



HSJCC NETWORK

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

NOVEMBER 2017

Overview

The purpose of the Member Engagement Plan (MEP) is to improve the engagement of over 1,500 members of the Local, Regional and Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committees (HSJCCs) across Ontario. The strength of the HSJCC Network comes from the voluntary collaboration between the justice, and human and social service sectors in Ontario. We want to continue building on this strength, and increase our engagement at the Local, Regional and Provincial levels of the HSJCC Network.

The goals of the Member Engagement Plan are to: (1) improve participation of HSJCC members at the Local, Regional, and Provincial committees, (2) enhance communication and collaboration of Local and Regional HSJCCs with one another, (3) improve flow of information between the Provincial HSJCC, and the Regional, and Local committees, and (4) recruit new members to the HSJCC Network.

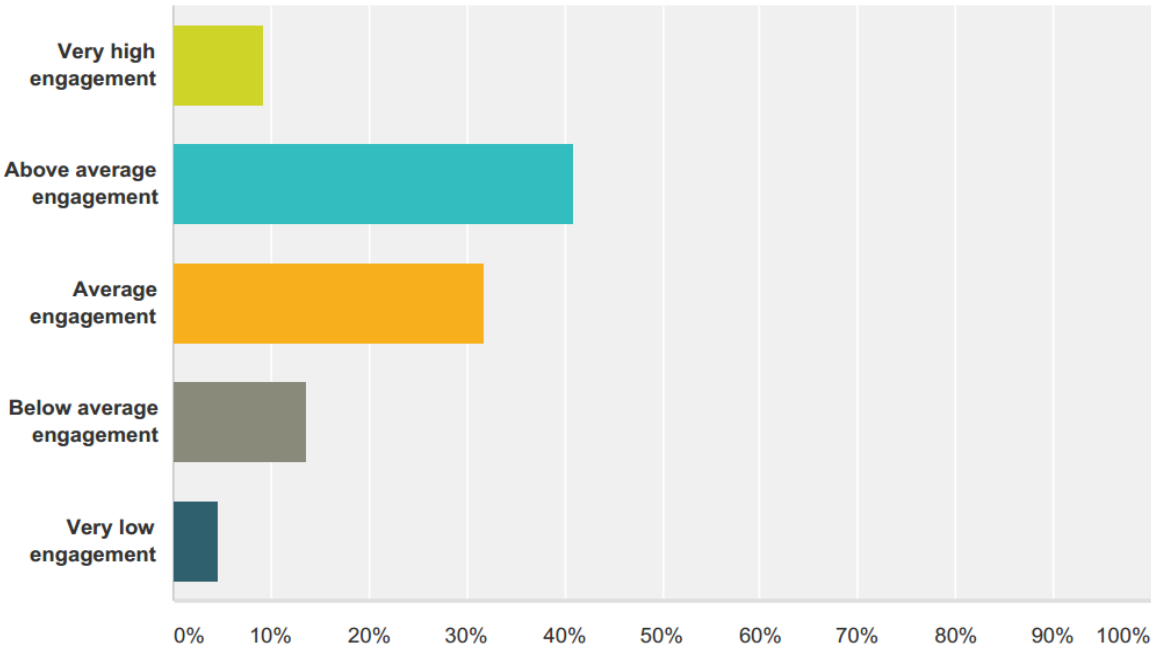
In November 2015, the Provincial HSJCC formed a project advisory group, tasked with guiding the development of the MEP. Through an online survey, the HSJCC Secretariat also consulted with the Chairs/Co-Chairs of Regional and Local HSJCC committees. The purpose of the MEP survey was to gain an understanding of current engagement level of members, and challenges faced by Chair/Co-Chairs in keeping members engaged in HSJCC committees. This document provides an overview of the results of the MEP survey, as well as an action plan for moving forward with member engagement.

Making the Case to Increase Engagement of HSJCC Members

The HSJCC Network is a dynamic, *voluntary* collaboration between 1,500+ professionals from across the human service and justice sectors. It is only due to the dedicated time, and commitment, provided by the members of the HSJCC Network that it is possible to work together to coordinate resources and plan more effectively for people with unique needs who are in conflict with the law. Given the voluntary nature of the HSJCC Network, it is very important to keep the HSJCC Network members engaged at the Local, Regional, and Provincial committees.

