



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



HOPE LAB
UBC
HEALTHY OUTCOMES BY IMPROVING
PATIENT & PROVIDER EXPERIENCES

Nothing about us without us: Increase effective engagement with residents and families in Long-Term Care

Prepared by: Dr. Farinaz Havaei (*UBC SON Associate Professor*), Sabina Staempfli (*UBC SON PhD Candidate*)

Presented by: Lisa Dawson (*Vice President/Secretary, ILTCCABC*)

Land Acknowledgement



We would like to acknowledge that UBC operates on the traditional ancestral unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples including the territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations

Project Lead

- **Dr. Farinaz Havaei**
Associate Professor, UBC

Project Manager

- **Sabina Staempfli**
PhD Candidate, UBC

Participants:

Resident council participants
1 focus group

Family council participants
2 focus groups

Advocates
1 focus group, 1 interview

LTC Leaders
1 focus group, 1 interview

Team Members

- **Lisa Dawson**
Independent Long-Term Care Councils Association of British Columbia
- **Dr. Sheila Novek**
UBC Postdoctoral Fellow
- **Kim Slater**
Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils, Family Councils of BC
- **Megan Kaulius**
School of Nursing, UBC
- **Amira Ahmed**
PhD Candidate, UBC Okanagan



Project Overview



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Community Care and Assisted Living Act

RESIDENTIAL CARE REGULATION

B.C. Reg. 96/2009



Menu Home raise-your-voice-how-to-... x Create

All tools Edit Convert E-Sign Find text or tools

Check for updates

Canadian Journal on Aging / La Revue canadienne du vieillissement

Raise Your Voice: How to Increase the Effectiveness of Resident and Family Councils in Long-Term Care Homes

www.cambridge.org/cjg

Sabina Staempfli¹, Farinaz Havaei¹, Lisa Dawson², Sheila Novek¹, Kim Slater³, Megan Kaulius¹ and Amira Ahmed^{4,5}

Article

Cite this article: Staempfli, S., Havaei, F., Dawson, L., Novek, S., Slater, K., Kaulius, M., & Ahmed, A. (2025). Raise Your Voice: How to Increase the Effectiveness of Resident and Family Councils in Long-Term Care Homes. *Canadian Journal on Aging / La Revue canadienne du vieillissement* <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0714980825000029>

Received: 03 May 2024
Accepted: 09 January 2025

Keywords: caregiving; health policy; integrated knowledge translation; nursing homes; participatory research; patient partner integration

Mots clé: connaissances intégrées; recherche

Abstract

The devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the missing voices of families and residents in long-term care (LTC) decision-making and policy processes. Family and resident councils constitute one method of raising these voices, but there is currently a gap in evidence of how to promote the effectiveness of these councils. We conducted five focus groups and two interviews with LTC home leaders, residents, family members, and advocates in British Columbia using a participatory approach integrating knowledge-users throughout the research process. Using a framework analysis, we found modifiable (communication, structure, recruitment/engagement, council leadership, culture/attitudes, and resources/supports) and non-modifiable factors (medical complexity of residents and short lengths of stay) affecting council effectiveness. We discuss strategies implemented by knowledge-users to address modifiable effectiveness factors and construct a preliminary tool (a 35-question survey) that operationalizes



- Journal article
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40034050/>

Findings



What makes a council effective?

