

# Team Around the Family (TAF) Meetings

## Guide to Chairing a TAF Meeting

The chair for the initial Team Around the Family meeting can be any of the meeting attendees.

Attendees should avoid professional jargon.

- Welcome all attendees to the meeting.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting and confirm who the meeting is about.  
For example *“The purpose of this meeting is to put in place a package of support for name of child/young person/family to meet the needs identified in the Early Help Assessment.  
The expected outcome of this meeting will be to have established a Team around the Family and develop a Family Plan that will identify individual members of the Team around the Family and the action(s) they have agreed.  
A Lead Professional will be agreed and appointed and a review date set.”*
- Explain the confidentiality status of the meeting.  
For example explain what information will be recorded and shared and with who; explain limits of confidentiality and ensure service user rights are understood using the confidentiality statement provided.
- Ask all attendees to introduce themselves and explain their current involvement and/or possible future role.
- Discuss the needs identified in the Early Help Assessment and possible support available to meet those needs. The views and opinions of the family members should be encouraged throughout.
- Identify and confirm members of the Team around the Family, agree outcomes and actions. Draw up a family plan, agree who should become the Lead Professional and set a date for review (ensure a venue is agreed and available).
- Summarise the outcomes of the meeting as recorded in the family plan and ensure the family are in agreement with and sign the family plan and are clear about who is involved, who will do what and what happens next. The family and all members of the team around the family should receive a copy of the agreed family plan.

## Key questions to consider at a TAF meeting

### Family perspective

Have there been any successes for the family since the last TAF meeting?

Do the family feel they have been supported effectively - if yes, how? If not, why?

What has changed for the Family as a result of the TAF process?

### TAF membership

If there are new members present today have the family been made aware / been involved in the decision?

Is the current TAF membership effectively supporting the Family Plan? Do you need to invite anyone?

If new members are required, who are they? Is the family happy to consent to them being asked to join TAF?

Does the Lead Professional need to change? Whilst this might occur at the first TAF meeting, it is advised that the Lead Professional remains the same throughout the intervention

Have we got ground rules as a TAF, if so are we referring to these throughout this meeting? If not should we develop some?

Are we communicating effectively as a TAF? Do we want to consider other options re how to do this between meetings e.g. any missed communication?

If TAF members are not present at the meeting have they provided an update? If not how / who will ensure this is received and considered? If so, have you asked for a written update?

### Review of the Family Plan

Have the actions from the Family Plan been completed, if not, why not?

Do we need to revise priorities and agree any new actions?

Does the TAF need to continue to meet, can the TAF be closed and / or family supported by a single agency?

## Tips for managing difficult behaviours in meetings

If you have difficult people in your meetings, how can you manage them more effectively? What are the best strategies for dealing with people who are argumentative, disruptive, negative or just not contributing?

The first step is to recognize how important it is to deal with the problem. Difficult people will upset the balance of the meeting, kill the momentum, de-motivate people and keep you from accomplishing critical tasks.

There's a big difference between people who participate in a lively discussion, challenge conventional thinking and contribute ideas– and those who are negative, make it personal and create bad feelings. Positive conflict happens when a group of bright, motivated people get together to discuss ideas. As the leader of the group, you want to encourage that – ask people for their opinions and get the best stuff on the table.

### *Tips on promoting positive conflict:*

Create a safe, open environment where people can speak their minds

- Encourage all participants to speak up, and don't let anyone dominate
- Set the ground rules for your meetings and enforce them

### *Tips on managing negative conflict:*

- Listen to conflicting views
- Identify common goals between participants
- Build on agreements you already have as you try to resolve differences
- Avoid placing blame and making accusations
- Depersonalize through your own words – it's not about the person, it's about the resolution of a problem or challenge
- Look for a win/win so that everyone feels they have contributed
- Communicate respect to everyone at all times
- Use a positive tone even if others are being negative
- If conflict persists, talk about it after the meeting
- Zero tolerance for personal attacks – never allow it to happen, stop it when it does

## *Difficult people, profiles and tips to deal with them*

### *People Who Argue*

Although debate and controversy are usually healthy, some people push it; they argue miniscule points, don't see others' views, or don't understand the value of compromise. They may be angry, feel misunderstood, or enjoy challenging a leader. They often don't know how much they irritate others, and how they are perceived.

- Prevent by having a pre-meeting discussion
- Intervene by confronting the argument
- Draw out objection with question
- Turn it over to the group to judge
- Point out the negative impact
- Keep it professional, not personal

### *People Who Dominate*

People who dominate have similar traits; they may also be poor listeners, or talkative people, or they may have an agenda. They go on and on, to show-off or demonstrate superior knowledge or ability. They are unaware of the purpose – to generate many ideas, allow participation, build consensus. They are also unaware of the effect they have on others and sometimes may be rewarded for this behaviour.

- Enforce time limits and ground rules
- Prevent by pre-meeting discussion
- Intervene by asking questions of others
- Avoid recognizing the dominator
- Look for a place to break-in
- Thank them for their contribution
- Ask for other opinions
- Bring it back to the agenda
- Acknowledge point/feelings/issues – break eye contact and ask someone else’s point of view
- Referring back to Support Plan/agenda

### ***People Who Have Side Meetings***

People who are talking during the meeting may have an emergency, but often they are bored. This may be because you have spent too much time on the topic, or because they are self-important, rude and unaware of the effect of their behaviour on others. You can’t have an effective meeting when there are other meetings going on.

- Discuss privately after meeting
- Glance in their direction
- If that fails, walk near them or, go quiet, stop the meeting
- Let them finish their conversation
- Ask their opinion about topic
- Sit next to them

### ***People who do not participate***

- Timeslot given for participant to speak
- Prep them before – what they want to say – think of questions/comments/ideas
- Ask them open questions/involve them
- Ask how they are feeling (nervous, resistance could be issue)
- Encourage to talk/ask opinion
- Ask open questions
- Suggest advocate/appropriate support
- Encourage
- What do they think about others comments?
- Start them off by acknowledging work or incident or similar
- Be methodical about asking people to share

### ***People who interrupt***

- Remind all have turn to talk
- Pen/paper – suggest jot it down until we get to you
- Is it about topic or something separate?
- Interrupter to go first?
- Explanation of respectful talking time
- Acknowledgement of their issues
- Explanation and request to allow others to finish
- Ground rules of participation

### ***People that become distressed***

- Break – consider parent may be conscious of being spoken about
- Reassurance
- Emphasise what is going well and strengths/positives
- Comfort

- Remaining factual and non-judgemental
- Ensure advocate/supportive person is present if required