

# IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDELINES TEAM MEETING GUIDE



The **Implementing the Guidelines: Team Meeting Guide** is all about giving you support and ideas to inspire and educate your team. This meeting guide is designed to help veterinarians and practice managers lead their veterinary teams in establishing team core values, improving client relationships, and communicating the importance of preventive pet healthcare. The **AAHA-AVMA Canine and Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines** give you a foundation for enhancing the preventive pet healthcare provided in your practice.

As part of each meeting, an agenda of topics has been prepared. The six meetings are designed to last no longer than 45 minutes each. They include suggestions for individual homework assignments to keep your team thinking about preventive healthcare and client relationships.

We recommend using this **Team Meeting Guide** in conjunction with other tools the Partners for Healthy Pets has produced. We suggest printing the complete **Team Meeting Guide** and **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook as you review and prepare your **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice PowerPoint Presentation**. By having all three tools available simultaneously, it will be easier to understand how they complement each other during the team training process.

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# HOW TO USE THIS TEAM MEETING GUIDE

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*This **Meeting Guide** is divided into six sections, one section for each meeting. Review the entire document to have a better understanding of the direction that the meeting series is heading in. Some suggestions may not be applicable for all practices. Pick and choose ideas from this meeting planner that work for you!*

*Throughout the Meeting Guide, you will find **Tips** suggesting other tools that have been produced by the Partners for Healthy Pets. The tools were created to complement one another, and we encourage you to download the documents to see if they will work for you. Some of the Tips refer to team worksheets that are part of this Meeting Guide. Team worksheets and homework assignments are included in this document directly after the meeting that references them.*

*The following is a list of additional suggested resources that are available for you to use as part of your team meetings. You can download these tools from the Partners for Healthy Pets website:  
[www.partnersforhealthypets.org](http://www.partnersforhealthypets.org)*

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## 1. IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDELINES: PRACTICE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

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This PowerPoint file includes slides and detailed point-form speaker notes to go along with the meetings outlined in this guide. The slides are intended to be edited and customized to suit your selected content and presentation style. If your practice cannot project a PowerPoint presentation or gather around a computer, consider printing the slides for your team meetings.

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## 2. SHARPEN YOUR AXE VIDEO

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This video was created during a talk given by Dr. Andy Roark. It encourages and inspires professionals in the veterinary field to think about preventive pet healthcare and the impact that they have on clients and their pets. We suggest that your team connect to the internet during Meeting #1 to watch the talk at the Partners for Healthy Pets website.

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## 3. IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDELINES: PRACTICE ACTION PLAN WORKBOOK

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This document was designed to help you create a personalized action plan for your practice. The **Practice Action Plan** will help you prepare for your meetings by providing a place for you to clarify your ideas on the following topics:

- Core values for your practice
- The things your practice is doing well
- The opportunities for improvement at your practice
- Creating a protocol to implement the AAHA-AVMA Preventive Healthcare Guidelines
- Setting goals for your team

# HOW TO USE THIS TEAM MEETING GUIDE (CONT.)

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## 4. AAHA-AVMA CANINE & FELINE PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE GUIDELINES

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Developed jointly by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), these Guidelines provide information for veterinary professionals on the care and treatment of canine and feline patients.

The information is not intended to dictate an exclusive protocol, course of treatment, or procedure. The Guidelines are not to be considered an official AAHA or AVMA standard of care.

The Guidelines are introduced to your team in Meeting #1. The subsequent meetings focus on strategies to implement the Guidelines in your practice.

## 5. WORDS THAT WORK VIDEOS & SCRIPTS

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The **Words That Work** series takes a detailed look at how to have successful preventive healthcare conversations with clients. These videos and supporting scripts have been designed to help you and your team review techniques recommended by experts to help communicate the value of preventive care to your clients. Individual vignettes cover specific topics such as history taking and relationship building, conveying value during a physical exam, and dental discussions. The **Implementing the Guidelines: Team Meeting Guide** encourages the use of these videos and scripts to review communication skills at team meetings.