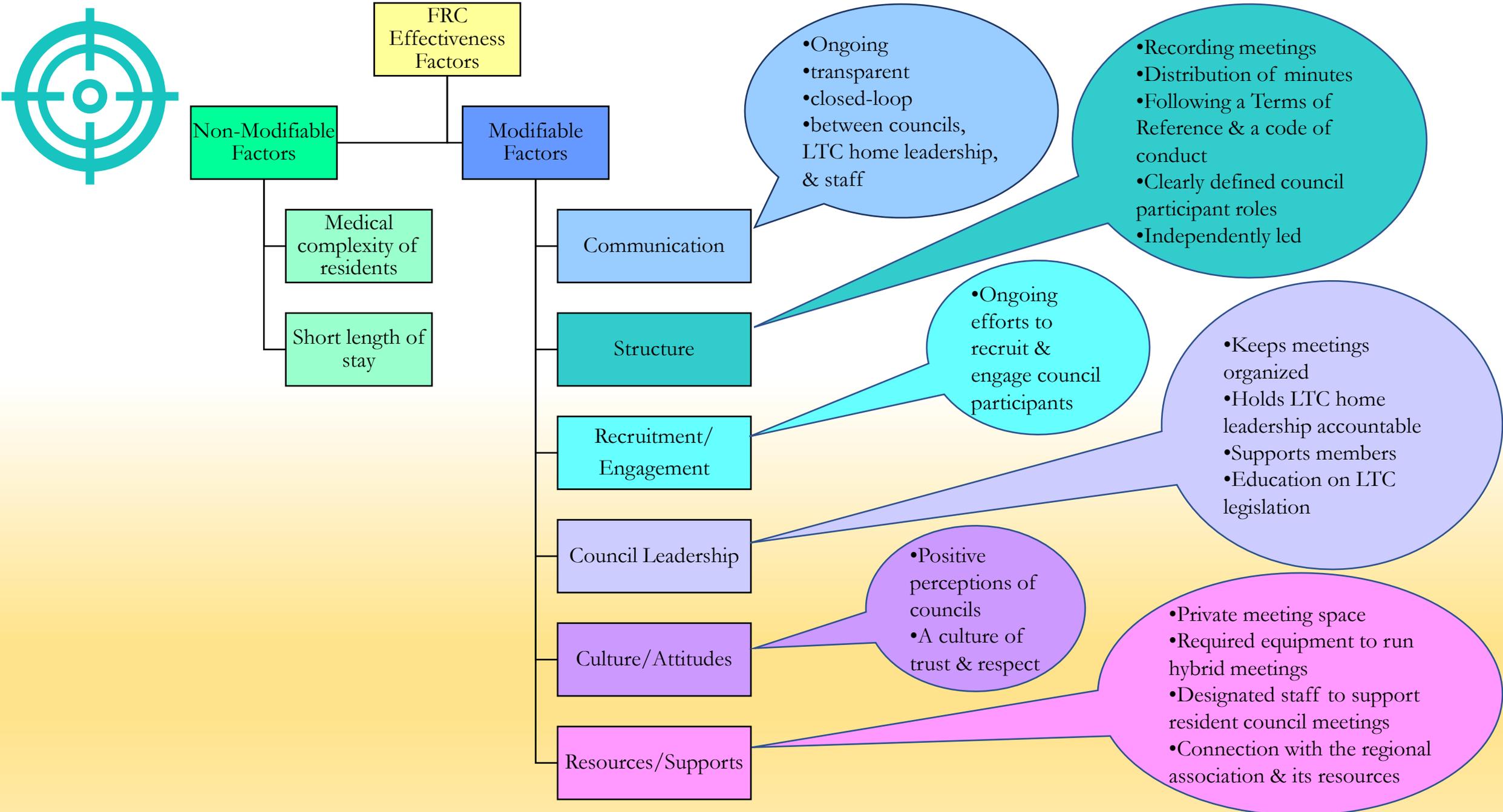


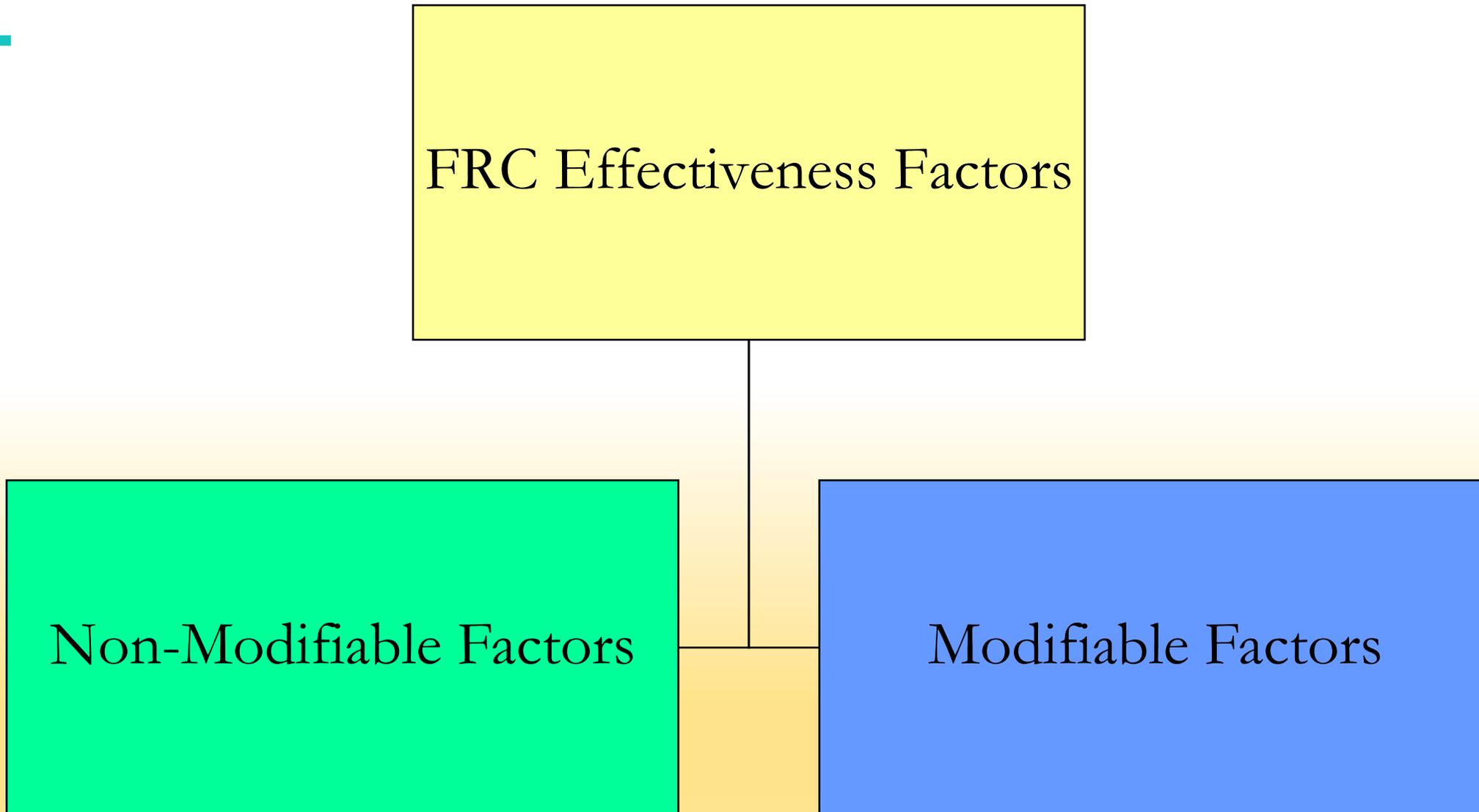
Figure 1. A visual depiction of key study findings on non-modifiable and modifiable factors of family and resident councils effectiveness (FRC)

