

# Working Together: Effective Planning Council Meetings

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Office of HIV Planning  
November 20, 2020

# HRSA/HAB Expectations for PC Operations

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- Bylaws that are regularly reviewed, updated, and consistently followed
- Policies and procedures that meet RWHAP requirements and are consistently followed
- Open meetings with public notice, a public comment period, and materials and minutes available to the public
- Appropriate committees with regular meetings, agendas, and minutes
- PC and Committee Chairs or Co-Chairs with clearly defined roles and appropriate training and support
- Support staff and budget to support PC operations (OHP)

# HRSA/HAB Expectations for PC Meetings

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- Open meetings with public notice
- Conflicts of interest declared and managed
- Use of parliamentary procedures as stated in Bylaws
- Public comment period
- Code of Conduct enforced for members and public
- Active participation by consumers, providers, and other members
- Recipient staff present
- PCS staff support for Chair and members

# Importance of Committees

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- Assigned responsibility for legislative roles
- Do much of the work of the planning council
  - Public input
  - Consultation with outside experts
  - In-depth discussion
  - Recommendations to PC through Executive Committee
- Members often participate more actively in committees than in full PC meetings
- Voting members can include non-PC members
  - Training ground for potential new PC members

# Working Across Committees

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- Committees are often closely linked – one committee must complete its task before another committee can do its work; *for example:*
  - Needs assessment data must be available before the PSRA process can be carried out
- Some tasks are jointly implemented; *for example:*
  - Directives often jointly developed by committees responsible for system of care and needs assessment
  - Membership and Consumer Committees may work together to recruit consumer members

# Success Factors for Committees

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1. **Clear, specific purpose** with clear responsibilities
2. **Defined membership** – PC members, sometimes non-members; consumers
3. **Defined annual work plan** – including objectives, tasks, products, timeline, and links to work of other committees
4. **Committed, informed leadership** – ideally Co-Chairs or Chair/Vice Chair, with 1 a consumer
5. **Support** – data, staff support, recipient participation where needed

# Effective Meetings

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- Encourage discussion and decision making that are:
  - Sound
  - Data-based
  - Inclusive
- Have members who:
  - Participate actively
  - Respect each other's views
  - Feel involved and valued
  - Choose to remain active

# Characteristics of a Successful Meeting

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- Appropriately scheduled, with publicly posted agenda
- Materials sent out in advance
- Convenient, accessible location
- Informed management and facilitation by the Chair
- Agenda that is followed
- Structured discussion, with most members participating
- Comfortable environment, with input from all members welcomed
- Use of established parliamentary procedures
- Appropriate data provided/used for decision making

# Planning Successful PC Meetings

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1. Establish meeting goals: know what *must* be decided
2. Have Chair and Executive Committee set agenda
  - Start with a “standing agenda”
  - Schedule the most critical items early
  - Specify who will present information for each topic
  - Clearly identify action items
  - Include time frames for each topic
3. Be sure all needed materials are available and are sent out in advance
4. Address logistical needs (PC staff)

# HIPC's Code of Conduct: Attendees

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1. Arrive on time. Call the office at 215-574-6760 if you are running late.
2. Silence your phone. Take any phone calls in the lobby or hallway.
3. Respect others' boundaries and personal space.
4. Don't share others' personal information.
5. Speak respectfully, including volume, tone, and word choice.
6. No personal attacks. Disagreements will focus on issues, not individuals.
7. Wait to be acknowledged by the co-chair/speaker before speaking.
8. Avoid side conversations and cross talk.
9. Ask questions when you need more information.

# HIPC's Code of Conduct: Members

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1. The Planning Council addresses the needs of people living with and at risk for HIV as their top priority. Members serve the needs of the community, not their own interests.
2. Members will behave in a way that reflects this responsibility to the community.
3. Every member is responsible for both following all meeting rules and speaking up to ensure that others follow them.

