 9 iii of subsection 63 (1) and subparagraph 7 iii of subsection 66 (1);

(d) providing for anything that under this Part may or must be provided for in regulations, or that is to be done in compliance with or in accordance with the regulations.

Information for residents, etc.

84. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that,

(a) a package of information that complies with this section is given to every resident and to the substitute decision-maker of the resident, if any, at the time that the resident is admitted;

(b) the package of information is made available to family members of residents and persons of importance to residents;

(c) the package of information is revised as necessary;

(d) any material revisions to the package of information are provided to any person who has received the original package and who is still a resident or substitute decision-maker of a resident; and

(e) the contents of the package and of the revisions are explained to the person receiving them. 2021, c. 39, s. 84 (1)

Contents

(2) The package of information shall include, at a minimum,

(o) information about the Residents' Council, including any information that may be provided by the Residents' Council for inclusion in the package. 2021, c. 39, ss. 84 (2),

Councils have the right to provide information about their home's Residents' Council, so that it can be included in the information package for new residents and their families. For example, the Residents' Council may wish to include a brochure or information sheet.

Posting of information

84. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that the required information is posted in the home, in a conspicuous and easily accessible location in a manner that complies with the requirements, if any, established by the regulations. 2021, c. 39, s. 85 (1).

Communication

(2) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that the required information is communicated, in a manner that complies with any requirements that may be provided for in the regulations, to residents who cannot read the information. 2021, c. 39, s. 85 (2).

OARC views Council meetings as an opportunity to share required information with residents who are unable to read the information.

Required information

(3) The required information for the purposes of subsections (1) and (2) is,

(p) the most recent minutes of the Residents' Council meetings, with the consent of the Residents' Council. 2021, c. 39, ss. 85 (3)

Posting of Residents' Council meeting minutes needs the approval of Council members.

Satisfaction survey

43. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that, unless otherwise directed by the Minister, at least once in every year, a survey is taken of the residents and their families and caregivers to measure their experience with the home and the care, services, programs and goods provided at the home. 2021, c. 39, s. 43 (1).

Action

(2) A licensee shall make every reasonable effort to act on the results of the survey and to improve the long-term care home and the care, services, programs and goods accordingly. 2021, c. 39, s. 43 (2).

Advice

(3) The licensee shall seek the advice of the Residents' Council and the Family Council, if any, in carrying out the survey, and in acting on its results. 2021, c. 39, s. 43 (3).

- Residents' Council members have the right to have input into the development of their home's annual satisfaction survey.
- Residents' Council members have the right to have input into how the survey is carried out in their home.
- Residents' Council members have the right to offer suggestions on how to act upon areas requiring improvement in their home.

Documentation

(4) The licensee shall ensure that,

(a) the results of the survey are documented and made available to the Residents' Council and the Family Council, if any, to seek their advice under subsection (4);

The administration (as designate of licensee) must share the survey results with the Residents' Council members with the intent of receiving their advice on areas requiring improvement.

(b) the actions taken to improve the long-term care home, and the care, services, programs and goods based on the results of the survey are documented and made available to the Residents' Council and the Family Council, if any;

The administration (as designate of licensee) must ensure that any actions the home is undertaking to improve identified areas within the home are documented and shared with Residents' Council.

(c) the document required by clauses (a) and (b) is made available to residents and their families; and

The document produced under (b) is available to any resident and any family member.

(d) the documentation required by clauses (a) and (b) is kept in the long-term care home and made available during an inspection under Part X. 2021, c. 39, s. 43 (4).

The document must be kept by the home and OARC suggests that Residents' Council meeting minutes reflect their involvement in the home's satisfaction survey process in detail.

PART X COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Inspections

Meeting with Councils

148. Where an inspection is required under section 146, the inspector may meet with the Residents' Council or the Family Council, if requested or permitted to do so by the Council. 2021, c. 39, s. 148.

- The inspection referred to in section 146 covers any inspection of the home whether it is intended to investigate a complaint, investigate a critical incident, or carry out a follow-up inspection or an in-depth inspection of the home, known as an RQI (Resident Quality Inspection).
- During an RQI, a Residents' Council representative will always be interviewed.
- A Residents' Council may request an interview with an inspector relating to any of the other reasons for an investigation in the home.

Inspection report

152. (1) After completing an inspection, an inspector shall prepare an inspection report and give a copy of the report to the licensee and to the Residents' Council and the Family Council, if any. 2021, c. 39, s. 152 (1).

A Residents' Council President will receive a summary of the inspection report directly from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. It is expected that this report be shared with Council members and discussed at a Council meeting.

Ontario Regulation 246/22

Communication methods

47. Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that strategies are developed and implemented to meet the needs of residents with compromised communication and verbalization skills, of residents with cognitive impairment and of residents who cannot communicate in the language or languages used in the home. O. Reg. 246/22, s. 47.

> The administration (as designate of licensee) must develop alternative ways to communicate with residents who have difficulty communicating. Alternative methods need to be developed and implemented to ensure there are ways to communicate with all residents, e.g., Residents' Bill of Rights produced by the Aphasia Institute.

Menu planning

77. (2) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that, prior to being in effect, each menu cycle,

(a)is reviewed by the Residents' Council for the home;

> The Residents' Council is aware of the home's menu cycle and has a committee in place to review menus being introduced prior to each cycle.

Dining and snack service

77. (7) The licensee shall ensure that meals and snacks are served at times agree upon by the Residents' Council and the Administrator or the Administrator's designate. O. Reg. 246/22, s.390 (1)

- The Residents' Council has the right to review the dining room service, including choices available, as well as meal times.
- The Residents' Council has the right to review the snack service, including choices available, as well as the snack times.

Recreational and social activities program

71. (2) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that the program includes,

(d) opportunities for resident and family input into the development and scheduling of recreation and social activities. O. Reg. 246/22, s. 71 (2).

- The Residents' Council has the right to provide input in the choices of activities.
- The Residents' Council has the right to provide input relating to the scheduling of activities.
- See 63 (1) 4. Powers of a Residents' Council for related information.

REPORTING AND COMPLAINTS

The following legislation outlines the expectations for the general complaint process in the home. Note that this complaint process is separate from the one that exists for Residents' Councils.

Dealing with complaints

108. (1) Every licensee shall ensure that every written or verbal complaint made to the licensee or a staff member concerning the care of a resident or operation of the home is dealt with as follows:

1. The complaint shall be investigated and resolved where possible, and a response that complies with paragraph 3 provided within 10 business days of the receipt of the complaint, and where the complaint alleges harm or risk of harm to one or more residents, the investigation shall be commenced immediately.

   All complaints, verbal or written, by an individual or a Residents' Council, should be investigated by the management of the home and resolved as quickly as possible.

2. For those complaints that cannot be investigated and resolved within 10 business days, an acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint shall be provided within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint including the date by which the complainant can reasonably expect a resolution, and a follow-up response that complies with paragraph 3 shall be provided as soon as possible in the circumstances.

Given that it may not be possible to investigate and resolve some complaints within 10 business days, management must acknowledge receipt of the complaint, communicate their plan to pursue the investigation, and provide the complainant with a schedule for resolving the issue.

3. The response provided to a person who made the complaint shall include,

ii. An explanation of,

A. what the licensee has done to resolve the complaint, or

B. that the licensee believes the complaint to be unfounded and the reasons for the belief. O. Reg. 79/10, s. 101 (1).

The complainant, whether an individual or the Council, has the right to receive a report detailing what has been done to resolve the complaint. If the licensee considers the complaint to be unfounded, they must provide an explanation as to why.

(2) The licensee shall ensure that a documented record is kept in the home that includes,

(a) the nature of each verbal or written complaint;

(b) the date the complaint was received;

(c) the type of action taken to resolve the complaint, including the date of the action, time frames for actions to be taken and any follow-up action required;

(d) the final resolution, if any;

(e) every date on which any response was provided to the complainant and a description of the response; and

(f) any response made in turn by the complainant. O. Reg. 246/22, s. 108 (3 ss. 2).

The licensee, through their designate, must keep a detailed record of the complaint. OARC suggests if Council is making the complaint, they also keep a detailed record of the complaint and all investigation correspondence for review at a Council meeting. Complaints and concerns brought forward by the Council to the administration can be effectively tracked using the OARC Meeting Minutes Template under the "Concern Response Review" section.

(3) The licensee shall ensure that,

(a) the documented record is reviewed and analysed for trends at least quarterly;

(b) the results of the review and analysis are taken into account in determining what improvements are required in the home; and

(c) a written record is kept of each review and of the improvements made in response. O. Reg. 246/22, s. 108 (3 ss.3).

Continuous Quality Improvement

166. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall establish a continuous quality improvement committee.

(2) The continuous quality improvement committee shall be composed of at least the following persons:

9. One member of the home's Residents' Council.

168. (1) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall prepare a report on the continuous quality improvement initiative for the home for each fiscal year no later

than three months after the end of the fiscal year and, subject to section 271, shall publish a copy of each report on its website.

(2) The report required under subsection (1) must contain the following information:

1. The name and position of the designated lead for the continuous quality improvement initiative.

2. A written description of the home's priority areas for quality improvement, objectives, policies, procedures and protocols for the continuous quality improvement initiative for the next fiscal year.

3. A written description of the process used to identify the home's priority areas for quality improvement for the next fiscal year and how the home's priority areas for quality improvement for the next fiscal year are based on the recommendations of the home's continuous quality improvement committee.

4. A written description of a process to monitor and measure progress, identify and implement adjustments, and communicate outcomes for the home's priority areas for quality improvement in the next fiscal year.

5. A written record of,
   i. the date the survey required under section 43 of the Act was taken during the fiscal year,
   ii. the results of the survey taken during the fiscal year under section 43 of the Act, and
   iii. how, and the dates when, the results of the survey taken during the fiscal year under section 43 of the Act were communicated to the residents and their families, Residents' Council, Family Council, if any, and members of the staff of the home.

6. A written record of,
   i. the actions taken to improve the long-term care home, and the care, services, programs and goods based on the documentation of the results of the survey taken during the fiscal year under clause 43 (5) (b) of the Act, the dates the actions were implemented and the outcomes of the actions,
   ii. any other actions taken to improve the accommodation, care, services, programs, and goods provided to the residents in the home's priority areas for quality improvement during the fiscal year, the dates the actions were implemented and the outcomes of the actions,
   iii. the role of the Residents' Council and Family Council, if any, in actions taken under subparagraphs i and ii,

iv. the role of the continuous quality improvement committee in actions taken under subparagraphs i and ii, and

v. how, and the dates when, the actions taken under subparagraphs i and ii were communicated to residents and their families, the Residents' Council, Family Council, if any, and members of the staff of the home.

(3) The licensee shall ensure that a copy of the report is provided to the Residents' Council and Family Council, if any.

Every home must develop a continuous quality improvement plan and representative of the Residents' Council must be on the Quality Committee. Every Residents' Council has the right to know which areas their home is focusing on. OARC suggests that the Resident Representative share the details and progress of the quality improvement plan as part of their report to Council every three months. This could be a time for celebration by inviting both the administration and the Council to be present and report.

At The End Of Section Two, Consider Inserting A Copy Of:

- Your home's mission statement.
- Information your Council has created to be included in the information package provided to new residents (brochure or information sheet).
- Your home's most recent satisfaction survey and a summary of the results.
- The summary of your home's most recent inspection report.
- Your home's most recent menu cycle.
- Your home's current complaint resolution policy.

2.4 Cultivating Rich, Collaborative Partnerships

It takes a village, as the saying goes, to create a sustainable culture of mutual respect, understanding and collaboration among residents and other stakeholders within the home and surrounding community. When, residents, families, team members, volunteers, the home's management team, and the external community form meaningful, interdependent partnerships, you may find that these supportive connections help contribute to the success of your Residents' Council in some way. There is an inherent power in partnering; successful alliances create an environment that is enriched by the combined efforts and talents of everyone involved.

The Ingredients of Effective Partnerships

Establishing partnering relationships is important to the effectiveness of your Council. Partnering creates a supportive environment that benefits everyone. Effective partnerships have the following four main ingredients:

1. A clear vision of what each partner wants to accomplish and how they will work together as partners to get there. Partners collaborate and work to reach goals determined by the shared vision.
2. A commitment to specific goals, as well as to the partnership.
3. A plan to accomplish these goals.
4. Clear and respectful communication and boundaries.

Partnerships between Your Council and the External Community

Although the most direct benefits of a Residents' Council are to people living within your home, others in the external community are touched as well. Many homes' Residents' Councils facilitate opportunities for residents to participate in the life of the community at large through their advocacy efforts, as well as social events sponsored by their Residents' Council. Councils have told us that they have:

- Actively advocated for improved transportation within their community.
- Held fundraising events, such as yard sales, bake sales, raffles, 50/50 draws, BBQs and bazaars, to support their chosen community organizations or charities.
- Gathered ball caps, gloves, mitts and magazines for soldiers serving overseas.
- Engaged in intra-generational opportunities.
- Made and donated clothing, knitted blankets, quilts and food baskets to their local community or worship centre, acknowledging those in need of assistance.
- Hosted interactive social activities, such as making crafts with school children in the spirit of multi-generational kinship.
- Engaged in intergenerational programs and opportunities.

Families and friends deeply appreciate the work of Councils in actively welcoming new residents when they move into their new home and in helping make the transition more comfortable and enjoyable. We know of a few Councils that host a welcome dinner or reception for new residents to introduce Resident Council and leadership team members and encourage them to join. Some also show their warm hospitality by greeting new residents with a welcome gift or with a personal visit by a member of the Residents' Council Welcoming Committee.

Residents' Councils continue to play a valuable and influential educational role within the external community. Many Councils enthusiastically counteract assumptions and stereotypes associated with LTC homes by sharing their stories and demonstrating that their home is a place where residents live life to the fullest extent possible, have a meaningful role in their home's affairs, and can continue to be actively engaged in enjoyable interests that nurture the mind, body and spirit.

Partnerships between Your Council and the Management Team

Your home's management team plays a pivotal role in helping your Residents' Council be an effective and necessary part of the home's culture. By showing that they are prepared to work in partnership with residents to make the Council successful in the home, the management team serves as a positive role model to all team members and volunteers.

A management team that recognizes how the home can benefit from an effective Residents' Council and has a genuine desire to support residents who become involved in the work of the Council can strengthen the home's culture of continuous quality improvement (CQI) by considering issues raised at Council meetings and how they could be addressed as quality improvement projects.

> A licensee shall co-operate with the Residents' Council, the Family Council, the Residents' Council assistant and the Family Council assistant and shall provide them with such financial and other information and such assistance as is provided for in the regulations. [2021, c. 39, s. 68]

There are many ways the home's management team can help improve the effectiveness and sustainability of your Residents' Council. Here are just a few to think about.

Regularly Consulting with Your Residents' Council

Your management team is required to develop and maintain processes in your home that measure and improve quality of living. Collectively, these are called the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program, and they must target positive change in accommodation, care, services, programs and goods provided to residents. Your Residents' Council is an invaluable part of the process because:

- the results of the CQI program must be communicated to your Residents' Council; and
- the opportunities for residents to be engaged in their own quality of living experiences through communication between management and the Residents' Council are endless.

> The improvements made to the quality of the accommodation, care, services, programs and goods provided to the residents must be communicated to the Residents' Council, Family Council and the staff of the home on an ongoing basis. [O. Reg. 226/22, s. 168]

To harness residents' lived experiences and to effectively capture their input and recommendations for change, the home's management team must invite a resident from the Council to participate on the Quality Improvement Committee to be apart of the discussions and activities of the home's CQI team, to enrich the conversation, the overall experience and the project outcomes.

The development of your home's mission statement and the review process present another opportunity to work together through collaborative consultation. This activity can happen as often as deemed necessary but must occur at least every five years with the involvement of the Residents' Council, the management team, staff and volunteers.

> The licensee shall ensure that the mission statement is developed, and revised as necessary, in collaboration with the Residents' Council and the Family Council, if any, and shall invite the staff of the long-term care home and volunteers to participate. [2021, c. 39, s. 4 (3)]

The home's administration is required to consult regularly with the Council, at least every three (3) months; however, to maintain a strong and mutually supportive relationship, we encourage Administrators to communicate more often. When the channels of communications are freely open and the relationship between the Council and the management team is robust, it tends to make it easier to work together.

> A licensee has a duty to consult regularly with the Residents' Council, and with the Family Council, if any, and in any case shall consult with them at least every three months. [2021, c. 39, s. 73]

Some Councils choose to invite their home's management team to their monthly meeting and some invite department managers and staff to come and talk about their role and the services they provide. This gives residents an opportunity to ask questions directly and have their questions answered right away. In the spirit of transparency and sharing, management teams and Residents' Councils have had good success in coming together to share new ideas. When respective experiences, preferences and challenges are understood by all, cooperation seems natural and issues can be resolved before they worsen.

Addressing Issues in a Timely Manner

Your Residents' Council provides a wonderful opportunity to have a mutually supportive relationship with the home's management team in efforts to improve the quality of care and services to residents in your home. When members raise concerns, complaints or recommendations, we would encourage the Council and the home's management team to work collaboratively to address the issues whenever possible. They should consider the benefits of working outside the "organizational chart" and partnering with all team members to discover solutions through conversations with them.

The home's management team is required to investigate and respond to the Residents' Council in writing within ten (10) calendar days of receiving a concern, complaint or recommendation. If the situation cannot be investigated and resolved within that timeframe, the home's management team needs to inform the Council in writing within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the concern, complaint or recommendation, indicating they are aware of the issue and detailing the plan or next steps involved, in an attempt to work towards a resolution. Then give a date before the next scheduled Residents' Council meeting as to when the Council can expect a resolution and follow-up response. A written response from the management team, along with any further updates, will be shared at the next Residents' Council Meeting. Both parties are working proactively in "good faith," to deal with the issue together.

Rewriting Policies and Practices

The home's management team may consider inviting residents and team members to provide insights (based on their lived experiences) into the home/organization's policies and practises to identify possible revisions that promote inclusiveness and the ability of each person to be involved in their internal and external community. Supportive policies can help to remove physical and social barriers.

Culture Change and Enabling Practices

The home's management team has the power to inspire change in the culture of the residents' home. It is helpful to have a vision for what the desired change could look like and to share that vision with everyone. Effective and lasting change is more likely when it is understood by all and supported across the home. Often it is the small changes in thinking, practices and in the environment that have the biggest impact on people; however, change may be difficult if team members are not encouraged to be part of the process, even in the smallest of ways.

- One example of enabling team members that is worth thinking about is for the home's management team to make allowances for the Residents' Council assistant to have his or her regular duties covered by a colleague while they are directly supporting Residents' Council activities and meetings. This strategy will encourage the Residents' Council assistant to be fully engaged with the Council, not preoccupied by the typical duties of a regular day.

- Another enabling initiative is to encourage team members to put the person before the task by asking residents, "What does a good day look like for you?" By adopting a person-centred approach, team members can then look at how they can partner with the resident to make it a reality. Team members who strive to be more resident- or person-centred should be acknowledged or recognized wherever possible to reinforce (and standardize) these practises. .

"By pursuing what is right for the collective, others are motivated to take deep personal risks and follow their leaders' direction because the leader believes in the vision."

- Robert E. Quinn

OARC suggests regular meetings occur between the Council's leadership team members and the home's management team in order to strengthen their relationship.

Some management teams have supported the work of the Residents' Councils by ensuring that:

- Residents' Councils are engaged in the process of developing a Residents' Council brochure for their moving-in package (also known as their admission package).
- When moving in, residents have an opportunity to learn about their Residents' Council, either through written materials provided by the Council or when they are welcomed by a Residents' Council Welcoming Subcommittee member.
- There is a communication system in place to notify the Residents' Council leadership team when a new resident is expected to move into the home. This allows resident leaders to be proactive in the provision of peer support and other welcoming initiatives for new residents during their transition to long-term care
- When moving in, residents are encouraged (and assisted) to attend Residents' Council meetings to actively participate in activities/social events in accordance with the resident's preferences.
- During orientation, all team members, students, volunteers and other stakeholders working within the home have the opportunity to learn about resident rights and the Residents' Council's role and contributions to their home and to the external community. The home's supportive culture towards the Residents' Council should also be clearly communicated during the orientation process.
- If a resident is nominated to join OARC's provincial Board of Directors, assistance is offered to them so they may fully and effectively participate in their role; for example, by dedicating a suitable space in the home for an OARC Board member to carry out the work of the Board or by arranging for a care partner to accompany a Board member to an off-site OARC meeting so they can offer personal assistance to the resident as required.
- Private space (preferably behind closed doors), with minimal noise and distractions, is arranged for Council meetings.
- Residents' Council assistants are allocated protected time to provide assistance to the Council, as required.
- Efforts are made to provide additional coverage for team members and volunteers to help residents arrive at Council meetings on time.

- Residents receive physical assistance, as required, to be able to get to and from meetings and to participate fully in Council activities.
- Those serving on the Council Executive/leadership team are publicly recognized and their contributions celebrated.
- The Council has the opportunity to collaboratively develop, and revise as necessary, the home's mission statement along with team members, families, volunteers and other stakeholders
- Legally required information, such as the most recent minutes of the Residents' Council meetings (with the consent of the Council), is posted in the home in a visible and easily accessible location.
- The home's management, team members and other guests only attend Council meetings when invited.
- Council members are told about suggested changes in their home's/organization's policies and have opportunities to share their thoughts, ideas, concerns and recommendations before changes that affect them are made.
- The Council's recommendations are given serious consideration and acted upon whenever possible. The home's Administrator must provide written acknowledgement of the recommendation (or other question/concern presented by Council) within 10 calendar days.
- Financial support is provided for Council activities, if necessary.

Approaches we use to work with our home's management team and other team members in order to identify and resolve issues include the following:

- establishing good communications with them;
- letting them know that we are trying to work together as a team for the better interest of the residents;
- showing them that we are able to help where necessary;
- being open to what they say; and
- providing them with an explanation of what residents are requesting.

