

# Substance Use Recovery Services Advisory Committee (SURSAC) Norms and Expectations

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## General guidelines

- Assume good, positive intent from everyone
- Consider diversity, equity, inclusion, and Tribal impacts in the work we are doing
- Offer “both/and” as opposed to “either/or”
- Show mutual respect
- Be solution-focused: When identifying a barrier or systemic problem, offer ideas for potential solutions as well to inspire progress and creativity
- Be fearless and willing to share innovative ideas or dissenting opinions with confidence that they will be heard
- Make the best effort to attend all committee meetings. If attendance isn’t possible, inform the SURSAC Administrator, [Kelley Sandaker](#).

## Language and terms<sup>1</sup>

- Use people-first language (e.g. “person experiencing homelessness” rather than “homeless person”)
- Use the term “substance use” rather than “substance abuse” which is stigmatizing
- Avoid using the term “addict” (person-first language alternative: “person with a substance use disorder”)
- When someone forgets to use these terms, assume that their intent is still good, and be gentle with reminders to use agreed-upon language

## Chat guidelines

- The chat function can be used if attendees have questions or comments that arise during the meeting (e.g. “How many regions have recovery navigator programs?”)
- If you are a Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) or Department of Health (DOH) program team member, or other subject matter expert with direct knowledge that can answer someone’s question, it is appropriate to provide a response in the chat

## Questions and follow-up

Unanswered questions or other follow-up related to HCA programs will be addressed with internal HCA meetings in between SURSAC meetings, and communicated to SURSAC members during the “previous meeting recap” portion of the agenda, or within a follow-up summary document.

## Virtual environment

- Type detailed questions/ideas into the chat so they can be referenced at a later time
- Use *Raise Hand* function when someone else is speaking to indicate you would like to speak next
- Having your camera on is not required, although it is encouraged and helpful in facilitating conversation

## Decision making procedures and final plan recommendations

- Decision making is based on general consensus. If/when a vote is needed to move a decision forward, each member has a single vote.
- For those who have designated alternates, the alternate may submit a vote in the absence of the primary committee member.
- Committee members must be present at decision-making meetings in order to use their vote

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<sup>1</sup> [Words Matter - Terms to Use and Avoid When Talking About ...](#)

- All decisions will be submitted as recommendations to the Health Care Authority. If HCA determines any of the advisory committee's recommendations are not feasible to adopt and implement, then HCA will communicate that back to the committee.
- Recommendations that arise during committee meetings will be reviewed and processed internally by the Substance Use Recovery Services Plan team at HCA, and categorized into the following:
  - Outside scope of committee objectives
  - Not viable (with explanation)
  - Already being included in the Plan or elsewhere implemented within state program(s)
  - Topic for further committee discussion to sort out details

## Use of delegates

When a committee member is absent, they can ask anyone of their choice to attend the meeting as a member of the public who can report back to the committee member. Such delegates will be able to provide input at the end of the meeting as part of public feedback but will not have the same main discussion and voting privileges as the committee members. State legislator alternates are members of the committee, per RCW [71.24.546](#).

## Conflicts of interest

### Guidelines

- If a SURSAC member has a beneficial interest in a SURSAC action, decision, recommendation, etc., the member should disclose that information to the rest of the committee.
- If the member feels they cannot vote on the matter in an impartial way due to the beneficial interest, the member should recuse themselves from the vote related to that recommendation.

Members' contribution to discussion and sharing their personal and professional expertise is encouraged at all meetings.

*Example:* A SURSAC member represents a provider organization (Organization X). SURSAC is creating recommendations for increased funding for all providers of a particular service and Organization X provides that service. In this situation, the SURSAC member who represents Organization X should disclose to the rest of the committee that their organization could potentially benefit from that particular recommendation.

*Example:* A SURSAC member represents Organization X. SURSAC is developing a recommendation that the state provide a certain amount of funding specifically for Organization X, (i.e. "SURSAC recommends the state provide \$100,000 in Grant Y funding to Organization X to provide this service".) In this situation, the SURSAC member representing Organization X should disclose to the rest of the committee that their organization would benefit from that particular recommendation **and** refrain from engaging in voting on that particular recommendation. If they feel they are not able to be impartial in the discussion, they should also refrain from discussion related to the recommendation.

SURSAC members who are also state officers or state employees are subject to the Ethics in Public Service Act ([RCW 42.52](#)), and may be subject to additional restrictions/requirements. If these members have any questions or concerns regarding conflicts of interest, they should consult with their agency's ethics advisor and agency ethics policies as appropriate.

## Public comment

- Committee members are welcome and encouraged to invite those with lived/living experience and expertise, as well as peers in their areas of representation, to the committee meetings.
- Dedicated Public Comment periods will be offered at the beginning and end of each meeting, for 10 minutes each.

- Ongoing input from meeting attendees who are not committee members will be invited during each main topic discussion.
- Members of the press are considered members of the public. They may attend meetings and may also participate in the public comment section of the meeting. However, SURSAC members, presenters, state agency staff, and other meeting attendees are not obligated to respond to any inquiries during live recorded meetings. If someone from the press makes a direct inquiry during a committee meeting, attendees may do the following:
  - Respond to the inquiry or politely decline to comment on the inquiry
  - Ask the press to reach out to them independently or by contacting a media relations manager or communications consultant at the individuals' agency/organization.