

Regional Center of Orange County

Ambassadors in the Community
October 3, 2019

Board Member Ambassadors for RCOOC

- ▶ Attendance at community events helps to generate greater awareness of RCOOC
 - Help more people get the services they need
- ▶ Persons served and family members humanize the organization and its work
- ▶ Your personal stories reinforce the critical nature of RCOOC services and supports
 - You are the expert about you and your family!

Expectations

- ▶ Board members should have basic knowledge of RCOC, but are not experts in what we do
- ▶ More detailed discussions about RCOC should be referred to staff. For example:
 - Eligibility
 - POS Guidelines
 - Vendorization
 - Specific services and service providers
 - Individual diagnoses
 - Complaints or anything confusing
- ▶ Staff will follow up promptly on all inquiries

RCOC Ambassador Toolkit

- ▶ “Elevator” speech
 - Two-sentence description of who we are and what we do
- ▶ Basic supporting information
 - A few details to expand on the elevator speech
 - Your personal experience to make it “real”
- ▶ RCOC’s key messages
 - Important things we want people to remember
 - Key messages are drawn from RCOC’s Strategic Plan
 - Things to keep in mind when you’re talking about RCOC, our work, and the people we serve

Elevator Speech

- ▶ Regional Center of Orange County is one of 21 private, nonprofit organizations contracted by the State of California to coordinate lifelong services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The regional center is the first stop for those seeking to obtain critical services and supports in the community.

Basic Supporting Information

- ▶ RCOC serves more than 22,000 Orange County residents and their families.
- ▶ Developmental disabilities include autism, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disabilities.
- ▶ RCOC contracts with more than 1,700 local service providers to ensure adults and children with developmental disabilities receive the services and supports they need.
- ▶ The individualized services and supports RCOC funds range from helping adults find a place to live and a place to work, to early intervention, respite care, special education advocacy, and much more.

RCOC's Key Messages

- ▶ RCOC has a vital role as the hub agency that coordinates essential services and supports for more than 22,000 Orange County residents with developmental disabilities and their families.
- ▶ RCOC embraces self-determination and person-centered thinking, placing the person with disabilities – their needs and preferences – at the center of everything we do.
- ▶ People with developmental disabilities bring valuable talents and unique skills that make them an asset in the workplace.
- ▶ The community is a good and healthy place for people with developmental disabilities to live.
- ▶ Regardless of the severity of their disability, every person can have their needs met by RCOC in the community.

RCOC Contacts for More Info

- ▶ For general information and to inquire about applying for services, visit the website at www.rcocdd.com
- ▶ For family support, reach out to RCOC's Comfort Connection Family Resource Center
 - Contact info and resources on the RCOC website
- ▶ For help resolving a problem or issue, contact your RCOC Service Coordinator
- ▶ For additional assistance getting the help you need, contact RCOC's Peer Advocate

Potentially Awkward Situations

- ▶ A person served is unhappy with a service provider or direct care worker
- ▶ A family member feels RCOC isn't doing enough for them or the community
- ▶ A person disagrees with an RCOC or DDS policy or decision
- ▶ A person feels their family member was unfairly denied eligibility for RCOC-funded services

Rules for Engagement

- ▶ There is no “off the record”
 - Be mindful that interactions may be recorded
- ▶ Don’t assume people know about RCOC or developmental disabilities
 - Embrace the opportunity to educate & dispel myths
 - You are the expert in you and your family’s experience
- ▶ Know your limits
 - Ask yourself if you are the person’s “best source” for the information they seek
 - It is always okay to say “I don’t know” and connect them with RCOC staff
 - If you misspeak, correct yourself right away
- ▶ Never argue
 - You can acknowledge and respect another’s feelings and viewpoint, without agreeing with them

Making a Graceful Referral

- 1. Acknowledge the question or issue.**
 - “I can tell this is very emotional for you...”
 - “It’s disappointing to hear that...”
- 2. Use a strong transitional phase.**
 - “...and what I really want you to know...”
 - “...and I hope you can understand...”
- 3. Refer the person to RCOC for follow up.**
 - “...RCOC has lots of resources to help families like yours who are dealing with that issue.”
 - “...your RCOC Service Coordinator can help, and will want to know that you’re having this issue.”

Questions?