# Additions to the Code of Conduct for PC Members

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- Follow the decision-making process in the Bylaws
- Know when to be an advocate and when to be a planner
- Make decisions based on data, not self-interest
- If a proposed action or process does not follow the Bylaws or policies, politely inform the Chair
- Accept and support decisions made by the PC, regardless of personal views
- Speak positively about the PC and its members in public
- Take responsibility for both following these ground rules and helping ensure that others follow them

# Responsibilities of Individual Members in Making Meetings Successful

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- Review materials before the meeting
- Attend regularly – and inform staff well before the meeting if you can't attend
- Pay attention – put down your phone and other distractions
- Offer input and ask questions
- Know when to act as an advocate for particular groups and when to plan for all PLWH in the EMA/TGA
- Base your support or opposition to a decision on the best available data
- Follow established rules and procedures

# Procedures for Running Meetings

- Parliamentary Procedure: Robert's Rules of Order
- Alternatives to Robert's Rules of Order

# HRSA/HAB Expectations

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- PC uses an agreed-upon process for discussion and decision making at committee and full PC meetings
- Process helps create a culturally sensitive environment
- A formal process using Robert's Rules of Order does not necessarily work in all PCs
- Procedures used for in meetings should:
  - Meet the needs of most members
  - Promote full participation and high productivity
  - Create a comfortable and inviting atmosphere

*See Part A Manual, p 244*

# Benefits of an Established Process for PC Discussion and Decision-Making

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- Provides an orderly process for meetings
- Is fair and democratic – everyone follows the same rules and has the same opportunities to participate
- Supports open decision making
- By managing discussion, protects the organization from individuals who want to put their own interests first

# Key Principles of Robert's Rules of Order

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- All members have equal rights and obligations
- Majority rules – based on one person, one vote
- Respect for the minority – some decisions require a “super-majority”
- Only one question/motion is considered at a time
- Right of everyone to speak once before anyone speaks a second time
- No member can speak until recognized by the Chair
- Chair should be impartial
- The group's Bylaws and other rules apply

# Flexibility in Robert's Rules of Order

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Examples of flexibility in provisions:

- No limit to number of times member can speak to a question
- No need for motions to close or limit debate
- Informal discussion permitted if no motion pending
- Chair can speak in discussion and vote on all questions

# Consensus Decision Making

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- A way of reaching agreement among all members of a group
- An alternative to voting/“majority rules” decision making
- Tries to find “win-win” decisions and solutions that balance what different people want
- Process-oriented: depends on listening and working together
- Inclusive, participatory, and collaborative
- Based on the belief that when everyone agrees with a decision, they are much more likely to help implement it

# Adopting and Using a Process

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**Regardless of the approach used, the PC should:**

- Agree on process to be used and include it in Bylaws
- Provide training so all members understand it
- Provide a handout that explains the main points
- Follow the process consistently but not rigidly
- Have the Chair ensure that individual members are not permitted to use their expertise to control meetings or discourage participation

# Group Process

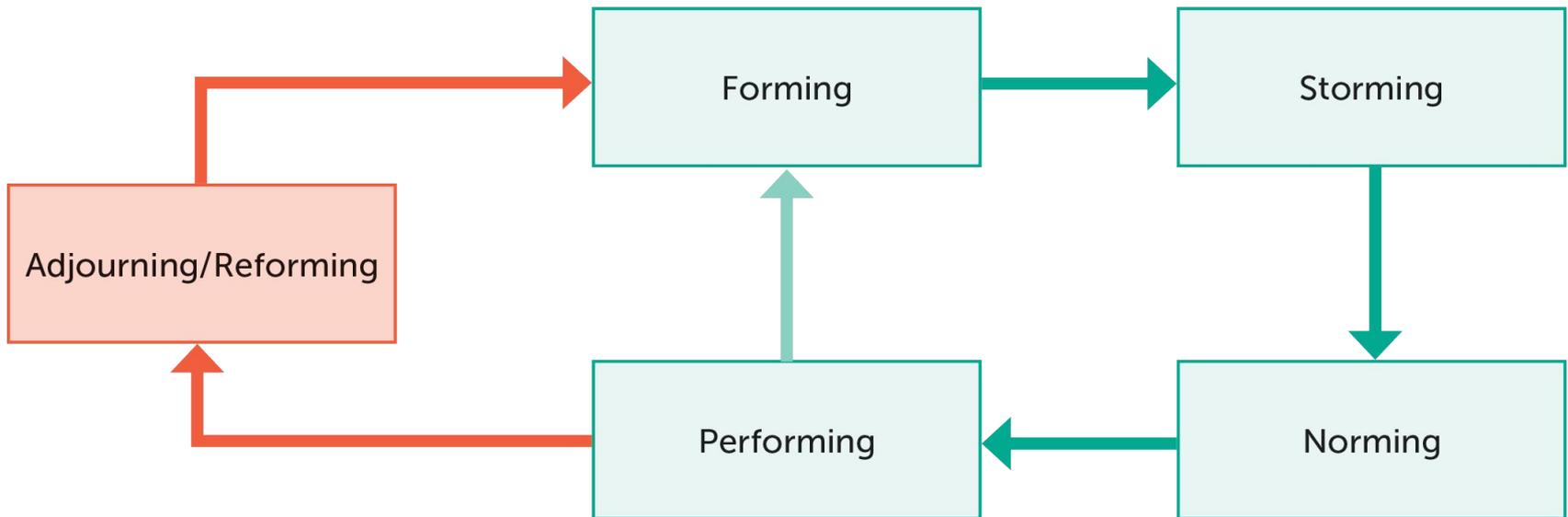
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**Group process** refers to how members of a group work together to get things done