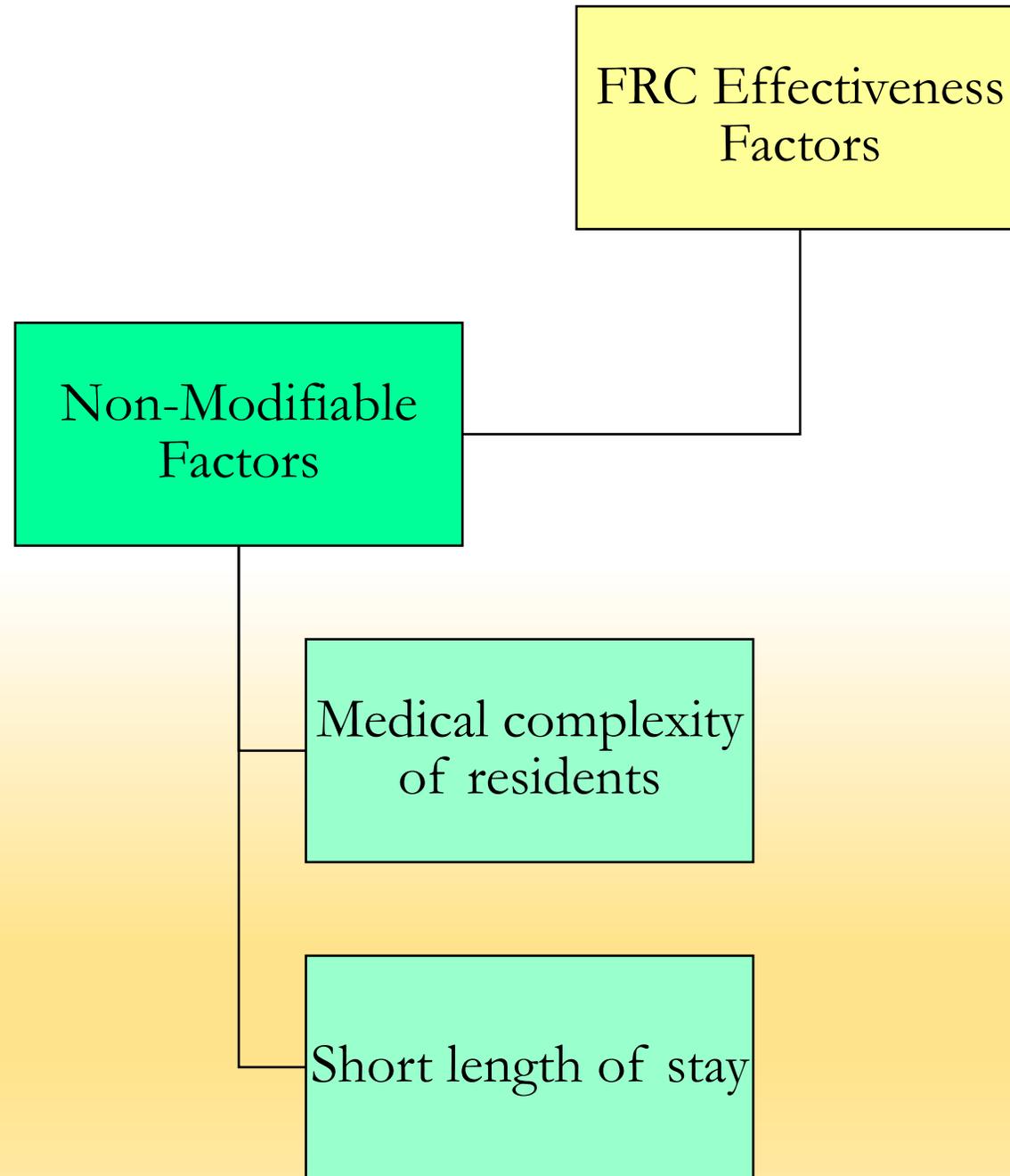


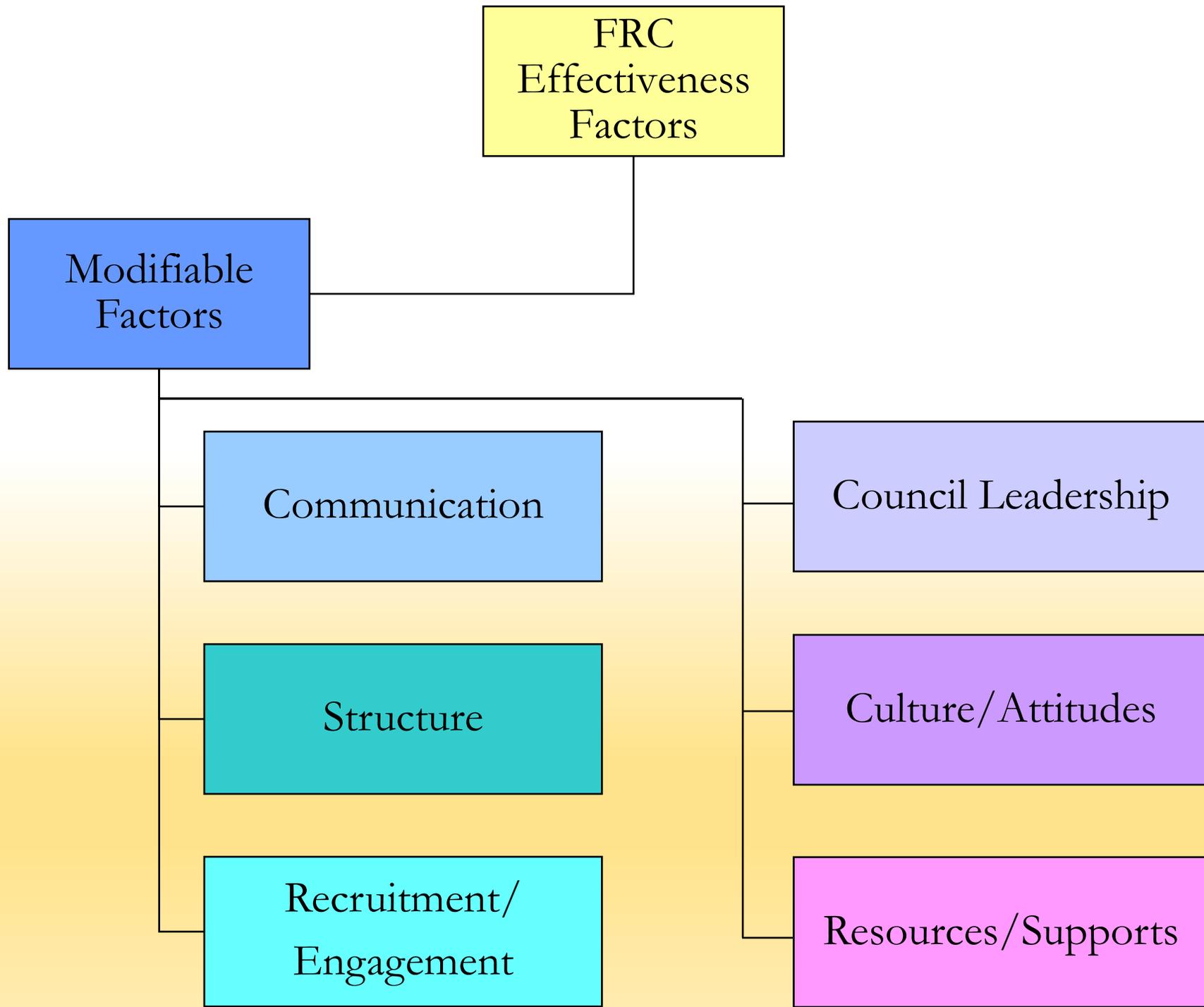
FRC Effectiveness Factors

Non-Modifiable Factors

Modifiable Factors







Modifiable
Factors

Communication

- Ongoing
- Transparent
- Closed-loop
- Between councils, LTC home leadership, & staff

Communication is not just what is said
but how you say it

[Appreciative Inquiry](#)

[Gentle Advocacy](#)

[Developing Relationships](#)



These ratings can change to something else.

For example:

1-most of the time 2- from time to time 3- not often enough

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither disagree nor agree (3)	Agree (4)	<u>Strongly agree (5)</u>
Communication					
1. There is a regular and defined process for communicating information between staff/leadership and the council.					
2. Communication between the council and staff/leadership is transparent without fear of repercussion.					
3. Staff/leadership follow up on issues raised by the council and report back to the council in a timely and appropriate manner.					
4. The council follows up on issues raised by the staff/leadership and reports back to the leadership team in a timely and appropriate manner.					
5. Staff/leadership attend council meetings when invited by the council.					

Modifiable
Factors

Structure

- Recording meetings
- Distribution of minutes
- Following a Terms of Reference & a code of conduct
- Clearly defined council participant roles
- Independently led

Keep it simple!