*Please visit [www.partnersforhealthypets.org](http://www.partnersforhealthypets.org), and consider using the above resources to complement this Meeting Guide. Pick and choose what will work best for you to raise the profile of preventive pet healthcare in your practice. Most important, get excited about presenting this meeting series to your team. If you are passionate about preventive healthcare, the team will follow your lead!*

# MEETING #1

## FOCUS ON PREVENTIVE PET HEALTHCARE AND IMPLEMENTING THE AAHA-AVMA GUIDELINES

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*The focus of Meeting #1 is to consider the state of preventive pet healthcare in the veterinary industry as a whole and to talk about its place in your practice. Use this introductory meeting to inspire your team. This is a chance to take a step back from your daily work and remind your team that your practice is committed to preventive care and that you want to continue to improve and refine your efforts to keep pets healthy.*

*The following sections outline suggested content for Meeting #1. If you are interested, remember to look at the **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice PowerPoint Presentation** for slide templates and detailed speaker notes for your presentation.*

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### TOPIC 1

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#### **Talk about preventive pet healthcare.**

- It can be hard to get excited about, but it is as important as treating sick or injured pets.
  - Share some industry statistics:
    - 24% of pet owners feel routine checkups are unnecessary.
    - 33% of pet owners say that they would only take their pet to a veterinarian if it was sick.
    - Veterinary visits have been declining for almost a decade.
  - We can do much better than the average for our patients.
  - We can continue to make a huge difference in the lives of pets and owners in our community.
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### TOPIC 2

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#### **Talk about why we all chose the veterinary field, and discuss the values that we share.**

- Ask your team to volunteer their ideas: What do you want for our patients?
  - Provide some examples of your own:
    - We would rather keep pets healthy than treat preventable diseases.
    - We want to advocate for the pets in our community.
  - Approaching every appointment as an opportunity to advocate for the health of our patients is a powerful way to live according to your values and feel fulfilled in your work.
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*Visit the Partners for Healthy Pets website with your team to watch a video called **Sharpen Your Axe**, a talk by Dr. Andy Roark. We strongly encourage this step – Dr. Roark’s presentation is compelling and thought provoking. You will feel tremendous pride in your role as a veterinary professional!*

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## TOPIC 3

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### Talk about improving preventive healthcare through better client relationships.

- We compete with many other sources of information, so many of our pet owners' decisions are based on things like trust, confidence, and the compassion that they feel from us.
- We have a powerful thing in common with our clients – we both want what is best for the health of their pets.
- We need to connect with clients and show our love of animals by advocating for what is best for their pets.

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## TOPIC 4

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### Introduce the AAHA-AVMA Preventive Healthcare Guidelines.

- The AAHA-AVMA Guidelines are a way to make sure that all of our patients are getting our preventive healthcare message.
- The Guidelines go through all aspects of what should be addressed yearly with patients.
- To use them effectively, we are going to make a protocol that specifies what everyone's role is when communicating the Guidelines.



## SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Ask your team to complete the **10 Beliefs I Have About Our Practice & Preventive Pet Healthcare** worksheet and give it to you before your next meeting. This worksheet will engage your team in the process and keep them thinking about their values and the importance of preventive pet healthcare.



Visit the *Partners for Healthy Pets* website, and download the **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook. You can use your team's feedback to help complete a personalized action plan for your practice. This week, focus on Sections 1, 2, 3, and the canine portion of Section 4 of the Action Plan workbook to prepare for Meeting #2.

Hand out copies of the **AAHA-AVMA Canine and Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines** so that your team becomes familiar with them. Explain that you will go over them in detail during your meetings.

# 10 BELIEFS I HAVE ABOUT OUR PRACTICE & PREVENTIVE PET HEALTHCARE



1

I am passionate about preventive pet healthcare because...

## COMMIT YOUR PASSION

A core value that our practice should adopt is...

2

3

How important is preventive healthcare compared to caring for sick or injured animals?



4

To connect with clients, I always ask them...

Connecting with clients is:

- a. Easy! I love doing it!
- b. Challenging. I'm never sure what to say.
- c. Different every day. It all depends on who the client is.

5

To improve our client relationships, our practice needs to...

6

7

Our practice keeps preventive pet healthcare a high priority by...

## CONNECT WITH CLIENTS

8

When it comes to communicating prevention to clients, I find it hard to...

9

Our practice advocates for preventive health...



10

I could communicate preventive care more effectively if...