A member of the management team

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." - John Quincy Adams

Partnerships between Your Council and the Residents' Council Assistant

Your home is required to appoint a Residents' Council assistant who is acceptable to the Residents' Council to assist the Council as requested or required.

The Residents' Council assistant is an invaluable enabler of your Council. As such, the Residents' Council assistant:

- takes instructions only from the Council in carrying out their responsibilities and reports directly to them;
- recognizes the fine balance between "helping" and "doing for" the Council;
- respects the autonomous decision-making process of the Council;
- advises your Council about their provincial association, OARC;
- educates Council members of their rights under the FLTCA;
- helps build and sustain a supportive environment in the home by promoting the importance of the Residents' Council across all disciplines;
- offers support and assistance, as required, in the implementation of Council decisions; and
- empowers members so their Council can perform as effectively and independently as possible.

Every licensee of a long-term care home shall appoint a Residents' Council assistant who is acceptable to that Council to assist the Residents' Council. [2021, c. 39, s. 64 (1)]

In carrying out his or her duties, a Residents' Council assistant shall take instructions from the Residents' Council, ensure confidentiality where requested and report to the Residents' Council.
[2021, c. 39, s. 64 (2)]

We advise Councils to take the time necessary to wisely select their Residents' Council assistant and determine if the person is willing and able to effectively respond to the Council's needs.

Can you think of the qualities you would like your Residents' Council assistant to have so they are able to successfully support your Council? Ask yourself, "Is this person…"

- Supportive of Residents' Council?
- Able to see the Council as a valuable part of improving quality in the home?
- Able to maintain confidentiality regarding the Council's affairs?
- Considerate and respectful?
- Collaborative?
- Resourceful?
- Trustworthy?
- Responsive?
- Positive and encouraging?
- Reliable?

Ask yourself, "Will this person…"

- Be willing to assist the Council to achieve its maximum level of independence?
- Resist the temptation to take over by recognizing the difference between supporting and educating the Council as opposed to "doing" for the Council?
- Resist the temptation to impose their ideas on members?

Finding a person who is the "right fit" for the Residents' Council assistant role is an important and necessary step. While this individual is typically appointed by the home's Administrator, the selected individual must be acceptable to the Council. OARC recommends that Residents' Councils allocate time to discuss and carefully review the suitability and fit of their assistant on an annual basis. If necessary, Councils can work with the home's Administrator to select a new assistant to support the Council moving forward. The OARC Meeting Minute template prompts Council to consider implementing this annual review as a promising practise.

How Residents' Council Assistants Can Work with Your Council to Provide Support

Sometimes the Residents' Council may not want or require assistance, but when it is needed, your Residents' Council assistant can provide support by:

- asking the Council how they can be of assistance;
- offering to help members develop the skills necessary for the Council to run effective meetings;
- helping with booking private meeting rooms;
- notifying the home's Environmental Services team of upcoming meetings and request assistance with room set up (including tables, chairs and microphone);
- working with the Council's leadership team to plan the agenda;
- offering to assist the Secretary or other resident leader(s) with recording, preparing and circulating the minutes;
- offering to help with projects the Council may wish to undertake;
- helping to prepare the Residents' Council Bylaws documents for the Council structure and continuity;
- helping to develop and execute the election process; and
- helping the Council understand when a condition is mandated by legislation and when a condition is expected under the home or organization's policy.

A licensee of a long-term care home shall not prevent a member of the Residents' Council or Family Council from entering the long-term care home to attend a meeting of the Council or to perform any functions as a member of the Council and shall not otherwise hinder, obstruct or interfere with such a member carrying out those functions. [2021, c. 39, s. 71(c)]

Reflect on the partnership between your Council and your Residents' Council assistant. Then, ask yourself…

- In addition to the above-noted acts of service, what other things do you find helpful?
- Can you think of other ways that your Residents' Council assistant can better support your Council in the future?

Some Ways Residents' Council Assistants Can Support Council Meetings

Before a meeting, consider:

- consulting with the Council to choose a suitable meeting space;
- encouraging residents to raise discussion items to be added to the agenda;
- posting the meeting agenda and reminder notices on bulletin boards, social calendars, in-room flyers, in newsletters and in any other communications at least two weeks prior to the meeting;
- reminding residents of the upcoming Council meeting on the day of the meeting; and
- partnering with resident leaders, team members and volunteers to verbally remind residents of the upcoming meeting and to encourage them to attend.

During a meeting, consider:

- offering to serve as timekeeper to help the meeting stay on schedule;
- encouraging the Learning Circle model of sharing;
- offering to support the democratic process by making sure members have an equal opportunity to contribute to discussions and to have their ideas and viewpoints considered in the course of making decisions; and
- offering any other support as requested by the Council.
- helping to ensure meeting accessibility for all participants (see sections 3.4 and 3.5 for more information)

After a meeting, consider:

- assisting the Secretary with preparing and posting the minutes, for approval (the minutes must be approved by a member of the Residents' Council leadership team prior to posting);
- informing the home's management and team members of Council decisions and the reasoning behind them, if directed to do so by Council; and
- assisting in following-up with the home's management team concerning Council issues, if requested by the Council.

Our Residents' Council Assistant supports our Council by assisting with:

- banking, if Council members are unable to do so;
- record keeping and taking minutes;
- setting up spaces where residents can meet and have privacy;
- creating an open culture within the home;
- forming policies and procedures; and
- educating residents about the Residents' Council.

A resident

Partnerships between Your Council, Volunteers and Team Members

All team members and volunteers, no matter their position within the home or what their duties are, are welcome to offer assistance to help the Residents' Council effectively achieve its goals. Assistance can come in many forms.

How Team Members and Volunteers Can Work with Your Council to Provide Support

- Act as champions for the Council by reminding residents of upcoming meetings and encouraging residents to get involved in Council activities.
- Learn more about the responsibilities and functions of the Residents' Council.
- Promote and support Residents' Council's projects, fundraisers and events.

- Publicize the Council's meetings, activities and accomplishments; for example, on the monthly Activity Schedule.
- Help residents receive assistance, if needed, to get to meetings and activities on time and to their home area afterwards.
- Remaining flexible and person-centred by offering to reschedule activities of daily living (ADLs), such as baths, to allow residents the opportunity to attend Council meetings or other preferred activities.
- Accompany OARC Board members to Board meetings, or arrange for a care partner to do so, with the intent of supporting their needs.

"Happiness is an attitude. We either make ourselves miserable, or happy and strong. The amount of work is the same."

- Francesca Reigler

Partnerships between Your Residents' Council & Family Council

Some Residents' Councils have an evolving partnership with their home's Family Council and some do not. OARC advocates for positive and cooperative relations between the Residents' Council and Family Council but advises to not merge the two Councils. Only family members must have membership within their Family Council, and only residents must have membership within your Residents' Council. The intent of the law that governs this is to provide a safe, non-threatening peer meeting so that concerns can be openly shared and reviewed from the same perspective.

> Our Residents' Council and Family Council didn't have a partnership a year ago. Over time, we have come up with opportunities for us to work together. For example, now the Presidents of both Councils meet on a regular basis to share information. Both also meet with our home's management team to problem-solve issues. It's been working really well.
>
> *A Residents' Council Assistant*

As a Council, consider brainstorming specific ways that Residents' Councils and Family Councils can coordinate efforts in reaching mutual goals. It may also be helpful to identify communication strategies in order to meet and collaborate in between respective Council meetings, through informal discussions or through a more structured subcommittee.

2.5 Common Residents' Council Structures

There are various models to consider for your Council's structure.

Before we discuss three classic examples, it is important for us to reiterate that there is no right or wrong way to organize your Council and your leadership team does not have to be structured in a traditionally formal way with conventional titles. Your Council may decide on a completely different structure from those discussed in this resource guide, or perhaps a decision is made to adopt certain elements of different models that better meet the needs of your home's residents. We recognize that some Councils can be small and informal and meet occasionally, whereas others can be larger, more formal, and may meet more often. Regardless, it is important to choose a structure that is best suited to your situation and one that will help your Council to be most effective.

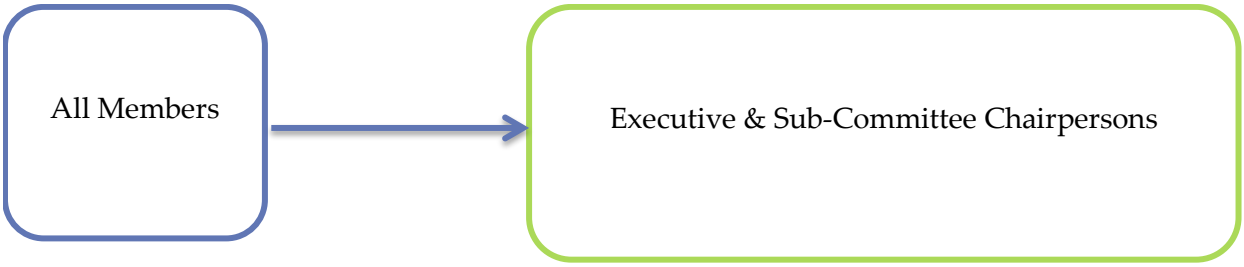
Whatever model is preferred, it is important that it be flexible enough to change if residents' needs can be better met by trying a different way of structuring your Council. Once approved, any update or changes to the Council structure s should be captured in your Residents' Council Bylaws document.

Structures to Consider

Reflect on the following models and decide if any of these might work for your Council:

Option A: Town Meeting Model

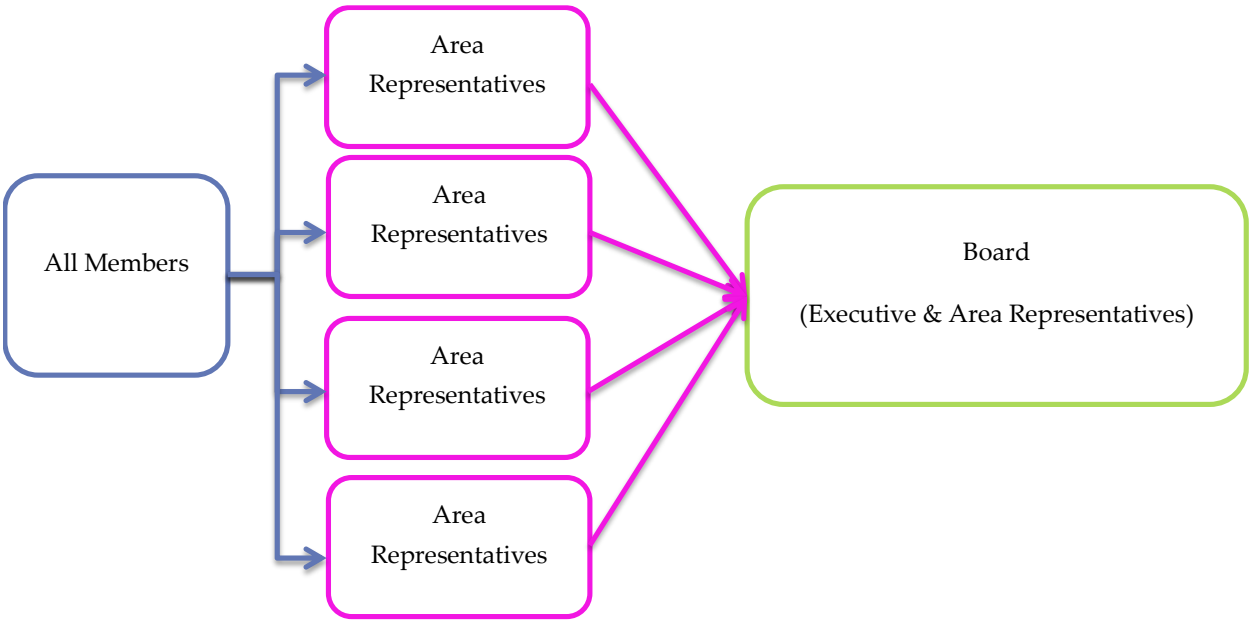
- Tends to be effective in smaller homes.
- All residents are invited to attend and participate in all meetings.



Option B: Representative or Board of Directors Model

- Elected or recruited resident Representatives from various areas of the home represent all residents who live on every home area or floor at Council meetings.
- These "Home Area Representatives," together with the Residents' Council Executive, form the Council's Board of Directors, a type of leadership team which represents the entire home.
- Tends to be effective in larger homes.
- This model requires the Council to have a process for involving all residents. Many homes choose to have regularly scheduled sub-council meetings on each floor or residential area to connect and support each other, discuss issues, convey information, and share ideas.

- The Home Area Representative chairs their area's sub-council meetings and then takes the concerns and ideas of the residents to the larger Residents' Council meeting and reports back to the residents they represent about Council activities and decisions.
- The Residents' Council may call special meetings where all residents are encouraged to attend and participate.



Option C: Blended Model

- A made-to-order structure that falls somewhere in between the Representative/Board of Directors model and the open Town Meeting model.

Note: The structure of a Residents' Council is determined by the group and the decisions are written in the Council's Bylaws document and adopted by all members. See "Developing Your Residents' Council Bylaws" on page 79.

Subcommittees of the Residents' Council

Much of the work of a Residents' Council is better served through the work of smaller subcommittees of residents. Each subcommittee has a dedicated purpose and may have an elected or nominated Subcommittee Chairperson. For example, a subcommittee may be formed to plan events or assist residents who have recently moved into their new home.

Features of a Residents' Council Subcommittee

- Typically, several residents, often less than ten people, serve on a subcommittee.
- Subcommittee membership can be opened up to interested residents who are not on the Residents' Council leadership team.
- The subcommittee meets regularly to discuss ideas and concerns related to their focus and to work with the appropriate members of the home's management team to resolve issues. These meetings could involve the Residents' Council assistant, if desired.
- The subcommittee may communicate progress or updates related to their activities/initiatives by providing a Committee report at the general Residents' Council meeting, or through other desired avenues such as newsletter articles, posters or by or posting subcommittee meeting minutes (if applicable).

Benefits of a Subcommittee

Regardless of what structure a Council chooses to model itself after, the group can benefit from establishing a few subcommittees which will be able to:

- Help explore issues and focus efforts on a particular topic/area that the Council as a whole might otherwise not be able to properly consider.
- Foster a safe gathering place for exchanging ideas and having in-depth discussions of issues and potential solutions.
- Provide opportunities for residents not on their Council's leadership team to display leadership as Chair of a Council subcommittee.
- Help strengthen relationships and partnerships among members as a result of working towards common goals.

A sub-committee should exist only so long as it serves a purpose.

- Present new opportunities to involve residents with the added mutual benefit of using and developing members' skills. On the one hand, subcommittees help increase residents' participation while benefiting from their collective wisdom and skills. On the other hand, members who serve on subcommittees are likely to develop skills and gain knowledge of issues which they may not otherwise get.

Some subcommittees are temporary, formed to carry out a specific project with an expected end date. When that project is over, the subcommittee is disbanded. Additionally, some subcommittees are ongoing. Councils can form new subcommittees as needed and dispense with others when their work is completed.

Consider all residents as potential candidates when choosing subcommittee members. Residents who have been reluctant to participate in the Council or take on a leadership role may be interested in serving on a subcommittee instead. Subcommittees may have special appeal because they are small and focus on a specific subject.

"Cooperation is the thorough conviction that nobody can get there unless everybody gets there."

- Virginia Burden

Common Subcommittees Formed by Residents' Councils

Welcoming Subcommittee	• Welcomes new residents when they move into the home. • Introduces new residents to others and offers to take them on a tour of the home. • Explains the purpose of the Residents' Council and invites new residents to attend the next meeting. • Encourages new residents to participate in activities/life at the home. • Promotes peer-to-peer support during the initial transition to long-term care.
Food/Dietary Subcommittee	• Works with other residents and dietary managers/team members on menu selection. • Meets with the dietician to discuss nutrition, healthy food choices, and other areas of interest. • Surveys residents on their food preferences. • Acts as taste testers when a menu or product/supplier change is planned. • Meets with residents to hear complaints and suggestions.
Program and Activities Subcommittee	• Reviews and evaluates programs. • Suggests new ideas or assists with planning and hosting special events and social gatherings. • Works with team members to plan/develop recreational programs.
Sunshine Subcommittee	• Recognizes resident and team member birthdays and other milestones/special occasions. • Helps with the home's newsletter or Residents' Council website (if applicable). • Keeps residents advised about the activities of the Council. • Keeps track of residents who are ill or hospitalized. • Supports residents who may not have much family support. • Attends funerals and gives support to family members.
Other Subcommittees	• Quality Improvement Committee • Grievance or Advocacy Subcommittee • Pastoral Care or Spiritual Subcommittee • Residents' Rights Subcommittee • Volunteer Service Subcommittee • Program Planning/Fundraising Subcommittee

- Palliative Care Subcommittee

2.6 Residents' Council Assistant's Learning Needs Self-Assessment

This is meant to be a quick self-assessment for staff working with their Residents' Council. It is intended to help you define your own capabilities and learning needs. You may find it helpful to photocopy this page so that you can continue to use this checklist when you reassess your learning needs. Consider using this tool to reflect on your strengths and on which skills you believe could be improved.

Below is a list of common tasks performed by Residents' Council assistant. Ask yourself what you already know how to do, what might take a refresher or skills update, and what you would have to learn how to do. Indicate if the task is not applicable. You can also add tasks to this list, based on the needs of your Residents' Council.

The Task	**Can Do This Now**	**Need Refresher on How to…**	**Need to Learn How to…**	**Not Applicable**
Help to organize meetings				
Secretarial or administrative duties				
Bookkeeping				
Help maintain democratic meetings				
Publicize and promote Council meetings and events				
Use and promote the Learning Circle model of sharing				
Coach others				
Inform residents of their rights and powers under the LTCHA				
Obtain answers to questions				
Implement Council decisions				
Help with nominations/elections				
Assist with special events				
Assist with fundraising				

Uphold, review & understand residents' rights				

Self-Reflection Checklist

We encourage Residents' Council assistants to routinely practice self-examination in order to identify new opportunities to effectively support the Residents' Council. As Council members change, so does your work. The questions in this checklist will help you reflect on your ability to effectively support the Council. Ask yourself:

- What do I need to do to…?
- How can I best support the Council to...?

- What information and knowledge do I need?
- What assistance or support do I need?
- What resources can help me?
- Is this the best way to accomplish…?
- What obstacles might block the achievement of…?
- How will I know if I…?

Asking for Feedback

Seeking feedback is a wonderful way to discover how others perceive us and our capabilities. We encourage you to obtain feedback from your Residents' Council leadership team, which will likely provide you with greater awareness of your strengths and opportunities for learning. Consider asking, "Is there anything else I can help you with?"

Consider making a list of questions you want to ask the Council. You may want to get feedback on how you can better assist the Council with particular elements of their work. Strive to use their feedback to help develop your learning goals.

Questions you may choose to ask the Council's leadership team include the following:

- What do you think I do well?
- Can you give me an example of how I effectively help the Council?
- Can you give me an example of what areas I need to improve?

You may want to ask your supervisor to include this self-assessment in your human resources file as one component of your professional development plan.

2.7 Qualities of an Effective Residents' Council

It takes many dedicated people working harmoniously together for a Residents' Council to thrive. Bearing in mind that each home is unique as are the residents living there, an effective Council strives to reflect and meet the needs of the residents it serves. Your Council's strengths and successes are maximized when your home's management team:

- values a two-way relationship of cooperation and support;
- understands how to draw on the collective wisdom and value of your Council meetings;
- is available to help your Council overcome any difficulties; and
- is willing to make positive changes within your home, based on what is brought forward from your Residents' Council.

Residents' Councils may be considered effective by the extent to which they achieve the goals they establish for themselves.

Common Characteristics

Ask yourself if your Council possesses these desirable qualities:

- The Council strives to be inclusive and representative of all residents.
- The Council promotes a sense of belonging and a safe gathering place where residents can inspire and support each other.
- The Council sparks residents' curiosity and interest.
- All residents are informed about the Council, its accomplishments and successes, and are encouraged to attend meetings
- All residents are invited to participate in the Council either through their attendance at the meetings or through opportunities to express themselves to their Home Area Representatives.

- Ideas, suggestions and concerns are conveyed to the home's management team in the spirit of problem-solving together.
- The Council strives to build and promote relationships with all residents, staff and volunteers.

2.8 Establishing Your Residents' Council

Things to Think About When Establishing Your Council

Prior to starting a Residents' Council, you may want to reflect on factors that might influence your planning. Although the existence of a Residents' Council is legislatively required, your Council should be uniquely suited to the residents who live in your LTC home. Take some time to consider the following.

What Are our Residents' Concerns, Needs and Interests?

Earlier we spoke of how an effective Council reflects and meets the needs of the residents it serves; therefore, you might want to chat with residents to learn more about their concerns, needs and interests. While not all residents may want to be involved in forming or shaping the Council, it is beneficial to ask for their opinions, ideas and feelings about establishing a Residents' Council to ensure their future support. After all, the purpose of a Residents' Council never changes:

- A Residents' Council is "for Residents, by Residents."
- Residents' Councils represent the collective voice of all residents in the home.
- The Residents' Council is a legislated opportunity for residents to come together privately to discuss, share and debate issues of importance to them.

We have found that residents usually want to be involved and stay involved when they notice that their Council is able to work cooperatively with the home's management team to address issues which may affect them.

Who Will Help Us with Planning and Forming our Residents' Council?

A designated Residents' Council assistant can assist residents, if requested, in planning and coordinating the activities required to establish a Residents' Council. To help all residents feel more invested in their new Council, consider involving as many residents as possible in the early stages.

How Can our Council Ensure it Is Inclusive and Representative of All Residents?

The chief ingredients making up your Residents' Council are the individual residents living in your home. Because each person can and does make a valuable difference in the unique ways that they are able to contribute, strive to keep your Council inclusive and representative of all residents. Ask yourself if:

- the agenda or minutes need to be printed in larger text;
- written materials should also be visual, i.e., icons/pictures;
- a microphone will be needed;
- there are sufficient team members or volunteers to help residents get to meetings on time (everyone's responsibility is to "be a friend" and to extend a personal invitation to attend the Residents' Council meetings);
- Council meetings should be more frequent, shorter and have fewer participants in order to increase the involvement of residents with more complex needs; and
- it will be necessary to elect or nominate Home Area Representatives to your leadership team so they can host meetings in specific areas of the home because of a large number of residents who are not able to leave their area.

