MDS Alert

Clip and Save: Make Meetings Meaningful

Having a plan can go a long way in efficiency.

Know Why You're Holding the Meeting

What is the purpose to those attending? Will it be staff or will residents and their respective representative(s) or family be involved as well? Attendees should have some idea of the value of a meeting before walking in, so tailor meeting topics and times to the needs of your practice and team. If there are certain actions you want your staff to take as a result of the meeting or certain things you must accomplish, like allowing the resident to go over the comprehensive care plan, identify those actions.

As you're planning the meeting, make sure you evaluate whether it is really necessary. Once you've identified the desired objectives, make sure that a meeting really is the best way to accomplish them. For example, a simple staff announcement that requires no discussion could happen via a group email.

Keep Meetings Small

Research shows that meeting productivity decreases as the number of participants increases. When feasible, try and hold meetings by department or with the interdisciplinary team (IDT) - or whichever team members or residents or resident representatives absolutely need to be involved.

Schedule Accordingly

When possible, try to schedule important meetings toward the beginning of staff shifts, when everyone is most awake and attentive. When meeting with residents' representatives or family, take into account their schedules and do your best to accommodate.

Make Time to Prepare

Knowing exactly how you want to use your meeting time will go a long way in effectively facilitating a meeting. Making time in your schedule to prepare adequately for the meeting will go a long way in keeping it to your desired timeframe.

If you schedule a meeting with a start and end time, chances are good that it will fill the time allotted. Create a detailed agenda and make it available to all attendees at least 24 hours before the meeting. Distributing the agenda beforehand allows attendees to know exactly what to expect, and even consider suggestions or important additions.

Organize the agenda so you start the meeting with the top priorities. By addressing those topics first, you should have plenty of time (and energy) for conversations and any necessary collaborative decision-making. If the meeting ends before you accomplish everything on the agenda, either put them on the agenda as priorities for your next meeting, or address them via email or group chat program (if not in violation of the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), of course).

Take Moderating Duties Seriously

Take your moderating duties seriously. Make sure that any team member who wants to discuss a relevant topic is heard, but make sure you take your timekeeping responsibilities seriously. If you feel like the team member is straying from the agenda or topic at hand or reiterating something already discussed, you may interrupt politely and move the conversation in a more productive direction.

Encourage Sharing Great Ideas

Encourage everyone to share ideas and let your employees shine. Don't let long-time team members tread on newer staff members' ideas just because something was tried at one point in the past - maybe now is the time to try again.

Also, look out for what **Joe Quitoni**, **The Ritz-Carlton's** corporate director of culture transformation, calls CAVE employees - those that are Constantly Against Virtually Everything.

Plan for Follow-up

Make sure staff are motivated to perform better as a result of the meeting. Set action items for particular follow-up tasks, if applicable. If the meeting is to evaluate any aspect of an individual resident's care, make sure everyone present is on the same page moving forward, especially if any big changes are made, and give them ample time for questions and make sure they feel comfortable with any decisions made. Provide information for easy follow-up, in case team members or residents have questions later.