



Your Network Tools

A Volunteer Support Network is an organized way to support a Centre. In this final module we are focusing on templates and checklists created to make things easier – especially for the Facilitator and network note-taker or secretary.

Templates simplify the creation of documents important to record how the network will move forward and network history. Network history is important for the Centre and anyone new to the network. It also helps the Facilitator look back on who volunteered for what task and past decisions for easier follow-up.

The following templates and checklists have been designed to save you time. Feel free to be creative in how information is presented but please keep in mind the needs and desires of the Centre. Afterall, networks are directed by the Centre and nothing is decided without them!

This workbook includes:

- 1. The Meeting Agenda Template**
- 2. Network Meeting Minutes and Centre Facilitator Meeting Template**
- 3. Note Taker / Secretary Checklist**
- 4. Centre Binder Checklist**
- 5. Hosting a Meeting Checklist for the Facilitator**

The Meeting Agenda Template

Center Name

Network Meeting Agenda

Date

Start Time

End Time

Location

In-Person or Zoom

Facilitator Name

RSVP to:

Welcome

Set the Stage

Activity

(ice breaker, game, etc. - if the Centre wants too)

Review minutes from previous meeting

Identify Goal

Goal - Status Update

Goal - Next Steps

Parking Lot Discussion

(goals/priorities/needs deferred for another time)

Other

Next network meeting date(s)

Adjourn

Network Meeting Minutes and Centre Facilitator Meeting Template

Center Name

Network Meeting or Centre Facilitator Meeting

Date

Start Time

End Time

Location

In-Person or Zoom

Present

list everyone in attendance
(including last name) and
how they joined the meeting
(in-person, zoom, phone, etc)

Regrets

List everyone who could not
attend the meeting
(including last name)

Network Note Taker:

1. Notes that arise from welcome.

2. Notes that arise from Setting the Stage

3. Brief explanation of activity (if one takes place)

4. Notes that arise from the review of previous meeting minutes

5. Identify Goal and record status update

Task	Who	Update

6. Goal – Tasks and Next Steps

Next Steps - Tasks	Who	When

7. Parking Lot Discussion (goals/priorities/needs deferred for another time)

8. Other Discussion

9. Next network meeting date(s)

10. Adjourn

Network Note-taker/Secretary Checklist

This person plays a key role on the network. Both the Centre and Facilitator rely on this person to take good minutes. Minutes do not have to be perfect but should accurately reflect discussion and decisions. Minutes are not a transcript of everything said but record important details and decisions. A good question to ask is if someone is reading these minutes a year from now, would they understand what happened and why?

This person:

- is a good listener
- can follow the discussion
- can translate what is heard into a summary in the minutes
- is organized
- can type, write or prepare the minutes
- can use the computer to send minutes
- can send minutes to the Facilitator and Centre within one week of the meeting
- works with the Facilitator to find a back-up in case they can't attend meetings

Centre Binder Checklist

A Centre binder is the binder that stays with the Centre. All network information is the property of the Centre. The Facilitator should also have a binder for themselves which can be given to the next Facilitator when needed. Keep in mind, the Centre may not have the physical ability to print documents or physically update the binder on their own and it's important the Facilitator and Centre come up with a plan for this. If online access is an option for everyone on the network, consider a cloud-based file sharing platform such as Google Docs or Dropbox. This option must be available and accepted by the Centre.

The Centre Binder Checklist:

- **copies of past minutes – Network and Centre Facilitator meetings**
- **information related to creating the network including the downloads from this program**
- **an up to date list of network members and their contact information**
- **goal setting material and notes**
- **documents relevant to the work the network does (applications, research, etc)**
- **other – items that are relevant to the network**

Hosting a Meeting Checklist for the Facilitator

An important job for the Facilitator is to manage or lead meetings. A good rule of thumb is to keep meetings to a maximum of one hour. If a social component is important to the Centre, schedule it after the formal meeting. That way network volunteers who may be on a limited schedule can leave. As a Facilitator you are the host.

- **Arrive at least 15 minutes before the meeting start time. This gives you an opportunity to check-in and set the stage with the Centre so they know what to expect.**
- **Let the Centre know when to expect you.**
- **Set up the room and make sure the room everything works**
- **Review the agenda with the Centre**
- **Ask how the Centre is feeling. This helps Set the Stage in the meeting.**
- **Start on time**
- **If people are consistently late or absent, don't address it in the meeting. Follow-up with them privately and ask what might be getting in the way of being on time or attending meetings? Ask what they might need to be on time or attend.**
- **Welcome everyone and review the agenda. Remind everyone you will be following the agenda to keep discussion on track to finish in an hour.**
- **Set the Stage - always ask if anyone has time constraints**
- **Check-in with the secretary to make sure they are ready**
- **Keep discussion moving – use the agenda to keep discussion on track.**
- **Guide discussion – try and include everyone and gently limit anyone who is dominating discussion. Possibly practice a couple of phrases that might help you do this. Perhaps:**
- **“That’s a great idea, let’s put that in the parking lot and (Centre’s name) and I will talk about it at our next meeting.”**

- Or “Our goal today is _____ and I want to make sure we stay focused so that (insert Centre’s name), can achieve it as soon as possible.”
- Observe reactions and emotions – especially the Centre’s. Think about ways people communicate. Is anyone reacting, behaving or responding in a way that might impact the network? Is a break needed?
- Always make sure the Centre has time to process and think about recommendations or decisions they are required to make. If more time is needed, make sure it is recorded in the minutes so you don’t forget to follow-up.
- Use the Centre Facilitator check in meetings for follow up and explore how the Centre is feeling and if they are ready to make decisions that were paused.
- Use the Centre Facilitator check in meeting to share with the Centre how you are feeling
- Always thank everyone for attending the meeting and remind them when the next meeting is.