- PC focus on getting the work done – meeting legislative requirements and making deadlines
- Also need attention to group process and team building
  - How members are interacting
  - Needs, roles, and contributions of individual members
- Members who feel they are valued and contributing members of a team are more involved and more productive – and so is the PC

# The Tuckman Model

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PCs are ongoing groups, but go through transition when Chairs/Co-Chairs and Membership change. So the “new” group may go through the same stages of group development.

# Characteristics of Each Stage

## Forming

Team acquaints and establishes ground rules. Formalities are preserved and members are treated as strangers.



## Storming

Members start to communicate their feelings but still view themselves as individuals rather than part of the team. They resist control by group leaders and show hostility.



## Norming

People feel part of the team and realize that they can achieve work if they accept other viewpoints.



## Performing

The team works in an open and trusting atmosphere where flexibility is the key and hierarchy is of little importance.



## Adjourning

The team conducts an assessment of the year and implements a plan for transitioning roles and recognizing members' contributions.



Source: Net Solution for Business, 2018,  
<http://ns4business.com.br/tuckmans-stages-of-group-development/>

# Observing PC Group Process

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Observing different elements of your PC's interaction can identify strengths and areas for improvement.

- **Communication** (*points to observe*)
  - Who talks most/least often?
  - Do certain members typically guide conversation?
  - What are the styles of communication – suggestions, assertions, questions, disagreement?
  - What is the tone of communication – respectful, friendly, neutral, negative?

# Observing PC Group Process

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## Participation (*points to observe*)

- Who is paying close attention to the discussion?
- Who is – and is not – speaking?
- Do you see changes in the level of participation by some members?
- What members typically help guide or direct the discussion?
- Are there members whose views tend to be ignored?

# Observing PC Group Process

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## Decision Making (*points to observe*)

- Are all members encouraged to participate in reaching a decision – before a vote is taken?
- Do some members try to force a decision without full discussion?
- Which members support taking the time to hear and understand all viewpoints before a decision is made?
- When a decision is made, how do those in the minority react? Those in the majority?

# Observing PC Group Process

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**Roles** (*observe which members are playing the following roles*)

- *Task roles* that focus on getting the work done, like initiating, information/opinion seeking, orienting, assessing, clarifying, summarizing, consensus testing, and recording
- *Group maintenance or social roles* to improve relationships, like encouraging, compromising, and supporting
- *Dysfunctional or self-oriented roles* like dominating, being aggressive, withdrawing, ignoring, blocking, seeking recognition, or disrupting the process

# Uses for Group Process Observation

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- Helps in understanding current levels of group interaction and team building
  - Can be used by a new Chair or Co-Chair or a new PC support staff member to understand group status
- Focus can be on one or several elements of group process
- Observations should be documented and main findings discussed with the group
- If change is needed, group should agree on action plan

# Inclusive Planning

- Benefits of a Diverse PC
- Strategies for Inclusive HIV Community Planning

# Describing Inclusive HIV Community Planning

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**Genuinely inclusive HIV community planning means that:**

- Membership meets representation and reflectiveness requirements
- All members participate as engaged and equal partners
- Diverse public input is regularly sought and used

# Components of Diversity

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- PC members are diverse in many ways
- Groups typically consider differences in “culture” – social and behavioral norms – based on characteristics like:
  - Race
  - Ethnicity
  - Nationality
  - Gender/gender identity
  - Sexual orientation
  - Age

