

# How to Run Effective Meetings

A workshop on June 1, 2018 for the Canadian Child Health Clinician Scientist Program (CCHCSP)

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to

1. Understand the different needs and perspectives that various meeting participants can have
2. Design agendas that maximize the impact of time spent together in meetings
3. Chair/conduct effective meetings

## Overview

Increasingly, research and innovation are team endeavors, often bringing together people from diverse sectors, disciplines, educational backgrounds and geographies.

Meeting effectiveness can literally make or break million dollar initiatives, and the need for productive meetings has never been greater.

This workshop includes:

1. Simulated meeting exercises and “tips and tricks” for effective meetings
2. Seminar style presentation on types of meetings and tools for them (e.g., agenda templates, decision making processes, Terms of Reference documents)
3. Large group session to demonstrate facilitation techniques in action and capture participants’ views on the most important learnings from the workshop

## Simulated meeting exercises and tips and tricks for effective meetings

## Simulated Meeting Exercise Part 1

- Is there a brave volunteer to Chair a ~5 minute mock meeting (which will be much more challenging than any actual meeting)?
- Five volunteers to be the meeting participants (each quietly reads their role without showing anyone else)

## Simulated Meeting Exercise Part 1 cont.

- Decision to be made:
  - Hockey or Curling?
- ~5 minutes or until exasperation
- Go!

## Simulated Meeting Exercise Part 1 cont.

1. Interviewing for a position at another organization, doesn't really care what decision is made because they hope they won't be here much longer
2. Niece just had risky surgery, is expecting an email update during the meeting time
3. Wants to hijack meeting and use time to decide on something else
4. Regular participant, no hidden agenda
5. Long-standing conflict with participant number 4

## Tips and Tricks for Meetings

- Have an agenda that states the objective(s)/purpose
- Identify a strong Chair who will ensure:
  - The objective(s)/purpose are met
  - Good process is followed and there is an opportunity for all participants to contribute their knowledge
  - Challenging attendees are managed
  - There is clarity about what was decided and who is responsible for which action items
- You may want to use the five finger consensus method vs. simple yes/no
  - Fist (cannot/will not support) to five fingers (strongest support)

## Simulated Meeting Exercise Part 2

- Volunteers to be Chair (4 or 5 total)
- Form groups of ~4-5
- Everyone else, pick a card/number, don't tell anyone else what it is
- People who pick a card/number that is 7 or higher choose some non-supportive role to play (without telling others what non-supportive role)
- Ready?

## Simulated Meeting Exercise Part 2 cont.

- Decision: sorbet with fruit or molten chocolate cake? [you must choose one or the other, no creative fusion desserts]
- Work for ~ 5 minutes or until done or until exasperation
- If you had a non-supportive role, tell others in your group what that was

## Large Group Discussion

- How was that?
- What worked/didn't work?

## Seminar style presentation on types of meetings and tools for them

## Types of Meetings and Tools for Them

### Types

- Kick-off meeting
- Core team meeting
- Advisory committee meeting
- Steering committee meeting
- Stakeholder consultation meeting
- Project close-out meeting

### Tools

- Agenda
- Defined decision making processes
- Terms of Reference
- Marked-up agenda as an alternative to minutes
- Facilitation techniques

## Kick-off Meeting

One of the single biggest positive things you can do for your project (great ROI!)

- Formally start the project
- Introduce the lead and other team members to each other
- Establish a common understanding of scope (ideally in terms of deliverables) and identify who will be the leads for them
- Ensure that everyone knows about important dates and constraints
- Make people aware of key opportunities for the project and high level risks (but don't get into the weeds)
- Begin to build relationships within the team (best done in-person)

## Core Team Meetings

- Core team will Ideally be 7-10 people who do project work daily-biweekly
  - Project Lead/Principal Investigator
  - [Project] Coordinator
  - Deliverable Lead(s)
  - [Sub-deliverable leads]
  - People who aren't the "lead" for anything, but do core project work
- Core team meetings are the most frequent, e.g., weekly or biweekly


AGENDA Project Name  
Meeting Date Room and Teleconference Details

Item	Lead (s)
1) Welcome and review of main meeting objectives: a) Objective 1 b) Objective 2 c) [Objective 3] – two main objectives is preferable	[name of meeting Chair] ~ 5 minutes
2) [Optional: Brief review of selected key accomplishments/milestones since last meeting: a) Accomplishment/milestone 1 b) Accomplishment/milestone 2 c) Accomplishment/milestone 3 d) Accomplishment/milestone 4 e) Accomplishment/milestone 5]	[can be meeting Chair or Project Manager] ~ 5 minutes
3) Discussion/ Decision Item 1 [Circulated agenda includes key points related to the item, e.g., whether it is being presented as an FYI, for discussion/input or for decision. If there are major risks/issues that require whole team input to resolve or decide upon, this is where you would want them on the agenda] a) Point 1 b) Point 2 c) Point 3	[Lead for that deliverable/activity]
4) [Discussion/Decision Item 2]	[Lead for that deliverable/activity]



