

EFFECTIVE STAFF MEETINGS
How to Get Everyone on Board
By Judy Kay Mausolf

Oh no! It's that day again. You know, time for your staff meeting. Everyone meets in the lunch room to find out what went wrong since the last meeting. That is most everyone unless you are creative enough to think of a reason to get out of attending. Someone reads off the list of grievances and the team nods in agreement to the change. Another staff meeting that you are finally over with. The only problem is the same issues keep coming up again and again. Does this sound familiar? Think back to your last staff meeting. What did you accomplish? Is everyone on the team enthusiastic to implement what was discussed? You are not alone if you answered no. Over the past 25 years I have interviewed hundreds of offices who also face this ongoing frustration? So how do you create enthusiasm and get everyone on board in your staff meetings?

There are 3 steps necessary to accomplish effective staff meetings.

1. Create a safe environment
2. Implement one new thing at a time
3. Monitor results and hold accountable

The first step is to create an environment where everyone feels safe to share their ideas. You can accomplish this by establishing Communication Guidelines for your future meetings. Your entire team should be involved in deciding what they will be. Be creative and have fun with it. A couple examples could be, Freedom of speech – free speech is granted as long as you don't dominate the floor, physically harm, or rudely interrupt others. The right to a jury of peers – You are entitled to a room of peers who will not judge or jeer, but make you feel safe. Utilize bold colors and font styles when you write the Communication Guidelines to make it look like art. Use your imagination! Next frame the Communication Guidelines and put them on display in your meeting room. It is important to review it as a group whenever you have hired someone new or someone's behavior deems it necessary. Or just to keep it fresh in everyone's mind. You have now created an environment where your team feels safe to share their ideas

and come to resolutions that are in keeping with the vision of your practice.

The second step is to decide as a team the one next best thing or idea most important for your office to implement. You start by having everyone on the team share their ideas. Instead of everyone raising their hands to share their ideas use a bright ball or something light to toss to the person who has an idea. The only person talking is the one holding the ball or item. Remember to get eye contact before tossing the ball! Have someone volunteer to write down the list of ideas on a flip chart. Together as a group prioritize the list. The first item on the list has become your one next best idea or thing. Once that is accomplished you proceed to the next item on the list at your next staff meeting. You and your team have just created a positive meeting agenda where everyone's input has been utilized resulting in everyone being on board.

The third step is to monitor how well the team has implemented the new idea and how it affects the practice. Morning huddles are an ideal venue to allow you to do this on a daily basis in between your staff meetings. Start the huddles by discussing yesterday's schedule. What were successes and what were growth opportunities? It is important to use the Communication Guidelines for this venue as well. Keep the atmosphere light. Team members will feel safe to bring up any questions or concerns they have as they arise. The team can help each other resolve any issues and implement any new ideas. The end result will be an environment where everyone is helping everyone to succeed!

Congratulations you and your team are now on your way to creating an environment where future meetings will be welcomed and effective!
Happy meeting!