Tips for Your Team Meetings

A Guide for Youth

Many young people feel like they don't get much say in the decisions that are made about their lives during their team-based planning meetings*, which can be very frustrating. The Achieve My Plan youth advisory group has developed some suggestions and strategies to help young people, just like you, to become more involved in their team meetings.

**Note: A team based-planning meeting can be any meeting where a team of professionals and family members meet with a youth to make plans for their future. This can include Wraparound team meetings, Individualized Education Plan meetings, etc.*

Get the Team to Work for You

Team meetings are designed to support you and help you plan for your future; however, sometimes this doesn't happen in reality. It is important for you to be involved in planning, organizing, and participating in your meeting. A place to begin getting the team to work for you is to:

Talk with the person on your team that you are closest to about how you want to be involved in your meetings. This person can be your "support person." If no one on the team supports you, let your team know you want to invite someone as a support person or ally to come to your meetings.

The Best Support Person Is...

- Someone I trust who will **support me even through uncomfortable parts of the meeting.**
- Someone who the **other people at the meeting will respect and listen to.**
- Someone who knows me and will **help me say what I want to say.**
- Someone who will be a**vailable to meet before the meeting to check-in and review** what I would like share with the team.
- Someone who will be **available to check in with me after the team meeting** to talk about how it went and support me with any follow-up tasks.

Beginning below are tips that you and your support person (if applicable) can use to get the team to work for you.

Ask the team to create ground rules that ask everyone to show respect and welcome participation.

Here are some examples of ground rules: Honor everyone's voice; Speak directly to the person you are speaking to or about; Do not assume what others are thinking or feeling; Offer advice only when it is requested. A**sk the team to use an agenda for the team meeting.** Using an agenda, and sticking to it, helps the team to stay on track and cover everything that needs to be discussed. Some teams also add time limits to agenda items to ensure that the team can talk about everything quickly and efficiently.

Ask to add one or two topics that are important to you to the meeting agenda.

You can come up with some goals or activities that you want to work on and share with the team. You can ask your team to support you in achieving your goals or assisting with your activities.

If you're working with a support person you can make a communication plan for the meeting.

This can be a look, gesture or placement of a pen/pencil to "signal" your support person when you need help.

Include a break in the agenda.

If your meetings feel like they take a long time and don't get anywhere, you or your support person can ask that your team build in a five minute break so everyone can have a moment to refresh before continuing with the agenda.

Request information before the meeting, including agenda items and who will be attending.

It's important for you to have time to think about what will be discussed, who will be there, and any thoughts you may want to share with the team. If you are working with a support person, they can help you review the agenda, take notes, create a list of questions for your team members, and assist you with sharing your ideas and questions during the meeting. You can do these things on your own too.

Suggest the team use a "parking lot."

This is a place for items that come up that were not on the original agenda. These "parking lot" items can be discussed at the end or saved for the next meeting. This helps to keep the meeting on track and moving forward.

https://achievemyplan.pdx.edu

This publicaton was produced by Achieve My Plan at Portland State University and was supported with funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education; and the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (NIDRR grant H133B900019).