## COMMUNICATE PREVENTION

# MEETING #2

## FOCUS ON OUR PRACTICE VALUES & THE AAHA-AVMA CANINE PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE GUIDELINES

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The focus of Meeting #2 is to use the feedback from your team and create values that you have consensus on. You can continue to return to these values to address WHY you are focusing on client relationships and preventive healthcare. Meeting #2 is also where you will present your plan for implementing the **AAHA-AVMA Canine Preventive Healthcare Guidelines** in your practice. To do this, you must decide who will do what and when so that the Guidelines are consistently applied for all patients. It is important for you to devote some time to thinking about a good plan that will work in your clinic before Meeting #2. However, it is just as important to consider the feedback you will get from your team when you present your first ideas for a protocol. Be prepared to refine your protocol after team input from Meeting #2.



The Partners for Healthy Pets has created an **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook that will help you consolidate team values and think about a customized protocol for implementing the Guidelines.

The following sections outline suggested content for Meeting #2. If you are interested, remember to look at the **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice PowerPoint Presentation** for slide templates and detailed speaker notes for your presentation.

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### TOPIC 1

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#### **Present your practice values and team feedback from Meeting #1.**

- Consolidate core values from the team worksheets or from team discussion during Meeting #1.
  - *Develop core values for the practice (we recommend up to five).*
- Consolidate feedback from the team on preventive care.
  - *Identify one preventive care action that the team does especially well and one action that needs improvement.*
- Consolidate feedback from the team on building client relationships.
  - *Identify one client relationship action that the team does especially well and one action that needs improvement.*
- Encourage team members to keep giving feedback during this process.
- Let them know that you will work as a team on the things they identified as needing improvement.

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## TOPIC 2

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### Present the AAHA-AVMA Canine Preventive Healthcare Guidelines to the team.

- Explain how as a team, you will work together to implement the Guidelines in your everyday practice.
- First, review each guideline and address any exceptions that the practice will adopt.
  - *For example, "We will administer the following non-core vaccines because..."*
  - **Remember to discuss WHY your practice recommends the preventive care practices it does.**
  - *This will help ensure that everyone on the team is delivering the same preventive care messages and can communicate why they are important to clients.*
  - *Encourage your team to ask questions so that everyone understands each recommendation.*

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## TOPIC 3

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### Present a protocol for implementing the AAHA-AVMA Canine Preventive Healthcare Guidelines at your practice.

- Present your expectations of the team for implementing the Canine Guidelines.
- First, review each guideline and address any exceptions that the practice will adopt.
  - *Be specific in outlining everyone's roles and responsibilities for all sections of the Canine Guidelines.*
  - *For example, a technician may be responsible for educating clients on a patient's treatment/prevention protocol.*
  - *Encourage team members to ask questions about what is expected of them.*
- Finally, encourage discussion, as your team will have ideas that may help you refine your protocol.



The Partners for Healthy Pets has created an **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook that will help you create a customized protocol for the AAHA-AVMA Canine Guidelines. Use Section 4 of the Action Plan workbook to organize your thoughts for Meeting #2.



## SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Have the members of your team complete the **Implementing the AAHA-AVMA Preventive Healthcare Guidelines for Dogs** online course available at [www.vetmedteam.com](http://www.vetmedteam.com).



Use the **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook in preparation for Meeting #3. This week, focus on the feline portion of Section 4 of the workbook to create a preliminary protocol for implementing the AAHA-AVMA Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines.



# MEETING #3

## FOCUS ON THE AAHA-AVMA FELINE PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE GUIDELINES

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The focus of Meeting #3 is to present your plan for implementing the **AAHA-AVMA Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines** in your practice. To do this, you must decide who will do what and when so that the Guidelines are consistently applied for all patients. Your team may have questions about the plan for the Canine Guidelines from your last meeting. Address any questions or revisions at the beginning of the meeting, and then move on to discuss the Feline Guidelines. It is important for you to devote some time to thinking about a good plan that will work in your clinic before Meeting #3. However, it is just as important to consider the feedback you will get from your team when you present your first ideas for a protocol. Be prepared to refine your protocol after team input from Meeting #3.



The Partners for Healthy Pets has created an **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook that will help you create a customized protocol for implementing the Guidelines.

The following sections outline suggested content for Meeting #3. If you are interested, remember to look at the **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice PowerPoint Presentation** for slide templates and detailed speaker notes for your presentation.

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### TOPIC 1

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#### Check in with the team, and review homework.

- Check in with your team, and ask how many have completed the *Implementing the AAHA-AVMA Preventive Healthcare Guidelines for Dogs* online course (available at [www.vetmedteam.com](http://www.vetmedteam.com)).
- Invite discussion about the implementation plan for the Canine Guidelines.
- Record questions and concerns that need more thought, and get the answers to your team at a later date.