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither disagree nor agree (3)	Agree (4)	<u>Strongly</u> agree (5)
Structure					
6. The council meetings follow a well-structured, organized process.					
7. Meeting minutes are recorded.					
8. Meeting minutes are made available to all the council participants and invitees.					
9. The council follows a <u>terms of reference</u> , an operation manual, or a handbook.					
10. The council participants follow a Code of Conduct.					
11. The roles of council participants are well-defined (e.g., chair, co-chair, non-voting member etc.).					
12. Meetings are held at dates/times that are convenient for most <u>council</u> participants.					
13. The council organization is appropriate for the needs of the council participants (e.g., a joint resident and family council versus separate resident and family councils).					
14. The council meetings are run independent of long-term care staff/leadership oversight (i.e., the council is self-determining).					

Modifiable
Factors

Recruitment/
Engagement

- Ongoing efforts to recruit & engage council participants

Recruitment and Engagement					
15. The long-term care home informs newly admitted residents and families about engagement opportunities with the council.					
16. The council welcomes new residents and their family.					
17. The council engages in ongoing recruitment of council participants.					
18. The long-term care home leadership supports council recruitment efforts.					
19. The council's small and large wins and successes are celebrated and shared within the long-term care home community.					



Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils (VIAFC) Tool to Increase Family Council (FC) Membership

Note: majority of ideas will require discussion with Long-Term Care Home (LTCH)

© VIAFC

PROMOTION:

- Have sign-in sheet and a FC poster at sign-in desk
- Use Info brochures: 1) what is a family council?; 2) FAQ's
- Posters of FC meetings on coloured bristle board to attract attention
- Ask if the FC can include a statement in LTCH's newsletter
- If no newsletter, encourage creation of one
- Have a FC Bulletin Board in a highly visible place
- Have regular announcements from LTCH re: FC events and updates
- Reminders (and encouragement) sent out by LTCH regarding upcoming meetings
- Ask to have a FC statement in monthly LTCH mail outs
- Discuss FC at meet and greets and other events. Have info brochures available
- Ask Mgt to send a note to their data base asking families to opt-in by sending contact information to FC Chair. Indicate attending FC is an option-we want their information (family member contact information and resident's name) to keep them informed
- Encourage existing FC members to reach out to other families

GUEST SPEAKERS:

- Have important, interesting guests, "brought to you by the family council"
- Alzheimer's Society, Dementia/Geriatric Specialist, Seniors Advocate, LTCH Managers, Dietitian, Physio Therapist, Head Chef, DoC, Rec Manager
- Ask Council members about potential guests
- Have a "family education day" on how to operate a wheel chair, etc

CELEBRATE SUCCESSSES:

- Include "kudos" as an agenda item for FC meetings
- Ask families if there are particular staff members they would like to celebrate and provide those names to Mgt - do not include names in meeting notes (confidentiality)
- Have "WOW" stickers to acknowledge specific staff members
- Celebrate program/policy successes in mail-outs (from LTCH)

COLLABORATE AND COMMUNICATE:

- Collaborate with Mgt to raise profile of FC
- Be involved at end of intake process for new residents and their families
- Have permission for families to sign up for FC when they enter LTCH
- Have a one-on-one with new family members to welcome them/answer questions
- Organize group discussions on topics of interest to families
- Talk to families about the FC and invite them to join; indicate they don't have to attend meeting, that if they provide e-mail info and resident's name, they will receive info from the FC
- Do a survey with the families/representatives on your list (once people opt-in) to get an idea of the issues, what themes are present and what areas need attention
- Offer support to families who need it. Have a couple of FC members engage with families, take them out for coffee etc.
- Be clear to new staff regarding the role of the FC

MEETINGS:

- Survey families for best meeting days and times
- Late afternoons or evenings often work better
- Meeting frequency could determine attendee number. Consult with families
- Try to keep meetings to one hour
- Meetings can be formal or informal, more formal for larger homes generally works
- Ask Mgt to provide coffee/tea and snacks for FC meetings
- Try hybrid meetings to include more families
- Have families only discussion for 1st 30 minutes; include LTCH Mgt for last 30 minutes or vice versa
- Have Mgt send an invite to all families/representatives on their data base
- Have a Code of Conduct for FC Members, just in case, and especially if there is a member who makes meetings "miserable"
- Be open to after meeting discussion
- Avoid a doom and gloom meeting climate

HAVE FUN!