Item	Lead (s)
<p>5) FYI and Small Decision Items <i>[Detailed statements are included in the circulated agenda, one per bullet set up in a way that the group doesn't need to respond or will likely say "yes" to each in turn, e.g.,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>Detailed statement 1 (e.g., the travel budget for the June stakeholder meeting is set at \$75,000)</i></li> <li>b) <i>Detailed statement 2 (e.g., could state plan to address risk identified on project tracking sheet that doesn't require group discussion to resolve, "activity x is behind schedule, people y&amp;z will convene a working group and bring the proposed resolution to next team meeting"</i></li> <li>c) <i>AGD will be away July 24-Aug 12</i></li> </ul> <p><i>If any of the quick decision statements don't get a near-immediate "yes" during the meeting, quickly note whom will take action outside the meeting, and include that as one of the action items under agenda item 7</i></p> <p><i>This section can also be positioned before the discussion/presentation items]</i></p>	<p><i>[can be meeting Chair or Project Manager]</i></p>
<p>6) Other Business</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>7) Summary of Action Items and Next Steps <i>[verbally reported, typically by Project Manager who is keeping a list during the meeting]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement on priority activities to be completed before the next team meeting</li> <li>• Other items [e.g., action items identified as a result of team discussion]</li> </ul>	<p><i>[can be meeting Chair or Project Manager]</i> ~ 5 minutes</p>


Regular participants: Joe Smith, Sanjay Gupta as delegate for Bill Di Carlo, XXXX, XXXXX, XXXX  
 Guests: XXXXX, XXXXX, XXXXX, XXXXX  
 Regrets: B. Di Carlo

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# Core Team Decisions

- **Whole Team decides?**  
*Including people who only come to meetings occasionally or aren't in touch? What if the next XXX meetings isn't for weeks? Months?*
- **Core Team decides?**  
*Do all opinions really have the same weight? Be honest about who contributes to decisions.*
- **PI alone decides?**  
*Lose the benefit that diversity of opinions usually brings to decisions.*
- **A "Research Executive Committee" comprising the PI plus a few others decides ✓**  
*Often a practical solution, sometimes as a practical backup if Core Team cannot come together meet, and/or can be used for regular decisions that other team members really aren't in a position to contribute to*

*NOTE: NOTHING PREVENTS THE DECISION MAKER(S) FROM CONSULTING WITH AND INVOLVING OTHERS IN THE DECISION, BUT IT IS GOOD TO DETERMINE – UP FRONT – THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS THAT NEED TO BE INVOLVED FOR A DECISION TO BE MADE*

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## How are Decisions Made – Attempt Consensus, Escalate if Necessary?

- Give notice of an upcoming decision at least one week before a decision is required
- Strive to make decisions by consensus, i.e., decisions that no member indicates dissent for, noting that abstaining does not count as dissent
- If there is not consensus, the member presenting the item will be asked to make efforts to modify the item, within a timeframe specified by the co-chairs, with the goal of making changes that allow consensus to be achieved
- If consensus cannot be achieved within the timeframe specified, decisions will be made by [higher authority body or individual, e.g., Chair, Executive Sponsor, Steering Committee]

## How are Decisions Made – Attempt Consensus, Vote if Necessary?

- *Give notice of an upcoming decision at least one week before a decision is required*
- *Strive to make decisions by consensus, i.e., decisions that no member indicates dissent for, noting that abstaining does not count as dissent*
- *If there is not consent, the member presenting the item will be asked to make efforts to modify the item, within a timeframe specified by the Chair, with the goal of making changes that allow consensus to be achieved*
- If consensus cannot be achieved within the timeframe specified by the Chair, decisions will be made by majority vote, i.e., the decision will be made if more than 50% of the members contributing to quorum vote to support it
- In cases where there is a tie, input will be sought from members who were not present when the vote was taken within a timeframe specified by the Chair
- In cases where there is a tie after votes have been counted from all members that are available in the specified timeframe, the [higher authority body or individual] decides

## What Do We Mean by Governance?

- It's research, things will not go exactly as planned
- The questions are, who will decide what to change, and how and when will they do that?
- GOVERNANCE is the answer
- Put simply, governance defines how and by whom decisions will be made for the project
- Governance is more than just the list of the people who lead or accountable for deliverables on the project; governance speaks to who is providing strategic oversight, direction and advice for the project
- Governance body (bodies) can have an oversight (direction setting and approving) function or an advisory function
  - Contrast with the core project team who is responsible for planning and performing the day-to-day activities of a project