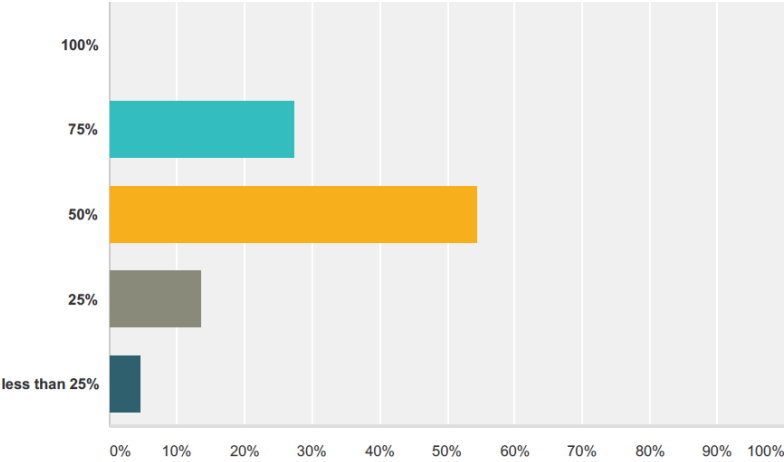
Engaged members make strong contributions, are actively connected to other HSJCC Network members, and are always enthusiastic about contributing their knowledge, expertise and skills to support the vision and the goals of the HSJCC Network.

Now the question is, what is the level of engagement amongst our current HSJCC Network members?



Based on the MEP survey, approximately 40% of the Chairs/Co-Chairs indicated “above average engagement”, and 9% indicated “very high engagement” shown by members in their committees. In answering this question, we asked the Chairs/Co-Chairs to think about how often members attend meetings, engage in discussions during the meetings, and complete committee related work.

We also asked the Chairs/Co-Chairs about the level of attendance at their committee meetings. As indicated below, **only 30 percent** of the Committee Chairs indicated that seventy-five percent of their committee members actively attend meetings on a regular basis. The rest of the Committee Chairs indicated 50 percent or lower level of attendance at committee meetings, which suggests that many members are not attending HSJCC meetings regularly.



These findings demonstrate that members *are* interested in participating and engaging with the HSJCC Network, however, there is much room for improvement. In the MEP survey, the Chairs/Co-Chairs also mentioned the challenges they are facing in encouraging greater engagement from their committee members.

Some of these challenges include:

- Unable to commit time, and conflicting schedules. Since HSJCC members are working professionals in the justice and human services sectors, they are often juggling multiple priorities and demands from their other commitments
- Absence of clear direction, goals, and objectives for the committee. Few of the Committee Chairs also indicated that they are uncertain of their own roles and responsibilities
- Unwillingness of committee members to fulfill vacant roles of Chairs, Co-Chairs, and other roles in the committee
- Lack of engagement from the justice sector, for example, lawyers, judges, and corrections
- Lack of understanding of the HSJCC Network, its vision and goals, and how it connects to committee specific goals and activities
- Lack of awareness of the work of the Provincial committee, and the various knowledge and communication channels

The MEP survey provided valuable insight into the current engagement level of HSJCC members at Local and Regional committees. The purpose of the **Action Plan** outlined in the following section is to address the challenges mentioned by the Chair/Co-Chairs in engaging members at their Local/Regional committees, and also to improve communication between the Provincial HSJCC committee, and the Local and Regional committees.

Action Plan to Increase Engagement of HSJCC Members

The strength of the HSJCC Network comes from the **voluntary collaboration** of professionals from the justice and the human service sectors. In order to ensure 1500+ members of the HSJCC Network stay engaged at the Local, Regional, and Provincial committee, it is important to implement focused engagement strategies within each committee. Greater engagement of HSJCC members in all the committees will ensure:

- powerful membership base, composed of wealth of knowledge and expertise in justice, and human service sectors
- success and recognition in affecting change at the community level, and at the system level
- greater awareness and building an excellent reputation of the HSJCC Network
- greater collaboration and knowledge translation across justice, and human service sectors

This Action Plan will be helpful in guiding Chair/Co-Chairs of committees and HSJCC members to improve overall engagement of their committees. Although the Chair/Co-Chairs may play the leadership role in starting the conversation about engagement, and implementation of specific strategies, it is important to note that this should be a *collaborative* process that includes *all* committee members. Throughout the process, members should be assigned specific tasks related to implementing the strategies, and should be asked for feedback and recommendations. Improving member engagement should be viewed as a collective initiative that involves all committee members.

