

Phases of Team Development

Objectives:

1. Participants will learn the assumptions underlying strategies to effective team building.
2. Participants will better understand the characteristics of good team building.
3. To provide participants with basic skills of developing a well functioning CPT.

Activities:

1. Break participants into small groups of 4-5. Ask them to identify specific characteristics of a well functioning team. Once they have done this, ask them to specify how they could encourage these characteristics within their own team. Some characteristics might be trust, respect for others, buy-in of the team concept and team purpose and goals.
2. Have each team report back to large group with what they developed. Build on what is reported.

Discussion:

1. Discuss the assumptions that participants have in developing effective teams. What do they feel works well?
2. Have participants ever been a member of well functioning team? If so, what made the team effective? What makes a team ineffective? Does it take one person, more than one, an incident, etc.?

Phases of Team Building

A team is a group of individuals who must work interdependently to achieve personal and organizational objectives.

Commitment. Members of the team must indicate at least a minimal interest in participating. Commitment increases when it is clear that there are specific goals and objectives for the team. This commitment must include the agency as well as the individual.

Collaboration. Members of a team must be willing to collaborate and coordinate with each other to assure that the goal of the team is accomplished. No one person can make a team work effectively.

Team Development Assumptions

If everyone on the team has all the same skills, a team is not needed.

Each team member has a unique function which must be integrated with that of other members. While differences are a team's greatest assets, the managing of the team's differences often presents the greatest challenge.

Team building is an effort to improve problem solving skills among team members by working through task and interpersonal issues. It aims to strengthen positive aspects of the team function and to identify aspects of group interaction that impede effective team function while introducing strategies to improve those aspects. Nothing needs to be "wrong" in order to do team building.

The following assumptions or values underlie all teambuilding strategies:

- Involvement of all team members is expected, valued and encouraged.
- People are different, and their differences need to be exposed, affirmed, and integrated into team decisions and actions.
- Individual members and the team as a whole are accountable for the actions of the team.
- Team members are willing to examine their task and process and are searching for more effective ways to be interdependent.
- The knowledge of information concerning all aspects of the team provide the power to make individual and team changes now and in the future.
- Team development is a continual, ongoing process, not a one-time event.
- Team is an attitude, not a structure.

Characteristics Of Good Team Building

- **High level of interdependence among team members.** Each member of the team has to be able to count on each of the other members of the team to fulfill their responsibility to the team.
- **Team leader has good people skills and is committed to team approach.** The team leader must take the responsibility to keep each team member on task to accomplish what they have set out to do. Team leaders must be able to motivate all members of the team.
- **Each team member is willing to contribute.** Each member of the CPT must willingly contribute their expertise.
- **Team develops a relaxed climate for communication.** Effective teams consist of members that feel comfortable around each other and are willing to express themselves openly.
- **Team members develop mutual trust.** Trust of each team member is essential. Each team member must be able to trust the other team members to fulfill their responsibility to the CPT. The CPT team must also be able to trust each member to be responsible to the CPT.
- **Team and individuals are prepared to take risks.** Each CPT member must be willing to take risks as a team and also as an individual member. No team or individual is right all of the time.
- **Team is clear about goals and established targets.** Goals and mission statements must be developed early by the CPT and be clearly understood by each member and their agency.
- **Team member roles are defined.** The roles of each team member should be clearly defined so that the team will know what to expect from each member or as a subcommittee, officer, etc.
- **Team members know how to examine team and individual errors without personal attacks.** It is important that when working in a team environment that no one person is responsible for the actions and outcome of the team. This should be a helping environment that will learn from their mistakes and not blame others for them.
- **Team has capacity to create new ideas.** Important ideas can be accomplished through the CPT; more so than with individual members and agencies. CPTs must be creative in their efforts to combat abuse and violence in Indian communities.
- **Each team member knows he can influence the team agenda.** Each team member should feel comfortable enough with each other to be able to suggest agenda items and activities as well as offer new and creative ideas.

When the team resources are focused and members are all working to accomplish the same purpose, teamwork can be very rewarding and productive. This is best accomplished when team members use a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach to accomplish their purpose (Adams, 1987).

The proactive approach manifests such characteristics as:

1. **The team members take a very positive approach in jointly determining the way they are going to work together as a team** and what they want to have happen. When individuals adopt this attitude and commit to use their resources, knowledge and skills to contribute to the goals of the team, alignment with the team's overall purpose comes about. This will not happen unless both the team leader and team members choose to do so.
2. **Having a well-defined purpose or vision of what the team will accomplish** is a very powerful force for the team leader and members. Goals are aligned with the team purpose, and team members are empowered to accomplish the goals. This process leads to a high level of team productivity.
3. **Team members have a positive attitude toward change** and are willing to accept and allow change to occur as needed in order to accomplish desired results.
4. **Team members understand that patience is required**, and that for some goals, a long-term commitment is needed to accomplish the desired results.
5. **Interests of both the team leader and team members are focused on desired results** rather than on short-term problem solving activities.
6. **Team members have a strong feeling of control within the team.** They are able to establish priorities and then commit time and resources for accomplishing these tasks.
7. **Team members verbally and publicly support each other.** They recognize that negative comments about other team members tear the team down.