Many residents live with cognitive changes which may affect their ability to express themselves and participate freely in their Residents' Council meetings. These residents may have issues to discuss and experiences to share but cannot do so independently.

OARC recommends that residents who are cognitively well spend some time with those who live with cognitive changes. By doing so, residents who can participate and speak on behalf of others can do so with increased awareness and empathy. Time can be spent visiting residents in small groups, observing their environment and in one-to-one activities. Speak with your Recreation and Social Activities team members to discover some pleasurable, interesting and engaging ideas to try out as you seek to understand the complexities of your co-residents. Your Residents' Council meetings will be enhanced as residents strive to support co-residents in this way.

How Do We Manage Resistance?

Are you experiencing any resistance or indifference from either residents, home management or team members to the idea of having an actively engaged Residents' Council? It is normal for a person to show some resistance when anticipating or experiencing a change that may affect them. We hope you will feel assured that successfully handling resistance to change is a learned skill that takes time to develop. Patience and perseverance are needed to understand people's reasons for resisting. One approach which has been quite successful involves two steps:

1. Invite the person to express what they are worried about while you actively listen and strive to understand. You may wish to ask:
   a. "Tell me why you feel this way."
   b. "Please help me understand what is bothering you."

2. After the person's apprehensions have been acknowledged, consider asking open-ended questions to prompt them to suggest solutions to their concerns.
   a. "What could we possibly do differently?"
   b. "Would you consider sharing your concerns at a meeting or would you mind if Council members discussed this issue, in order to come up with some possible solutions?"

"It is not enough to be compassionate – you must act."

- His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Planning Stages

> Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that a Residents' Council is established in the home. 2021, c. 39, s. 62 (1).

By law, every home in Ontario must establish a Residents' Council. Formally establishing your Residents' Council can be an exciting and creative pursuit given there is no single recipe. Your Council is unique, so you can expect your journey of planning, generating ideas, and hosting your first meeting to be as well. You might find it helpful to complete each of the four steps below, in consultation with the OARC, and then modify different elements to suit your needs. Over time or with significant changes on the resident leadership team, you might also consider revisiting some of these foundational stages. This will help to refresh or refamiliarize an existing Council with the goals and purpose of a Residents' Council

1. Have a Brainstorming Session to Gather Information and Explore Ideas

Residents typically welcome the idea of having a Residents' Council in their home, but may not know exactly what it is, what is involved in forming or running a Council, or how to actively participate in its activities or meetings. In the early stages of structuring a Council, you may wish to provide these details to all residents, staff, volunteers and the home's management team to support a culture of shared understanding. Here are some suggestions.

- Call a meeting and invite residents, the home's management, team members, families and volunteers interested in helping to form a Residents' Council to attend.
- Discuss what a Residents' Council is, how it works, what the Council does, and the reason Residents' Councils were legislated.
- Discuss the value of a Residents' Council and collectively explore the diverse benefits for staff, residents, families, the external community and your home.
- Discuss roles and work together to brainstorm agreed upon responsibilities of the home's management, team members and Council members by using this guide, OARC and the FLTCA as resources.
- Identify potential residents to join the Residents' Council leadership team or subcommittees.

- Plan an exploratory meeting inclusive of all residents to discuss the finer points to developing your Residents' Council.
- Consult Appendix 1 in the back of this guide for further resources.

During a brainstorming session when everyone's thoughts are organically flowing, there are no wrong ideas. Everyone needs to feel welcome to freely voice their perspectives and inspired thoughts without fear of judgement.

2. *Introduce the Idea of a Residents' Council*

Once you feel that you have gathered enough information from your brainstorming session, it is likely time to invite all residents—and others you would like—to attend a general information session during which the concept of a Residents' Council can be shared and discussed. Presenting the idea of a Residents' Council is an open invitation for residents to become involved and contribute to their home's continuous quality improvement process. You may wish to ask a representative from an established Residents' Council in another home to come and talk about the benefits of forming a Council and to also share their personal experiences with having a Council. Your primary goal at this first meeting is to form a Planning Committee whose purpose it is to lay the groundwork for an effective Residents' Council.

Strategies to Consider in Preparation for your General Meeting:

- Choose an optimal time and comfortable location to gather. Ask to have the tables and chairs arranged to encourage the fullest possible participation.
- A microphone will ensure everyone can follow the discussion.
- Publicize the meeting and the value of a Residents' Council. You may want to speak directly with residents or use other means, such as newsletters, posters and electronic boards. One creative Council places notices in plastic holders on dining tables on the day of the meeting. Consider that residents will need to know *why* the meeting is being held, and *why* they may want to attend.
- Think about how attendees will be made to feel welcome and comfortable.
- Arrange for team members or volunteer support to help residents get to the meeting on time.
- Decide who will take notes to track ideas, suggestions and offers of assistance.
- Decide who will chair or co-chair the general meeting.
- Decide how much time will be required for each item and speaker, and how much time will be protected for questions and discussion so that the meeting is both informative and enjoyable.

3. *Form a Planning Committee*

In general, your Planning Committee typically consists of residents who have expressed a keen interest in collaboratively working together to establish their Residents' Council. If a resident on your Planning Committee has complex needs or particular challenges and requires assistance, arrange to have a team member or a volunteer available to support them so they may be able to fully participate in the process.

Planning Committee members are elected by their peers, volunteer to serve, or simply asked to help. Using a resident strengths-based approach may help you identify potential residents within the home to be part of these planning stages. These residents may emerge as potential leaders to serve on the Residents' Council leadership team once the Council is formalized.

Responsibilities of the Planning Committee

The Planning Committee's purpose is to bring the concept of your Residents' Council to life. Please remember that you have the support of your Residents' Council assistant and your home's management team. Traditionally, the Planning Committee will:

- initially draft a set of rules under which the Council will operate, known as the Bylaws (refer to the OARC Bylaw Template to help guide you through this process);
- find residents who would like to serve on the Council's leadership team;
- propose an initial list of objectives for the Council to work towards achieving; and
- establish essential Council subcommittees, such as a Welcoming or Food/Dietary subcommittee. A list of common subcommittees can be found on page 58.

While this committee needs to have a deadline by which to complete its work and a schedule of milestones, the group will want to work slowly and deliberately to be productive. Bringing an idea to life takes time, teamwork, patience, energy and a variety of talents. It can often take several months for a Planning Committee to complete its work. We would like to suggest connecting with other homes nearby to learn about their experiences with forming a Council and discover what strategies worked for them.

During the Term of the Planning Committee, the group may want to:

- meet often, keeping in mind their schedule and deadline for completing their work;
- share tasks among committee members to distribute the work;
- come together to resolve difficulties and to offer positive encouragement and support;
- keep minutes of meetings and record all decisions and completed tasks;
- regularly report their progress to back to the residents and other stakeholders as desires/appropriate;
- continue promoting the idea of a Residents' Council with residents, team members, volunteers and the home's management team;
- create opportunities to speak directly with residents in order to understand and respond to any concerns they may have;
- brainstorm the qualities desired on the Council's leadership team, which will likely help position the Council to be democratic and effective in serving its members; and
- plan a second general meeting to share and discuss the recommendations of the Planning Committee.

To recruit members, our Council:

- welcomes everyone when they move into the home and provides them with information about the Residents' Council, and on how we can improve their quality of life in their new home;
- creates positive relationships with all residents, and greets everyone with a nice, "good morning," and a genuine smile;
- works with team members to invite residents to join the Council;
- lets residents know that we really care and that we are there for them; and
- promotes friendships and trust within our home.

A resident

4. *Hold Your Residents' Council Founding Meeting*

When the Planning Committee has finished its work, it is time to call a second general meeting where the committee can share its outcomes and discuss its decisions with residents and others who are invited to attend.

We encourage you to give the same attention to organizing this meeting as was given to coordinating the first general meeting where the concept of a Residents' Council was first proposed.

Your Planning Committee may find it helpful to:

- write an agenda for the meeting which includes all topics for discussion and the order in which they will be discussed;
- choose two residents who can temporarily perform the duties of Chairperson and Secretary until the official leadership team is elected;
- prepare written materials that you anticipate will be required in the meeting; for example, if the Bylaws are to be discussed, you will want to make copies of the drafts available for each person attending;
- consider limiting the conversation, if time is limited, to (i) proposing a Council structure, (ii) drafting a list of nominees for the leadership team, and (iii) holding elections; and
- distribute copies of the initial list of objectives for your Council to work towards achieving as well as your draft Constitution and Bylaws so that people can review them before the next scheduled meeting.

Congratulations!!! Your Residents' Council is now formally established with a temporary or newly elected leadership team that is ready to begin their work of developing and growing your Council.

2.9 Establishing Your Residents' Council Leadership Team

Residents' Councils vary in size and formality. Some choose to not use traditional titles on their leadership team, while others have elected to establish a traditional executive structure with officers to handle the general administration of the Council. There are several models a Council can choose to structure its leadership team after.

For ease of reading, this guide will use the term "leadership team" as a broad reference to every type of leadership structure a Council may choose to adopt. Each of the four options listed below are examples of different types of leadership teams. How will your Council choose to configure its leadership team?

Option A: Traditional Executive Structure

Council members may decide to elect an executive team comprised of four distinct positions, known as officers, with specific responsibilities. The most typical positions are:

- a President;
- one or more Vice President (s);
- a Secretary; and
- a Treasurer.

You may find that some residents are reluctant to take on a particular executive role, such as that of President or Treasurer. One creative way to overcome this is to consider having two or three residents share a position, taking turns performing the functions of that role. For example, a Council can choose to have two residents share the role of Treasurer or President.

Option B: Merged Officers Structure

Council members may decide to combine a few of the executive positions. For example, homes may have one person acting as a Secretary-Treasurer who takes on the responsibilities of both roles.

Option C: Shared Leadership Team Structure

Council members may decide to combine all of the four executive positions and collectively be known as the "Residents' Council leadership team," without using traditional titles. This type of team collectively assumes the accountabilities of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Your Council can decide what titles to use (or to not use) based on what you feel would work well.

Sharing the administrative responsibilities across the leadership team is attractive to many people because it:

- promotes a resident strengths-based approach when selecting or identifying potential resident leaders within the home
- encourages the elected leaders of the Council to cooperatively work as a group;
- dilutes the pressure of feeling specialized expertise is required for certain assignments; and
- gives each leadership team member an opportunity to learn and use different skills.

Option D: Board of Directors Structure (Officers plus Home Area Representatives)

The composition of a Board of Directors may be different from home to home and your Council is responsible for recording this position in your Constitution and Bylaws.

Council members may decide to recruit or elect a group of Home Area Representatives to stand for the residents of a particular area in the home at meetings in addition to having a traditional Executive (option A) or a Merged Officers (option B) structure. Collectively, the Officers and the Home Area Representatives are considered a full Board of Directors. Under this model, the Home Area Representatives are not considered part of the formal Executive body of Officers.

In homes that chose a Shared Leadership Team structure (option C) and decide to recruit or elect a group of Home Area Representatives—as a united entity, this group is also called a Board of Directors; however, the difference is that the Home Area Representatives are considered contributing members of the Council's leadership team and share equal responsibility for running the Council.

Qualities You Would Like in Your Leadership Team

We advise residents to take the time necessary to wisely select their leadership team and determine if each person being considered to serve on that team has desirable qualities that will make your Council a safe, secure and comfortable place for all residents to openly share their ideas and concerns.

Can you think of the qualities you would like potential leadership team members to have to help create an inclusive Council where residents can share their thoughts and experiences, and also offer each other comfort and mutual support? Ask yourself, "Is this person…"

- Democratic in nature?
- Approachable and welcoming?
- Calm and not easily flustered?
- Positive and considerate in nature?
- Able to encourage residents to share their thoughts and experiences or to participate in activities and meetings?
- Respectful of the diversity of opinions and abilities?
- A collaborative team player?
- A good listener?
- Trustworthy, reliable, responsible and accountable?
- Willing to ask for help?
- Willing to ask others to do tasks that will help the Council?
- Organized?
- Willing to set aside personal interests in order to achieve a common goal?
- Able to guide conversation and activities but not dominate?
- Accurate with numbers (recommended for treasurer)?

Dismantling the Hierarchy within Your Council's Leadership Team

Creating a Council of equals requires dismantling the traditional hierarchy of roles, representing the collective voice of residents, and sharing various responsibilities across the group. This calls for a collective commitment to do the work required in order to achieve true collaboration and partnership.

At its foundation, nurturing partnerships is about building trusting relationships and mutual respect, which must organically sprout at its own instinctive pace. When achieved, this process—rooted in the overarching principles of democracy—gives your Council much more flexibility in the way the work gets done. When you release your leadership team from functioning within a social hierarchy, people are better able to lead in situations that can leverage everyone's strengths. Your team then becomes the facilitator of your Council's success.

We would like to offer a practical approach to help you dismantle the leadership hierarchy. It is typically based on a profoundly different view of authority: the shared power of synergy rather than power over or top-down control. It involves a style of leadership which recognizes that everyone's experience and opinion matters and seeks to serve its members. This requires self-awareness, a willingness to be vulnerable, and a readiness to engage in configuring the dynamic of your leadership team to a participatory partnership.

Consider the benefits of implementing this particular approach for your Council.

> It's all about the people… about our relationships and how we treat each other as human beings.
>
> *A resident*

A leadership approach of shared synergy is based on four key principles:

1. Working towards inclusion. Members on your leadership team will need to consciously share responsibilities.
2. Placing a high value on practising open, mutually respectful communication. Consider opportunities for your leadership team to learn and practice effective communication skills.
3. Recognizing individual and team efforts. While it is good to recognize individuals, it is also very important to recognize achievements through authentic teamwork.
4. Accepting and encouraging other ways of knowing, learning and contributing. Wisdom comes from many sources. Your leadership team may wish to consider publicly acknowledging and honouring diverse perspectives and opinions as those opportunities arise.

You may find using this approach creates fertile ground for promoting active participation among your leadership team members where they can role model open communication and democratic problem-solving. Members will recognize the cooperative attitude among the leadership team and this will foster a more relaxed atmosphere for all.

The spark of hope for developing a leadership team of equals is kindled in members of the leadership team who recognise the need to make changes to the power dynamic.

When your efforts are combined, you may realize the power expressed in two ancient African proverbs: "When spider webs unite, they can stop a lion." Alternatively, in another African proverb: "If you wish to go faster, go alone, but if you wish to go further, go together."

Roles and Responsibilities of Your Leadership Team

Below is a brief outline of the traditional duties of each member serving on a Council's leadership team, using as an example, a Board of Directors structure that has Officers and several Home Area Representatives. Sometimes, because of the generous assistance available through a Residents' Council assistant, certain titles, such as Secretary or Treasurer, do not necessarily include all of the duties usually assigned to these roles.

Common Responsibilities of the President

- Provides leadership to the Council.
- Generally, represents the collective voice of Council members.
- Democratically chairs Council and subcommittee meetings, including the Annual Meeting (with the exception of elections to avoid unfairness) and ensures all sides are respectfully heard in an organized manner.
- Together with the Secretary, prepares the agenda for meetings.
- Ensures the agenda is followed.
- Encourages all residents to participate in Residents' Council discussions.
- Does not have voting rights except in the case of a tie.
- Following a meeting, mediates with the home's management team and provides follow-up on concerns before the next scheduled meeting.
- Keeps in touch with other leadership team members, the home's management team, and the general membership of the Council.
- Seeks the support of OARC when needed.
- Appoints subcommittees to achieve particular objectives.
- Possible signing authority on the Residents' Council's bank account.
- Acts as ex-officio (non-voting) member of all subcommittees.

Common Responsibilities of the Vice President

- Assumes the duties of the President in his or her absence.
- Performs other duties as assigned by the President.
- Has voting rights.
- Helps to maintain a democratic process during meetings.
- Delegates tasks, as appropriate.
- Has possible signing authority on the Residents' Council's bank account.

Common Responsibilities of the Secretary

- Has voting rights.
- Ensures people are notified of upcoming meetings.
- Keeps written minutes of important details at the meetings and ensures that the approved minutes are posted.
- Verifies that the intent of the Council meeting discussions is accurately captured in the minutes, as well as any questions the Council would like to raise with the home's management team.
- Attends to any correspondence of the Council, such as mail and newsletters.
- Assists the President with preparing the agenda.
- Has possible signing authority on the Residents' Council's bank account.
- Carries out other duties as assigned by the President.

Common Responsibilities of the Treasurer

- Has voting rights.
- Monitors the Council's finances.
- Keeps all Council funds separate from other funds in the home, whether the Council has its own bank account or not.
- Keeps a simple record of Council funds that are raised and spent.
- Reports the financial status of the Council at meetings.
- Has possible signing authority on the Residents' Council's bank account.
- Reports on the Council's finances for the year at annual meetings.

Sometimes it can be difficult to find a Treasurer for the Residents' Council. Some residents may feel that they need to have a lot of experience in bookkeeping when really it is simply a matter of keeping track of what money comes in and what money gets spent. Anyone who has handled household financial accounts can feel confident that they will make a terrific Acting Treasurer.

Common Responsibilities of Home Area Representatives

- To be a good listener and to encourage discussion among residents.
- To bring concerns and suggestions from the residents in their home area to the general Residents' Council meetings where they can be shared with the group.
- To encourage residents in their home area to get involved in Council activities.
- To help welcome new residents on their home area, provide peer support to enhance their transition to the home and encourage participation in the life of the home.

Shared Responsibilities Among Members of the Board of Directors May Include:

- actively promoting the Residents' Council and its purpose to all residents, staff, volunteers and family members;
- letting all residents know about their Residents' Council and its purpose;
- generating interest in residents to become involved in Council activities;
- maintaining open and regular communication between the Council and its members as well as the home's management team;
- helping subcommittees understand their responsibilities including their accountabilities to regularly report back to the Council;
- keeping accurate documentation of Council activities and records, and ensuring they are available to members;
- posting the names, roles and responsibilities of the leadership team;
- filling a vacancy on your leadership team to temporarily act on behalf of the team, and to support the importance of what they do, until the end of the term; and
- reviewing the Council's Bylaws with the membership, and preparing changes and revisions, if necessary, for approval by the members.

Changes or Vacancies on Your Leadership Team

If someone expresses interest in a role, they may be appointed by the leadership team in an acting capacity until the next election. OARC suggests this provision should be detailed in your Bylaws. You should not feel constricted by the defined election timeframes or terms of service in expressing interest.

It is worth noting that some Councils have experienced challenges with filling vacancies for several different reasons, including a lack of interest among residents to run for a position on the leadership team or a reluctance to take on a specific role with the responsibilities that come along with it. In some cases, Councils have used this as an opportunity to trial or transition to another style of leadership, such as the Shared Leadership model, which may be more appealing to residents who can join a "team" without the formal structure of some of the other leadership models. OARC recommends that once a change of leadership structure is trialled and agreed-upon by the Council, to take the time to update your Council's guiding document, your Bylaws.

2.10 Developing Your Residents' Council Bylaws

Bylaws are designed to provide guidance and direction for the Residents' Council. Having Bylaws in place help to eliminate confusion and promotes consistency in the operations of Council over time including changes in the resident leaders within the home. Bylaws are drafted by the Council's leadership team or founding Planning Committee and can help you create:

- A framework that defines the rights, roles and responsibilities – along with the accepted protocols – for running your Residents' Council.
- The definition of your Residents' Council.
- The purpose of your Residents' Council.
- Goals and objectives of your Residents' Council.
- Clearly defined and mutually agreed upon rules of order and process (how individual members work together as a group or collective voice).
- Continuity for the Council.

Your Bylaws do not have to be complicated or lengthy. Rather, try to strive for simplicity to make it easier for anyone to read and understand.

Residents' Councils that are proactive and prepare their foundational Bylaws early increase the likelihood of dealing with issues consistently, fairly and of eliminating overriding personal interest. Even if a leadership team is not in place, these documents can still be successfully created by a subcommittee of residents.

OARC recommends the Residents' Council Bylaws be reviewed on annual basis. The Residents' Council's leadership team can review and confirm the document or put forward suggested changes to be voted on by the Council as a whole.

Your Bylaws

Bylaws include your Council's own basic principles and rules regarding the operation of your Council. Bylaws need to change to reflect members' needs. Bylaws generally cannot be amended without a majority vote by members. Bylaws vary widely from Council to Council, but generally cover topics, such as how leadership team members are elected, how meetings are conducted, and what are the leadership team's duties.

