

QuickGuide

Peer support network topic: Writing up peer network meeting notes

Introduction

Good facilitation of Peer Support Networks includes writing up meeting notes. This Quick Guide will help you to develop your group's method of note taking.

Let's get started

Why are meeting notes important?

Taking and sharing really good meeting notes is a skill, and a powerful way to keep people engaged. Let's look at why taking good notes is so important:

- Notes are a record of the work of the group, and mean actions can be tracked and previous discussion and decisions can be referred to
- Indicates to members that the group's meetings are taken seriously
- Honours members' participation and contributions
- Reminds members of what happened in the meeting, and builds enthusiasm

Taking good notes

People approach note taking in various ways, and you may have your own method. Here's a clear and simple process for you to consider in taking peer network meeting notes:

Prepare

Make sure you have a structured template agreed and ready to go.

Here's an example that would work well for peer network meetings, and which of course can be adapted to meet your needs. It is filled in with some examples

Date:23/06/2017

Present: Mary, Peter, Michelle, David, Bob. Guest: Sally (NDIA)

Topic	Who	Notes	Action and who
Welcome	Mary	Main topic today will be setting a meeting calendar, and a speaker from NDIA	Nil
Check in - what's alive in you today?	Peter	Feeling sad Happy, looking forward to the meeting Some trouble my son is having at	Nil

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		school Experiencing a lot of pain today Holiday excitement	
Setting a meeting calendar for the year	Mary	All agreed that fortnightly meetings are best	Put calendar in a table, send out with notes - Michelle
What does an NDIA planning meeting look like?	Sally (NDIA)	See attachment for Sally's handout	Send electronic version of handout - Sally Add attachment to meeting notes - Michelle

Make sure someone has volunteered before the meeting to take the notes during the meeting. It is best if this is not the person also facilitating.

Support the note taker by sharing the meeting agenda with them before it starts. Share the note taking task around.

Take good notes

The most important thing a person can do to take good notes is to listen. Let people talk and follow what they are saying. Focus on capturing:

- Decisions
- Actions
- Information that really needs to be recorded

Don't write everything - just the highlights. You can type directly into a template, or hand write if you prefer, typing the notes into the template later.

Sometimes if it's a very important discussion a facilitator could make an audio recording of the meeting. Don't forget to ask for consent from members to record if you are going to do this.

Review and tidy the notes

Soon after the meeting, tidy up your notes, correcting mistakes and clarifying, summarising or adding anything that wasn't captured

Implement the notes

This might mean reminding people of the actions they are responsible for at the end of the meeting.

It also means sharing the notes with everyone when the notes are finished.

Where to go to get more information

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See Quick Guide: After the meeting: the follow-up work that will get people to the next network meeting

Useful web links:

The Centre of Excellence for Peer Support (mental health) has some great resources for peer support networks:

<http://www.peersupportvic.org/index.php/2014-12-15-22-42-49/2014-12-16-02-22-27/Resources/>

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