- Encourage FC/staff gatherings with coffee and snacks
- Arrange for a wine and cheese evening for families, paid for by the LTCH
- Ask LTCH to have a "meet and greet" with a cake or a barbecue for staff and families
- Have a welcome tea for new families, organized by the LTCH and attended by FC
- Arrange "tea parties" with snacks for residents and some family members
- Organize a "Dinner Club" for FC members
- Be involved in Rec Activities with residents, where appropriate
- Solicit family members to volunteer their music-arrange with LTCH Mgt
- Help decorate LTCH for holidays-include residents where appropriate
- Have a book drive
- Organize a reading session for residents

[CLICK
HERE](#)

Modifiable
Factors

Council Leadership

- Keeps meetings organized
- Holds LTC home leadership accountable
- Supports members
- Education on LTC legislation

Council Leadership					
20. The council leadership has an in-depth understanding of long-term care.					
21. The council leadership has an in-depth understanding of long-term care legislation.					
22. The council leadership listens to council participants' concerns and provides appropriate support.					
23. The council leadership is approachable and friendly.					

Modifiable
Factors

Culture/Attitudes

- Positive perceptions of councils
- A culture of trust & respect

Culture and Attitudes					
24. The care home staff/leadership respects and values the role of the council.					
25. The council feels comfortable raising concerns with staff/leadership without fear of reprisal.					
26. The council has a culture of trust and collaboration with staff/leadership.					
27. The council and staff/leadership work together towards a shared vision of improving resident quality of life.					

Modifiable
Factors

Resources/Supports

- Private meeting space
- Required equipment to run hybrid meetings
- Designated staff to support resident council meetings
- Connection with the regional association & its resources

Resources and <u>Supports</u>					
28. A designated staff member facilitates council meetings when requested by the council.					
29. Council participants can attend meetings virtually if they want to.					
30. Educational opportunities (e.g., through guest speakers) are offered by the council when members identify a need.					
31. The council regularly engages with their regional association of family and resident council.					
32. The council takes advantage of the resources and opportunities offered by the regional association of family and resident council.					
33. The council has a clear and in-depth understanding of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the Residential Care Regulation.					
34. The council receives the support it needs from the care home to operate effectively.					

