



CIGNA Behavioral Health

The Family Meeting

A Great Communication Tool



A regular family meeting can help transform a chaotic household into a more cooperative team. Schedule a meeting once a week to discuss goals, problems and family events. Use the meeting as a time to talk about menus and assign household errands. Try to make the meeting fun. Order your favorite take-out meal or serve a special dessert.

Family meetings serve another function besides providing a way to assign household chores. They teach children that members of a family can work together to make decisions and create thoughtful solutions to problems. While they don't substitute for intimate time with each other, family meetings help create a climate of cooperation while smoothing the way for busy families with too much to do.

Involve the Kids

As soon as children are old enough, include them in family decisions, such as whose turn it is to help with the shopping. Discuss how you can share responsibilities and improve weekly routines, such as meal preparation, laundry and bathing. Children who participate in these discussions will develop a sense of teamwork.

Use the Time to Organize

Discuss household chores and schedules. Ask your spouse and your kids if there are any particular tasks they like, then let them have responsibility for those jobs. Plan weekly menus and post them on a master calendar. Also post doctor appointments and

school events. Discuss changes in parents' and kids' work and school schedules.

Clear the Air

Use this time to review family goals. Discuss annoyances and problems that have cropped up during the busy week. For example, this is the perfect time for a family member to complain if they feel they've taken out the garbage too many weeks in a row.

Make Plans for Fun

Use family meetings to make long-range vacation plans and schedule weekend excursions. Plan picnics and parties; decide what your family would like to buy a grandparent as a birthday gift; talk about holiday celebrations and plans to entertain family friends of all ages.