Information Commonly Outlined in Bylaws:

- Membership and Representation
- Leadership Team Structure; Roles and Responsibilities
- Elections and Terms of Office
- Meeting logistics
- Code of conduct
- Procedure for calling and conducting annual, regular and special meetings.
- Your Council's definition of a quorum (the number of members your Council determines is required for voting to take place and decisions to be valid).
- Process by which votes will take place.
- The chosen reference authority (e.g., *Robert's Rules of Order*) which cites the procedure to be used by your Council, i.e., one person speaks at a time.
- Financial management

CONSIDER INSERTING YOUR COUNCIL'S BYLAWS AT THE END OF SECTION TWO

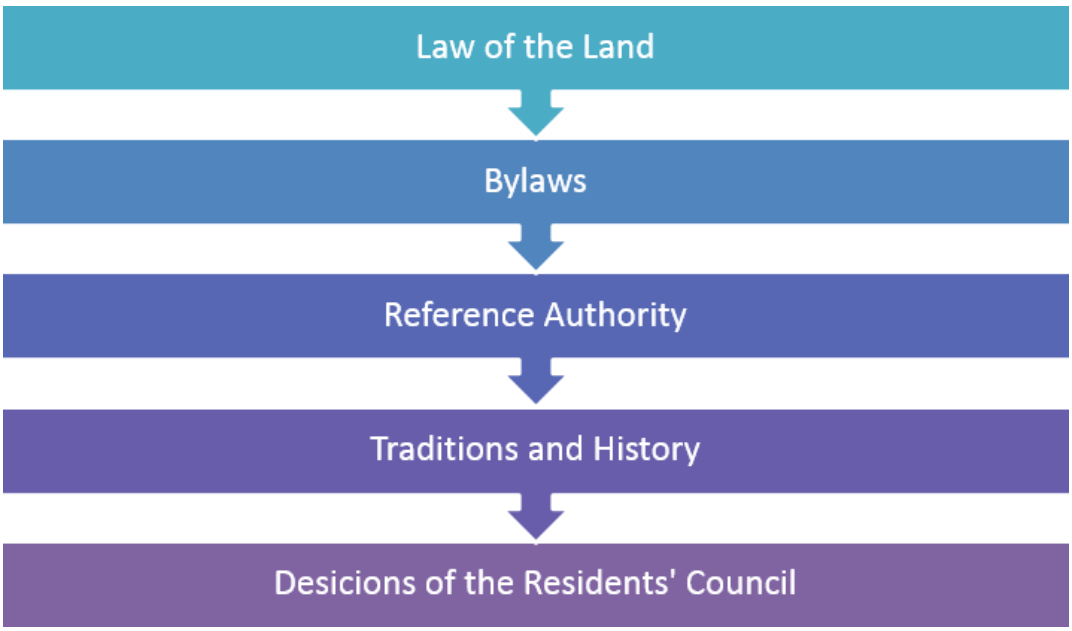
Citing a Reference Authority in Your Bylaws

Most Councils cite *Robert's Rules of Order* in their Bylaws. They are a set of rules that can help you run effective meetings and to which members can refer to when necessary. https://robertsrules.com/

The Authority System Hierarchy
Generally speaking, there is a system by which rules in any society are ranked. For example, the laws set by Canada surpass Ontario's laws, and provincial laws hold precedence over the policies of companies. Check to make sure that your Council's Constitution and Bylaws do not include any provision that is contrary to the laws that displace it. For instance, a Council should not discriminate on the basis of age, gender or physical ability, to determine who will serve on the leadership team.

If an issue arises that is not covered by the law of the land or Bylaws, your Council will need to consult the chosen Reference Authority named in your Bylaws. If that does not help the current situation, your Council can look to its traditions and history to see what has been done in similar situations. If all else fails, it then falls to the Presidential role in the leadership team, or Subcommittee Chairperson when appropriate, to decide upon a course of action.

The Hierarchy of Rules



Strategies to Consider When Developing Bylaws

1. Call a General Meeting

Because the document(s) must reflect the collective will of members, it is wise to start with a general meeting of all residents to develop objectives for the Residents' Council and to determine the type of structure that will best reflect your members' needs.

2. Form a Subcommittee or Working Group

Form a small subcommittee or working group consisting of interested residents and others who may have expressed a desire to help. The Residents' Council assistant can serve in an advisory/supportive role and help members to work through the process of developing the first draft of their Council's Bylaws. OARC has developed a template to guide you through each step in creating your home-specific-Bylaws.

3. Share the Work

Once formed, residents may volunteer to divide the workload. For example, one resident might review various Reference Authorities to determine which one best suits the Council's purposes. Another resident might brainstorm ideas for a Code of Conduct to be followed during meetings, etc.

4. Review the First Draft

Once a draft is ready, the working group will review it carefully, keeping in mind:

- The effects the rules might have in different situations. Imagine a few "what ifs." Try your rules out in imaginary scenarios.
- Any inconsistencies, ambiguities or language that may be contradictory.
- Some of the questions that might be posed by members.

5. Present the First Draft to Council Members

Once the first draft is completed, it is time to hold a meeting to present the draft to the membership. The working group will want to provide adequate notice to ensure a good turnout. Consider typing, copying and distributing the draft document to all members and other interested parties prior to the meeting, so they can study it and become familiar with the contents. During the meeting, take a moment to work through one article at a time and give the entire membership the opportunity to provide suggestions.

Members of the Bylaw working group will want to take notes and begin the process of writing a second draft if amendments are proposed.

6. Present the Second Draft to Council Members

After writing the second draft, you will want to copy and distribute the document again to all members prior to the next scheduled general meeting. Use the meeting to focus entirely on the review and approval of the Bylaws. Once again, work through each article and hold a vote of approval for each section.

7. Adopting the Council's Bylaws

After adopting the Residents' Council's Bylaws, make a final copy and distribute to each resident member and Residents' Council assistant. Remember to keep a copy in your Residents' Council Minutes Binder. Remember to put aside some time to celebrate your accomplishment! This is a very important milestone for your Council.

Providing for Amendments

Your Council will want to review your Bylaws on an annual basis. Any change to the Bylaws is considered an amendment. This can include the addition of new material, the removal of old material, or changes to wording. An amendment procedure must be included in the Bylaws, because if it is not, the Council cannot make any adjustments, regardless of what may require changing.

The clause or article in the Council's Bylaws which addresses changes to the Bylaws needs to outline the process for amending the basic documents. For example, it might specify that members must have prior written notification of any possible amendments, that these amendments will only be considered at the annual general meeting, and that a majority vote of members present is necessary to implement the proposed change.

A Note on Incorporation

Incorporation is a legal process carried out in accordance with the law of the province or the country. Incorporation clarifies the legal obligations and liabilities of the Council and its leadership team. It may be advisable to incorporate if the Council intends to enter into business contracts or if it will be handling large sums of money; however, it is seldom necessary for a Residents' Council to incorporate. If a Council decides to become a not-for-profit corporation, it is wise to seek legal advice.

Glossary of Terms Used with Bylaws

Absentee Ballot	A vote cast by a person who is unable or unwilling to attend the official polling station. Increasing the ease of access to absentee ballots is seen by many as one way to improve voter turnout.
Associate Members	A special category of members established in the Bylaws of an association to accommodate persons who do not fulfill all the requirements for regular membership. This category can include members of the leadership team who are appointed to committees for liaison purposes. Associate members do not have full voting rights.
Ballot	A written vote.
Board of Directors	A governing body of elected or appointed members who jointly oversee the activities of an organization.
Bylaws	A set of regulations for the internal organization and operation. A Bylaw can only be suspended if a mechanism for this is specifically included in the Bylaws themselves.
Chairperson	A person (a) who is given authority to direct the conduct of a meeting, or (b) who is appointed/elected as the head of a committee.
Consensus	A group decision-making process that seeks the consent, not necessarily agreement about the preferred choice of all members. Consensus is an acceptable resolution, one that can be supported, even if not the "favorite" of each individual.
Delegate	A person authorized to act as a representative for another.
Ex officio	A non-voting, non-office-holding special membership that is granted to an individual because that person holds another specified office, only for as long as he or she holds that office.
Executive Committee	A subcommittee appointed or elected by the Board of Directors, or by the general membership, which has well defined executive powers, usually spelled out in the Bylaws, and meets frequently to manage the affairs and further the purposes of an organization or entity.
Guest	An individual, identified in the Bylaws, who is permitted to receive notices and attend meetings, but not to vote. An observer does not have to be a member of the organization.

Majority Vote	Approval by a simple majority vote requires 50 per cent plus one. This can be applied to (1) a majority of votes cast, (2) a majority of the quorum, (3) a majority of those present, or (4) a majority of the total membership.
Motion	A proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. In formal meetings motions must be moved by one member and seconded by another member, but the latter is not required in committees. Individual members can (a) call to order, (b) second motions, (c) debate motions, and (d) vote on motions.
Nominating Subcommittee	A standing committee which produces a list of names for election to administrative and committee posts, such that at least one name is put forward for each vacant position.
Organization	A group with accepted relationships, objectives and activities.
Proxy Voting	A form of voting whereby some members of a decision-making body may delegate their voting power to other members of the same body to vote in their absence, and/or to select additional representatives. A person so designated is called a "proxy" and the person designating him or her is called a "principal."
Putting the Question	Placing a motion before a meeting for a decision by vote.
Question	A motion that has been formally moved and seconded but has not been voted upon.
Quorum	A number of members, or a proportion of the membership, that must be present in order to transact business at a meeting.
Regular Member	A category of individual with full participation and voting rights.
Rules of Order	A set of rules, based on democratic parliamentary procedures, which govern the rights of members and the conduct of meetings, committees and elections. The rules allow everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. Because it is a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings, it can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.
Scrutineers	A person who, though not necessarily voting members of an organization, are called upon by the Chairperson or Secretary of an organization to assist in the voting process.
Special Meeting	A meeting held at short notice, as defined in the Bylaws, to deal with urgent matters which are specifically listed in the circulated agenda.
Standing Committee	A long-term committee of an organization, the members of which usually serve overlapping terms so that there can be continuity. The functions and structure of these committees are defined in terms of reference approved by the general membership.

Straw Vote	A vote taken in an informal session to assess the views of members. This vote is non-binding.
Task Force	A committee that investigates a set problem by holding discussions with individuals who support varying viewpoints and by considering alternative solutions, in order to develop specific recommendations for presentation to a parent group.
Two-Thirds Majority Vote	Approval requiring two-thirds of the votes cast, not counting blanks or abstentions.
Unanimous Vote	A vote in which no one indicates opposition to a motion or candidate.

SECTION 3: SUPPORTING THE OPERATIONS OF YOUR RESIDENTS' COUNCIL

For Residents, By Residents

SECTION 3

Inside you will find…

Introduction

3.1. Encouraging Attendance and Participation

3.2. Running an Effective Residents' Council Meeting

3.3. Extraordinary Group Facilitators

3.4. Improving Accessibility

3.5. Checklist: Planning a Meeting That Is Accessible to Everyone

3.6. Running an Election

3.7. Checklist: Nomination and Election Procedures

3.8. Participating in Managing Your Council's Finances

3.9. ADDENDUM: Insert Home-Specific or Official Council Documents

Introduction

Section 3 will give you a few ideas to take into consideration when looking at different ways to help strengthen and support the effectiveness of your Residents' Council's operations.

We will start by:

- encouraging residents to get involved in their Council;
- exploring some strategies for running an effective Residents' Council meeting;
- understanding how to help residents become more involved in their Council by creating an inclusive Residents' Council that is accessible to everyone;
- identifying the advantages and disadvantages of different table and seating arrangements for meetings;
- examining how to hold a fair election; and
- understanding how to participate in managing your Council's finances.

We have included helpful tools, sample documents and templates in this section which may be used in your home. This guide is also available through the OARC website www.ontarc.com. Consider adding your home-specific documents that relate to the topics mentioned in the above list at the end of this section.

Let's get started!

3.1 Encouraging Attendance and Participation

One way for residents to become involved in making decisions that influence their experience in their home is to actively participate in their Residents' Council. However, having residents regularly attend a Residents' Council meeting or participate in Council activities appears to be a common challenge.

Together with team members, our Council uses several different ways to remind residents of upcoming Council meetings. Some successful approaches are:

- Posting notices of the next meeting, up to two weeks prior to the meeting, in the dining rooms, lobby, monthly newsletters, calendar and public notice boards.
- Announcing the meeting over the P.A. system in the morning and late afternoon.
- Putting reminders on tables when residents go for breakfast.
- Inviting residents for a tea or coffee to chat about the Council.
- As we speak with residents, we personally remind them that we need their help.

A resident

Below are some approaches which you may find helpful in sparking interest as well as encouraging and motivating residents to become involved.

Understand What Motivates Residents to Attend and/or Participate

- Be clear about why your home has a Residents' Council… why it is important for residents to have a regularly scheduled, safe, resident-only meeting time to discuss their experiences among their peers and offer support to one another.
- Residents may be encouraged by the opportunity to meet and build relationships with their peers from all floors/home areas, learn about what is new in their home, and to celebrate with fellow residents.
- Attending a Council meeting may be sparked by a trust that their concerns can be addressed
- Attending a Council meeting may help inspire the feeling that each person is not alone and that they have the opportunity to contribute to increasing the quality of living for all residents.
- If residents perceive the Council as an effective forum for resolving concerns, implementing new ideas and sharing suggestions, they are more likely to return to a meeting. Preparing and distributing a list of accomplishments that occurred because of the Council over the past 6-12 months may provide residents with evidence that Council affects change in their home.
- Residents are more likely to return to future Council meetings if they feel their ideas and suggestions are given serious consideration.

Inform New Residents of the Home's Residents' Council

New residents appreciate being informed about their home's Residents' Council when they first move in. New residents are provided with a Move-In Package (also known as an Admission Package), which includes a description of the Council and any other material the Residents' Council requests be included. You may find that a good Council project is to develop a short, simply written brochure that explains the Council's purpose, gives the meeting dates, times and location, and lists some of the Council's past achievements or current goals. You may choose to include the names of your Council's leadership team and/or Home

Area Representatives, and Residents' Council assistant and how to contact them. OARC has created a fully customizable template to guide you through the creation of a brochure for the Council, which can be accessed at www.ontarc.com. Consider asking your Residents' Council assistant to support you in this process.

Link in with another LTC Home in the Area for Guidance and Mutual Support

Connecting with other long-term care homes within your area or within your home's organization is a great way to learn about what other Residents' Councils are doing and to share some of your own innovative ideas! Consider working with your Residents' Council assistant to make these introductions or contact OARC to help you connect with Residents' Councils.

Personally Invite New Residents to Attend and Participate in the Council

You may wish to visit each new resident to invite them to attend the Council meetings. During this visit, you can explain the purpose of the Council and encourage the new resident to become involved. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the new resident's interests and past experiences. At this time consider offering to accompany the new resident to the next Council meeting or to arrange for another member to do so. It may be helpful to bring along a copy of your Residents' Council brochure to share with the resident, as well as a copy of the Residents' Bill of Rights. This resource can be printed from the OARC website (www.ontarc.com) and is available in over fifteen language translations.

These "welcome" visits with new residents might also be made by a resident on a Council subcommittee, e.g., Welcoming Subcommittee member. If there are no residents available to visit new residents, the Residents' Council assistant can take on the responsibility, if requested.

Identify Issues of Interest to Residents

You will find that residents are more likely to be involved when the Residents' Council is considering issues that are important to them. One way of ensuring your Council is striving to serve residents' needs is to learn more about residents' concerns, ideas and interests. Consider having Council

members try the following to learn more about what matters to residents:

- Schedule regular social conversations with residents to get to know them better.
- Hold an open forum where residents can share their concerns and what they find important.
- Ask for concerns and suggestions at monthly Council meetings or local meetings with Home Area Representatives.
- Ask the home's management team to discuss concerns that have been brought forward to them and the action plans that have been implemented to address the concerns.
- Encourage residents to speak with Council members directly or to share their thoughts via some other means that may be more convenient for them.
- Review all resident issues of concern.
- Encourage residents to use suggestion boxes, if your home uses these.
- Distribute a questionnaire that asks residents to list concerns and to offer suggestions for addressing them, or to share suggestions of what they would like to see improved in their home.

Follow Up and Close the Loop!

Once you have identified some key topics and areas of interest to residents in the home, be sure to work with the Residents' Council leadership team to include them as discussion topics on your meeting agendas for an upcoming Council meeting. You may consider extending invitations to a members of the home's management team to attend as a guest in order to address specific questions the residents have regarding a particular topic. This process of following up and closing the communication loop helps to reassure residents that when they bring ideas or concerns forward, they will be taken seriously

3.2 Running an Effective Residents' Council Meeting

Planning the Meeting

Residents' Council meetings are for residents by residents. Running a successful meeting takes planning and teamwork. Certain details should be addressed during planning to ensure the Council achieves each meeting's objectives. Everything, from choosing guest speakers to protecting time to strengthen relationships, needs to be thought out in advance. You do not have to undertake all of these responsibilities alone. Consider collecting ideas from residents. What approaches would you use? A suggestion would be to have locations in your home (e.g., a binder or suggestion box on each floor or home area) where residents can anonymously write their ideas for possible discussion at the next meeting? One other suggestion would be for your leadership team and Home Area Representatives to collect ideas from discussions around dining room tables and bring them to the next Council meeting. Can you think of residents or team members who might be willing and able to help?

Based on feedback from residents we have spoken with, Councils are encouraged to have meetings that run approximately **one hour in length**, bearing in mind that time may need to be adjusted for greater resident engagement.

Establish a Scheduled Meeting Time and Place

Consider setting up a meeting schedule for the entire calendar year and publicizing it broadly in the home to ensure that everyone in the home (all team members from all departments) know when the Residents' Council meets. This will help to ensure that residents are made aware in advance, and team members can be flexible with care routines and help encourage/assist residents to participate. Perhaps the day before and the day of the meeting, you can remind residents of the meeting time and place. Different ways to jog someone's memory about upcoming Council meetings include: a warm personal invitation; mentioning the meeting at morning report so team members in all departments are aware; posting the information on calendars; placing reminder cards in a noticeable spot on dining room tables; and having a morning announcement about the meeting on the PA system (if applicable). What would work best in your home?

When establishing your meeting time and schedule, be sure to get resident input. Are morning or afternoon meetings preferred by the majority of residents? You may need to

use trial and error and adjust your meeting schedule over time to meet the changing needs and preferences of residents in the home. Be sure to communicate your schedule to the home's management team and Programs Department, to ensure that conflicting/competing meetings are not booked at the same timeslot as the reoccurring Council meeting.

Have Meetings Start and End on Time

It is safe to say that people appreciate having meetings start and end on time; however, it is also important to have some flexibility. You may need to:

- Be prepared to manage the meeting; for example, the flow of the conversation, as well as any tricky situation that may either limit covering all the items planned on the agenda or cause the meeting to run longer than expected (see *Extraordinary Group Facilitators* on page 105 for specific examples and approaches).
- Accept that all items on the agenda might not get addressed. The topics should be viewed as a guideline. If you run out of time, consider deferring the item until the next meeting or re-invite any speakers to the following meeting.
- Keep the conversation moving forward so that people do not get cut off just when the time indicates the meeting is drawing to a close.

Creating A Safe Place Where Residents Feel Comfortable Participating

Effectively facilitating a meeting requires you to create an atmosphere of trust where members feel safe to express themselves and support each other. Members tend to have greater engagement within their Council meetings. Encouraging everyone to participate in a comfortable setting will help you achieve the best possible outcome for all. The Chairperson/Staff Assistant can help cultivate a comfortable gathering place for fellowship by:

- Hosting meetings in a space that ensures a degree of privacy, i.e., a room with a door that can be closed.
- Introducing new members prior to each meeting, so that people feel welcomed and accepted.
- Reminding members, on occasion when needed, what the Council is and the structure of the meetings.
- Trying icebreakers at the beginning of your meeting to create a connected and comfortable space for sharing and to help ease people into the group.

- Extending a genuine warm welcome to everyone and a "thank you" for participating.
- Creating and reading *Opening Guidelines* at the beginning of the meeting and *Closing Remarks* at the conclusion of the meeting (tool available on the OARC website www.ontarc.com). These statements are helpful in setting the tone of each meeting and laying some courteous instructions that frame the way residents communicate with each other.
- Asking questions to encourage discussion.
- Offering an equal opportunity to people who wish to speak.

Preparing an Effective Meeting Agenda

Your agenda is simply a list of the topics to be discussed and the order in which they will be discussed. Preparing an agenda in advance of your Council's meeting will help you feel confident that your meetings are organized. Since a Residents' Council meeting is for residents by residents, any effort made in capturing discussion items directly from residents is important. Please consider placing a binder or suggestion box on each floor or home area. Members find it quite helpful to know in advance what topics will be covered.

You can post the agenda beforehand, hand out copies to those present at the meeting, and/or review the agenda at the start of the meeting. Some Councils have even gone "paperless" and project their agenda on a screen or Smart TV during their meetings, instead of printing and distributing hardcopies. Your Council can decide what will work best for your group for communicating agenda items.

Before the agenda is adopted (which is usually the first item of business at each meeting), it is considered to be a provisional agenda. This permits items of business that come up at the last minute to be included at the time of the meeting. After the agenda is adopted, discussions are limited to the items included in the agenda.

Preparing the agenda involves not only indicating the objective(s) of the meeting, but also deciding on the topics you would like to address with the Council's members and determining who will be responsible for presenting or discussing any particular agenda item.

What agenda items do you feel will generate lots of interest, questions, or discussion at your next Council meeting?

OARC has developed a Provisional Agenda that includes all areas allowed for in the FLTCA and are included as possible discussion items for resident dialogue or involvement in their home. OARC suggests using this agenda and the Residents' Council Minute Template, to ensure residents are aware of all the possible topic areas to be covered. Agendas can vary but here are some suggestions that many Councils find useful to include at some or all of their meetings:

1. Call the meeting to order.
2. Welcome and Introductions – People are welcomed at meetings and encouraged to participate. This is a wonderful opportunity to introduce new residents. You may find it useful to briefly review the purposes of your Council.
3. Reading the minutes from the last meeting – It is important to inform absent members and remind all others about what has happened at previous meetings.
4. Leadership Team Reports.
5. Subcommittee and Home Area Representative Reports – The Subcommittee Chairperson typically reports for their group. Reports can be a simple outline of their activities since the last meeting.
6. Old Business – This agenda item allows the Council to deal with issues that have been raised at previous meetings and that require further discussion or follow-up. Discussing old business ensures continuity between Council meetings. There might be some issues that will take several meetings to deal with or will need on-going attention.
7. New Business – This part of the agenda allows the Council to deal with any new issues, problems, ideas, or suggestions members would like to raise. The issues raised during this part of the agenda will take up more time because the issues must be explored, different points of view discussed, and next steps decided on, including who will take on what actions by a particular deadline. Issues that deserve attention but are too complicated to deal with during the meeting's time limitations, can be handled through a subcommittee, by tabling the issue until the next meeting, or through any other viable alternative.
8. Announcements – Allow some time for sharing news and information such as upcoming events.
9. Adjournment – If there is no further business, the Chairperson can now call for a Motion to Adjourn. Prior to voting on the motion, it is advisable to let everyone know the date and time of the next meeting and to record this in the minutes.