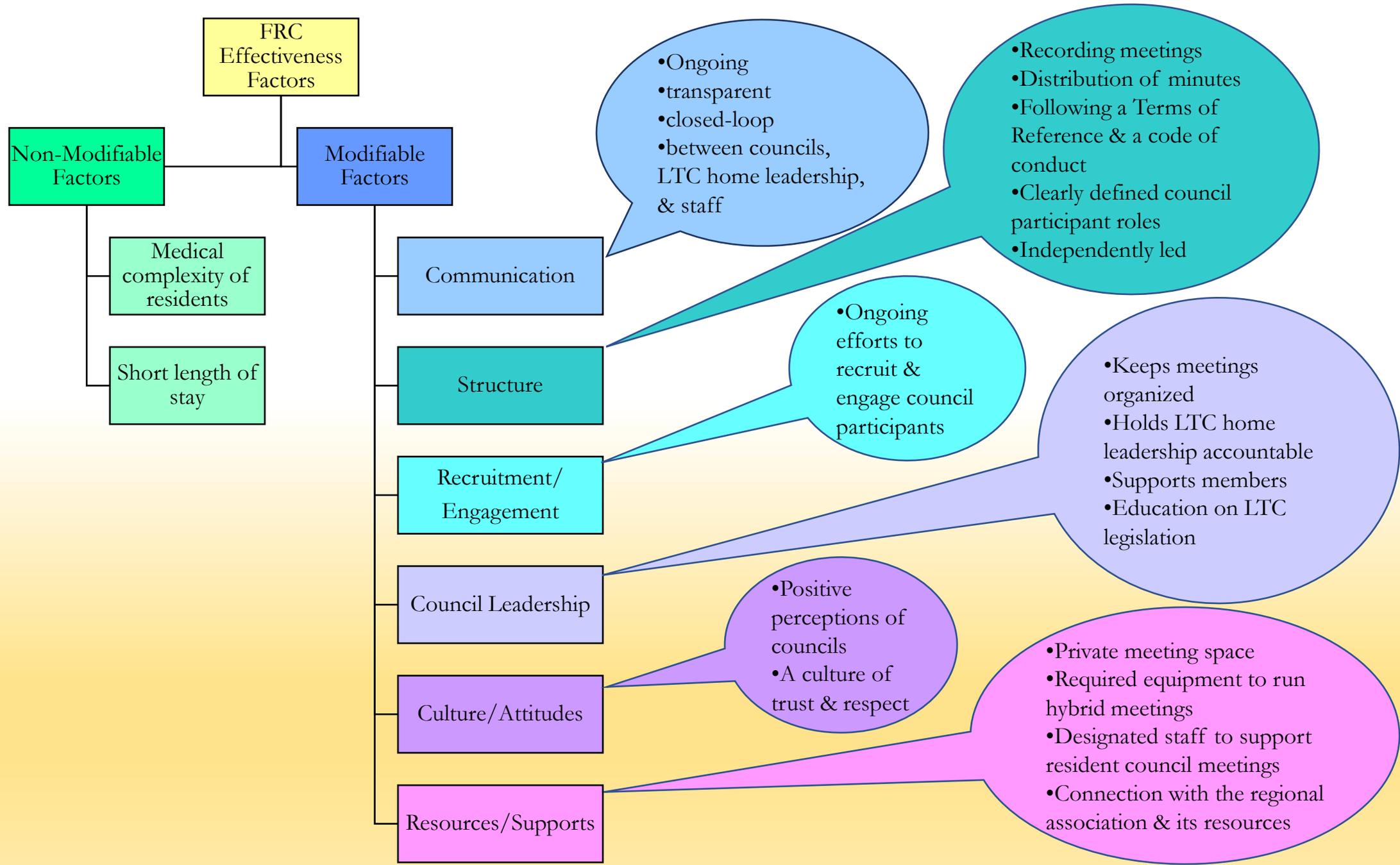


Figure 1. A visual depiction of key study findings on non-modifiable and modifiable factors of family and resident councils effectiveness (FRC)

Take Home Message



So what can we do with this information?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither disagree nor agree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Communication					
1. There is a regular and defined process for communicating information between staff/leadership and the council.					
2. Communication between the council and staff/leadership is transparent without fear of repercussion.					
3. Staff/leadership follow up on issues raised by the council and report back to the council in a timely and appropriate manner.					
4. The council follows up on issues raised by the staff/leadership and reports back to the leadership team in a timely and appropriate manner.					
5. Staff/leadership attend council meetings when invited by the council.					
Structure					
6. The council meetings follow a well-structured, organized process.					

- 35 questions total
- Provides an understanding of the extent to which council is perceived as effective or ineffective



- Anyone can complete this tool: available publicly
- Each LTC home and each council will be unique and needs to identify areas where they can improve
 - Each question gives an idea of where specific improvements can be made
 - E.g., Question 15: The long-term care home informs newly admitted residents and families about engagement opportunities with the council.
 - One LTC home emailed information about council one month after admission
- Journal article has specific examples from participants



Raise Your Voice



UBCNursing Vancouver
371 subscribers

Subscribe

8



Share

Download



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



HOPE LAB
UBC
HEALTHY OUTCOMES BY IMPROVING
PATIENT & PROVIDER EXPERIENCES

Contact us!

- Online at **Hope Lab UBC** under Healthy Aging Projects
- Email us
 - Naz Havaei: farinaz.havaei@ubc.ca
 - Sabina Staempfli: sabinast@student.ubc.ca
 - Lisa Dawson: vcafc.regional@gmail.com