Client and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) Terms of Reference

Last Updated: November 2025

Role and Purpose

The purpose of the CMHA Halton Client and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) is to meaningfully engage individuals who have lived/living experience with mental health/substance use concerns and their family members/caregivers in collaborating with CMHA Halton staff to promote people-centred, high-quality, safe, and accessible services at CMHA Halton.

The CFAC will be responsible for advising and making recommendations to CMHA Halton to ensure that client/family consultation and feedback are considered in the organization's operations.

The CFAC will operate within the CARE values of CMHA Halton:

- **C**onnected: Reflects how we think about care pathways and the stakeholders who span that continuum
- **A**pproachable: Reflects how we make the care process feel person-centric and easy
- **R**esponsive: Reflects who we serve and how we care for them
- **E**mpowering: Reflects how we make each other feel in our everyday interactions

The work of the CFAC may include the following:

- Providing input and suggestions on enhancements or changes to our programs and services from a lived/living experience perspective
- Assisting in identifying and addressing the needs, priorities, and potential barriers of CMHA Halton clients and caregivers and others seeking mental health/addictions care
- Reviewing client/caregiver experience summary survey results and providing perspective related to trends and results
- Providing feedback on new policies or protocols through a lived/living experience perspective and with an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility lens

Reporting Relationship

The CFAC will have a direct communication relationship with the Director, Services and Clinical Transformation and other staff/Board members as designated by the Director, Services and Clinical Transformation.

Leadership

The CFAC will operate under a co-chair model. One co-chair will be the CMHA Halton Director, Services and Clinical Transformation. The other co-chair will be a CFAC member chosen as co-chair by the membership through a consensus or majority to serve a 2-year term.

The co-chairs will:

- Keep the meeting on track
- Guide the discussions based on the agenda
- Review the previous minutes and bring forward decisions to the next meeting
- Ensure everyone has the opportunity to be heard
- Support resolution of any conflicts
- Reinforce the expectations of members

CMHA Halton Director, Services and Clinical Transformation will:

- Facilitate the preparation of an agenda through consultation with the CFAC and/or other CMHA staff
- Ensure availability after all meetings to support members as needed

Membership

Individuals who have lived/living experience with mental health/substance use concerns and their family members/caregivers may apply to be members of the CFAC. Current CMHA Halton staff and Board members will not be eligible for CFAC membership.

The CFAC will consist of at least 5 and no more than 12 members unless otherwise agreed upon by the CFAC and CMHA Halton.

Members will be recruited through a variety of methods, including online postings, social media, and networking. If there are no available CFAC positions, those interested in joining the CFAC may express their interest to CMHA Halton for future consideration.

The process of becoming a CFAC member will include the completion of an Expression of Interest form and an orientation to CMHA Halton, community-based mental health/addictions care, and the role of a CFAC member.

Members will serve two-year terms that may be extended as agreed upon by the CFAC and CMHA Halton.

If a CFAC member wishes to resign, they will inform the co-chairs.

Meetings

The CFAC will have at least two scheduled meetings per year. One of these sessions will include a training/educational session on a topic related to CMHA Halton services and the other will be a CFAC discussion/feedback forum.

Other CFAC meetings will be scheduled on an ad-hoc basis as needs arise. Meetings may be requested by either the CFAC or CMHA Halton and, depending on the meeting content, include the entire CFAC or select members only based on their experiences and areas of interest.

The scheduling and agendas for meetings will be developed by the co-chairs. Members will be responsible for reading information and documents related to each agenda prior to the meeting. Members may also be requested to participate in focus groups, surveys, and other activities in addition to regular meetings.

Minutes will be maintained for all meetings by CMHA Halton staff.

The Director, Services and Clinical Transformation is an ex-officio CFAC member and they and/or their designate(s) will attend CFAC meetings. Other CMHA Halton staff may also attend meetings needed or at the request of the CFAC or the Director, Services and Clinical Transformation.

Attendance

If a CFAC member is unable to attend a meeting, they will advise the co-chairs in a timely fashion.

If there are concerns about a member's attendance record, the co-chairs will discuss the concerns with them and may ask the member to leave the CFAC if improvements are not made.

Consensus

Recommendations made by the CFAC will be reached by consensus whenever possible. Consensus is a process in which group members develop and agree to support a decision in the best interest of the whole group or common goal.

Where no consensus can be reached, a simple majority will suffice.

Quorum

A quorum will be defined as 50 percent plus one of the members of the CFAC.

Compensation

All CFAC members who are not CMHA staff are volunteers and will not receive a salary or hourly wage for their work on the CFAC. They will receive individual honouraria of $50 for any meetings of less than 7 hours and of $100 for any meetings of 7 hours or more.

Honouraria will not be provided when there is an open invitation to attend CMHA Halton events or functions.

CFAC members may be reimbursed for other expenses, such as travel costs, if agreed upon with CMHA Halton in advance.

Feedback and Evaluation

Feedback from CFAC members related to the work and operation of the CFAC may be communicated directly to the Director, Services and Clinical Transformation. If members do not wish to communicate with the Director, Services and Clinical Transformation, they may communicate with the CMHA Halton Chief Executive Officer or Chair, Board of Directors.

CFAC members will be asked to share both how their membership experience is positive and how it could be improved. This information will be used to collaboratively enhance the CFAC for both the members and CMHA Halton.

If there are concerns about a member's conduct or performance, the co-chairs will discuss the concerns with them and may ask the member to leave the CFAC if improvements are not made.

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the CFAC annually.