Qualities You Would Like to See in Your Agenda

When developing your agenda, make sure it lets residents know the date, location and time of the Residents' Council meeting. We have seen some agendas which also indicate the goal of the particular meeting; for example, to vote on a new leadership team or to amend the Bylaws.

If someone requests an agenda item, consider asking them to contact you a few days prior to the meeting with the topic they would like to speak about and the amount of time they will need for their presentation. Additional agenda items are typically addressed when the Council discusses the New Business section of their agenda.

Agenda items are often summarized in a table format with common headings, such as "Agenda Item," "Presenter" and "Time" (minutes). You may find your meetings to be more focused if each agenda item is directly related to any goals you have set for the particular meeting. If a request is made to add an agenda item that is not directly related to the goals of the meeting, you will want to recommend that the item be discussed at another meeting.

Think about how much time is realistic to allocate to each agenda item so the presenter does not have to rush through the subject matter. You also do not want to force an unrealistic number of agenda items into an hour meeting. A few days prior to the meeting, you may want to ask the presenters if they are happy with the order in which they will be speaking and the amount of time they have been given.

Once you are satisfied with the provisional agenda, you will want to post it in a prominent location in your home at least one week before the meeting with a reminder of the meeting goals, location, start time and length of the meeting.

OARC has a resource entitled "Provisional Agenda" that leads you through all areas of the legislation. This is found on the OARC website: http://www.ontarc.com/education-support/tools.html#agenda

CONSIDER INSERTING A SAMPLE OF YOUR COUNCIL'S AGENDA AT THE END OF SECTION THREE

Recording Your Meetings' Minutes

Minutes provide your Council with a written record of your meetings. Minutes can be used to inform residents who were unable to attend of the Council's concerns, activities and accomplishments. It also helps everyone understand what occurred at that meeting. Minutes are also useful to document and track the length of time complaints remain unresolved, as well as any relevant follow-up. Approved meeting minutes, once posted/distributed may also help make other stakeholders, including Family Council, aware of some of the Residents' Council efforts and priorities.

For many Councils, the person serving as Secretary or Residents' Council assistant/Recording Secretary records the minutes and then reads them at the next meeting. After the minutes are read, it is customary to ask members for a "Motion to Accept" the minutes as read which serves to confirm that everyone agrees that the minutes accurately reflect what was discussed during the previous meeting, as well as what people agreed to and any decisions that were made.

Minutes can be as simple or as detailed as your Council prefers. A good rule of thumb is to briefly cover the issues discussed and the actions the Council decides to take. You will want to write down enough detail so that no important information is left out. For example:

> "It was moved by Mrs. Walker, seconded by Mr. Soumbos, and carried, that the Treasurer's Report, which shows a balance of $718.22 on January 31, 2015, be adopted."
>
> or
>
> "It was moved, seconded and carried that the Treasurer's Report be adopted."

At a minimum, you will want your minutes to contain a record of decisions reached and voted upon by your Council. You may wish to ask members if the minutes should or should not show the name of persons making and seconding a motion. The Council might also want the Secretary or Residents' Council assistant/Recording Secretary to include more details of discussions that took place, especially if there were different points of view expressed. When recording minutes, it is not necessary to write all of the details. It is more important to capture the intent of the discussion.

OARC suggests that the person recording the minutes pause from time-to-time in order to ask Council member(s), "I heard you say …" or "Is this correct?" or, "I've written _____. Is that how you would like this discussion reflected in the minutes?" This technique may be particularly helpful if the issue being discussed is emotional, controversial or sensitive in nature.

If your Council prefers to record the names of those moving and seconding motions, you should encourage each person to state their name before speaking. Some secretaries find a tape recorder (or similar device) is helpful to accurately record the minutes and capture the intent of the discussion. Details surrounding the use of a tape recorder are approved by Council members. For example, the purpose of the recorder is to aid the secretary in accurately reflecting the discussions at the meeting. Once minutes have been approved by Council members, the recorded meeting will be erased from the device.

Some Secretaries also find it quite helpful if people, such as the Subcommittee Chairperson, present brief written reports that can be received and attached to the minutes as Appendices. For example:

"TREASURER'S REPORT: Members agreed to accept the Treasurer's report, which is attached as Appendix A."

CONSIDER INSERTING A SAMPLE OF YOUR COUNCIL'S MINUTES AT THE END OF SECTION THREE

Chairing a Residents' Council Meeting

We felt it important to reiterate that the Residents' Council assistant's role is to assist the Council in any way the Council deems necessary. Oftentimes it is the Residents' Council assistant who performs the facilitation task of the meeting. The main role of the Chairperson/Residents' Council assistant is to guide the Council in the process and flow of its discussions and decision-making. There is no standard technique or set of inborn talents associated with facilitating meaningful dialogue among members.

During meetings, it is important for the Chairperson to be open to all ideas and perspectives, to trust in the wisdom and experiences of each Council member, and to focus on the Council's strengths. As a facilitator, the Chairperson needs to have confidence in the team and bring out the best in every member so that the Council works effectively together; this inevitably fosters a culture of inclusiveness and positive, mutual support in the home.

Every Council meeting presents different facilitation challenges and the Chairperson will need to rely upon different skills and approaches depending on whether a wide range of ideas need to be generated and explored, a problem solved or a difficult decision made, or whether the matter before the Council is new or familiar. Members of the Council's leadership team are advised to encourage and support each other during challenging times and to seek help if desired.

Preparing for Meetings

The Council Chairperson comes to the meeting well prepared. This often requires:

- Preparing or reviewing the agenda in consultation with the person serving as Vice President and other members of the Council's leadership team.
- Identifying time guidelines for each agenda item, in part to balance the length of reporting and discussions.
- Determining whether an agenda item is tied to an existing internal policy of the home or a provincial legislative requirement.

- Contacting other leadership team members to have them present an agenda item or lead a discussion.

Setting the Meeting Climate and Goals

Some Councils have a personal "check in" at the start of each meeting where each member speaks quite casually and briefly about how they are feeling about attending the meeting, or how they are feeling in general. Larger Councils or meetings with a full agenda may not allow for enough time to incorporate this activity. At the outset of each meeting, the Chairperson may find it helpful to reinforce the importance of the Council, the meetings, the value of members' participation, and the matters before the group. The inherent value your Council brings to your home cannot be overstated. The Chairperson can help cultivate a climate of cooperative solidarity in the meeting so that everyone feels comfortable sharing by:

- Welcoming everyone who is able to attend.
- Initiating a round of introductions (or a check-in) if new residents are present or if the group is still getting to know one another.
- Reviewing the agenda and time guidelines so everyone can anticipate how the meeting will flow.
- Modify the agenda if required to accommodate people who would like to present a new topic for discussion.
- Reminding the group of the meeting ground rules to reinforce shared expectations of mutual respect.
- Reminding the group that the Council is honoured to speak on behalf of everyone living in the home, so keeping those in mind who cannot speak for themselves is imperative

Encouraging Full Participation and Open Discussion

There are times in almost every meeting when the Chairperson will want everyone to feel comfortable participating in meaningful conversations, particularly when considering a major decision where it is important for members to contribute an uninhibited flow of ideas and concerns about an issue. Consider experimenting with framing those discussions by:

- Asking about the specific result or outcome that members hope for.
- Asking everyone to list the benefits and risks, hopes and fears, or opportunities and challenges that they can think of in relation to a particular idea.

- Trying a round of brainstorming where everyone can feel safe contributing to the conversation without judgement.
- Conducting a "go around the room" to provide members with an opportunity to speak briefly about the item being explored. You can decide if it is helpful to have someone act as a timekeeper so that everyone has the option to contribute.

Guiding a Focused Conversation

Sometimes your Council's conversation may need to be focused in order to move the group towards a decision. The Chairperson may find it quite helpful to:

- Highlight why the group has been asked to discuss a particular agenda item, i.e., to make a decision, to share information, to share and discuss ideas, to identify a plan of action, etc.
- Set time limits on how long individuals speak for or the total length of time for a group discussion.
- Summarize the group discussion before moving on to the next agenda item.
- Offer a clear question to be answered by members which will help direct everyone's attention to one issue.
- Call for a concluding "go around the room" by the group to gather final thoughts and signal the end of discussing an agenda item.

Ensuring That All Viewpoints Are Heard

Feeling welcome to actively participate in Council meetings is rooted in a comfortable gathering place where the leadership team strives to have all points of discussion and voices heard. Part of the Chairperson's role is to ensure that no one voice dominates the rest and that all perspectives are brought to bear on important decisions. Some Councils have implemented a physically-tangible "talking stick" as a tool for meetings. The "stick" is to be passed around the room, allowing each resident the opportunity to speak and share without interruption. To make it easier to unearth the collective wisdom and experience of Council members, consider:

- Asking if other members feel differently about an issue and remind the Council that the meeting is a safe and supportive environment to honestly share thoughts and feelings. Often, if there is one such perspective, there are likely others that need to be honoured.
- Asking if there is anyone else who has reservations.

- Exploring the different viewpoints and trying to learn more about the underlying reasons for the different perspectives.

You may find that there are times during these discoveries when you might need to discourage people from judging how others feel or what they believe. The Chairperson may feel reassured by drawing on the positive support of their peers that will help to encourage a space for optimal sharing.

Summarizing, Evaluating and Closing a Meeting

The end of a meeting is just as important as the beginning. How members feel about the meeting will influence their decision to return to the next one. *Summarizing* is an important skill to be exercised throughout meetings and particularly at the end. The Chairperson may choose to close by:

- Acknowledging any work done or any accomplishments since the last meeting.
- Summarizing major decisions and activities/tasks/actions to be accomplished, as well as who is responsible for completing them.
- Assessing the meeting by asking everyone what went well and how the Council's leadership team could improve future meetings. This is a wonderful way to demonstrate leadership team responsiveness to feedback from residents.

3.3 Extraordinary Group Facilitators

The Five Qualities of an Extraordinary Group Facilitator

- They are present and grounded.
- Have knowledge of what makes groups work.
- Lead with a light touch.
- Use a strengths-based and shared leadership approach.
- Create and nurture a safe place for group members to express and embrace their differences.

Becoming an extraordinary group facilitator is something that anyone can learn. It is a skill that if nurtured and intentionally encouraged, will grow.

How to Deal with the Roles That People Adopt in Groups

The Storyteller (aka The Monopolizer)

This is the person who believes that they are being called on to give a lengthy recitation about their life, their past, their present. Why is this a problem?

- The over-talkative member uses up so much "airtime" that other members may give up trying to participate.
- Quiet members can find them a blessing in disguise… it means they are off the hook and can remain quiet and remote.
- Over time this often produces frustration and irritation in the other group members, and they may leave the group.

How do extraordinary group facilitators deal with this?

- Gatekeeping – opening the gate and letting others in. How do you do this? Give positive feedback and then include others: e.g. "Thank you Mary, for sharing this, what an interesting life you have led!" While they are basking in the praise say this, "I seem to remember John grew up in Saskatchewan too." Then physically turn to another group member and ask for their input.

- Sit beside the group member you know is a storyteller. From this position you can give non-verbal cues to the storyteller to help regulate their input from a place of being *with* him/her, rather than *against* him/her. For example: a light touch on the arm to point to the person who is speaking.

The Quiet One (aka The Non-Participant?)

There are many reasons why group members may be quiet. Sometimes it is simply that they are learning by listening, sometimes it is because they are afraid of judgement by others, ...or it can be because of ethnic differences – speaking openly about personal issues is not congruent with culture beliefs.

How do extraordinary group facilitators deal with this?

- Make eye contact... people are much more likely to talk if another person is looking directly at them.
- Ask for their agreement with whatever is being discussed. It is a simple question that can be answered yes or no.
- Ask for their opinion on a topic.

The Finder-of-Challenges (aka The Complainer)

People who are finders-of-challenges find fault in everything. Their complaints are often accompanied by a suggestion that someone (probably you) should do something about the problem. Now.

How do extraordinary group facilitators deal with this?

- Listen and acknowledge. Let them know they have been heard. However, acknowledge does not mean agree, it simply means acknowledge.
- Help them to quickly move into problem solving – where can they take the issue to get some help with it.
- Invite them to talk after the group is over so the problem can get handled.

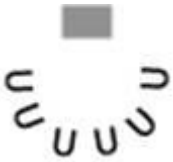
* Part 2 of Extraordinary Group Facilitators is available through Java Group Programs, Inc.
Used with permission by the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils

A Guide to Arranging Tables and Seating

Here is a helpful guide to arranging tables and chairs for your meeting. Consider arranging the room to suit the nature of your meeting, the number of participants and the objectives you want to achieve.

OARC recommends the following arrangements for optimal sharing during your meeting; however, other styles may work better in your setting.

Circle or Semi-Circle



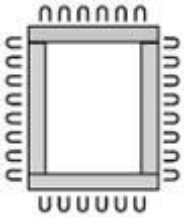
Description and Set-up Hints

This layout style is often used for discussion groups where there is a speaker, audio-visual presentation or other focal point.

Advantages

- Can be setup with or without tables.
- Excellent for sharing and interacting as everyone is able to see each other's face and have eye contact.
- Promotes a sense of equality and informality.

Hollow Square



Description and Set-up Hints

Square conference tables can be arranged in a closed or horseshoe type square, rectangle or even octagon—depending on the size of the group and of the room—leaving the center open. Chairs are placed around the outside of the tables. Ideal for groups of 30 or less.

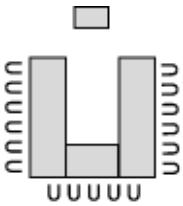
Advantages

- Excellent for the group leader/leadership team. Facilitates the exchange of messages and information with everyone being able to see and hear each other.
- Useful layout design that provides workspace for each person
- Because there is face-to-face contact, the members are encouraged to interact with each other and to participate in the activities.

Disadvantages

Awkward for the use of visuals.

U-Shape



Description and Set-up Hints

This style of seating consists of three tables in a U-shape with the choice of a focal point at the front. Participants are seated around the shape facing each other, but there is a space between the tables that can be used for presentations.

Advantages

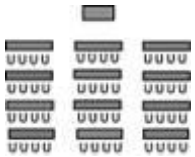
- Good work space.
- Encourages collaboration and interaction among participants.
- Ideal when audio-visual or speakers are involved.
- Center area can be used for simulations and role play.

Disadvantages

Not ideal for groups larger than 25 people as the sides of the "U" become too long and may not promote participation from all attendees.

OARC suggests that the following arrangements be avoided if possible because they do not tend to create an environment for optimal sharing.

Theater or Classroom Style



Description and Set-up Hints

This style accommodates smaller audiences. Chairs in rows face a focal point, such as a stage area, head table or speaker (with no conference table). Rows can be circular, semi-circular, straight or angled towards the focal point and can involve some combination of desks and chairs arranged in rows facing a focus area. If tables extend beyond the stage or podium, it is best to angle them towards the speaker. Consider offsetting each row so that residents do not have to look over the person in front of them (this will increase the space required). If you wish to accommodate large audiences who have come to see or hear a speaker, this is a suitable room set-up.

Advantages

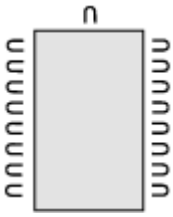
- This is a very flexible and comfortable room set-up and accommodates large groups in less space.
- The presenter can see all participants.
- When using tables, ideal for taking notes, meetings requiring multiple handouts or reference materials, or the use of a laptop computer.

Disadvantages

- Can be perceived as hierarchal or formal in nature.
- There is minimal group interaction.
- Does not allow audience participation beyond perhaps questions to the speaker.
- Taking notes is challenging without tables.

Conference or Boardroom Style

Description and Set-up Hints



A rectangular or oval table set-up with chairs around all sides and ends. This table layout is often used for Board of Directors meetings, committee meetings, or discussion groups. Standard conference tables can be placed together to form a square, rectangle or hollow square. The larger the set-up, the harder it is for attendees to see others at the end opposite them.

Advantages

- Provides a good working space and atmosphere for groups of 6 to 15 people.
- Encourages interaction among participants.

Disadvantages

- Can be perceived as hierarchal or formal in nature.
- Not ideal for more than 15 people because people at the far end of the table may have difficulty being able to interact with their team members or participate in the meeting.
- Not ideal for audio-visual presentations or speakers.

3.4 Improving Accessibility

Improving accessibility to Residents' Council meetings and activities offers residents opportunities to fully participate and promotes a positive atmosphere of mutual support which is inclusive of all residents.

If you notice that a resident is having difficulty accessing Council activities and meetings, a good starting point might be to ask, "How can I help you?" Residents are your best source to understand what they may need to get involved with the Council.

Presume Possible

Be mindful of assuming what a person can or cannot do. Ask them.

Understanding Challenges with Hearing

There are varying degrees of hearing loss which each person experiences differently. With the intention of maximizing a resident's ability to fully participate in their Council, consider learning more about what individual residents may need to be able to hear what is being said.

How to Support Residents Experiencing Challenges with Hearing

- If a resident uses a hearing aid, ask them what they might need to improve their ability to hear information while they are wearing it; for example, minimizing background noise.
- For larger groups and meeting spaces, consider trialling a microphone (if available) that can be utilized by the speaker/presenter and passed around the room as needed.
- It is often helpful to find a quiet area where you can speak knowing that shouting does not make it easier to hear.
- When setting up the room for Council meetings, if possible, reserve seating close to the Chairperson for residents with hearing challenges.
- You may need to speak a little bit slower or more deliberately.
- Ensure all residents have a copy of the meeting agenda to assist them in following the meeting process and discussions.
- When approaching from behind, think about using a gentle touch on the shoulder or a gentle wave of your hand as you approach to let the person know that you are there.
- Some people who experience difficulty hearing find it easier to see your face and read your lips; therefore, talking in a well-lit area is helpful as is making sure your hands are not covering your face when you are speaking.
- Consider asking if another method of communicating would be simpler; for example, using a pen and paper.

- At some long-term care homes, residents may have access to pocket talkers or other sound amplifier devices that could be borrowed for short-term use during meetings. Consider asking a team member or your Residents' Council assistant to see if this type of tool may be available at your home.

Understanding Challenges with Speech or Language

Challenges with speech or language may take the form of difficulty pronouncing words, slurring or stuttering, or difficulty expressing oneself or understanding written or spoken language.

How to Support Residents Experiencing Challenges with Speech or Language

- If you do not understand something that is said, you may want to ask the resident to repeat the information.
- It might make communication easier by asking questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no", or in a way that the resident prefers.
- Provide as much time as the resident needs to communicate without being interrupted.

Sometimes the words don't come easily to me. I know what I want to say, but I can't find the words as effortlessly as I used to. I would like people to be patient because I'm really trying and it's embarrassing when someone finishes my sentences for me.

A resident

Acknowledging and Supporting Language Barriers

Many long-term care homes are home to residents of varying ethnic or cultural backgrounds. The resident population and their preferences will often determine whether Residents' Council meetings are facilitated in English or French, or another language preferred by the majority of residents living in the home. In many homes, where there are multiple first languages spoken by residents, perceived communication barriers can occur. It is also helpful to recognize that for some residents living with cognitive changes, if they learned English as a second language later in life, as their shorter-term memories are affected, they may start to revert to speaking the language from their country of origin. This may also contribute to confusion and impact resident participation and understanding at Council meetings.

How to Support Residents Experiencing Language Barriers

- Seek the support of a volunteer who may serve as translator (this reoccurring guest would need to be pre-approved by Council in order to attend meetings)
- A volunteer translator could translate minutes and agendas and spend time reading these documents with residents for whom the language used in Council meetings is foreign
- The Residents' Bill of Rights (FLTA, 2021) is available in 15+ language translations on the OARC website www.ontarc.com – consider printing and sharing this resource.

Understanding Challenges with Mobility

Challenges with mobility may take the form of difficulty with moving, standing or sitting and can change from day-to-day and hour-to-hour. When planning Council meetings or activities, think about ways to remove obstacles or minimize physical discomfort.

How to Support Residents Experiencing Challenges with Mobility

- If you are speaking with someone who uses a walker, wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you both have eye contact.
- Ask permission before touching somebody's assistive devices or equipment.
- Think about how to remove obstacles and rearrange furniture so residents have a clear pathway.

Understanding Challenges with Vision

There are varying degrees of vision loss which each person experiences differently. Few people with some loss of vision are entirely blind, so it is best to assume the person has some ability to see. With the intention of maximizing a resident's ability to fully participate in their Council, consider asking what individual residents may need to be able to visually experience their environment.

How to Support Residents Experiencing Challenges with Vision

- We suggest contacting CNIB to learn more about the different degrees of vision loss, the tools and equipment that enable a person experiencing challenges with their vision to be as independent as possible, and more ideas about the types of support that may be helpful.
- Because their job requires them to be attentive, when service animals are working, it is best not to touch, distract or address them.
- The person may appreciate being oriented to their environment. Identifying visual, auditory or tactile landmarks seems to be helpful because they are often easier to remember. You may wish to ask the person what they would find helpful.
- Consider using a larger font size in your agendas, minutes, newsletters and other written material to make it easier to read. CNIB recommends a 12-point font size, in an Arial or Verdana typeface.
- If available, consider utilizing a projector or Smart TV to enlarge and display your agenda or other meeting materials on a larger screen format. This may support efforts to go paperless or reduce waste.
- If you are escorting someone to a room, find out where they would prefer to sit. It may be easier for them to see when they are seated in a well-lit area of the room.
- When leaving the side of a person who experiences challenges with their vision, be sure to let them know.

3.5 Checklist: Planning a Meeting that Is Accessible to Everyone

This checklist can serve as an optional courtesy guide to ensure you are providing residents the best opportunity to fully participate in a Council meeting. You may photocopy this checklist and tick the box beside the tasks that you have accomplished.

Choosing the location

- ☐ Visit the meeting room and check the location for features that may be a potential barrier to residents who wish to attend the meeting.

