

Solution-focused Meetings

Solution-focused meetings can effectively resolve particularly difficult situations or promote communication among all members of the learning team. When everyone provides open, honest and respectful input, the teaching staff, parents and the student will be more committed to the behaviour planning process.

Following is an example of a process to use in a solution-focused meeting.

1. One member of the learning team agrees to act as the facilitator. This individual needs to be positive, attentive, task-oriented, and have the ability to clarify issues and summarize collaborative decisions. The facilitator must help each team member stay on topic and work toward appropriate, practical solutions.
2. The facilitator begins the meeting by inviting the person who initiated the meeting to state his or her concern clearly and concisely. Find out specifically what this person wants to happen as a result of this meeting.
3. The team members ask questions to clear up uncertainties about what the issue is or what the circumstances are. The facilitator may need to encourage team members to look for factors that appear to trigger or contribute to the problem, and to identify and analyze conditions that seem to alleviate the problem. As part of this analysis, team members may also identify the student's strengths and available resources.
4. Once the problem or issue is clearly defined, the learning team uses a roundtable brainstorming session to suggest ways to solve the problem. All ideas are recorded on chart paper. At this stage let ideas flow freely and do not comment directly on any one idea.
5. The facilitator and the referring teacher review the strategies together and then rate each suggestion by assigning a number value.
For example:
1 = an idea or strategy that the teacher and/or parent wants to try
2 = an idea or strategy that has merit, but is not a priority
3 = an idea or strategy that has already been tried and didn't seem to resolve the issue
4 = an idea or strategy that is not immediately practical at this time.
6. The learning team develops an action plan for each strategy selected, including materials and resources required, persons responsible, and dates for follow-up and review.
7. The facilitator closes the meeting by thanking everyone and asking for feedback on the process. The team generally agrees to meet for a progress review in four to six weeks.

Adapted with permission from Gordon L. Porter et al., "Problem Solving Teams: A Thirty-Minute Peer-Helping Model," in Gordon L. Porter and Diane Richler (eds.), *Changing Canadian Schools: Perspectives on Disability and Inclusion* (North York, ON: The Roeher Institute, 1991), pp. 224-228.

Solution-focused Meetings (cont'd)

Sample Planner for a Solution-focused Meeting

Date _____

Referring member of the learning team _____

Team members participating in the meeting

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Student's name _____

A. Key concern

B. What we would like to see happen/change

C. Description of student's strengths and priority areas of need

Strengths	Areas of need	Other resources

D. Potential strategies

What can make this happen?

• _____	_____
• _____	_____
• _____	_____

E. Follow-up meeting date _____