

## Tips for running an effective meeting

### Circulate an agenda

Circulate an agenda several days in advance of the meeting. This will help participants anticipate the types of discussions that will occur so that they can prepare accordingly. Incorporate breaks for refreshments and opportunities to use cell phones, etc...

### Pre-work

Identify pre-work in advance. Participants may be asked to do some research, prepare a report, and/or gather resources to inform the upcoming meeting.

### Have a Purpose

Ensure that all participants are clear on why the meeting is taking place and why their participation is needed. Identifying a theme will set the pace and focus of the meeting.

### Facilitator/Chair

A meeting facilitator, chairperson or other designate should be identified. This individual is tasked with keeping the meeting on focus and on time. This individual facilitates, summarizes and clarifies the discussions around the table to guide the team towards its goal. Team members need to respect the importance of keeping the flow of the meeting going in order to meet objectives and make decisions.

### Transcriber

Assign the task of taking brief notes to an individual on the team. To avoid making this task onerous on one individual, have this role rotate throughout the group from meeting to meeting. Minutes of the meeting should include any progress on old action items, any new actions items, and the individual(s) responsible for carrying out the action, along with a timeline.

### Ground Rules

Everyone respects the role of the facilitator in keeping the discussion on track and on time. Cell phones, laptops and other electronic devices should be turned off to reduce distractions.

### Schedule Guests

If guests will be attending a meeting, this should be reflected in the agenda. Let guests know the time they are to arrive and how long they have to speak. Every effort should be made to have guests speak at the scheduled time.

### Parking Lot

Consider using the "parking lot" method. If the team is unable to end or resolve a discussion during the meeting, refer the discussion to the parking lot. If discussing a specific item, and other related issues are brought forward, refer the related or other topics to the parking lot. Items referred to the parking lot can either be discussed at the end of the meeting, or they can be added to the agenda of the next meeting. This method allows the team to move through the agenda items more efficiently and with a more directed focus.

### Synopsis

As the meeting is nearing the end, have the transcriber review what has been discussed, any decisions that have been made or any topics that were left unresolved. At this point the team should discuss whether or not they have met their purpose? Is another meeting required? Are there any action items? Issues to resolve?

### Evaluation

You may want to take the opportunity at the end of the meeting to ask the group what they liked about the meeting, what went well, what could be done better next time.

All members should participate in team discussions and decision-making  
Team discussions should lead to team decisions

Distribute copies of "**Shared Team Values**" (available in this toolkit) and "**Putting Health on the Agenda**" (available at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/healthyworkplace>) to all meeting participants.