Invitations and promotional materials

- ☐ Invitations and promotional material are available in alternate formats for residents who require or request them (i.e., Braille, audiotape, via e-mail, in large print, or other digital formats).
- ☐ Invitations and promotional materials include a note that lets residents flag any additional requirements.

Entrance to the meeting room

- ☐ The entrance to the meeting room is wide enough for residents using a wheelchair or scooter.
- ☐ The door is easy to open.
- ☐ There are signs in prominent areas of the home that clearly indicate where the meeting is being held.
- ☐ Signs are large enough and clear enough so that residents with low vision can read them.
- ☐ Signs are mounted at a comfortable height so that residents who use wheelchairs or scooters can read them.
- ☐ Team members or volunteers are available to help residents arrive at the meeting on time.
- ☐ There are accessible washrooms located near the meeting room.

Flooring in the meeting room

- ☐ Floor coverings (such as low pile carpeting, hardwood flooring or tile) will not hinder residents using mobility aids (such as wheelchairs and scooters) to easily move around the room.

Meeting room

- ☐ The meeting room is set up to provide access to all participant seating locations, the speakers' area and refreshments so that people with service animals or who use mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes, crutches) can independently enter and exit the room and move throughout the space, sit with other participants, participate as speakers, and get refreshments.
- ☐ A stage or raised platform, if not accessible to all speakers, will not be used.
- ☐ An adjustable-height podium is available for all presenters.
- ☐ Background noise (e.g., ventilation systems, noise from adjacent rooms) which may be distracting is minimized.
- ☐ There is a well-lit space for sign language interpreters, if needed.
- ☐ If the meeting room has windows, there are drapes or blinds that can be used to reduce light or glare.
- ☐ Furniture is arranged away from windows or the windows are covered so that participants, speakers and interpreters are not silhouetted by the natural backlighting, which makes speech-reading difficult.
- ☐ Cables, wires and microphones are well secured and away from aisles and other traffic areas.

Refreshment and dietary arrangements

- ☐ If refreshments are served, there is sufficient floor space for people using a mobility aid to approach the tables.
- ☐ All food, plates, light-weight glasses, bendable straws, utensils and napkins are within reach.
- ☐ If food and beverages will be served, there is a current Dietary report available to the Residents' Council assistant or volunteers that can be respectfully and discreetly used to reference dietary requirements for all residents (allergies, food texture, fluid consistency etc.) to ensure resident health and safety.
- ☐ If beverages are served, sugar-free drinks, juices, water and fluid thickener are available for residents with dietary requirements or concerns.
- ☐ If food is provided buffet style, the Residents' Council assistant or a volunteer will be on hand to help serve residents who have visual and physical disabilities.
- ☐ If pastries and cookies are on the menu, healthy alternative snacks will also be available for residents with dietary requirements or concerns.
- ☐ Wherever possible, make arrangements in advance to provide food offerings in various textures/consistencies for residents with dietary requirements so that no one is left waiting or excluded from eating.

Accessible communications

Making sure information is accessible involves more than just providing alternate formats to print. You will want to consider how you can make verbal presentations available to residents with difficulty hearing.

- ☐ Arrangements have been made for a sign language interpreter and/or real-time captioner to be present at the meeting, if required.
- ☐ The lighting and meeting room furniture is arranged to facilitate communication among participants, interpreters and real-time captioners.
- ☐ Printed materials indicate if they are available in alternative formats and languages, as well as information on how to obtain them from the Council.
- ☐ Handouts are placed at the front edge of the table to make them easier to reach for participants both seated and standing.

3.6 Running an Election

The process of nominating and electing members to your Council's leadership team can be quite exciting. Leading up to an election, let us look at some customs for running elections that are commonly used by Residents' Councils across the province, as well as some of the interesting roles and responsibilities of the individuals who will be involved in making your elections a success. As the time comes to seek nominees for office, anyone who is involved will want to review the procedures for nominations and elections set out in the Council's Bylaws.

Nominations

Nominees can often be found by approaching people personally, posting a single nomination form in a central location where names can be put forward, or by circulating individual nomination forms. This is a special opportunity for the Residents' Council assistant to help with recruitment as they may know of residents who are interested in being more involved in your Council. The Residents' Council assistant can put residents in touch with one of the current resident leaders to learn more about the operations of the Council as a whole. You may have other creative ideas for generating a list of potential candidates. Bear in mind that all nominations need to be seconded to show that the candidate has the support of more than one person.

Your Council can nominate candidates in several ways. Choose the approach that works best in your situation:

a. a Nominating Subcommittee;
b. by ballot; or
c. from the floor.

As with any election, the number of nominees is not as important as the fact that people would like to serve, and that the process is democratic.

Getting Nominated

Every resident can run in their Council's election.

Every resident can nominate someone who they feel would be a good candidate.

Nominees must formally indicate their willingness to serve on the leadership team.

A. Nominating Subcommittee

When a Residents' Council is being formed, it is common for the Planning Committee to initially find residents who are willing to serve on the new leadership team and, in some homes, residents who regularly attend Council meetings approach their fellow residents to consider joining the core group on the leadership team for the next term. Later in the life of a Council, members may decide to form a Nominating Subcommittee of a few residents and/or team members to take on the responsibility of finding people, either at election time, or when a vacancy occurs. Although a Nominating Subcommittee is not found in every home, it remains the choice of every Council whether they would find such a subcommittee helpful.

Your Bylaws will typically specify the structure of this subcommittee and how its members are chosen. It is common for the larger membership of your Council to elect who will serve on this group. To avoid a conflict of interest, the person serving as the Council's President is often not a member of this subcommittee. Residents serving on the Nominating Subcommittee can be nominated for office.

Should you choose to have one, the main role of your Nominating Subcommittee will be to encourage residents with fresh ideas and a cooperative outlook to consider running in the election, and to find the best candidate for each position on the Council's leadership team

The person currently serving as the Council's Secretary or record-keeper will want to give the subcommittee a copy of the Council's current Bylaws and a description of the duties of each role on the leadership team (if the Council is using the Traditional Executive Structure). The group carefully reviews the information and prepares an initial list of contenders whom they believe to be the best choice to potentially join the leadership team.

A member of the Nominating Subcommittee will then need to meet with the chosen nominees to let them know they were nominated, to confirm if they are willing to serve if elected, and to answer any questions. If a candidate declines, the subcommittee will need to leave that position open for nominations from the floor. It is advisable that no one be nominated without their consent.

Your Bylaws may confirm that additional nominations can be made from the floor at this time. As soon as the subcommittee presents its report, the group is officially disbanded. However, sometimes the subcommittee is revived to make nominations to fill vacancies.

OARC suggests that everyone on the current leadership team participate in discussing how your team will be arranged as soon as possible; for example, the group may choose to have a team with specific titles, such as Secretary. If your Council prefers to not have titles, we recommend using the generic term "leadership team" to describe the entire group of residents elected to oversee the general administration of your Council.

B. Nominations by Ballot

Your Council may choose to take nominations by ballot. In this process, all residents are offered a nominating ballot—which is different from an election ballot—where they can write the name(s) of one or more candidates. Some Councils host a special meeting before the election date where they hand out ballots to residents; however, it is important that people who are not able to attend also have the opportunity to get a ballot.

The person offering the nominating ballot lets residents know more about their Council and who to return the completed ballots to. Some homes put a nomination box on every home area/floor where residents can drop off their ballot. A member of the Nominating Subcommittee counts the ballots and writes a list of the nominees to give to the person serving as President for them to announce. Assistance is commonly given by team members or volunteers who are not involved in the election process if help is needed by a resident to fill out a ballot to reflect their choice.

> "Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. "
>
> - Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)
> Minister, Civil Rights Activist

C. Nominations from the Floor

The Chair calls for nominations from the floor. According to *Robert's Rules of Order*, a member may not be recognized by the Chair to make a nomination. In small organizations, nominations are frequently made from their seat. The guidelines for a member nominating a candidate are the same as for the Nominating Subcommittee and it is important to know beforehand if the person they would like to nominate is willing to serve.

When the nomination is from the floor:

- From their seat, a member can call out the name of their recommended candidate.
- No second is required but sometimes one or more members will second a nomination to indicate endorsement.
- A person can nominate themselves.
- A member can be nominated for more than one office (if using a Traditional Executive Structure).
- A member cannot nominate more than one person for an office until everyone has had an equal opportunity to make nominations.
- Nominees do not have to leave the room during nominations, when the vote is taken, or when the vote is counted.
- The presiding officer on the leadership team can continue presiding, even if they are one of the nominees for the office.
- A member can decline the nomination during the nomination process.
- After each nomination, the Residents' Council assistant typically writes the names of each nominee —and sometimes posts their photos—on a large writing surface, such as a whiteboard, and repeats the name of the nominee so that everyone can hear who was recommended.

You may wish to encourage nominees to say a few words about themselves. If at any time during the nominating process a member realizes that they will not be able to serve if elected, they will need to request that their name be removed from the list. Usually the person serving as President closes nominations when no further nominations come forward from the floor.

> "The idea of an election is much more interesting to me than the election itself... The act of voting is in itself the defining moment."
>
> - Jeff Melvoin

Elections by Anonymous Ballot

As the slate of nominees is read aloud at the meeting, many Councils find it helpful to write the names of persons nominated for each office—and sometimes post their photos—on a large writing surface, such as a whiteboard, before election ballots are completed. If help is needed to fill out a ballot, assistance is commonly given by team members or volunteers who are not involved in the election process.

Although this is an exciting process, it can be quite sensitive in nature because there is a potential for the self-esteem of nominees to be affected by the outcome. Some residents may feel hurt or discouraged if they are not elected. Because of this, OARC discourages voting through a show of hands and recommends keeping the process of counting ballots confidential, i.e., not letting anyone know how many votes each nominee received.

When all election ballots are cast, the scrutineers—often a resident who is not nominated for office along with your home's Residents' Council Assistant or another person pre-approved by the Council, —distribute and collect the ballots, count the votes cast for each candidate, and report results to the person serving as the Council's President. To maintain confidentiality and the integrity of your election process while charged with serving as an election official, you may wish to have your scrutineers sign a statement of confidentiality. Their written agreement can be stapled to the ballots and kept in a secure place as a formal record of proceedings until the next election period.

Only the names of the newly elected leadership team are announced, with the successful candidate being the person who receives the majority (50 per cent plus one) of votes cast. The results are then announced by the Chairperson of the Nominating Subcommittee, with appreciation expressed to all nominees for their willingness to support the Council as a leadership team member. The Chairperson may want to consider taking this opportunity to let everyone know how they can continue to support the Council as a part of the larger membership by getting involved in activities, cultivating a supportive environment to live in, and participating in Council meetings.

With the start of a new term of office, consider opportunities to coach and support your new leadership team members so that they can quickly feel comfortable in carrying out their responsibilities. When the election has finished, you will want to publish the names and post the photographs of your new leadership team for all residents to recognize as their new

Residents' Council leadership team along with a description of how to contact them. A further consideration would be a brief summary of the goals and objectives of your leadership team.

Election Guidance for a Shared Leadership Team Structure

It is worth noting that the election process might look slightly different for Residents' Council groups that have adopted a Shared Leadership Team structure, as opposed to a Traditional Executive Model with only 4 office positions to be filled (refer to pages 70-71 for a refresher on the various leadership team models). In many ways, the Shared Leadership Team model can be considered more inclusive because it allows more residents to be involved in meaningful ways that align with individual strengths and interests. Instead of dividing the work of a Council into defined roles with set responsibilities, the work is shared amongst the team. Ultimately your Council will decide how many residents will be part of a Shared Leadership Team. This number may vary according to the size of your home and the level of interest expressed by the residents. As a general rule of thumb, 4-8 resident leaders is a good range to stick to when forming your leadership team. When it comes to elections, your Council will follow the nomination process outlined earlier in this section, however, the number of nominated leaders may determine whether a formal election with ballots is warranted. There may be no need for an election i.e. if the Council has decided that the leadership team will consist of 6 people, and 6 people have been nominated, there is no election. In this situation, there is an election by acclamation which means that each person is automatically part of the Shared Leadership Team.

Selecting (and Electing) Your Home Area Representatives

By introducing the roles of Home Area Representatives as an extension of your Residents' Council leadership team, Councils are in a better position to represent the collective voice of residents living throughout the long-term care home. In some homes, the elected resident leaders may coincidently live on the same floor or home area. Home Area Representative positions help to ensure that resident perspectives from every floor or home area are recognized and brought forward at the general Residents' Council meeting each month.

It is up to the individual Council to determine how the Home Area Representatives will be identified. You may choose to formalize your process and use the nomination steps outlined earlier in this section. Alternatively, residents may be approached or volunteer to assume the role of Home Area Representative. If there is substantial interest in these positions, an election with ballot system may be warranted, however, it is also acceptable for nominees to be automatically be placed into the roles if there are only one or two residents interested in representing their respective areas. This process is known as an election by acclamation. OARC recommends that Councils select at least 2 Home Area Representatives from each area

of the home. This way, if one person is unable to attend the general Council meeting, there is still another individual who can share an update/report from their respective floor or home area.

Our election process is very simple. We allow all residents the opportunity to vote and think of who they would like to run in office. We just started this process last year. Prior to that, residents just did a show of hands on the day of the election. Now…

1. We do up a notice to be placed on all boards, in the dining room, lobby, activation rooms, and wherever we feel we can post notices.
2. We announce the people that were previously in office at the November meeting to allow people to think about it.
3. At the December meeting, we ask if anyone has thought about the elections and if anyone would like the opportunity to run.
4. After the December meeting, we post again asking for nominations and to hand all nominations into the Programs & Services Supervisor to hold until the day of the elections.
5. On the day of the election, the Program & Service Supervisor writes names on the board of all the people nominated for the officers.
6. Beside each name, a star is placed and then residents that are running are asked if they are willing to be satisfied to carry out those duties.
7. At that time, the Program & Service Supervisor announces each of the positions in the Council.
8. At that time, nominated residents are asked to sign the acceptance form.
9. The Program & Service Supervisor announces the name of each nominated resident who ends up having the most votes for each leadership team position:
    a. President
    b. Vice President
    c. Secretary
    d. Treasurer

We run our Residents' Council for a term of three years as passed through one of our Council meetings.

A resident

3.7 Checklist: Nomination and Election Procedures

Planning

- ☐ **Ask residents if they know of anyone they believe would make a good candidate for the Council's leadership team.**
- ☐ **Review the rules and procedures for nominations and elections as set out in the Bylaws or past minutes, keeping in mind that elections must be conducted in accordance with provisions of your Council's Bylaws document.**
- ☐ **Discuss the specific election duties that will need to be carried out and determine who will assume particular responsibilities.**
- ☐ **The Nominating Subcommittee (if applicable) will want to contact current leadership team members to better understand how the most recent election was conducted and if any problems occurred. The committee may find it helpful to obtain copies of prior publications, ballots, tally sheets and other records to use as templates in the upcoming election.**
- ☐ **Agree upon a date to close nominations and for the election.**
- ☐ **Consider developing a simple schedule which provides adequate time to complete each stage of the election.**
- ☐ **Select a polling site(s) and schedule polling hours to provide all residents with an opportunity to vote or do this at a regularly scheduled or election-specific Council meeting.**
- ☐ **Create and photocopy/print as many nomination forms as required.**

Nominations

- ☐ **Let everyone know that your Residents' Council will be holding an election for its leadership team.**
- ☐ **Consider publishing and posting the titles and duties of each officer (if using the Traditional Executive leadership team structure), as well as the date, time and location(s) for submitting nominations. Allow enough time for candidates to be suggested. You may wish to indicate: the length of term of office; instructions for**

making, seconding, and accepting nominations; and eligibility requirements for candidates and nominators.

- ☐ Home Area Representatives can assist by notifying residents who might not otherwise know of the upcoming election, so they can have an equal opportunity to put somebody's name forward for a position on the Council's leadership team.
- ☐ Make sure that the Residents' Council assistant or member of your Nominating Subcommittee visits each potential nominee to determine if they would be willing to accept the position for which they have been nominated.
- ☐ Keep an accurate record of all submitted nominations. You may choose to include the names of who nominated each candidate, as well as the nominees and positions for which they were recommended.

Preparing for Elections

- ☐ Regularly remind residents of the upcoming election by way of ongoing notices (posters, newsletter articles etc.) or during casual conversation.
- ☐ Consider publishing and posting an election notice that specifies the positions to be filled and the date, time and location of the election. You may wish to indicate the length of term of office, instructions on the voting procedure, voter eligibility requirements, and information regarding absentee balloting.
- ☐ Consider arranging for extra help from team members or volunteers on the day of your elections to help residents come to the meeting to vote and to help with marking ballots to reflect the resident's choice.
- ☐ Consider arranging for a microphone.
- ☐ Consider arranging for a large writing surface (i.e., a flipchart, blackboard or whiteboard) on which the names of nominees for each office can be written.
- ☐ Arrange ballots to be printed and counted before members vote. Check the ballot carefully to make sure it is accurate.
- ☐ Safeguard all ballots to maintain the integrity of the process.
- ☐ Plan for the tally of ballots (can be two residents or one resident along with one volunteer/team member) and determine the counting and voiding procedures to be used if this is not already indicated in your Bylaws.
- ☐ Prepare tally sheets to be used at the ballot count.

Elections Procedures

- ☐ **Ensure that you have enough supplies (including ballots, pencils, etc.) for people to vote.**
- ☐ **If you are using a ballot box, confirm that it is empty and seal it in the presence of observers before the polls open.**
- ☐ **Read aloud the list of nominees for each position at the meeting.**
- ☐ **Provide a replacement election ballot to any member who spoils a ballot while voting. Maintain custody of all spoiled ballots and account for them at the completion of the ballot tally.**
- ☐ **If some residents need help in filling out their ballots, this assistance is best offered by team members or volunteers who are not involved in the election process.**
- ☐ **If a resident is ill, a volunteer may bring a ballot to the resident to complete and then place in a sealed envelope to include in the final ballot tally.**

Ballot Tally

- ☐ **Begin the ballot tally only after you close the polls.**
- ☐ **If using a ballot box, open the ballot box in the presence of observers.**
- ☐ **Sort and count the ballots after all are submitted. It is common for the ballot counters to be at least two or three independent people, not eligible for office (can be a combination of a resident along with the Residents' Council assistant or Home Administrator).**
- ☐ **Allow observers to watch the counting and other related activities closely enough to verify the accuracy of the tally. However, you will not want observers to handle the ballots.**
- ☐ **Attempt to resolve any challenged ballots at the start of the tally.**
- ☐ **Count the votes on each ballot and enter the results on tally sheets.**
- ☐ **Announce the tally results for each candidate.**

Post-Election Activity

- ☐ **The Nominating Subcommittee (if applicable) will want to present the election results as soon as possible, and may wish to consider publishing and posting the names and photographs of those recently elected to the Council's leadership team, i.e., in your home's newsletter.**
- ☐ **The Nominating Subcommittee may wish to maintain all nomination and election records for at least one year.**
- ☐ **New leadership team members assume their Council duties and responsibilities, preferably with mentorship from exiting members.**
- ☐ **Evaluate your process and make notes for the next election while it is fresh. Think about what worked well and what changes you would suggest be made for the next election. You will want to record this in your next Council's meeting minutes.**

CONSIDER INSERTING A COPY OF YOUR COUNCIL'S NOMINATION FORM AND SAMPLE BALLOT AT THE END OF SECTION THREE

3.8 Participating in Managing Your Council's Finances

Choosing a Bank

One of the rights and roles of your Residents' Council is to sponsor and plan activities in your home. This process infers that you have access to funds. From time to time, your Council may also want to access funds to purchase special items (as approved by the Residents' Council). Your Council may wish to open a separate bank account in the name of your Residents' Council or you may wish to maintain a petty cash float, depending on the policies in your home which govern how petty cash floats are to be managed.

> A Residents' Council of a long-term care home has the power to... sponsor and plan activities for residents. [2021, c. 39, s. 64 (1) 4]

When considering which bank to partner with, be aware that not all banks do things the same way. In fact, not all branches of the same bank do things the same way either. Consider exploring not only different banks, but also different branches of the same bank, to ensure they can offer what you need to conveniently manage your Council's finances.

Some things to think about when choosing a bank include how close the bank is to your home, how easy it is to get to the bank, whether they are willing to visit the home, and if they provide the services your Council needs. You may want to find out if your home/home office has an arrangement with a local bank branch to come to the home regularly so that residents can easily do their banking. This may influence which bank you choose. If this seems daunting, please ask your Residents' Council assistant to help by exploring all of the possibilities, making phone calls, and providing your Council with a summary of their findings. This will help the Council make an informed decision on which bank to do business with.

Increasing restrictions and stricter policies at financial institutions in recent years have created some additional challenges for Residents' Council financial management. The majority of banks do not provide door to door service, which requires that residents leave their LTC home and travel to the bank to sign paperwork to become signing authorities. Furthermore, many residents do not have valid photo ID such as a driver's license which is required by the bank to become signing authorities. Increasing numbers of residents are experiencing cognitive changes resulting in fewer residents able to become signing authorities. Taken together, these conditions present as significant barriers for residents to become signing authorities for the Residents' Council bank account. The following sections introduce some strategies to address these real and perceived challenges.

Setting Up a Community Bank Account for Your Residents' Council

Most banks have a category of account specifically designed for small organizations like Residents' Councils. They are normally called "community accounts." They have provisions for writing cheques and receiving a monthly statement. The bank may ask you to complete a resolution in order to open an account. A resolution is a document proving that the Council exists and requires a bank account. It is typically required by banks to open accounts and to define which individuals are authorized or revoked to act on behalf of an organization. Many banks have their own resolution which they prefer to use. For liability reasons, we strongly encourage you to open your bank account in the name of the Residents' Council itself and not in the name of an individual or the home.

