

Stop this meeting, I want to get off!

Facilitator notes

Introduction

The sketch was deliberately over the top, but picks up on issues consumers and staff sometimes encounter.

Ask group members to comment or put hand up if elements rang true. What did they notice?

Some issues:

- Poor understanding of the role of Consumer Participation within the organisation (opening conversation before the meeting)
- Poor communication with the consumer and staff (emailing out information at the last minute)
- Relationship building (no time to get to know Angela. Colleagues do not know Matt's name)
- Composition of the committee (why have these staff been chosen?)
- A huge agenda with enormous reports, etc, attached
- Lack of orientation for the consumer (large information pack but nothing else)
- Rushing through items (The VAGO report)
- Use of endless acronyms (Mitzi)
- What is the role of the consumer? (Angela is asked to provide input on behalf of Arabic speaking women)
- Impossible timelines (hastily organising the "Planning meeting")

Reflection (individual, in pairs or in groups)

Of all the issues with this scenario, reflect for a couple of minutes, which most struck you as true?

Ask participants to share their reflection:

Has anybody else experienced this issue or has seen it happen?

Has anybody used some successful strategies to tackle the problem?

Broader discussion

In this scenario, the consumer has been appointed to a committee where there is poor respect for or understanding of the role. There has been no orientation for her, or for the staff who will be working with her.

Also, she has been asked to speak on behalf of a consumer group with which she has no contact or connection. How do you engage with consumers beyond the meeting room to ensure genuine partnership within your service?

Across your organisation:

- Does your organisation have a clear policy and process for involving consumers/carers?
- How does consumer participation on one committee fit with rest the of consumer participation activities within your service – do you have a framework?
- Are your staff aware of the policy and process?
- Are they supported and resourced to implement it within their area of work?

Within your committees:

- Do you provide genuine orientation for consumer representatives? Are they able to provide feedback about their concerns and issues discussed and have them addressed?
- Do you provide orientation to staff and Chairs to support them work constructively in partnership with consumers?
- Is there a clear communication strategy to ensure consumers receive enough information/preparation for meetings (agenda, location of meeting, briefings etc)?
- Are your meetings productive and meaningful?