

# Staff Meetings - A Practice Builder

Purpose: To share responsibility for positive practice growth by setting aside consistent time to communicate objectives, goals, action plans, adjustments, achievements, results and to solve problems.

## Guidelines:

1. Schedule a definite weekly time and place for the entire staff and all doctors to meet.
  - Staff meeting time and effectiveness is diluted by combining it with eating.
  - Taking time from production makes the staff meeting productive.
  - Have phone covered by machine or answering service to prevent interruptions.
  - Larger offices will alternate focus at staff meeting for clinical, hygiene and front office.
2. Prepare an agenda. Distribute copies to everyone before the meeting.
  - Know the kind of meeting and stick to it - training, informational, planning, problem solving, etc.
3. Select a leader. The leader (NOT always the doctor) keeps the meeting on track.
  - Time discussions if needed to prevent any one person from monopolizing the meeting.
  - Listening is as important as speaking.
  - Bring all items to decision on the action plan or decision to postpone implementation.
4. Record meeting notes.
  - The recorder (NOT always the secretary) is responsible for notes of this meeting and preparing and distributing the next meeting agenda.
  - Read purpose and goals of the office at beginning of each meeting.

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5. Use support materials.

- Have a blackboard or flip chart available for use.
- Bring copies of articles or other materials to share.

Be sure everyone has pencil and paper.

6. End every meeting by asking someone to summarize.

Review decisions, assignments and time limits.

- Everyone should leave knowing their responsibility in a project and be held accountable at the next meeting.

For Positive Results:

- Keep to the agenda unless time is leftover
- Stay on time; begin and end the meeting on time!
- Encourage each staff member to write and bring suggested agenda items.
- Prevent gripe sessions.
- Follow-up on each and every item.
- Keep track of results.
- Spread projects among all staff members.
- Monopolizing by the doctor or staff member shuts down progress and communication.
- Use positive brainstorming ideas for solving problems.
- Share positive accomplishments, positive comments by patients, and "thank-yous" to each other for help during the week.

# Group Problem Solving Steps

Whenever you have a problem to solve, there are six important steps to follow:

1. Identify and define the problem.
2. What is the problem? Be able to state it clearly so that the whole group agrees upon its definition.

## ***Brainstorming Rules***

*Brainstorming helps bring out the creativity of the staff by focusing energies on solutions and ideas. Because creativity is hampered by immediate judgment and evaluation, there are certain ground rules for any brain-storming session:*

- A. *No evaluation of any kind is allowed.*
- B. *Anything goes -from outrageous to impossible - let ideas flow.*
- C. *Piggyback (build) on ideas from others.*
- D. *Look at the problem from many different frames of reference, i.e., patient, staff, doctor.*

*Quantity is important. The more ideas the better. Therefore, do not try to justify any specific idea or explain it in detail. Keep them brief and keep up a fast pace. To record the ideas, have someone write down each one on a large chart pad that everyone can see, preferably using two or more colored markers. When time is up, read all the ideas again. You will be amazed by the quantity and variety of ideas generated.*

3. Evaluate the alternative solutions.

*Are there any reasons why the solutions will not work? Discuss the pros and cons of each possibility.*

4. Make a decision.

*Which solution is the best? Walk through how that solution would be carried out and monitored.*

(It's fine at this point to decide not to decide. Table the decision for a future specific date. Make it a positive action. The staff needs to know action will be taken at a future date).

## Group Problem Solving Steps

5. Implement the solution.

*Who needs to do what by when? Create a specific action plan with a time frame.*

6. Follow-up evaluation of the solution.

*What yardstick will be used to measure results? Did the solution really solve the problem?  
Can it be modified to work better?*



# Staff Meeting Recording Form

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Those in Attendance:

1	4	7
2	5	8
3	6	9

Last Meeting Reports:

Person Responsible	Project	Status

This meetings highlights:

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## Staff Meeting Agenda Topics

1. Review Practice Vital Signs. Set new strategies.
2. Conduct in-office training, each staff member learning duties of other staff members.
3. Discuss future continuing education for staff and doctor.
4. Brainstorm:
  - Possible guest speakers for staff meetings: pharmacist, pathologist, other dental specialists, physical therapist, nutritionist, wellness expert, speech pathologist, psychologist, etc.
  - Ways to increase treatment acceptance - review all new patient charts from prior month.
  - New marketing ideas - internal, external
  - Techniques to attract more new patients.
  - Ways to keep hygiene patients returning for regular visits.
  - Ways to help patients improve home care.
5. Evaluate practice image: decor, landscape, cleanliness, possible improvements, etc.
6. Review any patient problems, discuss their resolution.
7. Review articles read by staff or doctors.
8. Ask each staff member to contribute one suggestion for improving patient care, practice growth, time management, practice profitability or team relations.
9. Conduct a Systems checkup:

Scheduling, Insurance, Collections, Financial Arrangements, Inventory, Paperwork, Overhead Control, Recall, New Patient Process, Sterilization, Communication
10. Discuss ways to reduce stress.