



California Institute for Mental Health

Roles and Responsibilities of Mental Health Boards and Commissions

**Greater Bay Area Regional Training
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Purpose of this Presentation

1. Provide a basic overview of Roles and Responsibilities *with a commitment to engaging diverse communities.*
2. Develop awareness of how to “grow” and sustain an effective team approach as a Board and/or Commission.
3. **Review of The Brown Act** - to ensure Boards & Commissions are operating legally and ethically, with transparency to the community.

Effective Mental Health Boards

- ❖ Oversee and monitor the local mental health system
- ❖ Advocate for individuals with serious mental illness
- ❖ Provide advice to the BOS and the local mental health director
- ❖ Ensure the development of improved services, access to services and the best mental health program possible.
- ❖ **Review, evaluation and advise** on recommendations

Effective Mental Health Boards are aware of their Roles:

Per Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5604.2

- a) Review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, services, facilities and special problems;
- b) Review any County agreements entered into pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5650;
- c) Advise the governing body and the local mental health director as to any aspect of the local mental health program;
- d) Review and approve the procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement at all stages of the planning process;
- e) Submit an annual report to the governing body on the needs and performance of the County's mental health system;

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Mental Health Boards Roles:

continued

- f) Review and make recommendations on applicants for the appointment of the local director of mental health services. The Commission shall be included in the selection process prior to the vote of the governing body;
- g) Review and comment on the County's performance outcome data and communicate its findings to the California Mental Health Planning Council;
- h) Perform additional duties and / or exercise additional authority transferred to the Mental Health Board by the governing body.
- i) Assess the impact of the realignment of services from the state to the county, on services delivered to the clients and on the local community.

Key Characteristics of Effective Mental Health Boards

“It’s easier to get there if you know where you are going.”

Effective Boards attend to:

- **Membership and Recruitment**
- **Being Organized**
- **Getting Work Done**
- **Making Meetings Work**
- **Handling Conflict Constructively**
- **Active Listening**
- **Positive Advocacy**
- **Engage in Self-Evaluation**

Mental Health Board Membership

Per Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5604

- a) Each community mental health services shall have a board consisting of 10-15 members.
 - Appointed by Governing Body (i.e. BOS)
 - Small Counties Exception: If less than 80,000 population, *may* have a board consisting of 5 members.
 - 50% of members shall be consumers or the parents, spouses, siblings or adult children of consumers, who are receiving or have received mental health services.
 - 20% of total members shall be consumers.
 - 20% of total members shall be families of consumers.

- b) The term of each member shall be 3 years and terms will be staggered by the governing body.

Being Organized

Board Chairperson/Members identify & share:

- Updated rosters of board members & committee list
- Awareness if all Board member positions are filled and support recruitment of unfilled positions
- Understand and comply with Robert's Rules of Order; Brown Act
- Oversee / participate in preparation of Agendas & Calendars
- (Chair) Establishes Executive Committee to work with MH Director
- Identify Secretary for the Board (staff liaison or recruited by Board)

Getting Organized

The Mental Health Board has Goals and Objectives

- Allows Board to establish annual expectations for itself
- Translates into an annual work plan
- Work plan is primary tool to anticipate matters and track status of matters at the Board and standing Committee levels.
- Board work plan, along with goals, provides a benchmark for annual evaluation of the Board.

Understands Policies and Procedures

Establishes and complies with Board By-Laws

Getting Work Done

Use of Committees:

Permit Board members to service according to their strengths

Allow Board members to become more knowledgeable about specific areas.

Two types of committees:

Standing – Ongoing related to continuing roles and responsibilities of Board (i.e. Executive, Membership, Budget, Data Committees)

Ad Hoc – Time limited and formed to accomplish specific task (Community Assessment, Community raised issue)

Making Meetings Work

Meetings are effective when:

They achieve their objective

- Is objective to make a decision, generate ideas, get information?

They use time efficiently

- Prepare an agenda that factors in: Priorities; Sequence of events; Timing; Preparation and sharing of information to discuss; Invitations to needed attendees.
- Successfully manage time in meeting to: Move discussion; Push for decision; Assign issue to subcommittee.

Participants feel satisfied that a sensible fair process occurred.

- Ensure agenda stays on topic; No one dominates; Watch body language; Take breaks as needed; Summarize decisions.

Handling Conflict Constructively

Steps in Conflict Resolution:

“Pick your battles”

Make sure good relationships are the first priority

Keep people and problems separate

Listen first; Talk second

Set out the facts

Find Solutions

Active Listening

Using the “I” Rationale

For example: “I feel upset because.....”