## External Governance Bodies

- Larger initiatives and programs of research will often have one or more governance bodies
  - Steering Committees provide direction and in some cases make decisions (usually comprising external experts not directly involved in the project with the PI as an observer, different from the “Research Executive Committee” led by the PI)
  - Advisory Committees provide advice (they may or may not come to consensus on their advice and the advice should be considered by the team but may or may not be acted on)
  - Scientific Advisory Committees often include international members
- Describe how the committee will function and influence decisions in a Terms of Reference document
  - Providing advice or direction on topics that the PIs or research team brings forward
  - Providing advice or direction when team is unable to decide on their own (or does not have the authority to make a decision)

## Typical Sections in a 2-3 pg. Terms of Reference (ToR) Document

- Background of project & purpose of committee
- Chair(s) & membership (sometimes including information about how members are selected)
- Scope/Responsibilities
  - E.g., project oversight, advice on risk and opportunity management, financial decisions and decisions that affect scope, others
- Authority (what decisions can they make/not make)
- Quorum (how many members need to participate for a decision to be valid)
- Decision making process
  - Try for consensus, majority vote if necessary OR try for consensus, escalate if necessary
  - Certain decisions that can be made by the Chair, or a named subset of members
- Commitment to keep a record of decisions/action items
- Work commitment/meeting frequency
- Term (including “full length of project” if that is the expectation)
- Appendix with list of named members

## Group Discussion – Potential Tough Decisions

- Budget allocation/changes
- Site in/out decision
- Addressing quality/performance issues
- Kick someone off the team
- Failure to meet timelines lead to stopping
- Authorship
- Intellectual Property, what % to whom
- Response to budget cut

All of these decisions are less contentious if you have decided (up front) how decisions will be made

## FYI (Information Items)

- It is very inefficient to go around the table and have people speak about what is top of mind in terms of their updates
  - People can read faster than they speak
  - If it is an important update or information (e.g., a date), give it to people in writing to ensure the right facts are retained
- Often core team meetings and steering committee meetings will involve status updates as information items
  - These are often most effective if they are short

## Status/Performance Reporting

### RaCOTE Status Update 15Jun18

#### KEY MILESTONES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE JUNE 2016 UPDATE

- Working group established 24Oct18 as date for Summit
- \$75K budget confirmed for temp-controlled storage of samples during transportation

#### KEY TASKS, DELIVERABLES AND MILESTONES BEFORE NEXT BOARD MEETING

- Issue Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for focus groups and select vendor for specialized storage transportation

#### KEY RISKS TO BE MANAGED (WITH RISK RESPONSES WHERE APPLICABLE)

- None noted – have confirmed that there are at least five vendors with specialized storage transportation

#### CHANGES TO SCOPE, SCHEDULE OR BUDGET SINCE LAST UPDATE

- Because competitive process will be used, vendor for transportation with specialized storage will be selected by September vs. June as planned – no impact on overall schedule

# Status/Performance Reporting

SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>

No.	Deliverable/ Subdeliverable Name	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020
A	Research Priorities	PRIORITIES										
B	Data & Samples		DATA AND SAMPLES									
B1	Transportation											
B2	Data Feed											
B3	Physical Samples											
C	Analyses & Results				ANALYSES AND RESULTS							
D	Knowledge Mobilization Deliverables		KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION DELIVERABLES									
D1	Events											
D2	Knowledge Mobilization Products											

<sup>1</sup> Red line indicates current date. Activities to the left of the red line have been completed. Forecasted timelines are provided for activities to the right of red line.

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## Ending your meeting

- It's good practice to have "Other Business" before the meeting ends
- Somebody (Chair or project manager) should recap the list of decision and action items from the meetings, inviting others to add to the list if they have missed any
- Consider whether there is actual value in having minutes prepared, often a marked up agenda with only essential notes and action items will be less time consuming to prepare, and a more effective way to communicate

