

Family Meeting Formula

1. BEFORE THE MEETING

1.a. What do I want to get out of this meeting?

- 1.
- 2.

Is this realistic? ____ Yes. ____ No. If no, go back and revise question #1.
Remember, progress not perfection.

Prepare yourself as the meeting leader:

List 1-3 you need to do/ not do to have a successful meeting
(e.g. keep tone soft, use positive words etc)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1.b. Invite your people

Define: when, where, the topic of the meeting and what to bring (or not bring)

2. DURING THE MEETING

2.a Start well- craft a script that uses positive language to get people thinking and feeling collaborative and feeling safe about problem solving.

For example: This is a difficult time and we are for sure going to get on one another's nerves. Sometimes we need a structured space to talk and problem solve. I will do my best to listen, not be "judgy" or lecture. Thank you all for coming, we are going to be as brief as possible no more than 45 minutes.

2.b. MEETING AGREEMENTS/ GUIDELINES

List your family's principles/agreements to remind your family how to talk with one another in order to maintain respect while talking about difficult subjects.

Some examples are:

- We are all responsible for the energy we bring to this family and this meeting: no eye rolling, whining, sighing or dismissive body language.
- We are different people: we all get to have different ideas. We don't get to tell one another that the other person is wrong.
- Listening is about understanding the other person's ideas, letting yourself be changed by what you hear. Listening is not about telling them why they are wrong when they stop talking.
- We are a family: We all need to change something for change to happen.

List guidelines that you would like to use for your meeting below:

2.c. Personal Problem Solving

Develop questions that help flesh out why the problem is happening and how all can bring novelty ideas and actions to the process. Adjust questions to meet your specific needs/age group.

Some examples are:

How do you feel about the topic presented?

What other ways could this issue be solved?

Is there something that you are doing that is making the problem harder to solve? If so, what are you willing to do to change it?

Are there partial solutions to the problem? If so, what are they?

What strengths do you have/ does our family have that will help us move forward?

What questions fit your family/ your need?

2.d. Group Dialogue

Ask a question about one another's responses using curiosity and respect (PUHLEEEASE no sarcasm :)

for example:

Tell me more about _____

Help me understand

Are we finding any new ideas/solutions? If so, what are these?

Are there parts of this topic that we can solve now/ If so what are these?

Are there parts of this topic that need to wait for now? Say more about that

List others you want to use.

2.e. Close the Meeting

Thank everyone for coming and for participating.

Ask a question that reminds you of what you learned and what you will try to do differently in the days and weeks ahead.

For example:

What are you walking away from this meeting with (what did you learn? What stood out?)

What can you do this week to help move this issue forward?

C. AFTER THE MEETING

Reconnect: Conflict can be difficult, when the discussion is over, don't bring it up again that day (or any other issue that day). Focus on connecting or reconnecting. Conflict can be difficult and problems are not usually solved in a day. Take some breaks. Enjoy.

Note anything you liked or would change in future meetings. Write this in the space below.

*Based off of the work of the work of Rosalind Wiseman and Dan and Chip Heath.