States message in a non-blaming manner.

versus

The “You” or Blaming Approach

“You make me upset.....”

Labels behaviors or people as good or bad.

Positive Advocacy

Mental Health Board Member Role is to advocate for a strong and effective local mental health system.

Perceptions of “Advocacy”

Can have negative connotation.

or

Positive connotation when strength-based.

Positive Advocacy

Tips and Tools:

- Advocate for what will make things better, stronger, more effective.
- Be clear about your message
- Know what you want to accomplish as a result of advocating
- Do your homework
- Develop strategic partnerships*
- Speak from personal experience
- Show passion, but control emotions
- Listen actively; Be respectful and courteous
- Know when and how to negotiate and compromise
- Encourage community members to speak for themselves!

Self Evaluation by Board

Just as the Board reviews and evaluates the progress of their mental health **system**, it is also critical to assess ***the operation of the Board.***

Just as the Board reviews and evaluates ***itself***, it is also important to assess ***the effectiveness of Board meetings.***



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Review of The Brown Act

The Brown Act

Overview

The Brown Act is the law which guarantees the public's right to attend and participate in meetings of local legislative bodies. The Brown Act governs the actions of MHB/Cs. Refer to:

www.thefirstamendment.org/brownact.html

A "meeting" is any gathering of a majority of the members of a covered board to hear, discuss, or deliberate on matters within the agency's or board's jurisdiction.
(§54952.2(a))

Note: No vote or action is required for the gathering to be a meeting, nor must the members meet face to face. (§ 54952.2)

Source: www.thefirstamendment.org/brownact.html

The Brown Act

Under the Brown Act an agency must:

- **Post notice and an agenda** for any regular meeting (§§ 54954(a), 54954.2(a)); mail notice at least three days before regular meetings to those who request it, (§ 54954.1); post notice of continued meetings, (§ 54955.1); deliver notice of special meetings at least one day in advance to those who request it, (§ 54956); and deliver notice of emergency meetings at least one hour in advance to those who request it.. (§§ 54956, 54956.5)
- **Notify the media** of special or emergency meetings if requested, (§§ 54956, 54956.5); allow media to remain in meetings cleared due to public disturbance. (§§ 54957.9)
- **Hold meetings in the jurisdiction** of the agency except in limited circumstances, (§§ 54954(b)- (e)), and in places accessible to all, with no fee. (§ 54961(a))

Source: www.thefirstamendment.org/brownact.html

Under the Brown Act an agency must:*(continued)*

- **Not require a "sign in"** for anyone. (§ 54953.3)
- **Allow non-disruptive recording** and broadcast of meetings, (§ 54953.5(a)), and let the public inspect any recording made by the agency of its open meetings. (§ 54953.5(b)) The agency may destroy recordings it made after 30 days. (§ 54953.5(b))
- **Allow the public to address** the covered board at regular or committee meetings on any item in the agency's jurisdiction not addressed by the agency at an earlier open meeting.. (§ 54954.3(a))
- **conduct only public votes**, with no secret ballots. (§ 54953(c))
- **treat documents as public** "without delay," if distributed to all or a majority of members of a board before or at the meeting, unless they are also exempt under the Public Records Act. (§ 54957.5)

Under the Brown Act: *(continued)*

Closed Meetings

- Closed meetings are the exception and permitted only if they meet defined purposes and follow special requirements (§§ 54954, 54954.2, 54954.5, 54957.7).
- Special public notice and agenda requirements apply (§§ 54954, 54954.2, 54954.5, 54957.7).
- All actions taken and all votes in closed session must be publicly reported orally or in writing within 24 hours (§ 54957.1(b)), and copies of any contracts or settlements approved must be made available promptly (§ 54957.1(b),(c)).

Source: www.thefirstamendment.org/brownact.html

Under the Brown Act: *(continued)*

Closed Meetings may be held for:

- **Personnel** – Only to discuss the appointment, employment, performance evaluation, discipline, complaints about or dismissal of a specific employee or potential employee (§ 54957). The employee may request a public meeting on any charges or complaints.
- **Closed sessions are NOT ALLOWED for discussing:** General employment; independent contractors not functioning as employees; salaries; the performance of any elected official, or member of the board; the local agency's available funds; funding priorities or budget.
- **Pending Litigation** - Only if open discussion "would prejudice the position of the agency in the litigation." The litigation must be named on the posted agenda or announced in open session unless doing so would jeopardize the board's ability to service process on an unserved party or conclude existing settlement negotiations to its advantage. (§ 54956.9).

Source: www.thefirstamendment.org/brownact.html

Thank you...
for your service to your community!



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