

Maintaining Your Team

Leading, following, coordinating, and synergizing don't just happen. Careful planning and ongoing maintenance create great teams and extraordinary results.

There is an awesome power in collaboration as well as an increase in the collective I.Q.

- Gather nucleus of team
- Get to know one another
- Describe what's going on
- Ask and define questions
- Decide upon goal
- Prioritize
- Agree upon an action plan
- Celebrate community

Sample script for starting a first meeting

Thank you for coming to this meeting. And I want to start by thanking _____(the host). I'm really heartened and happy to see all of you here. It's good to know that we can work together to support _____(person who is being assisted).

There's a lot of information we want to cover. To help me as team leader for at least this first meeting, _____(team coordinator) has agreed to be the initial coordinator. Together we'll try to guide us all through this initial period.

Our first goals are to meet and to get to know one another, and to understand better what's going on for _____(person who is being assisted). Then we'll figure out what might be needed and how we can help meet those needs.

To get started, then, we'll send around a clipboard for you to write your name and contact information. As that's circulating, please, let's start to my left. Say your name and a little bit about what you currently do when you have leisure time and why you've come tonight.

Notes: _____



*What if you can't do what
you've said you'd do? Help!
Life happens to me, too!*
—Lisa Corbin

First meeting schedule

Without being fussy, check to see that the gathering space is warm and welcoming. It may help to be sure there are places for everyone you expect, and a lit candle or flowers.

As people arrive, pass out name tags. Be sure to take time for introductions and for each person to say why they've come. Circulate a sign-in/contact information sheet.

State again the reason for this meeting: to come to support _____ as a team. Ask everyone to answer these questions on a 3x5 card:

1. Why do you want to help _____?
2. What do you think you'll gain from this?
3. What concerns you about doing this?

Then share some answers, leaving the cards with the care partner.

Hear from the care partner (person being assisted) if he/she is present. Describe what's going on. Answer questions.

- List what needs to be done or is hoped for.
- Prioritize these needs/wants.
- See who can do what and brainstorm about meeting others.
- Create a beginning schedule and define a backup system.
- Schedule the next meeting.

Congratulate yourselves on what's been accomplished, share treats, say thank you to each other (even to those who've opted out) and to the care partner.

Important expectations

- Inclusivity: all are welcome.
- Respectful listening to all.
- Dealing with facts and truth, not rumors or assumptions.
- Honesty with self and what we can truly offer.
- Good faith efforts to reach consensus.
- Focus on goal of helping _____.
- Confidentiality.
- Honoring time together.

Gaining control in an information age

Know what you need to know and where to find it.

Handy people lists

- List of names, phone numbers, and backup phones for "A" team.
- List of same for "B" or "C" folks.
- Email list of these groups.
- Email list of folks to keep in the loop of information.
- List of names, addresses, phones of all of those above.
- List of physicians, resources used by care partner.
- List of medications and allergies of care partner.
- List of family members and pets.
- List of favorite places to go.
- List of what to pack to go there.
- Others.

Sample care-team member list

Date created: _____ **Team to assist:** _____
(Update this at least quarterly and circulate updates to all.)

Name: _____
Address: _____
Home phone: _____ **Work phone:** _____
Cell phone: _____ **Email:** _____
(Underline preferred means of being contacted)
Special talents/gifts that you might offer: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
Home phone: _____ **Work phone:** _____
Cell phone: _____ **Email:** _____
(Underline preferred means of being contacted)
Special talents/gifts that you might offer: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
Home phone: _____ **Work phone:** _____
Cell phone: _____ **Email:** _____
(Underline preferred means of being contacted)
Special talents/gifts that you might offer: _____

Notes: _____



Sample calendar in the life of a care team

T Mary–pool	W	Th Dan–dinner
T Mary–pool	W Sue–doctor	Th
T Mary–pool Bob–dinner	W	Th Lil–lunch

Important reminder:

To the person who waits, time is interminable and full of worries about what might have happened to you. Honor your commitments by being punctual, communicating schedule changes, and finding a replacement person to pick up for you if you cannot do what you thought.

It's important to alert people earlier rather than later if you discover or decide that you can't help.

Meeting check-in questions



Ongoing care-share team meeting

- Create a welcoming space.
- Welcome people as they gather, but start on time.
- Ask each other a “check-in” question about relevant events or changes in commitments, or any thing else that will increase the togetherness.
 - What’s one thing I especially like/enjoy/value about these meetings?
 - What’s one success or good thing I’ve experienced since the last meeting?
 - What’s a concern/problem/fear that I’d like to bring to this group? (If possible, communicate this to the team leaders ahead of time.)
- Create an agenda that includes the following:
 - Giving updates on changes in the care partner’s needs/wants.
 - Addressing anything left over from the last meeting.
 - Brainstorming solutions.
 - Scheduling changes in needs or tasks.
 - Celebrating successes and enjoying one another.
 - Scheduling the next meeting.
- Use a ritual to close the meeting (see appendix).

Learn from mistakes

- Let's try to identify the factors that contributed to Mary's not getting a ride home from her physical therapy appointment.
- Let's create a list of things to take when accompanying Fred to his oncology appointment so that next time he'll have what he needs.
- Let's brainstorm how to get new team members so we can have backups when one of us is sick next time.
- It's not who was at fault but rather what factors contributed to his bills not being paid. How can we assure that won't happen again?
- What went right since our last meeting? What went wrong since our last meeting?
- Because you are human, there will be mistakes. Though this may be unfamiliar, unwelcome, and/or unpleasant, it can help you learn something. There's a saying: "When the going gets rough, turn to wonder."



Ritual for closing a meeting

Light a candle in the middle of the space. Have a container nearby with slips of paper with each person's name on one piece. Draw one piece each, so that no one has his or her own name. Ask participants to write down or state something they appreciate about the person whose name they hold. When everyone's been recognized, extinguish the candle.

Great job!

You have done a very valuable thing for those who care about you. You can now model and spread the word about reimaging strength and developing your own team.

Celebrate small successes

- Brushing Sarah's hair makes her feel so much better and is such a wonderful thing you do.
- Writing the email message about Jim's upcoming surgery was so valuable.
- Picking Tim up after his soccer practice so I could meet with my attorney made such a difference.
- Walking Bill's dog and watering his plants took a lot of pressure off Bill.
- Calling every day of that awful week and leaving a brief, warm phone message was really thoughtful. It eased her mind.

What does your care-share team look like?

Any given care-share team will take on an identity that comes from the way in which it was formed, what it sees as its role, and the ways in which it functions. There is no right or wrong way to organize your team, but there are many different models. Is your care-share team more relaxed or scheduled? Is it made up of people who know, love, and were invited by the care partner? Or is it comprised of folks who belong to a parish, group, or temple that forms teams to help others? Maybe this continuum will help you learn more about your group and your options to create and modify a team that works for you.

loose and fluid
short-term
as needed, "on call"
one-to-one

family or friends only
volunteers
each one asked by you
only know the care partner

Notes: _____

Sample care manual for someone who's ill

- Health information
- Medications
- Schedule
- Contacts
- Care-share team
- Nutrition and transportation
- Other

Where is it all compiled?
Who knows where it is?
What is missing?

wider community
paid assistance/assistants
group or point person who helps
independent group of folks

tight and unchanging
long-term
scheduled for specifics
collaborative



Do you and all your team members know what you need to know?

“The experience makes me especially thankful for friends, family, and this work that seeks to strengthen the bonds of community and hope for a more positive future. It strikes me that our collective, relational wealth really is the greatest asset we all have available to us.”

– Bruce H.