

RETHINKING THE FIRST TEAM MEETING: WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT (SAMPLE):

- This is our first team meeting in the Collaborative process. We just wanted to say a few things about this process as we start.
- We first want to say that there are a variety of ways that you can address the issues related to your situation. You have chosen a Collaborative process, which has particular principles.
- One of the principles in the Collaborative process is that we recognize that this process is both an emotional process as well as a problem-solving process. Our job is to tend to both of those parts. At times, we will take time to acknowledge or process some of the emotions in the room. We also know that for most couples, they are not in the same emotional place. One person may be feeling one way and the other is feeling quite differently.
- We also acknowledge that we are asking each of you to do things in a certain way, sometimes a different way, than you have operated in the past. We know that either or both of you may be wondering if your spouse will be able to do the things asked of him/her. We also know that there are emotions related to the way you have been interacting up to this point.
- Our hope is that we can help you move through this process in a way that supports each of you and you are in a better place at the end of the process.
- Another principle in this process is that while we tend to the emotional state of each client, we want to be efficient and productive as we resolve the issues at hand.
- To that end, at each meeting, we will have an agenda that outlines our plan for that meeting. At the end of each meeting, we will send minutes from the meeting, which summarize what was covered.
- One of the unique features of this process is that we start the process by reviewing and signing a participation agreement, which outlines the ground rules by which we will all operate. Today, we will highlight various aspects of that agreement and answer any questions that either of you has about the agreement.
- We want to tailor this process as much as possible to the individual needs of your family. We will be checking in with each of you before and after team meetings so we are doing the best we can to achieve that goal.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

- Plan how the Participation Agreement will be discussed
- Develop themes and summaries for each section
- Consider emotional responses and how to handle them
- Plan how the Participation Agreement will be signed and copied

ENDING STATEMENT

- Here are some components you might consider for the ending statement
 - Acknowledge that the first meeting in this process has been completed
 - Acknowledge that future meetings will continue to be focused on emotions and business
 - Acknowledge that the clients put forth energy, effort, etc... in the meeting and the team appreciates that
 - Let the clients know the team will be checking in to see how things are going

Provided courtesy of Sue Soler LCSW-C, LICSW