

Dispute Resolution

Even when there is a high level of cooperation and coordination among members, there may be situations where disputes arise. Possible areas of dispute might include:

- Legal limitations
- Follow up of services
- Scope and responsibility of an agency's role in an ISP
- Eligibility criteria

If properly managed, conflict can be a great source of creativity, innovation, and team building. If a conflict does emerge, address it and discuss the issues. Working towards a resolution can result in creative approaches that were not previously considered. Techniques that can help you avoid and manage conflict include:

- Listen to understand. Being heard is key to feeling part of a group. Ensure that every member has the chance to be heard by creating space and opportunities for them to speak. Enforce respectful, active listening (receiving information without judgement).
- Use the agenda and ground rules. If someone continually goes off topic throughout the meeting, remind everyone of the agenda and ground rules the group agreed on.
- Do not be defensive.
- Take a break and give everyone a chance to recollect their thoughts.
- If necessary, talk to the disruptive person outside of the meeting room to discuss their behavior and possible solutions.

If the issue is especially heightened or if you are seen as aligned with one side or the other, it might be useful to bring in a neutral mediator to facilitate the discussion. CRCGs operate by consensus to help avoid unnecessary splintering of the CRCG. While voting might divide the CRCG, in consensus, all must come to agreement.

Interagency Dispute Resolution

Conflicts might emerge between members regarding agency programs or policies. If the issue is irresolvable by the members or threatens the stability and effectiveness of the CRCG, the issue can be turned over to mediators to resolve. The CRCG MOU requires each state agency to designate a negotiator who is not a member of any local CRCG to resolve disputes. The negotiator must have:

- Decision-making authority over the agency's representative on the local CRCG; or
- The ability to interpret policy and commit funds.

When two or more members of a CRCG disagree about their respective agencies' service responsibilities, the CRCG chair sends the designated negotiators for those

agencies written notification that a dispute exists. Within 45 days of receiving the written notification, the negotiators shall confer to resolve the dispute.

When an interagency dispute cannot be resolved in the above manner, the dispute may be referred to the Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner. Contact the State CRCG Office at (512) 206-5255 or CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us for further assistance.