Providing the Bank with Identification

Banks require two pieces of identification. If possible, find out what identification the bank would prefer you to bring. This may be primary ID (i.e., anything with a photo, such as a passport or driver's license) accompanied by secondary ID (e.g., SIN card, credit card). Most banks will accept the Record ID of your home for the purpose of a signing officer for the Council's account. Find out if the bank would like you to bring your Council's Bylaws and a signing authority resolution to your bank meeting. Explain that challenges with mobility may limit residents' ability to come to the bank to offer sample signatures, and that they may not have the types of identification normally expected by banks. Consider asking if a banking representative could come to your home to assist in the initial setup of the account.

Confirming Who Has Signing Authority on the Account

Increasingly, financial institutions are becoming more stringent about the acceptable forms of identification for banking purposes. As a response to this changing reality, and because many residents do not possess the required documents, Councils have had to make decisions and necessary adjustments around the selection of new signing authorities for their Residents' Council bank account. Residents may approach their home Administrator or Residents' Council assistant to step in as new or additional signing authorities.

Once you have determined who will have signing authority on the account, you will need to make a decision regarding the number of signatures that will be required when writing cheques. Banks may recommend that cheques written on this kind of account have two signatures. This is a good way to protect the Council's money from fraud. Even if the financial institution you choose does not require it, the Council would be wise to require two signatures on any cheque, and to have at least four residents authorized to be one of those signatories. That way you can be sure that at least two people are readily available.

CONSIDER INSERTING A COPY OF YOUR COUNCIL'S BANKING RESOLUTIONS AT THE END OF SECTION THREE

Doing the Banking

Not everyone can make a deposit to your Council's bank account. You may wish to ask if the bank has any conditions that must be met concerning who can make a deposit. For each deposit, request that the bank provide you with a receipt for your financial records. There are no restrictions on the amount of money which your Council may maintain in either cash or banked funds.

Ideally, cheques are written by the person serving the role of Treasurer (if applicable) or another member of your leadership team . The Residents' Council assistant may also be asked to assist with physically writing the cheques; however, they are only signed by two of the four signatories. Having four signatories on the account (with any two to sign) will make it much easier when someone is unavailable.

Maintaining Your Council's Financial Records

Grounded on the principles of not spending more than you have, your Council's bookkeeping essentials will likely be fairly simple. A basic paper or electronic worksheet will work quite nicely as a ledger to track deposits and withdrawals in your petty cash account and bank account. We recommend separately tracking deposits and withdrawals for each of these two accounts. To help a newly elected or acting person serving the role of Treasurer understand how the bookkeeping is currently managed, it is extremely helpful to document the preferred operating procedures.

The person serving the role of Treasurer (or other resident leader assisting with Council finances) does not need to have accounting experience, and neither does the Residents' Council assistant; however, it is important to make careful calculations using straightforward addition and subtraction in order to have the correct balance in your account at the end of each month.

The key to maintaining accurate records is to keep them up to date. If deposits and withdrawals are written in the worksheet as soon as they are made, it will be less time-consuming to manage later on, and you can have confidence that your records are always correct.

If your bank branch uses paperless banking, we encourage the Treasurer/resident leader or Residents' Council assistant to still complete a deposit slip (found in a deposit book provided by the bank) so that there is an itemized record detailing each cheque or cash element of a deposit. This will make it much easier to monitor the Council's finances. Consider setting up a

folder or binder for your financial records and keeping it in a secure location, typically in a locked file, along with the Council's chequebook and deposit slips.

Within a few days of receiving your monthly bank statement, the Treasurer/resident leader or Residents' Council assistant will find it helpful to compare the account or worksheet against the bank's records, particularly in advance of your Council's scheduled meetings where the Council's financial status is reported to members105. Unless there are unusual amounts of money recorded, the person serving in the role of Treasurer typically reports the total account balance of petty cash, giving the total deposits and withdrawals for the month. There may be certain transactions which need to have a motion passed by your Council members prior to spending.

Every year at the end of December, you will want to store all of the Council's financial records for that calendar year in a secure place. These need to be kept for at least six years from the end of the previous calendar year.

CONSIDER INSERTING A COPY OF YOUR COUNCIL'S ACCOUNT LEDGERS AT THE END OF SECTION THREE

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Managing Finances

Question: Many residents are unable to leave their LTC home to do their personal banking or banking for the Council. Who is the best contact at a bank branch to request someone from the bank come to the home to assist with managing personal or Council finances?
Answer: The Residents' Council assistant can call or physically go to the local financial institution and speak with the Branch manager or Financial Service Representative to determine what transactions and services can be done remotely at the home and in the branch. Each financial institution is different and may even operate differently, depending on the community in which it is situated. If a home is part of a larger corporation, the home office may have banking affiliations already established. The home may want to ask their home office if this is the case.

Question: What types of accounts are appropriate for funds raised by the Residents' Council?
Answer: Most financial institutions have non-profit or community accounts which would be appropriate. Visit the local bank branch of the financial institution of your choice and speak to them about the options available to the Council.

Question: What services are available to help the Residents' Council manage and reconcile their funds/support bookkeeping?
Answer: The Council could enlist the help of a local bookkeeper; however, cheques and monthly statements are often sufficient because the Council is not-for-profit and does not file tax returns. Cheques and monthly statements can be audited by other Council members to make sure there has been no mismanagement of Council funds. The Council can also choose to set up their bank account with dual signatures, but it is wise to think about the implications of this action.

Question: Our home provides Residents' Council funds on an annual basis to spend at our discretion. Should we set up our own bank account with these funds?
Answer: This may not be necessary. It is important to note that the account is controlled by the Residents' Council. Activities of this account are to be under the discretion of the Residents' Council, based on a vote recorded in the minutes of that particular meeting. Signing authorities on the account still fall to residents, not the management of the home. The funds may be released to the Residents' Council on a regular basis (annually or pro-rated monthly, for example). The Residents' Council may wish to secure the money in an independent bank account, or the Council may wish to keep the money at the home, secured within the home's system. If the funds are secured within the home, the home is to provide statements as requested by the Council. It is also important for the members of the Residents' Council to be informed on a regular basis, that money is available for the Council's use.

SECTION 4: SUPPORTING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF YOUR RESIDENTS' COUNCIL

For Residents, By Residents

SECTION 4

Inside you will find…

Introduction

4.1. The Three Pillars of an Effective Residents' Council

4.2. How to Achieve a Collaborative Residents' Council

4.3. 20 Ways to Build a Culture of Positive Mutual Support

4.4. Working Successfully as a Team

4.5. Working Together to Creatively Resolve Problems

4.6. Respectful Ways to Manage Conflict

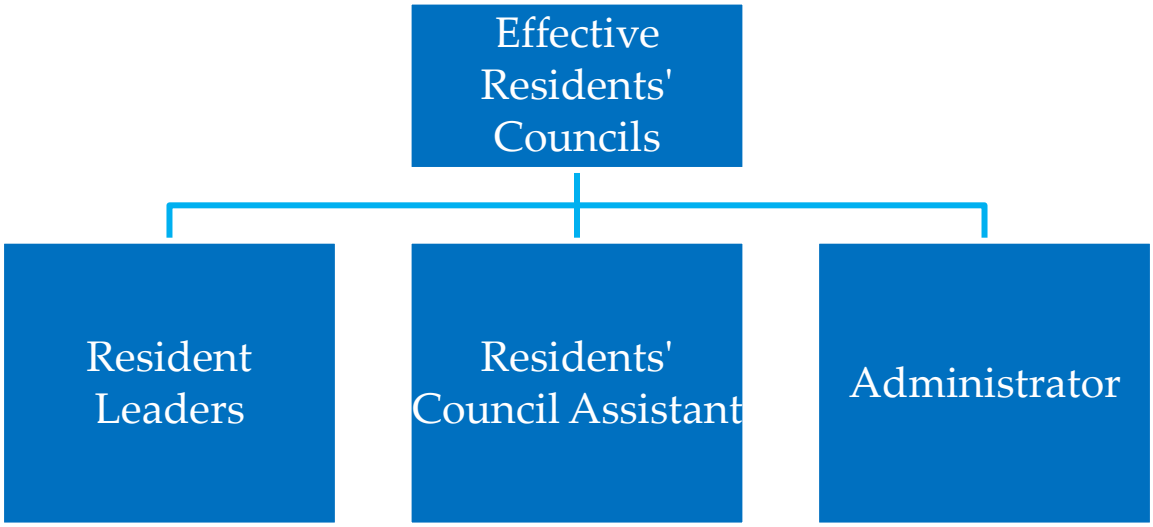
4.7. ADDENDUM: My Home-specific or Official Council Documents

Introduction

Section 4 will help you understand a little more about human behaviour and how to manage conflict. It will also give you ideas on how to work together as a Residents' Council, as well as practical approaches for dealing with conflict. Not only can the following approaches support you in your peer-to-peer interactions with other residents, but they can also be applied in situations that you might encounter with team members, home management or other stakeholder groups.

4.1 The Three Pillars of an Effective Residents' Council

There are three components or "pillars" that support the foundation and contribute to the overall effectiveness of a Residents' Council in every home: resident leaders, the Residents' Council Assistant, and the home Administrator.



The first pillar represents the **resident leaders** in the home. An effective Council is made up of engaged and empowered residents who may or may not be formally part of a leadership team or executive team but remain committed to the function of the Residents' Council in their home. While every resident living in the home is automatically a member of the Residents' Council, there are usually a few people who naturally become part of the leadership of the Council through voicing their opinion, seeking solutions to challenges, attending meetings,

establishing relationships with other residents and team members, etc. These residents are deemed "resident leaders" and play a critical role in the success of their Residents' Council.

The second pillar is the **Residents' Council Assistant**, who is an ally and key support to the Residents' Council. Identifying an appropriate team member to serve as Residents' Council Assistant is determined through a negotiated process between the home's Administrator and the residents. It is very important that the person selected is the "right fit" and acceptable to the residents in order for a trusting relationship to develop. A strong Assistant is able to recognize the individual skills, strengths and interests of residents and help to leverage and direct them so that residents can be engaged as part of the Council in ways that are meaningful to them. The Residents' Council Assistant is not a member of the Council nor or they acting as a representative of the home/licensee; they take direction from the Council and act in an impartial, supportive capacity, often completing administrative tasks. Assistants should be knowledgeable of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2010 (explored in Section 1) in order to help residents realize their full scope and powers as a Council. An Assistant is simultaneously a confidante, and enabler and an advocate for Residents' Council.

The third pillar in the foundation of a successful Residents' Council is the home **Administrator**. Administrators (sometimes referred to as Executive Directors or General Managers in some long-term care homes) help to set the tone in the home. Your home's management team, including the Administrator, plays a pivotal role in helping your Residents' Council be an effective and necessary part of the home's culture. It is important that Administrators view residents as "experts" because they have direct experience and intimate knowledge about what it is like to live in a long-term care home, and as such, they should be asked to be part of discussions and decision-making about things that may impact daily life in the home. In our earlier review of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2010 in Section 1, we identified that there are number of accountabilities that must be carried out by your home's licensee, often by way of the home Administrator. In order to do this, every Administrator (like the Residents' Council Assistant) needs to be well-informed about the legislation, including the specific powers and scope of a Residents' Council. An Administrator contributes to the success of a Residents' Council by communicating with resident leaders on an ongoing basis, keeping them informed and engaging them in problem-solving and quality initiatives.

It is inevitable that from time to time, residents and their supportive partners may disagree or hold conflicting points of view. Disagreements might also occur between individual residents or with other groups. With the three foundational pillars in mind, we can begin to explore tools for conflict management that allow us to focus on strengthening relationships, establishing cohesiveness, and supporting the sustainability of an effective Council in your home. We will start by:

- exploring how to achieve a collaborative Council and how to recognize some of the roadblocks you may encounter;
- suggesting 20 different ways your Council can encourage a culture of positive mutual support;
- examining the dynamics among people in your Council and subcommittees as each pass through particular stages of development;
- exploring problem-solving strategies and helpful tools to consider trying;
- illustrating several valuable conflict resolution and negotiation approaches; and
- describing how to evaluate how well your Council is performing.

The OARC team has developed a number of helpful tools and resources, including Fact Sheets. sample documents and templates which can be accessed on the OARC website: www.ontarc.com.

Consider adding your home-specific documents that relate to the topics mentioned in the above list at the end of this section.

Let's get started!

4.2 How to Achieve a Collaborative Residents' Council

Have you ever experienced or witnessed a group of people all working well together towards a common purpose and wonder how they were able to achieve a culture of collaboration within their team? We can all learn from those high-functioning groups, which have weathered their share of challenges and gradually formed a team where members trust and support each other so as to achieve their purpose. You will find that the most effective teams are built on a foundation of trust and a shared commitment to carry out their plans, where each person feels jointly accountable for the team's successes. On these teams, you will notice that people tend to commit to the group's decisions by means of engaging discussions within the group.

Figure 1: Characteristics of a High- Functioning Team. (Lencioni, 2002)

Identifying Roadblocks

There are five common roadblocks to collaborative teamwork frequently encountered by many groups. Each roadblock feeds another making it that much harder to be effective. Do the roadblocks summarized below seem familiar?

Think of a team where members do not seem to trust each other. You may notice that the absence of trust among the group tends to weaken their ability to engage in meaningful conversations and constructive conflict. If you have ever been in a team that has not established a foundation of trust, you may also notice that it is harder to get members to make solid commitments to any plans or decisions. This often leads to people not being quite sure of who is responsible for certain tasks, making it difficult to focus attention on shared results.

Teams who run into even one of these roadblocks are susceptible to the other four. Let's look at each roadblock in a bit more detail as well as some suggestions for addressing each one.

1. *Roadblock #1 – Absence of Trust*

If people do not trust one another, you may notice that they are hesitant to speak and be vulnerable within the team. You may find it very challenging to build a foundation of trust if people do not feel safe to share their thoughts and feelings.

Suggestions for Building a Foundation of Trust and Positive Mutual Support

The following ideas call for people to share their lived experiences and get to know each other as individuals with unique qualities.

a. **Learning Circles** – Learning circles are small groups of people who come together intentionally for the purpose of developing common ground and expressing mutual respect as they learn from one another. Learning circle is a style of meeting where there are a series of discussions on topics of interest through which residents share their knowledge and experience, learn new information and make shared group decisions. The technique for a learning circle is unique. After a topic is introduced, everyone is given the opportunity to speak on that topic for a brief period of time. There is no dialogue, judgement or comment exchange among members of the group; each and every person shares. Some learning circle members choose to pass an object (e.g., stick, ball, stone) from one person to the next. Whoever holds the object speaks. After everyone in the group has had the opportunity to share, open discussion and exchange of viewpoints occurs. This technique is helpful in establishing common ground because it illustrates the notion that every member of the group has something to say about the topic if they choose to participate. If the topic at hand seems to be difficult (emotionally charged or perceived as negative) the group leader can set the stage for sharing by saying, "Please share one thing that worries you followed by one thing that excites you about ____."

   Learning circles, like Residents' Councils vary in membership and duration, yet are clear about their intention and purpose. Residents come together for a meeting of equals. The goal is to encourage everyone to develop a strong sense of ownership over the process and products of the group's efforts.

b. **Team Effectiveness Exercise** – One person at a time, members identify what they believe to be the single most important contribution that they have made to the Residents' Council, as well as the one area in which that person must either improve or eliminate for the good of the Council. Residents' Councils have found it helpful if members on the leadership team share first, as this can role model the attributes of vulnerability and self-reflection to the others.

c. **Who I Am Exercise** – Team members spend a few minutes getting to know other members and after a set time they must share a few things they have learned about the other person, such as number of siblings, number of children, hometown, favourite author, favorite hobbies, first job, last job, etc.

Members of trusting teams. . .

- Look forward to opportunities to work as a team.
- Appreciate and tap into one another's skills and experiences.
- Know their limitations and strengths and are not afraid to ask for help or support.
- Offer and accept apologies without hesitation.
- Accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility.
- Focus time and energy on important issues, not politics.
- Are inclusive of others.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a conclusion.
- Take risks in offering feedback and assistance.

2. *Roadblock #2 – Fear of Conflict*

A lack of trust sets the stage for the second roadblock. Teams without trust are unable to engage in passionate debate about ideas. Instead, they are guarded in their comments and resort to discussions that mask their true feelings.

Suggestions for Encouraging Unfiltered Conflict around Ideas

You will want to stress to the team the importance and approval of healthy, constructive conflict. When you spot a healthy debate during meetings, think about drawing attention to it so that other members can recognize what constructive conflict looks like and can realize that this is just what is needed to strengthen the team.

a. **Mining** – Getting members to engage in healthy, constructive conflict often requires effort and extracting buried disagreements within the team.

Members that engage in productive conflict. . .

- Have lively discussions and interesting meetings that engage members.
- Put critical topics on the table for discussion.
- Quickly resolve concerns and problems.
- Minimize politics.

3. *Roadblock #3 – Lack of Commitment*

When team members do not feel comfortable openly surfacing their true opinions or engaging in healthy debate, members will rarely commit to team decisions, though they may pretend to agree in order to avoid controversy or conflict.

Suggestions for Encouraging a Genuine Commitment to Plans and Decisions

a. **Cascading Messaging** – Following a meeting, you will want to encourage the team to review the key decisions made during the meeting and agree on what needs to be communicated to various audiences, such as other residents, the home's management team, or the external community.

b. **Set Clear Deadlines** – Reach consensus on deadlines to secure each member's commitment.

Members that commit to the team's plans of action and decisions. . .

- Align the entire team around common objectives.
- Learn from mistakes and look to the future.
- Create clarity around direction and priorities.
- Take advantage of opportunities.

4. *Roadblock #4 – Avoidance of Accountability*

When team members do not openly commit to a clear plan or team decisions, it can create an atmosphere where members hesitate to hold each another accountable on actions and behaviors that are not in the best interest of the team.

Suggestions for Holding Each Other Accountable

a. **Confirm and Share Team Goals** – Find creative ways to let residents and staff understand what the team wants to achieve during the current calendar year.
b. **Routine Progress Reviews** – Regularly update team members on Council activities or tasks and review progress to accomplishing any goals.

Members who hold each other accountable. . .

- Establish respect among their team members who are held to the same expectations and principles.
- Identify potential problems quickly by questioning the approaches the team is using.

5. *Roadblock #5 – Not Focusing on Results*

Any lack of accountability makes it possible for members to put their personal needs above the team's goals to the detriment of the team.

Suggestions for Focusing on Collective Results

a. **Share the Team's Results** – Make public proclamations about intended success, which will help to garner appreciation for what your Council has achieved, and the benefits or changes that came out of your hard work.

Members Who Focus On Collective Results

- Tend to curb their personal interests for the good of the team.

4.3 20 Ways to Build a Culture of Positive Mutual Support

1. Express kindness at least once a day. Small gestures go a long way. Greet someone with a warm "hello," offer a hug, or check in at mealtimes and ask them how things are going.
2. Express sincere appreciation. When you think an appreciative thought – come on out and say it. We often think appreciative thoughts but do not voice them.
3. Listen to others. Do your best to listen to what other people are saying. Try to be present when others are speaking. Make a point of looking into their eyes and listening to their words… nod your head, it makes a world of difference.
4. Mentor someone who is struggling. Getting involved in someone's life… just one person… especially if they are struggling, lonely or isolated. Go visit them, take them out for a walk, for a cup of coffee or tea.
5. Volunteer in some way in your community or organization. Anything that interests you… when we help others, we help ourselves.

6. Find a way to donate to charity or to support a fundraising initiative within your home or within the broader community. Many Residents' Councils are engaged in meaningful work that allows residents, team members and other stakeholders to "give back" in some way. Look for opportunities to share your individual strengths to contribute to a project or cause that resonates with you.
7. Take the time to talk to strangers. Offer a handshake and introduce yourself. Something that is simply small talk to you can mean a lot to someone who is shy.
8. Be aware of body language. Your body language sends a strong message to others. Be aware, for example, if you have your arms folded across your chest while you talk, you may come across as shutting others out.
9. Be sincere. Your sincerity will help to make people feel appreciated.
10. Nurture talent in others. If you notice someone has a talent that they are not putting to use, let them know, you have noticed. Gently encourage them and offer suggestions of where they can share their talent or where they may go to learn more. Perhaps there is a way that these strengths can be used to enhance the Residents' Council.
11. Smile often. There is an anonymous quote that states, "A smile confuses an approaching frown."

12. Project positivity and eliminate negative thoughts. This positivity will then be returned by others.
13. Initiate physical contact. In this society in particular, there is a hesitance to touch one another. If it feels right, simply placing a hand on someone's shoulder can help someone to reconnect.
14. Tell those you care about how you feel about them. Do not wait until it is too late to let someone you care about know how you feel about him or her. Life is wonderful but short.
15. Help foster creativity. There are 1,001 ways to be creative. Creativity is not just for artists and musicians. Perhaps there is a talent show, program or club within your home that might allow someone to further explore or showcase their individual talents? Let them know about it.
16. Have meetings with an open, inclusive oriented atmosphere. Whether it is a fun group that meets or a Residents' Council meeting, let everyone know their opinion is valued. If you are not the leader or facilitator, you can still offer this to all.
17. Learn a quote or two that inspires you and offer it to others.
18. Lend a helping hand. Whether it is helping someone pick up something that spilled, or if they are lost and trying to find their way, reach out and offer help. It shows you care.

19. Give encouragement. If you catch yourself gossiping or listening to it, turn it around and promptly say two good things you know about them, e.g., "This is what I know about…" It can vanquish gossip. Every one of us has the power to empower others simply by generously giving praise and showing encouragement.
20. Take time for yourself. Find an affirmation book that has meaning for you and read a short part of it each day. By taking the time to sit and reflect in your own way, you will find you are happier and more available for others.

Adapted from "50 Little Things You Can Do to Empower People." *Posted by Donald Latumahina*
Note: This form is used with permission by the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils

4.4 Working Successfully as a Team

Every team, whether it is a Residents' Council or a subcommittee, moves through particular stages of group dynamics to increase their potential, and may even go through a stage more than once. Knowing what stage your team is in will help your Residents' Council to:

- recognize where the team is at in their development;
- know what is happening to the team and why; and
- know what to do next.

