



Serving on Groups That Make Decisions: A Guide for Families

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Section 4: Tools Groups Use



What are helpful tools groups use?

- Meeting Facilitator/Leader
- Ground Rules
- Agenda
- Meeting Minutes
- Written Guidance
- Open & Closed Sessions

- Keeps discussions on track and on time
- Makes sure everyone is able to share



- Creates an atmosphere where thoughts and perspectives can be openly shared



Agenda

A roadmap for the meeting

- Only include items to be discussed at the meeting
- Created by leader or executive committee

The Opening

- Welcome and introduce participants
- Set the tone and pace
- Review and approve agenda
- Review minutes from previous meeting



Discussions & Decisions

- Keep the group on task
- Assess the group's interest level
- Discuss old & new business
- Make decisions
- Provide feedback
- Enforce ground rules



The Conclusion

- Identify next steps & future agenda items
- Announcements
- Evaluate the meeting



Meeting Minutes

- Summary of the meeting
- Records decisions and actions
- Typed and distributed
- Previous meeting minutes may be approved at the next meeting
- Reminder: Still take your own notes!



Meeting Time Management



If meetings continue to run over time, you may ask the group:

- Is the agenda too full?
- Do ground rules need to be established?
- Does there need to be a 'time keeper'?
- Does more time need to be scheduled for meetings?

Written Guidance

Helps individuals interact with the group

- May include:
 - Bylaws
 - Policies
 - Procedures & Protocols
 - Compacts



Open vs. Closed



Open Meetings

- Open to ANYONE
- Public is invited to LISTEN to group's discussion
- Public may share their views on the topics
 - Refer to written guidance regarding public participation

Closed Sessions

- Used when not appropriate for non-members
- Topics that should be in closed sessions:
 - Personnel Issues
 - Confidential Information

Common Reasons for Unproductive Meetings

- Participants aren't prepared
- No agenda in advance
- Group doesn't follow agenda
- Not everyone considers themselves "participants"
- Data is lacking or decisions made not based on data
- No action items are highlighted
- No timelines or deadlines
- No follow-ups



Section 4 Resources

Taking Good Meeting Notes

<http://www.effectivemeetings.com/meetingbasics/minutes.asp>

Mind Tools On-line training articles on problem solving, decision making, and practical creativity

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_00.htm

Policies and Procedures

<http://www.mycommittee.com/BestPractice/Committees/Policiesandprocedures/tabid/248/Default.aspx>