Guiding Principles and Engagement Strategies

Since its inception in 1997, HSJCC members have shown tremendous commitment by volunteering many hours towards building and supporting the HSJCC Network. Since being part of the HSJCC Network is completely voluntary, the **Guiding Principles** will briefly introduce concepts related to strengthening volunteer participation. Following the guiding principles, the **Strategies** will focus on concrete actions that can be implemented to increase engagement of committee members.

Guiding Principle I: Vision

What is the overall vision for our committee? What does our own committee want to achieve?

The mandate of the HSJCC Network as a whole is to “coordinate resources and services, and plan more effectively for people who are in conflict with the law”. The HSJCC Network gives priority consideration to people with a serious mental illness, developmental disability, acquired brain injury, drug and alcohol addiction, and/or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Although the work of all of the HSJCC committees fall under this mandate, it is important to have **committee-specific** vision statements, goals, and objectives because as mentioned in the MEP survey, some members are not clear about the direction or the purpose of the committee.

A **Vision Statement** describes the clear and inspirational long-term change that will result from your work. A vision statement is a road map and will guide your committee specific objectives. A good vision statement should be clear, future-oriented, and inspiring.

By crystalizing a vision, and setting goals and objectives for your own committee, the members will feel a greater sense of purpose in belonging to the HSJCC Network. The process of developing a vision, and setting objectives should be a collaborative effort that includes the feedback of all committee members.

Strategies

Formulate a vision statement. During a committee meeting, work with all the members in the committee to create a vision statement. The vision statement can be used to capture the purpose of the committee as a whole, and the positive change the committee members would like to see as a result of their work. An example of a vision statement for a Local Committee may be, “*We seek to provide a planning table that will bring together inter-sectorial service providers to enhance service delivery and coordination for individuals with mental health, addictions issues or other human services needs who have become involved with the law*”.

Set committee-specific objectives. After formulating a general vision statement, the big question is, “*how will we achieve our vision?*” The good news is that through the HSJCC Work Planning process, many committees are already thinking about the “how”. The Work Plans submitted by all committees require members to set committee-specific objectives. These objectives should be precise, measurable, achievable, and lastly, there should be consensus and all committee members should agree on these objectives. The Work Plan also requires all committees to break

down these objectives into specific projects and/or initiatives the committee will work on in a given year.

The Work Plan should serve as a guiding document throughout the year to keep track of the progress of work plan items, and whether or not these items are meeting the objectives and, ultimately, the vision for the committee.

Guiding Principle II: Motivation

Who are my committee members and why are they part of the HSJCC Network?

It is important to understand the motivation of the members to belong to the HSJCC Network, and the relevant knowledge, and the skill sets related to justice and human service sectors they bring to the committees. When members feel their own interests in joining the committee are being addressed, they are able to make a meaningful contribution to the committee, and they are more likely to stay engaged and contribute.

Strategies

Assign specific roles to committee members. All committees have Chair/Co-Chair positions, however, based on the results of the MEP survey, only 55% of the committees have specific roles for the other committee members. When members have specific roles to fulfill within the committee, they are more clear and committed to their contribution to the overall work of the committee. Creating roles for members should be a transparent and collaborative process between the Chair/Co-Chair, and the committee members. Here are few examples of the roles that HSJCC committee members can take on:

- **Administrative Coordinator:** responsible for taking minutes and uploading the minutes to the website, and scheduling committee meetings
- **Education Planner:** will plan webinars, Lunch n' Learn events, conferences
- **Communication Coordinator:** will coordinate communication efforts with other Local, and Regional committees, and the Provincial committee. In this role, the individual could be also responsible for contributing to the Provincial HSJCC Newsletter, and the website.
- **Project Manager:** responsible for overseeing the progress of committee related projects

Create Working Groups. Many HSJCC committees are taking on projects and initiatives that require subject matter expertise and guidance from committee members. Creation of separate Working Groups will ensure greater engagement from committee members because they will be responsible for the initiation, implementation and evaluation of a specific project or initiative.