# Components of Diversity (cont.)

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- Attention to culture is helpful, but every person has an *individual relationship* to culture
  - Expectations about how someone will react or behave based on race/ethnicity or sexual orientation are often incorrect
- Every person is influenced by many characteristics
  - Some determined at birth (such as, race, nationality)
  - Others developed or learned (such as, beliefs)
  - Some usually visible (such as, age, dress, language)
  - Others largely invisible unless shared (such as, family background, job history)

# Each Individual's Personal Pyramid

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- Everyone has a Personal Pyramid
- PC members don't need to know everything about each other
- They do need to be aware that what they know – and what they don't know – may affect group interactions

# PERSONAL PYRAMID

Visible Characteristics

Age  
Race  
Dress  
Gender  
Ethnicity  
Behaviors  
Language/Accent  
Physical Attributes

Less Visible Characteristics

Nationality  
Education  
Social Class  
Sexual Orientation  
Gender Identity  
Religious Practices  
Health Status  
Status in Organization

Talents  
Personality  
Marital Status  
Leadership Style  
Political Views  
Social Relationships  
Communication Style

Often Hidden Characteristics

Place of Birth  
Core Values and Beliefs  
Military Experience  
Volunteer Activities  
Religious Beliefs  
Personal Passions  
History of Discrimination/Social Exclusion

Job History  
Early Life Experiences  
Family Background  
Role in Family  
Family Attitudes and Values  
Thinking Styles/Thought Patterns

# Requirements for Inclusive Planning

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- Continuing effort
- Openness to learning and change
- Awareness of many components of diversity
- Commitment to both tasks and process:
  - The tasks = getting the work done
  - The process = working for full participation, and making everyone feel welcome and valued

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 1

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## 1. Adopt and enforce Bylaws, policies, Code of Conduct, and operating procedures that support inclusion

*For example:*

- If you want leadership diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and gender orientation, Bylaws should require or encourage such diversity
- If you greatly value unaligned consumer input, adopt quorum requirements that address both total participation and the presence of a specified number of consumers

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 2

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## 2. Understand and encourage both cultural competence and cultural humility

- Cultural competence involves developing understanding of cultures other than your own – but if based only on academic learning rather than “lived experience,” can lead to stereotyping
- Cultural humility focuses on increasing awareness of culture through ongoing personal reflection and co-learning along with people from other cultures
- “Cultural competence is theory, cultural humility is practice”

# Supporting Cultural Inclusiveness

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People from every cultural group need to learn about other groups – and the PC can provide opportunities:

- Include interactive sessions during meetings, focusing on a cultural topic like race/ethnicity or sexual identity
- Have members from different cultural groups help plan training
- Role play situations where people have felt stereotyped or misunderstood and responses that increase understanding
- Ask service providers and consumers from different cultural groups to share ways to increase cultural understanding
- Bring in a trained facilitator to help members explore conscious and unconscious cultural biases

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 3

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## 3. Build Relationships

- Don't focus only on completing PC tasks
- Spend time helping members get to know each other
- Learn how culture affects behaviors and interactions
- Build trust and mutual respect

*For example:*

- At each meeting, have 3 members share why they joined, what they want to accomplish, and what other members most need to know about them
- If the PC meets during mealtime, use that time for getting better acquainted

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 4

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## 4. Be aware of culture when managing discussion and conflict

- Encourage honest discussion while respecting cultural norms
- Be aware of situations where cultural barriers to full participation may exist – like younger people deferring to elders, norms against public disagreement

*For example:*

- Go around the room asking each member in turn to present views or suggestions
- Brainstorm in small groups of similar age or status
- Discuss cultural differences openly

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 5

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- 5. Use professional interpretation to fully engage members who are deaf or have limited English proficiency**
- The PC and the jurisdiction have an obligation to provide language access for members, once appointed
  - Interpretation should allow all members both to understand what is being said and to participate fully
  - Interpreters should be professionally trained, know HIV & RWHAP terminology, and have needed equipment
  - Good quality interpretation can be challenging, especially if the jurisdiction uses a single contractor that does not have experience with RWHAP or HIV interpretation

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 6

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## 6. Recognize and address gender/sex bias

- The belief that “men have more to contribute” may be conscious or unconscious
- In many jurisdictions, men have much higher rates of HIV than women, which can contribute to a focus on male PLWH
- Women sometimes feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in primarily male consumer committees or PLWH caucuses
- Research shows that women in the workplace who speak in meetings are far more likely than men to be interrupted, have others get credit for their ideas, or be taken less seriously

