

Preparing for your family meeting

Effective family meetings involve the opportunity for all family members to share their thoughts about the care and support arrangement and then work together to incorporate those perspectives into the best possible plan for your family.

Before the meeting, all family members, including the person with care needs, should spend some time on their own thinking about their unique perspective on your family's current care and support arrangement, their role in the arrangement, and how the arrangement affects them personally.

Here are some tips to help you:

1 Consider what's needed

Thinking about what's needed involves reflecting on underlying health considerations and environmental considerations within and outside the home that may be affecting the person with care need's ability to safely and comfortably do the tasks needed for everyday life.

2 Consider what's happening now

Thinking about what's happening now involves reflecting on what the person with care needs is able to do for themselves, what devices are currently being used, who's helping, and when they are helping.

3 Consider what's wanted

Thinking about what's wanted means reflecting on how your family's care and support arrangement affects you and your daily life. What is your ultimate goal for the arrangement? What realistic changes do you think are needed to achieve that goal?

4 Consider what's possible

Thinking about what's possible helps your family re-work or fine-tune the existing care and support arrangement. Before the meeting, think about your strengths, preferences, and limitations. What are you able and willing to do, and what are you unable or unwilling to do?

It's also a good time to think about whether there are extended family, friends, or community services that can provide occasional help. Think about who those people or groups are, the types of help they might provide, and when they might provide it.

5 Write it down

Most importantly, all family members, including the person with care needs, should write down their thoughts and observations before your family meeting and be prepared to share them at the meeting.

If a family member has difficulty writing down his or her thoughts, ask if they would allow another person to assist and who they would prefer to help them (for example, a family member, friend, or neighbor).

Our Family, Our Way has designed family meeting materials that guide your family through each of the steps of preparing for and holding a family meeting. These materials are available for download and printing free of charge. To learn more and to access our tools and resources for caregiving families, visit the Our Family, Our Way website at www.MiamiOH.edu/ScrippsAging/OFOW