

LESSON TWO: MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee should be comprised of mature Christians who agree with the Pregnancy Care Canada Core Documents and who are willing to work hard to get the centre off the ground. Some people may be very passionate but are too busy to commit to do the work that needs to be done. These people are not good candidates for the steering committee but can be kept in mind for an advisory board or specialized committee down the road. Steering committee members can expect to invest 15 hours per month during the early planning phase.



The steering committee is an ad hoc group with no legal power to govern the centre, so the members are not required to have any special qualifications; although including professionals on the steering committee is beneficial because they bring with them skill and knowledge in their area of expertise. They also enhance the credibility of the organization in the eyes of the community. It is difficult to get churches, pastors, and others involved if the members of the steering committee are not respected as competent individuals and mature Christians. Ideally, you will be able to recruit individuals with experience starting or leading an organization.



It is important to develop a steering committee of at least five people. There is much work to be done and you don't want it to be overly burdensome for just a few people. You may need to have more than one community meeting to find people who are ready to commit, and some people may be hesitant and need more time before joining the steering committee. Take advantage of the contacts you have made at the first meeting and encourage them to invite their friends to a second meeting or to consider volunteering their time. Don't become discouraged if you don't get enough support at the outset. Sometimes it is necessary to have another community meeting before a sufficient number of people show interest.

The steering committee will be most effective when it has a wide range of people serving as members. Groups operate best when you have different perspectives and different talents contributing to the work. Below are some of the areas of diversity that are ideal to aim for.

Age. The perspective of a variety of age groups is extremely valuable. Therefore, involving Christians of all ages on the steering committee provides a good foundation for the centre. A committee of members who are all under the age of 30 may lack wisdom, spiritual maturity, and experience that can only come with age. A committee with all older people may not be able to relate to the younger generation's outlook on the world and may be perceived as being out of touch with issues of sexuality and pregnancy.

Christian Maturity. You want members of your steering committee to be committed to a local body of believers and to desire intimacy with God and ongoing spiritual growth. Having new believers on the committee can enhance enthusiasm and bring a fresh appreciation of God's grace. You will also want mature people who have been Christians for many years to provide necessary spiritual leadership.



Gender. A combination of men and women on the steering committee is preferable. It is important to include women in the leadership when planning an organization primarily aimed at women. An all-male steering committee may be problematic for some clients and volunteers, most of whom will be women. Yet, men bring a valuable perspective and address the misconception that unexpected pregnancy and abortion are simply a women's issue.



Ethnicity. The steering committee should make an effort to include people who are representative of the community. Racial diversity enhances understanding of the community and the ability to reach target clients, as well as promoting the centre's standing in the community. For example, if your community has a large number of indigenous people, it may be wise to have an indigenous Christian on your steering committee.



Church Representation. It is ideal to have people from several different churches on the steering committee. This sets the tone for the pregnancy care centre being an organization that is supported and led by many churches in your community.

Unity and teamwork are very important for a steering committee. It is detrimental for a steering committee to be controlled by one or two people; it can hinder progress and cause discord and conflict. Leadership should be shared. You need input from every person on the committee and do not want the committee staffed with people who will support a strong individual's ideas out of a sense of personal loyalty or friendship.

This module provides the information you need to establish a steering committee. The official formation of the steering committee will be put on hold until you have completed Module Three and have held your community meeting. It is very important not to rush ahead as the content of each module builds upon the last and you need all the information to complete the steps with excellence.

Ideally, upon completion of this, Module Two, you will have found at least two other people to join you in the preliminary phase of pregnancy care centre development. After completing Module Three, this core group can plan the community meeting and begin communicating the vision of a pregnancy care centre to others.

LESSON TWO REFLECTION

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