



Board Member Responsibilities Manual

VOLUNTEER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

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Board Member Responsibilities Manual for Volunteers for Mental Health

1. Introduction

This manual outlines the responsibilities, expectations, and guidelines for the board members of VMH. Our organization focuses on volunteer-driven efforts to gather data to bridge the gaps in mental health care and influence evidence-based policy. Board members play a crucial role in guiding our mission, ensuring good governance, and contributing their skills to advance our vision of improving mental health care.

2. Board Overview

The board of VMH is composed of members who bring diverse skills, experience, and perspectives to support the organization's mission. The board's primary responsibilities are to provide strategic direction, oversee financial performance, ensure accountability, and promote the organization's vision and values.

A. Structure of the Board

- **Chairperson:** Provides leadership to the board, chairs meetings, and serves as the primary liaison with the executive team.
- **Vice-Chairperson:** Assists the Chairperson in leadership duties and serves in their absence.
- **Secretary:** Responsible for board records, including meeting minutes, and maintaining official documents.
- **Treasurer:** Oversees financial management, budgeting, and reporting.
- **Members at Large:** Provide specific expertise and contribute to decision-making in their areas of specialty.

3. Board Member Roles and Responsibilities

A. Governance and Leadership

- **Strategic Direction:** Work with the executive team to set the organization's strategic direction. This involves participating in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of the organization's strategic plan.
- **Policy Setting:** Approve and oversee policies that define the values, ethics, and operating principles of the organization.
- **Legal Oversight:** Ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, and standards of good practice, including privacy and data protection laws.

B. Fiduciary Duties

- **Duty of Care:** Board members are expected to act in good faith and with the care that an ordinarily prudent person would exercise under similar circumstances.
- **Duty of Loyalty:** Prioritize the interests of the organization over personal interests, avoiding conflicts of interest.
- **Financial Oversight:** Monitor financial performance, approve budgets, review financial statements, and ensure the organization remains financially sound.

- **Fundraising and Resource Development:** Support fundraising efforts by leveraging personal and professional networks, participating in fundraising campaigns, and assisting in identifying potential donors or sponsors.

C. Program Oversight

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Oversee the progress of key programs, including volunteer recruitment and data collection activities, to ensure alignment with the organization's mission and goals.
- **Support to Programs:** Provide expertise and insights to help optimize program delivery, ensuring the effectiveness of data gathering and its subsequent use for advocacy and policy influence.

D. Advocacy and Representation

- **Ambassador Role:** Act as ambassadors for [Organization Name], promoting the mission, goals, and activities to external stakeholders, including the media, government, donors, and the public.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Participate in advocacy initiatives based on the evidence gathered by volunteers, helping to influence public policy related to mental health care.

E. Organizational Development

- **Executive Support:** Work closely with the Executive Director and senior staff, providing mentorship, guidance, and support.
- **Performance Evaluation:** Contribute to the performance evaluation of the Executive Director, ensuring accountability and alignment with the organization's goals.

F. Meetings and Commitments

- **Board Meetings:** Attend and actively participate in all board meetings, which are typically held quarterly. Members are expected to come prepared, having reviewed all meeting materials in advance.
- **Committee Work:** Serve on at least one board committee, such as the Finance Committee, Fundraising Committee, or Program Committee, and actively contribute to its initiatives.
- **Annual General Meeting:** Participate in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and other key organizational events.

4. Expectations for Board Members

A. Time Commitment

Board members are expected to dedicate sufficient time to fulfill their duties, including attending meetings, participating in committee activities, preparing for board discussions, and representing the organization in external events.

B. Professional Conduct

- **Teamwork:** Work collaboratively with fellow board members and staff, respecting diverse viewpoints and contributing positively to discussions.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information received as part of board duties.

- Integrity: Uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism, serving as a role model for staff, volunteers, and the community.

C. Support for the Mission

- Active Engagement: Be genuinely interested and invested in the organization's mission to bridge gaps in mental health care through volunteer-driven data collection.
- Financial Contribution: While not mandatory, board members are encouraged to make personal contributions to the organization, demonstrating their commitment to its cause.