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### TOPIC 2

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#### Present the AAHA-AVMA Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines to the team.

- Review with the team how you will work together to implement the Guidelines in your everyday practice.
- First, review each guideline and address any exceptions that the practice will adopt.
  - For example, “We will administer the following non-core vaccines because...”
  - **Remember to discuss WHY your practice recommends the preventive care practices it does.**

- This will help ensure that everyone on the team is delivering the same preventive care messages and can communicate why they are important to clients.
- Encourage your team to ask questions so that everyone understands each recommendation.

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## TOPIC 3

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### **Present a protocol for implementing the AAHA-AVMA Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines at your practice.**

- Next, present your expectations of the team for implementing the Feline Guidelines.
  - Be specific in outlining everyone's roles and responsibilities for all sections of the Feline Guidelines.
  - For example, a technician may be responsible for educating clients on a patient's treatment/prevention protocol as outlined by you.
  - Encourage team members to ask questions about what is expected of them.
- Finally, encourage discussion, as your team will have ideas that may help you refine your protocol.



## SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Have the members of your team complete the ***Implementing the AAHA-AVMA Preventive Healthcare Guidelines for Cats*** online course available at [www.vetmedteam.com](http://www.vetmedteam.com).

Ask members of your team to consider the Canine and Feline Guidelines and choose two preventive care topics that they feel pose the greatest challenge. Think of client scenarios that they've experienced for each topic, and ask them to be prepared to talk about them at the next meeting. Use the ***Implementing the Guidelines: Preventive Pet Healthcare Questions & Challenges*** worksheet (see next page) to help your team focus their feedback before the next meeting.



**TIP!**

Review the ***Words That Work*** series on the Partners for Healthy Pets website in preparation for Meeting #4.

# IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDELINES PREVENTIVE PET HEALTHCARE



## QUESTIONS & CHALLENGES

In the next couple of weeks, consider the AAHA-AVMA Canine and Feline Guidelines. Think about your role in implementing these Guidelines in our practice. Take time to complete the following worksheet, and bring it with you to our next staff meeting.

Remember, our ultimate goal is to keep more pets healthy for longer. Your input into this process is essential!

Do you have any questions about your role in implementing the Guidelines?

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What two preventive healthcare topics present the biggest challenges to you?

**1** TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Describe a time that this challenge occurred and what the outcome was, or explain how you anticipate this might be an issue.*

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**2** TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Describe a time that this challenge occurred and what the outcome was, or explain how you anticipate this might be an issue.*

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# MEETING #4

## FOCUS ON BUILDING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

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*The focus of Meeting #4 is to give your team ideas on how they can build even better client relationships. Occasionally, you will find team members who are naturally gifted at crafting and maintaining relationships. Encourage these people to take a leadership role in teaching client communication, but remember that this is not the norm. Talented team members may have strengths that don't include relationship building. Consider this a working meeting where time is spent helping your team gain skills in this part of their job.*



*The Partners for Healthy Pets has created video vignettes that focus on how to communicate specific messages and build relationships with clients. We recommend that you use the **Words That Work** series and the accompanying scripts to help your team. Alternatively, use your own experience and real-life scenarios to help your staff improve their relationship-building skills.*

*The following sections outline suggested content for Meeting #4. If you are interested, remember to look at the **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice PowerPoint Presentation** for slide templates and detailed speaker notes for your presentation.*

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### TOPIC 1

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#### **Team homework discussion – Challenging preventive care topics**

- Begin your meeting by discussing the homework from last week.
- Ask a team member to share a challenging client discussion about a specific preventive care topic.
- Discuss the best approach for dealing with this topic, and reference your protocol for implementing the Guidelines.
- Discuss how each team member would deal with this same topic in a manner that is suitable for his or her role.
- Acknowledge the team's challenges, and give useful instruction.
- Depending on time, discuss another challenge from a different team member.
- Use ideas from the Team Worksheets for group discussions at meetings in the future.

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### TOPIC 2

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#### **Present a *Words That Work* video and script, or talk about a real-life example from your practice.**

- Start with the ***Words That Work: History-Taking/Relationship-Building*** video.
  - *Print a copy of the associated script for each team member.*



Find the **Words That Work** video series in the toolbox at [www.partnersforhealthypets.com](http://www.partnersforhealthypets.com).

