



Charter for SPARK Community Advisory Council – Updated January 2024

SPARK's Mission

SPARK's mission is to improve the lives of people with autism by identifying the causes of autism and informing more effective therapies, treatments, services, and supports.

Purpose of Community Advisory Council

The purpose of SPARK's Community Advisory Council (CAC) is to help SPARK accomplish its goals by providing the voice of the autism community, guiding SPARK's research, recruitment, and retention activities.

Membership

- The CAC will have no more than 75 members.
- Members should be actively involved in the autism community.
- Members must be at least 18 years old, though teen advisors may be included in the future.
- The SPARK team will review applications to be sure that the CAC is representative of the autism community.
- New members will participate in an introductory phone call with study staff.
- Members will be invited to serve for two-year terms and may resign at any time.
- The SPARK team will review the participation of members annually, and some members may be rotated off the council. Others may be asked to extend their term.
- New members will be added periodically.

Responsibilities

CAC members are asked to devote approximately 10 hours per year to CAC-related activities. Most of the activities are accomplished via phone, email, or video conferences. Staff will ensure that activities are designed so that members can participate when and where it is most convenient. Occasionally, CAC members are invited to attend in-person events, though in-person participation is not required.

Members may choose from a variety of activities such as:

- Working with SPARK staff to test research surveys
- Participating in online focus groups to help with communications
- Taking informal surveys and polls
- Participating in interviews for SPARK articles

Meetings

- A general online conference call will occur once a year. These meetings will be recorded for those who cannot attend at the time of the call.
- Staff will convene ad hoc meetings with subgroups of the CAC as needed. For example, we may invite autistic members to advise staff on the wording of a survey for autistic adults.
- Staff will provide CAC members with a quarterly newsletter that includes updates about SPARK's progress and information about how the CAC's participation has contributed to SPARK.



- On occasion and when applicable, the SPARK team may reach out to members of the CAC who live in the New York City metropolitan area to participate in relevant SPARK meetings or events. Additionally, if the SPARK team attends a national event where CAC members live, we may invite those members to join us and/or attend a lunch or dinner meeting. In these circumstances, SPARK will cover transportation and meals.

Compensation

Active participants may receive a small annual gift as a thank you during their term.

Liability

Members of the CAC shall not be held liable for any actions taken by them in their capacities as members.