Teams seldom stay in one stage very long. As teams move through projects and transitions, they also move through team stages. Below are the characteristics you will notice at each stage. Can you identify what stage your Residents' Council is currently experiencing?

Forming	• Period of testing and orientation • Expectations learned including how members fit
Storming	• Members acquire roles and responsibilities • More conflict as members compete for roles
Norming	• Cohesion develops (unified) • Roles established, consensus forms around group goals • Members improve mutual understanding, acceptance
Performing	• Team becomes more task-oriented • Efficient work coordination, conflict resolution • Highly cooperative, high trust, committed to goals, plans, actions

1st Stage: Forming

- The *forming* of the team takes place.
- Council members tend to want to be accepted by others and to avoid controversy or conflict.
- Serious issues and feelings are often avoided, and residents focus on being busy with routines (such as organizing the Council, who does what, when to meet, etc.).
- Members are gathering information and impressions about each other as well as about the Council's work.
- This is a comfortable stage to be in, but the avoidance of conflict comes with a risk of not getting much done.
- Members get to know one another, strengthen relationships, and make new friendships.
- A good opportunity to see how each member of the Council works as an individual and as a team.

2nd Stage: Storming

- The *storming* stage is necessary for the Council to reach its potential.
- This stage is characterized by conflict where different ideas compete for consideration during meetings.
- Members address issues, such as what problems they are really supposed to solve, how they will function independently and as a team, and what leadership model they want for their Council.
- Council members open up to each other and respectfully challenge each other's ideas and perspectives.
- In some cases, *storming* can be resolved quickly. In others, the Council may never leave this stage. How members respect and appreciate each others' differences usually determines whether the Council will ever move out of this stage.
- It can be touchy or unpleasant for members who are uncomfortable with conflict.
- The leadership team may want to consider emphasizing and encouraging respecting different opinions.
- This phase can become destructive to the team and will lower motivation if allowed to get out of control.

3rd Stage: Norming

- The Council manages to identify specific things they want to work on and members come to a shared agreement to support teamwork.
- Some members may have to place their own ideas on hold and agree with others in order to help the whole team work effectively.
- Members tend to be more comfortable expressing their opinions and experiences.
- All Council members agree to work as a collaborative team with a shared purpose so that the Council can be successful.

4th Stage: Performing

- Not all Residents' Councils will reach the performing stage, and that is okay. What matters most is how the team works together. This stage is the outcome of members' efforts.
- Teams in this stage are able to function as a cohesive unit and find ways to perform their role and activities smoothly and effectively without destructive conflict.
- Team members are highly motivated and group energy is focused on the Council's activities.
- Disagreements are expected and okay as long as they are channeled through means acceptable to Council members.

4.5 Working Together to Creatively Resolve Problems

Some people argue that problem solving is the art of reasoning in its purest form. We all intuitively solve problems each day and seldom solve them in a conscious structured manner, particularly as a group, so it is no surprise that there is no single best way to resolve issues as they arise. Fortunately, this makes it possible for us to creatively generate many different approaches to collaboratively resolving issues through the gift of seeing things in non-traditional ways and envisioning fresh and unique possibilities.

As a group, we can be more insightful and effective at addressing issues than we can possibly be individually. Building problem solving skills within your Council will help achieve many important benefits, including the following:

- Supports and encourages a cooperative atmosphere which promotes positive mutual support among members.
- Encourages collaborative review of information and healthy discussions which help everyone involved to understand each other's underlying interests.
- Promotes sharing ideas and information freely.
- Encourages the group to generate many options.
- Addresses problems at the root rather than applying a temporary Band-Aid, only for them to reappear.
- People with a vested interest in a problem are engaged and can become involved in solving problems and implementing solutions.
- The collective wisdom of the Council is brought to bear on problems, resulting in more creative, permanent solutions to persistent problems.

Teamwork is a process that includes everyone and encourages shared decision-making. Consensus is one approach which allows collaborative problem solving to work effectively when more than two people need to reach an agreement. Consensus prevents domination by the majority, builds trust, promotes joint thinking by a diverse group, which leads to creative solutions and supports sharing of information, especially under conditions of conflict. Consensus does not mean that everyone will be equally happy with the decision or wholeheartedly agree with it, but all do accept that the decision is the best that can be made at the time with the people involved.

There are six steps commonly used which can help you understand and resolve problems:

1. State what you think the actual problem is and get acknowledgement from each person that the problem exists. Sometimes what we think is the issue is actually a symptom of the real underlying problem.

2. Try to figure out what is actually causing the problem. Before looking for potential solutions, it helps to identify all possible causes or contributors to the issue. It is easier to decide what the ideal solution would be when you feel you have a good understanding of the actual problem. How deep can you dig into the obstacles to learn more about what is driving this issue?

3. Clarify what would make an acceptable solution since what may be considered a resolution to one person might not be looked at the same way by another.

4. When possible, partner with others to suggest a range of possible ways to address the root cause of the problem. Consider making a long list of as many potential options you can collectively think of and then evaluate them. Workable solutions are developed by creatively combining and modifying ideas.

5. Select the solution(s) which is felt would be the most effective in solving the problem with the least risks. To help, compare the potential results of each alternative solution you listed. In some situations, you may need to gain acceptance of the solution by other people or get their thumbs up to carry it out.

6. Carry out the preferred solution after planning what needs to get done before implementing. You may wish to consider monitoring the situation afterwards to ensure that the solution is effectively addressing the problem.

Collectively resolving problems requires the Council to develop a respectful intimacy among members based on mutual understanding and an appreciation of the group's diversity. The group experiences success in working together, and in getting something accomplished that could not have been done better or through any other approach.

Groups that successfully engage in collective problem solving often share these desirable qualities:

- Members voluntarily participate.
- All members have an equal opportunity to help create the Council's approach to resolving problems.
- The group creates a safe and supportive atmosphere in which everyone feels free to state their views and to disagree.
- All members hear relevant information at the same time and have the opportunity to call a special meeting to present the issue and ask for suggestions.
- Disagreements are respected; members can illuminate unrecognized problems and serve as a spark for improving a decision.
- When someone disagrees, the group tries to discover what that person needs to accept the decision and strives to find a reasonable way to address any concerns. Consider asking the person, "What do you disagree with? What information do you need to be able to accept the decision?"
- Members are committed to working together and with the home's management team to prevent any issue from reoccurring.

4.6 Respectful Ways to Manage Conflict

There is no single best way to deal with conflict. How you respond will depend on the current situation. Managing conflict is a voluntary two-way process. It is meant to anticipate, limit and resolve disagreements so that the people involved can respectfully reach solutions which are acceptable to the participants with minimal harm to their existing relationship. Negotiation founded on the principles of humanity and partnership requires that you clearly express your interests and needs, empathise with the interests and needs of the other participant, and cooperatively problem-solve together to reach a mutually acceptable outcome.

Many people find it quite helpful to prepare in advance how they will manage their emotions and behaviour during any tense situations, including how they will interact with other participants in a constructive way. One useful approach to a difficult situation is to leave it to the end. The more mutual agreement there is between parties in the beginning, the more difficult it is to break the entire process over any given issue.

Effective communication skills are essential to successfully handle conflict. Try to ensure that the conflict is about the issue, *not* the person. Respect for the other participants is vital for success. The more information each person has about the interests and motivations of the other, the more likely a mutual resolution will be reached. Empathy coupled with a problem-solving, co-operative approach will likely result in a positive outcome.

> "To me it seems that to give happiness is a far nobler goal that to attain it: and that what we exist for is much more a matter of relations to others than a matter of individual progress: much more a matter of helping others to heaven than of getting there ourselves."
>
> -Lewis Carroll [Charles Lutwidge Dodgson] (1832-1898)
> Author, Mathematician, Clergyman

Constructive Outcomes of Negotiation

Conflicts and disagreements are a natural and inevitable part of human interaction. Even though it can feel quite uncomfortable at the time, some long-term outcomes of successful negotiation include:

- uncovering and clarifying important issues;
- strengthening relationships through respectful discussion of one's differences;
- generating improved and/or creative solutions; and
- experiencing a sense of achievement in reaching mutually acceptable understanding.

Risks of Avoiding Conflict

Conflict is stressful and disturbs us. However, when what upsets us is denied or avoided, the energy used to ignore it is not only diverted away from the important activities and issues, but also leads to damaged relationships, morale, trust and could make future collaboration difficult or even impossible.

When you are in the heat of trying to negotiate, it can be a challenge to focus on the problem and not take things personally or make them personal. At the end of the day, we are human beings trying to figure out a mutually beneficial solution. Try to think of yourselves as partners in a side-by-side search for a fair agreement advantageous to each. In consideration of that spirit, we encourage you to try to:

- separate the person from the problem;
- focus on each person's interests rather than their stance on the issue;
- generate as many options as possible together with the persons who are involved; and
- be as objective about the issue as possible.

Identify Your Negotiation Style

Try to understand your personal approach to managing conflict and then adjust that style in response to the circumstances under which you need to negotiate. There is no single correct approach for handling a conflict; each style is helpful in certain situations and can have negative consequences when overused or when used inappropriately.

Individual styles of negotiating conflict generally fall into one of the following five patterns:

- Collaborative
- Competitive
- Compromising
- Accommodating
- Avoiding

Approach #1: Collaborative Conflict Management

- Involves exploring an issue to identify each participant's underlying concerns and interests and finding solutions that truly satisfy these concerns.
- Requires an investment of time and energy.
- Tends to be mutually beneficial.
- Appropriate when the concerns of both sides are too important to be compromised.
- Not all problems and conflicts require such optimal solutions.
- Be careful not to overuse collaboration on less substantial matters, particularly just to minimize risk or responsibility.
- Your collaborative efforts will often elicit similar collaborative responses from the other participant; if they do not, this may be a signal that you need to rethink the relationship and develop another negotiation approach.

Approach #2: Competitive Conflict Management

- Primarily interest-driven, with the goal of having your side win and the other side lose.
- Participants tend to use whatever power and influence is available to protect and promote their interests.
- Appropriate when unpopular courses of action are needed.
- Initially, more collaborative approaches have shown that other participants are likely to take advantage of non-competitive behavior.
- Overuse may result in lost partnerships, reluctance from others to share information, and a competitive climate where more time may be spent on battling for influence than on constructive problem-solving.

Approach #3: Compromising Conflict Management

- An effort to find mutually acceptable solutions that partially satisfy your interests and those of the other participants without excessively straining your relationship.
- Requires participants to deal directly with the conflict and underlying interests at hand, but does not require exploring these interests in as much depth as the collaborative approach.
- Appropriate when participants have equal positions of power or influence and are strongly committed to mutually exclusive objectives.

Approach #4: Accommodating Conflict Management

- One participant tends to place emphasis on the concerns and interests of the other participant rather than their own.
- Although it will not move your agenda forward, accommodation can be a useful strategy, especially if the issue at hand is very important to the other participant and the outcome has no particular negative consequences for you or your interests.
- Can be used as a goodwill gesture to help maintain a cooperative relationship with the other participant.
- Be cautious because continual deference to the concerns of others may deprive you of the recognition and respect you need to influence future negotiations and outcomes.

Approach #5: Avoidance Conflict Management

- You address neither your interests nor the competing interests of the other participant.
- Not generally viewed as a useful strategy or a long-term solution.
- May be appropriate under the following circumstances:
  - an issue is trivial and does not merit your time; and/or
  - the potential damage of confronting the conflict far outweighs any possible benefits.
- You have little or no power or influence and perceive no chance of satisfying your interests.

  Postponing is a variation of avoidance and can be a useful strategy when you might need time to regroup and assess a situation, gather more information or resources, or engage partners who have the power and influence you need to address and negotiate the conflict more effectively.

Closing Remarks: The Residents' Council Journey

We at OARC hope you find this guide helpful at every stage of your Residents' Council journey. We trust that it helps to achieve and maintain optimum resident engagement in each and every long-term care home.

This guide was written to support and encourage all Residents' Councils to be the best they can be. We believe the intent of Residents' Council meetings is to provide a safe, comfortable environment for residents to come together on a regular basis. Regular meetings give residents the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences with each other and to work alongside their management teams, in an effort to improve the quality of living for all residents in the home. Incorporating "the resident experience" as an equal component in quality improvement strategies will – we believe – create a true feeling of "home" for everyone.

It is helpful to remember the important roles that each of the "three pillars" (outlined on pages 136-137) can play when it comes to developing a strong foundation for your Residents' Council operations. Continuing to invest in relationships and respectful communication between the pillars will contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of the Residents' Council in your home. The work of your Council will be maximized if you take the time to collaborate and share with other partners and stakeholders, instead of operating in departmental/group silos.

Residents' Councils are an opportunity to remind all of us of the importance to continue growing in our compassion, our kindness and forgiveness to others and to ourselves and, above all, to celebrate life!

Appendix: Sources of Information and Support

The following organizations may be able to assist you in obtaining resources to support improving the effectiveness of your Residents' Council and transforming the culture of your home to become more resident-centred.

Recreation Professionals of Ontario

Recreation Professionals of Ontario is committed to the professional development and support of its members involved in recreation services for seniors.

PO Box 293
Port Hope, ON L1A 3W4
Telephone: 1-888-594-0140
Fax: 1-888-494-7038
http://www.activitypro.ca/AboutRPO

AdvantAge Ontario

AdvantAge Ontario is the provincial association representing not-for-profit providers of long-term care services and housing for seniors. Members include municipal and charitable long-term care homes, non-profit nursing homes, seniors' housing projects and community service agencies. AdvantAge Ontario operates independent of government and is funded primarily from member fees and revenue generated through programs and services.

64 Jardin Drive, Unit 3B
Concord, ON L4K 3P3
Telephone: 905-851-8821
Fax: 905-851-0744
https://www.advantageontario.ca/

Advocacy Center for the Elderly

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE) is a community-based legal clinic for low-income senior citizens. ACE is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors at least half of whom are seniors. ACE is funded through Legal Aid Ontario and is the first legal clinic in Canada to specialize in the legal problems of seniors. ACE provides direct legal services to low-income seniors, public legal education, and engages in law reform activities. ACE services and activities are in relation to areas of law of special importance to the seniors' population.

701-2 Carleton Street
Toronto, ON M5B 1J3
Telephone: 416-598-2656
www.**advocacycentreelderly**.org/

Aphasia Institute

The Institute serves people living with or impacted by aphasia. The Institute's mission is to give hope to people with aphasia and their families by developing and sharing innovative solutions that reduce language barriers to full life participation.

73 Scarsdale Road
Toronto, ON M3B 2R2
Telephone: 416-226-3636
Fax: 416-226-3706

Concerned Friends of Ontario Citizens in Care Facilities

Concerned Friends of Ontario Citizens in Care Facilities is a volunteer, registered charity that is dedicated to advocacy at the systemic and individual levels in order to improve the care and quality of life in Ontario's long-term care homes.

2nd Floor, 140 Merton Street
Toronto, ON M4S 1A1
Toronto Area: 416-489-0146
Toll-free: 1-855-489-0146
www.concernedfriends.ca

CNIB

CNIB is a registered charity which provides community-based support, knowledge and a national voice to ensure Canadians who are blind or partially sighted have the confidence, skills and opportunities to fully participate in life. Any Canadian who has experienced a loss of vision can come to CNIB for rehabilitation support. Their goal is to help you lead the life you want – whether that means offering you helpful products like magnifiers or large-button phones, helping you access our comprehensive library of talking books, getting you in touch with a peer support group, or working with you one-on-one in your own home to learn practical techniques for independent living.

1929 Bayview Ave
Toronto, ON M4G 3E8
Telephone: 1-800-563-2642
Email: info@cnib.ca
http://www.cnib.ca/en/Pages/default.aspx

Government of Ontario, Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care (MOHLTC)

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is responsible for administering the health care system and providing services to the Ontario public through such programs as health insurance, drug benefits, assistive devices, care for the mentally ill, long-term care, home care services, community and public health, health promotion, and disease prevention. It also regulates hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care homes, operates psychiatric hospitals and medical laboratories, and coordinates emergency health services.
80 Grosvenor Street, 5th Floor, Hepburn Block, Toronto, ON M7A 2C4
General Inquiry: 416-327-4327
Toll Free: 800-268-1153
TTY Toll Free: 800-387-5559
http://www.health.gov.on.ca

MOHLTC, Long-Term Care Homes Division

The Long-Term Care Homes Division will help deliver on the ministry's key priorities for Long-Term Care. Working with partners from across the Ministry and government, the Division leads the design, development, and implementation of legislation, regulation, and policy. Providing program/sector oversight and administration, the Division also administers long term care home licenses; provides oversight and ensures accountability and compliance of Long-Term Care Homes and X-ray Facilities with applicable legislation and Ministry policy. The Long-Term Care Homes Division is comprised of the Assistant Deputy Minister's Office and also includes two branches: the Long-Term Care Inspections Branch and the Licensing and Policy Branch.
1075 Bay Street, 11th Floor, Toronto, ON M5S 2B1
General Inquiry: 416-327-7461
Fax: 416-327-7603
https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-long-term-care

MOHLTC, Inspections Branch

The Inspections Branch, an office of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, provides leadership and direction to accelerate sustainable health system performance improvement in areas of provincial priority or identified need. The branch is comprised of Long-Term Care Home Compliance and Enforcement, and Licensing and X-Ray Inspection.
1075 Bay Street, 11th Floor, Toronto, ON M5S 2B1
General Inquiry: 416-327-7461
Fax: 416-327-7603
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/ltc/31_pr_inspections.aspx

Government of Ontario, Ontario Seniors' Secretariat

Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility develops and facilitates access to public services to improve the quality of life for seniors and helps them lead safe, engaged, active and healthy lives; supports accessibility for people with disabilities by implementing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and by removing and preventing barriers in everyday life.
College Park 5th Flr, 777 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 1S5
Toll-Free: 1-888-910-1999
Email: infoseniors@ontario.ca
www.seniors.gov.on.ca

Java Music Program

The Java Music Club program is a research-based peer support activity group program designed for residential care. The program has been implemented in over 600 organizations across Canada and the US, including long-term care (nursing homes, skilled nursing), assisted living, retirement and independent living as well as adult day centers, hospitals and senior services within the community. This program is intuitive and easy to facilitate by recreation staff, residents, volunteers or family members. The focus is on peer support – residents helping residents – which adds purpose and meaning to their lives.
Telephone: 647-660-3910
Tool-free: 1-866-523-2411 (Canada and US)
Email: info@JavaGP.com
http://javagp.com/

Ontario Association of Residents' Councils

The Ontario Association of Residents' Councils (OARC) is a non-profit association with membership from both profit and non-profit long-term care homes in Ontario. It was founded in 1981 by residents and continues to be governed by a Board of Directors, all of whom are residents of member long-term care homes.
Mailing Address:
4261 Highway 7 East Suite#A14-360
Markham, ON L3R 9W6
Toll Free: 1-800-532-0201
Email: info@ontarc.com

Family Councils Ontario

The Family Councils Ontario supports the development and sustainability of Family Councils in long-term care homes and facilitates opportunities for Family Councils within a region to meet. Family Councils and Regional Family Council Networks are led by volunteers. Family Councils Ontario supports the development and sustainability of Family Councils in long-term care homes through resources, consultation and networking opportunities for groups of family and friends of the residents of long-term care homes.
Mailing Address:
2-140 King St. East Suite 305
Hamilton, ON L8N 1B2
Telephone: 647-427-5551
Toll free: 1-877-622-9968
Fax: 416-487-0344
Email: TFearon@fco.ngo
https: //www.fco.ngo/

Ontario Gerontology Association

The Ontario Gerontology Association (OGA) works to improve the quality of life of all seniors. Their focus is on positive aging, aging at home, and age-friendly communities which contribute to independent living.

351 Christie Street, Suite 216
Toronto, ON M6G 3C3
Telephone: 416-535-6034
Fax: 416-535-6907
Email: info@gerontario.org
http://www.gerontario.org

Ontario Long-Term Care Association

OLTCA is the largest long-term care provider association in Ontario and the only association that represents the full mix of long-term care operators – private, not-for-profit, charitable and municipal. Member homes are regulated by the Ontario MOHLTC and provide care and accommodation services to residents throughout Ontario.

425 University Avenue, Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1T6
Telephone: 647-256-3490
Fax: 416-642-0635
Email: info@oltca.com
https://www.oltca.com/OLTCA/

Elder Abuse Ontario

The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (ONPEA) is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to raising awareness about the abuse and neglect of older adults.

Mailing Address:
PO Box 38628, Cummer PO
Toronto, Ontario M2K 2Y5
Telephone: 416-916-6728
http://www.elderabuseontario.com/

Ontario Retirement Communities Association

ORCA is a voluntary, non-profit association established in 1977 that sets professional operating standards, inspects and accredits retirement residences in Ontario. ORCA-approved retirement residences provide care and services to 22,000 seniors in Ontario.

2401 Bristol Circle, Suite 202
Oakville, ON L6H 5S9
Telephone: 905-403-0500
Toll-Free: 1-888-263-5556
Fax: 905-829-1594
https://www.orcaretirement.com/

Pioneer Network

Pioneer Network was formed in 1997 by a small group of prominent professionals in long-term care to advocate for person-directed care. Pioneer Network advocates for elders across the spectrum of living options and is working towards a culture of aging that supports the care of elders in settings where individual voices are heard, and individual choices are respected. This movement towards more humane, consumer-driven models that embrace flexibility and self-determination has come to be known as the long-term care culture change movement.

P.O. Box 18609,
Rochester, NY 14618
Telephone: 1-585-287-6436
http://www.pioneernetwork.net

Therapeutic Recreation Ontario

Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) is dedicated to guiding, supporting, educating and advocating for its members by providing direction and advancing the profession. They enable the TR practitioner to deliver quality professional services and protect the rights of individuals across diverse delivery settings.

850 King St. West, Unit 20
Oshawa, ON L1J 8N5
Telephone: 1-289-626-8761
Fax: 1-289-656-1693
http://www.trontario.org

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