

FAMILY TEAM MEETING OVERVIEW

*TEAMWORK*TEAMWORK*TEAMWORK*

Like athletic teams, families require teamwork, cooperation and open communication to function in harmony and meet life challenges efficiently and effectively. I often use a teaming metaphor when working with couples and families even if there are no children involved. No one can read each other's minds and so we have to get better at sharing information and asking for what we need if we are going to work better with each other.

I highly recommitted that every couple/family have weekly meetings to develop an open forum for raising issues and concerns as they come up. It makes it easier for when the more difficult problems arise, to bring them up and work together on finding resolutions. Making these conversations a win-win rather than a competition, building resentments or shame attack improves connection and can leave everyone feeling seen and heard and promotes connection.

Following are some guidelines and ideas on how to make this a fun, nurturing and successful event in your relationship/family. Feel free to alter it to fit for you and I'd love to get feedback on what you do which can help me edit and share with others.

It is helpful to have a regular time each week that you can set aside for these meetings so that it gets built into your weekly routine and isn't forgotten. Setting the meeting as a priority in a busy family also teaches the importance of relationship building, connection and maintenance. Make sure that everyone has "Family Meeting" in their schedule as an recurring event. If people are not using their phone calendars you can put up a big blotter sized calendar in the house and get everyone using it to share information about weekly events.

Then post a blank agenda sheet in a place that everyone sees it regularly and is easy to access, like on the refrigerator. You can print out an agenda that has areas already set up so all anyone has to do it go over and scribble their concern or event on the sheet and it can be brought up at the meeting. Questions, concerns, relational problems, scheduling issues will all be addressed at the next meeting.

The agenda outline I've designed is simply a suggested format for you to work from. Feel free to adapt it to your household needs. Establish the areas for your family/relationship and make up your own agenda form for your needs.

If your family includes more than 2 people, it can help and be fun to assign a facilitator to each meeting to ensure they run more smoothly and also to help everyone feel engaged and important in the process. It does happen that one or more people will resist the idea of a meeting and may try to sabotage it at the beginning. Having a facility can help the process move in a more structured way.

It is the facilitator's job to make sure each topic is discussed thoroughly and that each member of the family has a chance to voice their opinions or concerns. Everyone can take turns which helps them learn team and leadership skills. If you have someone in your family who likes to power struggle or sabotage you might want to wait until they have bought into the process before they have the turn to facilitate.

While everyone has the right to an opinion, they do not have the right to wreak havoc, disrespecting other people's boundaries or being hurtful. Discussions should be focused on understanding each other and finding solutions, not putting other people or their ideas down. Make some rules as a group about how to listen and talk and give feedback.

FAMILY MEETING NEED AREAS

SCHEDULE

- What recurring events need to be in the schedule weekly, monthly, yearly?
- What plans and activities are coming up in the next week?
- Are there regularly scheduled events that conflict with each other?
- Before the end of this meeting, make sure you have scheduled the meeting for next week.

FINANCES

- Review of bills/budget for the month: what has been paid or still needs to be paid and by when?
- Are you on a budget? If not, what are the plans for adjusting?
- Are there any purchases need or planned for the next week or month?
- What are your dreams for the future in terms of purchases, vacations, etc?
- Are you on track for financial planning for retirement and other investments?

RELATIONSHIPS

- What is going well relationally? Couple? Family? Kids? Extended family? Parenting?
- What's not working?
- What are some of the problems and what are some possible solutions?
- What would help the relationships function better so that people can be happier with each other?

PROJECTS

- What is currently being done around the house, car, yard, etc?
- What is the status of each project?
- Who is responsible or involved for completing the task? Do they need help?
- Who has a creative/art project? What's the status of that project? Do they need help?
- What else would you like to plan for and when?

CHORES

- Set up a chore chart. Who is responsible for each chore and when are the chores?
- What is the time frame for when chores should be done? What happens if chores are not done on time?
- How's it going? What's working and what's not? How can you change it so it works better?
- Some families find it works best if there is a Family Cleaning Time each week when everyone is expected to do their chores.

ERRANDS

- Who is responsible for running errands for household goods like groceries/toiletries?
- Who is responsible for gift shopping?
- Who is responsible for car maintenance?
- Who is responsible for transporting children to activities and events?
- Who is responsible for vets?

ANIMALS

- How are the animals doing? Any medical or food needs?
- Who's responsible for vet care, training, walking, feeding?

MEDICAL

- What are the upcoming routine appointments? Who is responsible for scheduling them?
- How will emergencies be handled?
- Who is responsible for taking children to appointments?
- Who is responsible for scheduling adult appointments?

HOMEWORK/SCHOOL PROJECTS

- What homework do children have and what is their plan for getting it handed in on time?
- Are there any big projects coming up?
- Any upcoming events at school this week?
- What are the consequences for not doing homework, reading or getting work in on time?

SOCIAL PLANS/OBLIGATIONS

- What social plans and activities does everyone have this week? Is there a process for kids to schedule things that they need help with?
- Will couple have a date night/time to connect this week?
- Are there friends or family you'd like to get together with this week?

FAMILY LIFESTYLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Relational/social
- Extracurricular
- Religious/spiritual
- Fitness
- Volunteering/Community service

EXTENDED FAMILY PLANS AND OBLIGATIONS

- What are the plans for future relationship with extended family?
- What do you want to be doing with them vs obligated to do?
- How would you like to change family relationships and obligations?

WORK/CAREER ISSUES

- Are you enjoying your jobs? If not, what else are you thinking you'd like to do?
- Are you considering a change in career or job?
- Is your job stable?
- If you are unemployed/underemployed or looking for work, what is the status of your search?
- What's working and what's not?

EDUCATION/CAREER

- What needs to be coordinated with kids schools and educational plans?
- Do any of the adults want to go back to school?

PARENTING

- How are you functioning as a team?
- Who will take time off when kids are sick? How will you decide?
- Who is keeping in touch with schools via phone/email/school website to keep updated on school schedules, kids homework and grades?

Do you have your expectations and consequences clear between all parents (chores, behavior, school)? Do you agree on them? How is this being communicated to children?

How will you make decisions together and support each other?

FAMILY MEETING AGENDA ITEMS FOR ___/___/___

<input type="checkbox"/>	SCHEDULE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	FINANCES	
<input type="checkbox"/>	RELATIONSHIPS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	MEDICAL	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CHORES/ERRANDS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROJECTS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	ANIMALS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	HOMEWORK/SCHOOL	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plans / OBLIGATIONS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	EXTENDED FAMILY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	CAREER/WORK	
<input type="checkbox"/>	EDUCATION	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PARENTING	