



# COVID-19 and Physical Distancing

***THE ESSENTIAL TEAM  
MEETING YOU MUST HAVE***



# OVERVIEW

Why are we doing this?

**Purpose:** This meeting agenda will help you facilitate a crucial conversation with your hospital staff around what physical/social distancing means, why it is imperative that ALL staff members participate in it both inside and outside your hospital, and devise some commitments you can make as a team to each other to keep you and your loved ones safe....and be there to take care of your patients when they need you.

**Facilitator:** As you draw everyone into the meeting, set some ground rules with the team. Any time the “stakes are high” it is likely that emotions will also run high. The suggested ground rules for the participants are designed around empathetic communication. Tell the team in advance that you are going to monitor this and that you will call a time out if someone needs to realign their communication style. Give these examples below as options for people to use before you start:

1. Avoid judging others
  - a. Each person should speak about how they feel, and not judge how others feel.
  - b. Avoid starting off any sentence with YOU or WHY which often put others on the defensive.
2. Ask clarifying questions (examples)
  - a. Tell me more about that.
  - b. What do you think would be an ideal outcome?
3. Validation
  - a. I understand how you feel.
  - b. That sounds \_\_\_\_\_ (scary, frustrating, frightening, infuriating)
  - c. I can feel your pain.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** Markers, Different colored construction paper/index cards/large post its/etc. that will be hung on the wall, Tape



# DIRECTIONS

How are we doing this?

**1. Let's talk about our Stakeholders for a moment. As your team members call out Stakeholders, write down a Stakeholder on each piece of colored paper/post it/etc.**

- "Who are our Stakeholders?" (A Stakeholder is a person/group of people that are affected by our actions and behaviors)
  - Answers would be: Associates, Pets, Clients, Hospital, Families, Vet Community, Vendors that come in the hospital, Adoption Groups, etc.
- "Who are our 'personal' Stakeholders?"
  - You're looking for answers like: Children, Parents, Grandparents, Brothers/Sisters, do you have someone who is considered compromised for COVID-19?
- Post your answers (colored paper/post its) on a wall somewhere highly visible in the hospital.

**2. Then ask some questions around our current COVID-19 prevention measures:**

- "What does 'social distancing' mean to you?" And/or "What does 'physical distancing' mean to you"
- "Why do you think the CDC changed wording from 'social distancing' to 'physical distancing?'"
  - Point out that the goal is to limit physical contact with the goal of limiting the spread of germs, NOT create feelings of isolation, being alone, not having people you can reach out to, etc.
- You may wish to read the definition per the CDC: "Maintain a distance of at least 6ft (2 meters) from others" and per White House order "Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people." (Keep in mind that guidelines from the CDC will change periodically, so directives for social gatherings/stay at home orders/what to do in public etc. will be changing from state to state and as time goes on.)

**3. Create some discussion around what preventive measures you have already taken in your hospital:**

- "What measures have we taken within our hospital to abide by physical distancing guidelines?"
- "What other measures are you doing outside the hospital to abide by physical distancing?"



# DIRECTIONS

How are we doing this?