Seek feedback and recommendations from members. It is important to always check in with committee members about what is working and not working. For example, after six months or at

the end of the year, send out a short survey to your members to seek feedback on engagement strategies that have been implemented, and encourage your members to share ideas on future committee projects and initiatives.

Guiding Principle III: Communication

How can we enhance communication within our own committee? How can we enhance communication with other HSJCC committees?

Effective communication should be a primary goal of all committees. Improving communication with committee members will ensure everyone understands the committee-specific goals, as well as their place in achieving it. Effective communication is like a recipe, and just like recipes, different mix of ingredients is required to achieve the goals of any communication strategies.

Communicating for engagement requires the following ingredients¹:

- A clear, and consistent message with the appropriate level of information
- Openness and honesty with an authentic tone
- Passion and connection
- Goals, purpose and direction
- Clarity, transparency, measurement and accountability

The mix of these ingredients will depend on your committee's culture and how your members respond to different communication strategies.

Strategies

Create Working Agreements. Working agreements are norms or ground rules that members of a group agree to follow in order to achieve some common goal. Engage your members, and create a set of agreements that all members are willing to commit to, and follow. When developing the working agreements, ask questions such as, “*How can we work together to create a positive, and engaging committee?*” and “*How do we make our meetings more productive?*” Working agreements should be observable, and should be 4-5 statements maximum.

Here are few examples of working agreements:

- Arrive to meetings on time
- If unable to attend a meeting, send a substitute and let Chair/Co-Chairs know ahead of time
- One person speaks at a time

- Send out meeting materials a week in advance and read them prior to attending the meeting

Members of the committee may be already following certain ground rules to ensure the committee runs smoothly, however, by creating working agreements, expectations from all committee members will become clear and transparent to everyone.

Schedule several committee meetings in advance. As mentioned in the MEP survey, members are sometimes unable to attend meetings due to other commitments. By scheduling all committee meetings at the beginning of the year will allow members to manage their schedules, and prioritize attending HSJCC meetings. A simple way to schedule all meetings ahead of time is to dedicate a specific day of the week and hour to a committee meeting. For example, members of the committee will meet the first Monday of every month from 11:00am to noon. As soon as a specific date and time has been decided on, send out the invitations for all future meetings to avoid confusion about meeting dates, and to ensure all members have the meeting dates in their calendars.

Set meeting goals or objectives. Members will have a better understanding of the purpose of the meeting, and how they are expected to contribute if the goals of the meeting are made clear ahead of time. A meeting agenda is a great way to stay organized during the meeting, and communicate the meeting goals to the members.

Any discussion that arises in meetings either takes the group *towards* achieving the meeting goals, or *away* from the goals. It is the responsibility of the Chair/Co-Chair to facilitate these discussions to ensure that the group moves towards achieving the meeting goals. By the end of a meeting, members should have a clear understanding of the progress that has been made on work plan items, as well as action items that need to be completed prior to next meeting.

Guiding Principle IV: Knowledge Exchange

How do we share knowledge and information within our committee? How do we share knowledge and information with other HSJCC committees?

Knowledge exchange can be defined as a complex set of activities involved in advancing knowledge generated from research into effective changes in policy or practice.² An abundance of knowledge related to the human services and the justice sector already exists within our strong, inter-sectoral membership base of the HSJCC Network. The purpose of knowledge exchange related activities is to convert this knowledge into action by sharing information with frontline staff, service providers, researchers, and policy makers within and outside of the HSJCC Network. Knowledge exchange activities can also strengthen existing collaboration across

sectors, form new partnerships, and promote the utilization of evidence-informed, and best practice approaches. Many HSJCC committees are already hosting knowledge exchange related events for the members of the committees. The strategies below will highlight how to further enhance this effort.

Strategies

Post committee specific updates on the HSJCC website. The new HSJCC website is an excellent platform that can be used by all Local and Regional committees to share information about upcoming events, and ongoing projects and initiatives taken on by these committees. Aside from sharing information about your own committee, you can also learn about the work of other Regional and Local committees. The Provincial committee also updates the website regularly with information about the progress of current Provincial projects, as well as updates on the upcoming 2017 Provincial HSJCC Conference. Keeping the new HSJCC website updated and using it as a knowledge exchange platform will be a collaborative effort that will require the attention of all HSJCC committees.

