



preventing homelessness
transforming lives

DEVELOPED BY



TEAM AROUND ME

Guidance for Practitioners



"Team Around Me has been working really well for the women I work with. It encourages attendance by the client, and is extremely useful for collating and sharing information between different agencies. The woman feels empowered, feels valued, believed and is in the driving seat – and because of this, they have achieved some pretty positive outcomes!"

Specialist woman's organization involved in pilot, Camden

WHAT IS TEAM AROUND ME ?

'Team Around Me' is a structure for holding case conferences or multi-agency meetings, for people experiencing multiple disadvantage who need a multi-agency response. The template was developed in recognition of the fact that many professionals are holding multi-agency meetings already, but that there is currently no standardized cross-sector structure for how meetings are held, how minutes are taken, and how agencies are held accountable for actions. Team Around Me gives people who use services agency by enabling them to choose their own lead professional where possible – the lead professional can call the meetings, take minutes and advocate for the person if they choose not to attend the meeting themselves.

The meeting structure begins with recognizing positive factors and the person's achievements, rather than problems or deficits – to enable the person and the agencies who work with them to reflect on what a person is doing already to keep themselves safe, and what their strengths are, before thinking about what goals remain.

Team Around me also has a focus on identifying "system blockages" – i.e. problems or issues which are getting in the way of a person accessing services or achieving their goals. The template includes a system blockages process tool, which guides meeting attendees through identifying and thinking about issues/blockages collaboratively with a solution/action focused mindset. This will allow services to work together to overcome obstacles/create flex for people individually – and any trends in system blockages will also be captured and fed back to commissioners and senior leaders, to evidence the need for wider change if necessary. .

WHO IS TEAM AROUND ME FOR ?

Team Around Me can be used for and with any person experiencing multiple disadvantage, who has a number of cross sector professionals involved in/ aware of their case, and who need a multi-agency response to support them. Team Around Me can be used by professionals in any sector that supports people experiencing multiple disadvantage, i.e. homelessness, health, substance use, VAWG etc.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD A TAM MEETING BE CALLED?

This is up to the person, the lead professional, the other agencies involved and the level of risk/need. It may be that one or two meetings is enough to overcome an obstacle and for a person to move forward, and following that they may be able to engage effectively with a range of support services without those services coming together. For people who have ongoing challenges and/or who remain in high risk situations, it may be appropriate to hold Team Around Me meetings monthly, or more regularly, on an ongoing basis. Frequency should be decided on a case by case, needs led basis.

WHAT ABOUT MARAC/SAFEGUARDING?

Team Around Me is a framework for people who are having non-statutory multi-agency meetings held for them already, or where there is an identified need for such a meeting. MARAC and/or Safeguarding referrals should always be the first response if you are concerned that someone experiencing any form of violence and abuse. In some cases, especially for people experiencing multiple disadvantage, on-going multi-agency meetings are needed which sit outside of/in addition to MARACs or Safeguarding – and that's where TAM comes in.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

The lead professional will take responsibility for inviting other agencies who are involved with the person's support – this may be quite a few people, or it may be just one other worker in some cases. Only people who are working with/trying to work with the person should attend, in order to keep the meetings personalized. Family members or other non-professional people who support the person can also attend if this is the person's wish.

WHAT IF THE CLIENT CAN'T OR WON'T IDENTIFY A LEAD PROFESSIONAL?

If a person isn't able to identify a lead professional to bring together their TAM meeting, because, for example, they are not in regular contact with any services at the time, then any professional can take the lead in bringing together and chairing a TAM. It is best that the professional who has the most frequent contact/strongest relationship with the person leads on the TAM meeting, as it is likely they can best represent the person's views and goals. 'Lead' professional does not mean that person has to have all the answers, or do all the work! It just means they are 'leading' on bringing together the meeting.

WHAT ABOUT CONSENT?

The lead professional, regardless of what agency they are working for, can only proceed with a Team Around Me meeting with consent from the person. In most cases, the person will already be engaged with the lead agency and will have signed a consent form enabling that agency to share information with other relevant agencies. If this is not the case, consent should be obtained in the first instance before multi-agency working can occur.

WILL IT TAKE UP A LOT OF TIME?

No! The template is designed to be simple, easy to use and the minutes only need to be action focused bullet points, so everyone is clear what needs to happen next. Team Around Me is to be used only for people who are having/need to have case conferences/multi-agency meetings held for them already – it is not to be used for people who do not need these meetings, and therefore will not create extra work.

WHAT IF A SYSTEM CHALLENGE/BLOCKAGE CANNOT BE OVERCOME DESPITE MEETINGS?

Capture it! We have designed a quick, easy to use, anonymised form to capture data on ongoing system blockages or challenges. This data will be used by commissioners and senior leaders to understand the challenges faced by services and identify gaps in provision.