- After the team watches the video, start a discussion with these questions:
  - *What do you notice about the way the veterinarian responds to the client?*
  - *What key phrases stand out to you?*
- Explain how these key phrases and communication styles can be applied to all client interactions:
  - *Ask the team for some client scenarios that they have found challenging.*
  - *How could these communication techniques help?*



*Role-playing can be uncomfortable for some people. However, if you can get your team to practice in this way, it is a very effective way to learn communication skills. Get prepared before the meeting. Practice and be ready to be the first volunteer to role-play with a willing team member. Reading the script word for word can be the first step. Making it sound more natural with some of your own words can come later.*

- *Give the team members a couple minutes to put the script's key phrases into their own words and then role-play the script with a partner.*
- *As a team, discuss what everyone has learned from their partner's communication style, and share their ideas for rephrasing and other communication techniques they use to help build client relationships.*
- Some things to consider including as part of the discussion:
  - *Taking time for small talk*
  - *Acknowledging client concerns*
  - *Using open-ended questions*
  - *Supporting and praising your client's efforts*
  - *Showing your love of animals by advocating for what you believe is best for the pet*



## SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Ask your team to be prepared to share a client communication success story from the next two weeks. Ask each one to communicate with a client in a way that goes beyond what they usually do. For example, this could be a preventive care conversation that they've never had with a client before and the reaction they received. Use the **Building Better Client Relationships: Communication Success Stories** worksheet (see next page) to help your team focus their feedback before the next meeting.



Use Section 5 of the **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook to organize your thoughts for Meeting #5. You will be asked to create goals for your team in the upcoming weeks.

# BUILDING BETTER CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS



## COMMUNICATION SUCCESS STORIES

Better client relationships will result in improved preventive healthcare for our patients. We have a lot of important information and education to offer our clients; however, it is important to remember that many of our pet owners' decisions are based on things like trust, confidence, and the compassion that they feel from us. We have a powerful thing in common with our clients – we all want what is best for the health of their pets. We need to connect with clients and show our love of animals by advocating for what is best for our patients and their pets.

### EXERCISE:

In the next two weeks, try something that you have never done before. Communicate with a client in a way that goes beyond what you usually do. Don't be afraid to express your passion for your work or advocate for what is best for pets.

Write down what happened, and share it with the team at our next meeting.

#### Here are some ideas to try:

- Use more open-ended questions to **learn more about a client.**  
*What did you learn?*
- Make a special point to **support and praise a client's efforts.**  
*What was the reaction?*  
*Did the client open up and share more information with you?*
- Go beyond your normal conversation to **advocate for what is best for a pet.**  
*How did you do this?*  
*What was the reaction?*

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# MEETING #5

## FOCUS ON OUR GOALS FOR PREVENTIVE PET HEALTHCARE

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The focus of Meeting #5 is to share some specific goals for your team that will help with the implementation of the **AAHA-AVMA Guidelines**. As you create your first two team goals this week, look back at the feedback from your team about where they identified opportunity for improvement. Create goals that are short term. They might not solve the problem entirely but will work in a positive way toward a solution. Goals that can be measured easily are also good to start with. At this meeting, present your goals, and make sure that the team understands them. At the next meeting, you will review and celebrate successes.



The Partners for Healthy Pets has created an **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook that will help you create specific goals for your team.

The following sections outline suggested content for Meeting #5. If you are interested, remember to look at the **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice PowerPoint Presentation** for slide templates and detailed speaker notes for your presentation.

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### TOPIC 1

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#### Team homework discussion – Client communication success stories

- Review the client communication techniques that you covered in your last meeting.
- Ask team members to share a conversation they had with a client over the past two weeks.
- Give supportive praise and constructive advice to all team members.
- What worked? What didn't? Talk about things that you want to try in future conversations.

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### TOPIC 2

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#### Present two goals that support the implementation of the AAHA-AVMA Guidelines in your practice.

- Be excited about the two goals you have created for your team.
- Explain WHY the goals are important and what ties them to your collective core values.
- Let the team know that you used their feedback in creating the goals.
- Explain that the goals are focused on the issues identified by the team as opportunities for improvement.
- Clearly state what the goal is, and make them realistic.
- Clearly state what part each member of the team will play in achieving the goal.
- Clearly state how you will all keep track and measure success.
- Start with short-term goals so the team can see success over two weeks.
- Post reminders about the goals.
- Use your meeting time to brainstorm with the team about ideas on how to achieve the goals.

