BRAINSTORMING FOR A BETTER CHAPTER

Presenter Guidelines:

1. This program is designed to help members discuss and contribute to the ongoing success of the chapter. It has been written as a basic script for you to make presentation easier—presenter instructions will be in color and italic, everything else can be read to the members. Ideally, it should be presented by the chapter Leader.

2. Before the chapter meeting, make copies of the worksheet on page 4 to distribute to all members when instructed below.

3. This week, let’s “change things up” before the meeting starts. Ask members to sit next to different people. To encourage this, before other members arrive, place a charm or free dues certificate under a chair. As they arrive, tell them what you did but not which chair. You could assign people by birthday months or in alphabetical order. You can even change the seating arrangement—if you usually sit “theater style” or around tables, try arranging the chairs in a circle. Changing seating frequently is a good way to prevent getting in a rut.

4. After greeting the members, begin.

Are you bored with chapter meetings? Do you feel like some of the excitement, thrill or passion that you felt when you began your experience with TOPS is missing? If so, what can we do as a group to change this? Today, we are going to brainstorm to create an action plan that will make our chapter better. Your opinions count—all feedback and suggestions on how to make the meetings of more value are welcome.

Leader: hand out copies of the worksheet to members, then make a statement that you think sums up where you stand as a chapter in terms of membership and attendance. For example: “I think that our membership is __________ (growing or shrinking). We __________ (get or do not get) new members. We have ____________ (several new members, new KOPS and good losers or few new members, no new KOPS or good losers). Our new members ____________ (leave within a year of joining or stay around for the long run).”

Do you agree with this statement? How can we make meetings of more value to all who attend—new members, old members, and prospective members? This question is rather broad, so let’s break it down piece by piece. You are all encouraged to write down key ideas—whether they are your own or another member’s—for
each topic on the worksheet provided. It will be easier to remember ideas when we have a written record.

Keeping Existing Members Enthusiastic and Inspired

Mixing things up:
Do you feel as though we are stuck in the same old routine? How can we “change things up” without deviating too far from the purpose of the meeting? At the beginning of this meeting, I had us all sit in different seats. What are some other ways we can spice up our routine?

Opening the meeting with a chapter song:
Should we __________________________ (start singing or stop singing or sing different songs) at meeting?

We could change our opening song, or establish one. After discussion, we may see it would be fun. TOPS Song Books are available for purchase, but we could even have a song writing contest and then try out a new song each week. We can have songs written by different groups—based age, gender, occupation, etc. We can also ask a different group of members to lead the song each week which will help all members to feel engaged.

Would anyone like to work on a new song we may use at meetings?

Making roll call positive:
Every roll call should be a positive experience. Weight losers and KOPS at goal or below should be applauded, and those who gain weight should be encouraged and supported. We could develop a group motto to inspire those who have not lost weight during the week. For example, we all could say “You can do this,” or “Keep trying—we believe in you!” When they receive positive support—even though they feel like they have failed—they will consider the experience as a positive one and they will feel good about their efforts.

Does anyone have ideas for a positive group motto we may use during roll call to inspire those who have not lost weight during the week?

Keep New Contests Running Constantly in the Chapter
Many chapters run the same or similar contests all the time. We should strive for contests that are different and that are simple to follow.

Would anyone like to share ideas for new contests we may run? Which of our past contests did you like the best? What did you like about this contest?

Leader: Offer, if not mentioned, such ideas as all kinds of prizes for greatest loser, most loses, consistent number of loses, most inches off, staying in leeway during contest periods which can vary.

Getting the word out!
There are many different ways to advertise our weekly meetings. What are some ways we can get the word out about our chapter? Let’s discuss and write our ideas on the worksheet.

Leader: In case people get stuck, here are some ideas to discuss:
- Chapter websites and local newspaper listings of meeting dates, location, time and telephone contact information. Contact your Coordinator if you need some background information on TOPS to publish through any of these sources.
- Notify Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Wagon about your TOPS chapter.
- Share chapter member success stories through news media. Recognize division winners and royalty, KOPS graduates, and KOPS anniversaries, new officers, area contests won. Share some personal stories that are fun or inspirational about the weight-loss journey of those who are still challenged each day to get healthy.
- Place posters and brochures in stores, doctors’ offices, clinics, churches and libraries that provide the meeting dates, location, and time and telephone contact information. Some companies have employee-based websites that allow advertising of appropriate material, so you may have some members who can offer that opportunity.
- Order posters and brochures from your Coordinator or print copies from www.tops.org

When we have a visitor interested in our chapter, what can we do to make them feel welcome? How do we currently welcome visitors? Do we need to change our approach? It can be tough walking into a meeting not knowing anyone—how can we make our visitors feel special?
Closing the meeting
How does everyone feel about today’s meeting? Do you feel it was helpful to helping us build a better chapter? What would you like to take away with you from each TOPS meeting? Now that we’ve had a chance to discuss different ways to improve weekly meetings, it’s time to commit. We must turn our thoughts into plans and our plans into action!

What effort are you willing to make this week to help put our plans into action? Take a look at the thoughts and ideas you wrote on your worksheet. Choose one idea you can commit to this week. It could be contacting a local newspaper or even creating a new song or contest. Write your commitment down at the bottom of your worksheet and sign your name. We will report on progress we have made toward our commitment at next week’s meeting.

For now, let’s go around the circle and each one of us is encouraged to state their commitment aloud.

It is important to support each other on the days in between meetings. This will help keep our commitments to our chapter fresh in our minds. You are encouraged to phone or email fellow chapter members this week and discuss individual progress made toward building a better chapter. After all, we are all in this together and we know that TOPS is more than just a weekly meeting—it’s a lifestyle!

Special Note to the Leader
As a chapter Leader, how do you feel you are performing? Are you still passionate about helping others to achieve their weight-loss goals? Are you presenting a positive image to your members? Is there anything we can do for you to help you have the tools you need in order to be empathetic, supportive, creative and flexible? We appreciate all you do for TOPS, and we are here to help you.

Please provide your Coordinator with feedback on what you need in order to be successful as a chapter Leader. Do you need more information on what it takes to lead a healthy lifestyle? Do you need information on groups and teams, or presentation training? Do you want to learn how to be a better Leader? Please let your Coordinator know how we can help you help your members.

Remember how excited you were the first day you joined TOPS? We want you to feel like that again! Every day!
Worksheet: Brainstorming for a Better Chapter

Ideas for keeping existing members enthusiastic and inspired:

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Ideas for new contests in the chapter:

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Ideas for getting the word out:

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What effort are you willing to make this week to help put our plans into action?

This week I will:

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