# Actions to Encourage Gender Equity

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- Adopt and enforce a Code of Conduct to prevent members from interrupting or “talking over each other”
- Foster an environment in which all members are expected to “call out” problem behaviors
- Assign a PC officer or some other individual responsibility for talking individually with members who frequently show sexual bias
- Help “level the playing field” by going around the room to get input from everyone
- Be sure that members receive credit for their ideas in discussions and minutes

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 7

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## 7. Use the terms members prefer when referring to them

- People differ in how they want to be described
  - *In terms of their racial, ethnic, or cultural group or gender identity*
- An inclusive PC respects and uses preferred words
- Members should:
  - *Understand why these terms are important to people*
  - *Feel comfortable reminding others of these preferences – and being reminded*

# Actions to Support Use of Preferred Terms

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- Orient members to appropriate pronouns
  - Educate new members about why these terms matter
  - Ask all members to share their preferred terms – and terms that bother them
- Refer to members by their preferred gender or gender-neutral pronoun – she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs
  - Encourage putting them on email signatures or tent cards
- Use deaf, hard of hearing, or another term as preferred by PC members from that community

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 8

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## 8. Recognize and address power dynamics in the PC

- Power involves the ability of an individual or group to influence the actions of others
- **Power dynamics** involve the way different individuals or groups of people interact with each other when some have (or are believed to have) more power than others
- Members/groups of members may have power due to:
  - *Access to resources and/or influence on services*
  - *Special knowledge and experience*
  - *“High status” based on characteristics like race/ethnicity, gender, education, income, and profession*

# How Power Dynamics Affect PCs

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- More powerful individual members or groups may:
  - Try to guide discussion – weakening the Chair's role
  - Dominate discussion – talking a lot, interrupting others
  - Strongly advocate particular decisions
  - Discourage or ignore input from other members
- This can negatively affect participation and decision making – other members may:
  - Feel they have no influence
  - Speak less – so their ideas and experience are lost
  - Participate less or stop attending
- Consumer members are often affected

# Managing Power Dynamics

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- Recognize that difference in power exist
- Take action to equalize the roles of all members
  - For example:*
    - Directly discuss power dynamics in orientation and training, emphasizing the importance of full participation by all members and the value of consumer input
    - Follow parliamentary procedure: *“No member can speak twice on the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once”*
    - Use the Code of Conduct to address power differences and make all members responsible for enforcement
    - Train Chairs to recognize and address problem behavior

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 9

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## 9. Encourage full participation from quieter members

- People think and contribute differently
  - *Extroverted thinkers* are comfortable stating an opinion right after an issue is raised
  - *Introverted thinkers* like to think about an issue before offering ideas
- Extroverted thinkers are not necessarily smarter and their input is not necessarily better – but they may dominate discussion
- Quieter members who struggle to be heard or feel their views are not wanted may become less involved

# Actions to Encourage Participation by Quieter Members

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- Share meeting agendas and materials in advance, so members can consider the issues
- Before beginning discussion, ask members to think for a minute and write down their main ideas
  - This helps everyone get ready to share – and improves the quality of responses
- On important issues, go around the room or call on members individually
- Don't allow members to be interrupted
- Provide positive reinforcement to increase the confidence of quieter members

# Strategies for Inclusive Planning: 10

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## 10. Fully involve members who participate remotely

- Some PCs allow members to connect to committee or PC meetings by conference call or using technology that provides audio and video
- Full participation is challenging when the group is large – or when only a few connect remotely
  - *They may find it hard to hear the discussion*
  - *They may be largely ignored – unable to get the Chair's attention when they want to speak*
- If remote participation is necessary, focus on including those members in the discussion

# Sum Up

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- Truly inclusive HIV planning requires attention to many components of member diversity
- All members need continuous learning about cultural and personal differences and their effects on member interactions
- Managing diversity within the PC involves integrating diverse values, norms, roles, views, and vocabulary
- PCs can take many actions, large and small, to create an inclusive environment that contributes to a system of care that meets the diverse needs of PLWH in the EMA

# Join a Meeting!

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**HIPC meets Thursday Dec. 10th at 2pm**

**Positive Committee Check-in/Holiday Party Dec 15th 7-8pm**

Zoom links are available on OHP meeting calendar

**Email questions to [nicole@hivphilly.org](mailto:nicole@hivphilly.org)**