5. Committees

Board committees are established to assist the board in its oversight duties. Each committee reports to the full board and is responsible for specific areas of governance. The key committees at VMH include:

A. Finance and Audit Committee

- Purpose: Ensure the financial integrity of the organization, including reviewing budgets, financial reports, and audit results.
- Responsibilities: Work with the Treasurer to recommend financial strategies and policies that ensure the organization's financial health.

B. Fundraising and Development Committee

- Purpose: Assist in developing and implementing fundraising strategies.
- Responsibilities: Support donor relations, identify potential fundraising opportunities, and help with event planning and outreach activities.

C. Program and Evaluation Committee

- Purpose: Oversee the organization's program activities, including data collection and community engagement initiatives.
- Responsibilities: Monitor program implementation, support the evaluation of outcomes, and provide recommendations to enhance program effectiveness.

D. Governance and Nominations Committee

- Purpose: Ensure that the board can fulfill its duties effectively.
- Responsibilities: Identify potential board members, oversee the board nomination process, and provide training and orientation for new members.

6. Board Member Onboarding and Development

A. Onboarding

- Orientation: New board members will receive an orientation that includes an overview of the organization's history, mission, strategic goals, and key programs.
- Mentorship: Each new board member will be paired with a more experienced board member to help them navigate their role and understand their responsibilities.

B. Ongoing Development

- **Training:** The organization will offer opportunities for board members to participate in training on relevant topics, such as mental health advocacy, nonprofit governance, and fundraising.
- **Retreats:** The board will organize annual retreats to focus on strategic planning, team-building, and organizational priorities.

7. Performance Evaluation

A. Board Self-Evaluation

- **Annual Review:** The board will conduct an annual self-evaluation to assess its performance, identify areas for improvement, and ensure alignment with the organization's mission and strategic goals.

B. Individual Board Member Evaluation

- **Self-Assessment:** Board members will complete a self-assessment annually to reflect on their contributions, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for the following year.
- **Peer Feedback:** Board members will also receive constructive feedback from peers, which will be shared confidentially by the Chairperson.

8. Conflict of Interest Policy

A. Declaration of Interest

- Board members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest. This includes personal or financial interests that may affect their decision-making capacity within the organization.

B. Managing Conflicts

- **Recusal:** If a conflict of interest arises, the board members involved must recuse themselves from discussions and decisions related to the issue.
- **Transparency:** A register of interests will be maintained to ensure transparency in board activities and decisions.

9. Resignation and Removal

A. Resignation

- **Notice:** Board members wishing to resign should provide written notice to the Chairperson at least 30 days in advance to allow for a smooth transition.
- **Exit Interview:** An exit interview will be conducted to understand the reasons for resignation and gather feedback for future improvement.

B. Removal

- **Grounds for Removal:** Board members may be removed for failure to fulfill their responsibilities, including consistent absences, misconduct, or failure to comply with the board's code of conduct.

- Procedure: Removal requires a majority vote of the board, following a discussion in which the member in question is allowed to present their case.

10. Meetings and Decision-Making

A. Board Meetings

- Frequency: The board will meet at least four times per year, with additional meetings as needed.
- Agenda: The Chairperson and Secretary will set the agenda in advance of meetings, and materials will be distributed to members at least one week before the meeting.
- Quorum: A quorum of at least 50% of board members must be present for a meeting to make formal decisions.

B. Decision-Making Process

- Consensus: Decisions will typically be made by consensus; however, formal votes will be taken when consensus cannot be reached.
- Voting Rights: Each board member has one vote, and decisions require a simple majority to pass.

11. Board Member Benefits and Recognition

A. Benefits

- Professional Development: Board members will have access to professional development opportunities, including training sessions and conferences on topics relevant to mental health and nonprofit governance.
- Networking: Opportunities to connect with other professionals, partners, and stakeholders in the mental health sector.

B. Recognition

- Public Acknowledgment: Board members will be recognized on the organization's website, in annual reports, and during public events.
- Appreciation Events: An annual appreciation event will be held to acknowledge the contributions of board members and celebrate their impact on the organization