The new HSJCC website can be accessed here: <http://www.hsjcc.on.ca/>. If you have any questions about how to update the website with your committee-specific news and events, please contact, Trevor Tymchuk (trevor.tymchuk@humanservicesandjustice.ca).

Contribute to the HSJCC newsletter. The bi-monthly HSJCC newsletter is received by 1,500+ members of the HSJCC Network. Prior to the release of the Newsletter, all Regional and Local committees receive a notification to send in updates that can be included in the Newsletter. Similar to the HSJCC website, the bi-monthly HSJCC Newsletter is also another knowledge exchange tool, and should be used as a way to stay connected and informed about the work of all HSJCC committees.

Host knowledge exchange events. Many Local and Regional committees are hosting Lunch-n-Learns, webinars, forums and conferences. These online and in-person events provide an opportunity to share information about best practices, tools, and strategies, and allow HSJCC members to connect to one another and stay involved with the HSJCC Network. Knowledge exchange events should be considered as a Work Plan item for all committees, and as mentioned earlier, a committee member can be assigned to coordinate these events.

Provincial HSJCC's Action Plan to Improve Member Engagement

As mentioned in the MEP survey, communication between the Provincial committee, and the Regional and Local committees need to be improved. The Provincial committee is composed of 14 Regional HSJCC Chairs, ex-officio representatives from 5 Provincial Ministries, and ex-officio members from stakeholder groups such as Correctional Service of Canada, Ontario Provincial Police, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and Community Networks of Specialized Care.

The Provincial HSJCC meetings provide an opportunity to exchange information between Provincial, and Regional committees, as well as learn about relevant updates from the Ministries, and other stakeholders. During these bi-monthly meetings, the Regional Chairs provide updates related to their respective regions in the province, and they are also responsible for sharing the outcomes of the Provincial HSJCC meetings with the members of their Regional and/or Local committees. The new HSJCC website contains all the briefing notes, presentations, and meeting minutes from the Provincial HSJCC meetings.

In order to further strengthen communication and engagement between the Provincial committee, and the Regional, and Local committees, the **Provincial HSJCC Secretariat** will:

- Develop orientation packages for new Provincial HSJCC members and Regional Chairs. These orientation packages will provide an overview of the HSJCC Network, including its' function, structure, and the roles and responsibilities of the Provincial committee and members.
- Attend Local and Regional committee meetings. This will provide an opportunity for the HSJCC Secretariat to connect with Regional and Local Chairs, learn about the work of their respective committees, and share information about the work of the Provincial committee.
- Continue to regularly update the HSJCC website with CKE Chair, and assist Regional and Local committees with uploading committee-specific documents, and utilizing the HSJCC website as a knowledge exchange platform.
- Assist with development of Work Plans. As mentioned above, having a vision and set of objectives are two very important aspects of keeping members engaged. The vision, objectives, and initiatives taken on by the committee should be documented in the Work

Plan. The HSJCC Secretariat will engage with Local and Regional committees to assist in developing the Work Plans.

- Continue to strengthen connection with the justice and human service sectors to raise awareness about the HSJCC Network, and recruit new members to Local, Regional and Provincial committees.

Conclusion

The HSJCC Network is an excellent example of a provincial initiative that brings together people with lived experience, frontline professionals, program and policy makers, and decision makers in the justice, and human service sectors to work collaboratively to help individuals with unique needs who have come into conflict with the law.

The Member Engagement Plan is a guiding document to enhance engagement of HSJCC members at all levels of the HSJCC Network, and to improve communication between the Provincial and the Local, and Regional committees. If you have any questions about the Member Engagement Plan or suggestions on new engagement strategies, please feel free to let us know. You can reach out to **Trevor Tymchuk**, Chair of CKE Committee (trevor.tymchuk@humanservicesandjustice.ca) or the HSJCC Secretariat: **Tasha Rennie**, Network Engagement and Communications Officer (trennie@ontario.cmha.ca) or **Joseph Szamuhel**, Project Manager (jszamuhel@ontario.cmha.ca).

1. Bougey, Teresa, and Lindsay Munro. (2014). *The role of communication in creating engagement*. Retrieved from: <https://www.insights.com/5305/the-role-of-communication-in-creating-engagement.html>

2. Sick Kids. (2006) *Knowledge Translation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.sickkids.ca/Learning/AbouttheInstitute/Programs/Knowledge-Translation/>