

REMAINING NEUTRAL

This resource offers strategies for maintaining neutrality, helping you stay impartial and manage emotions effectively. It focuses on techniques such as using neutral language, asking open ended questions, and offering suggestions. By following these approaches, you can help ensure the meeting remains productive and solution-focused, even in difficult situations.

COMMUNICATE YOUR ROLE

Be transparent and explain what role you are playing in the meeting, especially when you might have more than one role in the meeting.

For example:

“In today’s meeting I will be the facilitator and will help the team move through the agenda, while helping to maintain the discussion. I will also be serving as the school psychologist and will be speaking about the assessment results and contribute to the discussion on supports. I will let you know when I will be stepping in and out of the role of facilitator.”

USE “WE” WHEN REFERRING TO THE PROCESS

Use “we” when referring to the process to emphasize shared decision making and collaboration in how the meeting will run.

For example:

- “How are WE doing on time?”
- “Do WE need a break?”

COMMENT USING NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Use spoken language and body language that acknowledges the person while ensuring you are not inadvertently communicating agreement.

For example:

- “Your idea is an option to consider”
- “ I hear you want... discussed.”
- “Hearing your perspective, I can see that...”

ASK OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Ask open-ended questions to gather more information, encourage discussion, and stay neutral by avoiding assumptions or leading the conversation.

For example:

- “Are there any questions about what is being proposed?”
- “What are the benefits of considering this placement and how can we ensure a shared understanding?”

USE “YOU” WHEN REFERRING TO THE CONTENT

Use “you” when referring to the content discussed during the meeting to clarify and acknowledge what the individual is saying.

For example:

- “Here are the concerns as YOU have ranked them.”
- “If I am understanding correctly, YOU would like to see how the team can address safety.”

OFFER SUGGESTIONS

Provide suggestions that are focused on the process (how things are discussed) and less on content (items discussed).

For example:

- “I suggest we look at these options and identify the advantages and disadvantages of each.”
- “Would it be helpful to take five to ten minutes to step away and regroup?”
- “Can we open up the discussion by brainstorming possibilities? This will help generate ideas without committing to them until we discuss further.”

