**Facilitating a Solution Focused Team Meeting**

*The solution focused podcast link below takes you to a great episode where someone who trianed using Solution Focused Counselling methods, applies the approach to a goal setting meeting with a new team he is working with. I used this to create a template for my first English Department as the new Head of Department at the beginning of the academic year. My aim was to establish the dpeartment goals; review the current development plan and ensure everyone felt involved in the process. This template really helped everyone to feel they had buy in and that they had been fully involved in this process, making changes in the future more sustainable and easier to justify when discussions arose. Your role is a faciliatator/manager throughout this process and you should be encouraging the team to talk about positive examples of change and development as much as possible. If team members insist on returning to talking about the ‘problems’, just politely redirect them towards imagining solutions and describing the impact of those changes in as much detail as possible. We need to be aware of our problems, but spend more time talking about an imagined positive future.*

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-solution-focused-podcast/id1435005818?i=1000422765080>

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| Step 1 – Get staff to postit note the following question on a big sheet of paper:  **What do I already know about the team that will ensure this will be successful?**  Then discuss and share some of the skills, interests and talents as a team |  |
| Step 2 – Ask **‘What frustrates you about the work you are doing at the moment?’**. Ask members of the group to write this down on a postit, but to screw it up and put it in their pocket. People need to have a problem in mind in order to focus their discussions around solutions that will follow, but you want to discourage any ‘air time’being given to talking about problems. The idea is that the majority of the meeting should be about describing solutions and what they would look like. |  |
| Step 3 – Ask people with that ‘problem’ in mind to answer the following question on another post it note and to stick it on a piece of paper or the board: **What do I want in regards to the problem?. Suggest they use the sentence stem ‘I would like….’** |  |
| Step 4 – Read out, summarise and repeat back to your team the statements. This gives a chance for people to clarify any points made and shows you and the other members of the team are listening actively |  |
| Step 5 – Ask the team to group the postits into common areas or themes (a maximum of 4 key areas) |  |
| Step 6 – Boil down the themes to a small set of team goals. Write down your team goals clealry so the team can refer to them and agree on the wording of these goals together. It is important to use ‘we’. | Here are some examples of goals set from an English Department meeting in a school environment (1) We **collaborate**and **share**best practice to create more **meaningful connections with colleagues**, within our department and across college  2) We focus on creating **learning**opportunities for our students that are **engaging, creative, current and relevan**t to them  3) We have an interconnected and developmental curriculum that focuses on the student being able to develop effectively on **the journey from year 7 all the way to year 13**; we are all aware of what students are expected to know in our subject at different points on that journey and where we are preparing them for their destination  4) We all know the department **shared vision and expectations**and we have routines and systems in place to ensure we consistently and clearly **communicate**this with our colleagues and the students |
| Step 7 – Ask the team to then imagine that these goals have been met and achieved. Ask them to **‘What would we notice when we came into work? ’What would other teams/students/stake holders etc notice about us?’.** Then ask them to describe this in as much detail as possible and extend this description with **‘what else; what else; what else questions?’** The more detail that people can describe this in, the more likely it is it will happen in the future and be realised. |  |
| Step 8 – Introduce a scale. Draw a scale from 1 to 10 on the board or a piece of paper. 10 represents ‘everything is happening/has been achieved’ and 0 represents ‘might as well not come into work’. Ask the team **‘Where are we now on this scale in terms of achieveing these goals?’.** If they say a 4, ask **‘what is helping us to maintain a 4?’**. Then ask **‘what would move us up to a 5’?** **‘What would we notice that was different?’** |  |