<p>AGENDA          XXX Working Group          XXXX, 4:00-5:30 pm EST</p> <p>[location]          Telecon: XXX</p> <p><i>Notes and action items added in blue bold italic font by FFF on 27Mar18</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Item</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1) Welcome and review of main meeting objectives:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Considering all input from consultations, finalize XXXX</li> <li>b) Discussion of potential future activities, risks and opportunities</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) Discussion Item 1 – The advice from multiple working group members has been integrated into the enclosed draft document. As noted in the comments embedded in the draft document, there are a small number of decisions to be made:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Agreement that will be approach XXX by doing YYY? <i>There was agreement to YYY.</i></li> <li>b) XXXXX. <i>There was agreement to XXX.</i></li> <li>c) XXXXX? <i>There was agreement that XXX.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>ACTION – FFF to revise the document to incorporate all of the above decisions and advice.</i></b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) Discussion Item 3 – Key risks and opportunities – <i>No new risks or opportunities that are not already being addressed were brought forward</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) Other business - <i>None noted.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5) Summary of action items and next steps:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The document will be distributed to stakeholders.</li> <li>b) <i>The Chair noted XXX.</i></li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>6) FYI items (generally not discussed unless members would like them brought into other business):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) There will be two webinars on XXX, and YYY</li> <li>b) The next meeting will be via teleconference on XXX</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Invitees</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>AAA - <i>present</i></td> <td>FFF - <i>present</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>BBB - <i>present</i></td> <td>GGG - <i>present</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CCC - <i>present</i></td> <td>HHH - <i>present</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>DDD - <i>regrets</i></td> <td>Guest: JJJ - <i>present</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>EEE - <i>regrets</i></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Item	1) Welcome and review of main meeting objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Considering all input from consultations, finalize XXXX</li> <li>b) Discussion of potential future activities, risks and opportunities</li> </ul>	2) Discussion Item 1 – The advice from multiple working group members has been integrated into the enclosed draft document. As noted in the comments embedded in the draft document, there are a small number of decisions to be made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Agreement that will be approach XXX by doing YYY? <i>There was agreement to YYY.</i></li> <li>b) XXXXX. <i>There was agreement to XXX.</i></li> <li>c) XXXXX? <i>There was agreement that XXX.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>ACTION – FFF to revise the document to incorporate all of the above decisions and advice.</i></b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	3) Discussion Item 3 – Key risks and opportunities – <i>No new risks or opportunities that are not already being addressed were brought forward</i>	4) Other business - <i>None noted.</i>	5) Summary of action items and next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The document will be distributed to stakeholders.</li> <li>b) <i>The Chair noted XXX.</i></li> </ul>	6) FYI items (generally not discussed unless members would like them brought into other business): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) There will be two webinars on XXX, and YYY</li> <li>b) The next meeting will be via teleconference on XXX</li> </ul>	AAA - <i>present</i>	FFF - <i>present</i>	BBB - <i>present</i>	GGG - <i>present</i>	CCC - <i>present</i>	HHH - <i>present</i>	DDD - <i>regrets</i>	Guest: JJJ - <i>present</i>	EEE - <i>regrets</i>	
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## “Research Project Partners”

- Key contributors to project work, but not in the same way as the core team, e.g.,
  - Integrated knowledge users
  - Procurement leads, vendors
  - Technical specialist involved for a period of time (e.g., statistician)
  - Industry funders
- Often part of working groups set up under the project (but not on core team)
- Plan and support different involvement than core team members, set the agenda so that they can participate in select portions of meetings vs. having to stay the entire time if they will only find certain parts relevant

## More Tips and Tricks for Meetings

- Avoid roundtable updates
  - Consider FYI items submitted in advance instead
- Avoid lengthy roundtable introductions
  - Consider having people submit bios and state their ‘hopes’ at the first meeting
- If a few people start talking about a particular topic, do let it proceed if they can immediately decide on a course of action, but ask them to take it offline if it is taking more than a few minutes
- Have some fun, otherwise people won’t want to come to your meetings anymore
- Facilitation techniques are useful, particularly when you have diverse participants

## Facilitated Session



## Facilitating vs. Chairing a Meeting

- The facilitator is different than the Chair
- The facilitator focuses entirely on process and should refrain from providing content input
- Facilitation techniques can be very effective when:
  - You have diverse participants and/or unequal power and it's important that you hear from different voices
  - The team has a tendency to “propose, pick apart, kill” ideas vs. build upon and connect ideas
  - It is the end of a project and you want to do a “lessons learned” exercise
  - You have a large number of participants (e.g., a large stakeholder group) and you want everyone to be engaged

## Some Useful Techniques for Facilitated Sessions

- Multi-voting
- I wish/How to [IW or H2] post-it notes grouped by theme
- Use of small groups to refine ideas before they are discussed by the large group
- Two-hands raised when someone wants to provide a comment or suggestion to the point that has just been made
- Internet polling (such as poll everywhere) to
  - Provide an environment in which people can make anonymous suggestions
  - Create a record of what everyone contributed in their own words (vs. the facilitator's interpretation of their comments)
  - Have multiple people sharing thoughts with the whole group in parallel

*[Disclosure – I hate group report-backs, I find them energy-sucking]*

## Facilitated Session on Lessons Learned

- Individually, make some notes about 3-5 key take-away points from today's session
- In groups of 2 or 3, discuss and come up with take-away points that your group will share
- Large group discussion [and live polling to show suggestions, time permitting]
  - Let's discuss top take-aways from that you're pretty sure others had
  - Take-aways that were uniquely useful to you because of your circumstances

## Recap: Learning Objectives

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to

1. Understand the different needs and perspectives that various meeting participants can have
2. Design agendas that maximize the impact of time spent together in meetings
3. Chair/conduct effective meetings