#### 4. Connect the dots:

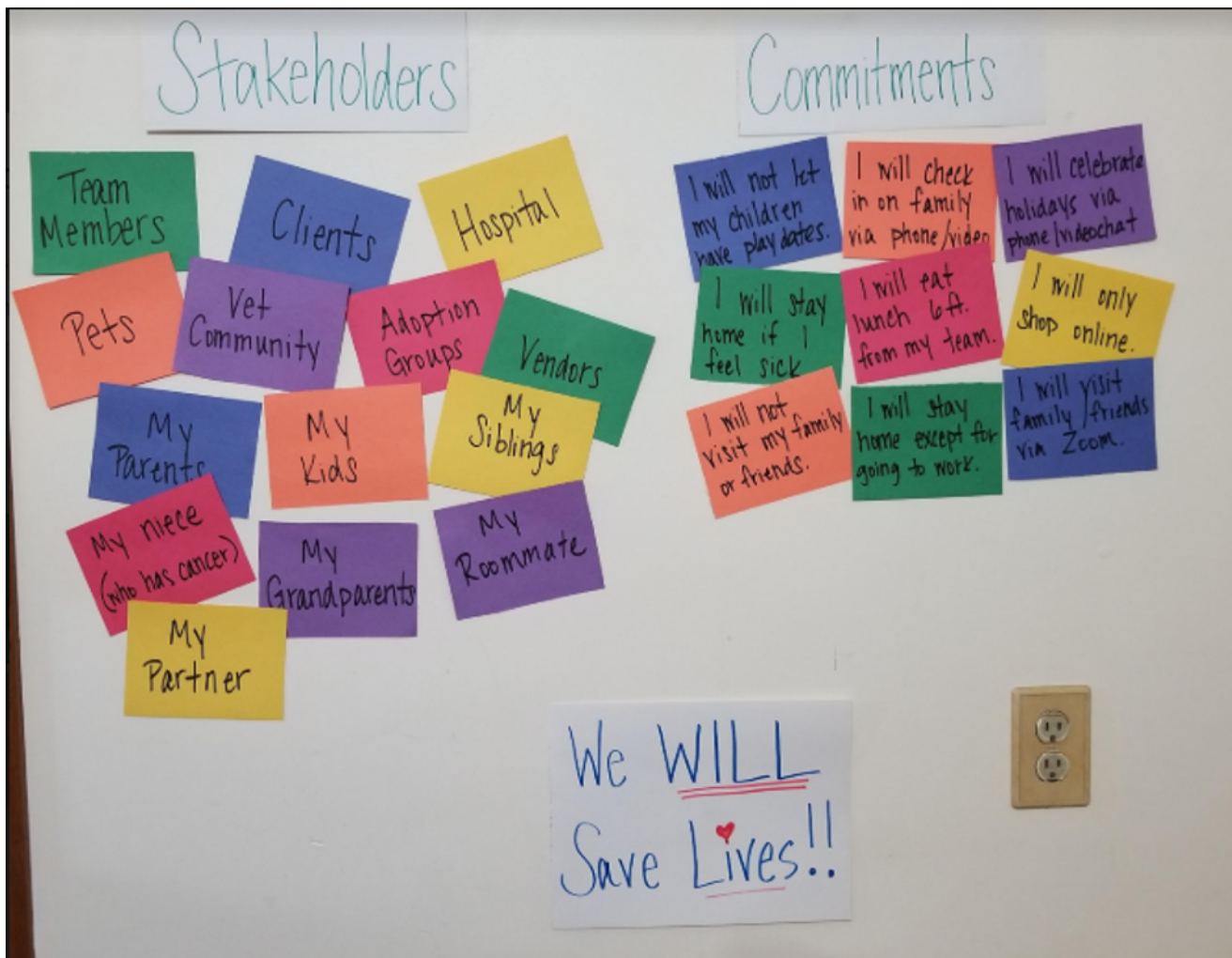
- “How might our actions and behaviors INSIDE the hospital affect our Stakeholders?”
- “How might our actions and behaviors OUTSIDE the hospital affect our Stakeholders?”
- “Are we practicing physical distancing to the best of our capabilities? Or might we have some opportunities?”

**5. Ask each staff member to write down on a colored paper/post it their own personal commitments for how they will practice physical/social distancing INSIDE and OUTSIDE the hospital. They can have as many sheets as needed for what they want to commit to. They can write their names on it or remain anonymous. The goal is to make commitments to themselves, their families, and their team members’ families so that everyone can feel as safe as possible to come to work to be able to provide care for your patients... and earn wages to provide for their family.**

- Point out the fact that what each staff member does both inside and outside the hospital affects ALL your Stakeholders. So if someone is trying to protect a COVID-10-compromised family member, or elderly family member, the actions of their coworkers affect that, because you all come to work together.
- Remember that this pandemic had a beginning, it will have an end. It’s not a short-term situation, but it will end. You’re looking to save as many lives as possible, both human and pet, by remaining open for business. You are HEROES!

*\*\*It is recommended to revisit this exercise from time to time – as the guidelines for social gatherings/stay at home/etc. change in your state, you may need to adjust your own safety measures inside/outside your hospital.*

Below is a sample of what your team activity may look like. Be sure to post it in a visible area in the hospital so it is a constant reminder of what's at stake every day.



### **References and Resources for More Information**

<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-what-social-distancing-means.html>

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20\\_coronavirus-guidance\\_8.5x11\\_315PM.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf)

<https://hippomanager.com/covid19tips/>

<https://hippomanager.com/covid19webinar/>