The Partners for Healthy Pets has created an **Implementing the Guidelines: Practice Action Plan** workbook that will help you create specific goals for your team.



**Examples of goals that you might start with include:**

- Find a community event that we can participate in. Plan a presence that will promote the practice and educate about preventive pet healthcare.
- Use a communication tool (e.g., pamphlet, poster) with every client for the next two weeks to help pet owners understand and accept the value of regular veterinary visits and preventive healthcare. Review the outcome with the team in two weeks.



## SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Ask your team to keep your goals in mind as they work over the next two weeks. Fill in the **Working With Purpose: Our Team Goals** handout (see next page) for each goal, and make sure everyone understands his or her role. At the next meeting, let the team know how you are doing. Celebrate successes!



# WORKING WITH PURPOSE



## ■ OUR TEAM GOALS

Goals are a great way to put our core values into practice. Some goals are short term; others will be long term. All of our team goals will work to keep our practice moving in the direction of our collective values.

**GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**WHY** is this goal important to our practice?

*How does this goal drive one of our collective core values?*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Actions for Achievement	Person Responsible	Due Date	Expected Challenges	Desired Outcomes

*Comments* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Date of Review/Completion* \_\_\_\_\_

# MEETING #6 AND BEYOND

## FOCUS ON THE FUTURE!

*If you have already held your first five meetings, you are well on the way to implementing the **AAHA-AVMA Guidelines** and prioritizing preventive healthcare in your practice. You have also made a start at building better client relationships. It is essential that as a leader you stay positive and have a “We cannot fail” attitude.*

*Plan your own Meeting #6, and keep your team focused on preventive pet healthcare with regular meetings going forward. Continue to use the tools you have to engage your team. Use the **Words That Work** videos and scripts to teach communication techniques. Plan and follow through with achievable goals. Always remember to celebrate successes and encourage team ideas and participation.*

*Most important, continue to remind your team **WHY** preventive pet healthcare is a priority at your practice. If you keep your team working toward your collective core values, you will have a more productive and motivated group.*

*Consider some of these ideas for future meetings:*

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### IDEA 1

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**Watch the remaining *Words That Work* videos.**



Access the **Words That Work** videos and scripts from the toolbox at the [Partners for Healthy Pets website](#).

- The **Words That Work** series highlights how to communicate with clients on specific topics found in the AAHA-AVMA Preventive Healthcare Guidelines.
- Devote a meeting to each topic, and talk through how you will communicate these messages at your practice.
- At each meeting, review the video, read through the scripts, and role-play to become comfortable with the communication techniques and messages.
- Identify key messaging and phrases that team members will incorporate into their client discussions.

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### IDEA 2

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**Working toward our goals**



Continue to use the **Working With Purpose: Our Team Goals** worksheet from Meeting #5 as you create new goals for your team.

- Team members share their efforts in working toward the team goals.
- Leader should acknowledge team efforts and share personal efforts.
- Once a goal has been achieved as agreed on by the entire team, celebrate!
- The goal can be based on preventive care or client relationship challenges.
- Whenever possible, create goals centered around feedback from the team.
- Your goals can gradually become longer term and more challenging as your team gets used to achieving and celebrating.

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### ■ IDEA 3

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#### **Have a six-month check-up on your Guideline protocol.**

- Ask your team to write down the things they think are working and opportunities for improvement.
- Have a discussion about new ideas.
- Refine your protocol, and make changes that work for your practice.

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### ■ IDEA 4

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#### **Ask your staff for ideas on how to build better client relationships beyond just communication.**

- Brainstorm with your team about how to make your practice a community.
- Some ideas might include:
  - *An open house at the practice where kids get to see what working at a veterinary practice is like.*
  - *A talk in the evening by a technician or veterinarian about a topic of interest to your clients.*
  - *A presence at a local event to promote your practice and bring attention to preventive pet healthcare.*

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### ■ IDEA 5

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#### **Create a go-to document for team members and new employees.**

- Start recording all of the questions you get from your team, and commit the advice to paper.
- For example, what if a client tells you his or her dog has fleas in spite of using a flea product?
- Come up with answers for hard questions, and make the document available to the rest of the team.
- Continue to add to it and build your practice knowledge base.

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### ■ IDEA 6

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#### **Most important, KEEP GOING!**

- Keep having meetings to talk about preventive care.
- Keep preventive care a priority in your practice.
- Create a culture based on your practice's values and the idea of keeping pets healthy.