



HAVING EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT MEETINGS

Collaborative teams use a variety of structures and processes so that their meetings are effective (i.e., they accomplish the goals of the meeting) and efficient (i.e., they use the time that they have well).

PURPOSE FOR MEETINGS

Effective teams have different meetings to accomplish different goals. Effective teams have clearly defined purposes for different meetings. When there is a shared understanding of the purpose of the meeting, time is more efficiently utilized doing the work of the meeting. These team meeting structures are likely to improve team productivity:

- Team members define and agree on the purposes of meetings, such as meetings for case management, unit/lesson planning, and IEP development.
- Team members define and agree on the desired outcomes and/or products for the meeting for each topic on the agenda.
- Meeting time is utilized to develop action steps that will be taken outside of the meeting time.

AGENDAS

A clearly defined agenda and the use of the appropriate agenda format based on the purpose of the meeting support the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the meeting.

- A clear agenda format is developed.
- Agenda items are chosen according to the purpose and desired outcomes for the meeting.
- A flexible timetable is developed for addressing each item on a meeting agenda.
- Team members address agenda items that are within their capacity to influence.
- At the end of each meeting, the next meeting's agenda is planned with included action items.
- "Meeting reflection/evaluation" is an agenda item for all meetings.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Meetings are most effective when the right people attend the meeting. This supports the effective and efficient use of each team member's time.

- Based on the agenda, those who should attend each meeting are identified and invited.
- There is an accountability structure in place for attendance at meetings.
- There is a structure in place for sharing the decisions and action steps with team members who are unable to attend a meeting.

MEETING ROLES

Shared leadership of responsibilities within the meeting encourages a sense of community and ownership of the meeting process. Rotation of meeting roles and responsibilities is critical to the meeting's success.

- Team members agree on meeting roles.
- Meeting roles (e.g., facilitator, timekeeper, note taker) are assigned in each meeting.
- Meeting roles are rotated on a regular basis reflecting a commitment to distributed leadership.

MEETING ENVIRONMENT

The environment contributes to the overall productivity of team members as they participate in meetings. Environments that have few distractions and a comfortable arrangement of the table and chairs contribute to team members' abilities to attend to the work of the meeting. Virtual meetings may work best to accommodate members in varying locations.

- The meeting location is chosen to maximize the effective and efficient work of the team.
- Team members arrange the meeting room environment in accordance with the meeting purpose and agenda.
- All team members, including the facilitator, are able to see and hear one another. This includes agreeing to leave cameras on and unmute when speaking for virtual meetings.
- The seating arrangement allows team members to focus on displays and the facilitator.

For more information on meeting structures, processes, and skills, take the TX CAN online course [Coaching and Team Meeting Basics for Inclusive Education](#). This document was designed to accompany the [Supports for Participation](#) training from TX CAN.