



Volunteering S.A. Inc.

Introduction to Working in Teams



Government of South Australia
Office for Volunteers

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INTRODUCTION TO WORKING IN TEAMS

Objectives:

Once you have completed this training you should be able to:

- Identify the characteristics of effective and ineffective teams
- Examine the motivations and roles of team members
- Understand stages of team development
- Consider expectations placed on work teams and obstacles to effectiveness
- Identify and practice the skills that enable members of a team to work together successfully

Pathways to a formal qualification

This workshop has been developed to align with aspects of nationally recognised units of competence (subjects).

SRXTEM001A Work in teams

SRXTEM2A Support the work of teams

CHCGROUP1B Support the activities of existing groups

As evidence of your participation in the workshop Introduction to Working in Teams you will receive a Certificate of Attendance with a statement outlining what has been covered.

Disclaimer

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This presentation is intended to provide general useful information and should not be relied upon as constituting any advice.

Attendees should, before acting on any matters arising out of or otherwise in relation to this presentation, seek their own specific independent legal or other advice about their situation.

Handout: Joining a Team/Attending a Workshop/Going to a Party

This activity at the beginning of the workshop will allow participants to focus on the insecurities people experience when entering a new situation.

Process:

Many participants do not know each other and come from different organisations and different areas of the State. This can be a good exercise for sharing fears or preconceptions.

Activity 1:

Form into small groups of about 4 people and choose someone to take notes..... then quickly respond to the question:

“What fears, concerns or pre conceived notions did you have before coming here today?”

After 2-3 mins recorders will be asked to present their lists to the whole group. (This provides a good opportunity for everyone to acknowledge the insecurities felt when people step into a new group).

These feelings occur when teams are formed or when new people come into an established team.

Some of the answers from previous groups:

Will I be the youngest (oldest) person?

Will I know anybody?

Will I act properly?

Will I look stupid?

Will they be more casually (formally) dressed than me?

Will I be the fattest (thinnest) person?

What kind of questions can I ask without looking dumb?

Will I be able to understand what people are talking about?

Will they use acronyms or abbreviations that I don't know?

What can we do in our work teams knowing that these are some of the fears that people may have when they join a group or do something new?

Best Teams

Handout: Speaking of the best teams

- To work out how to create a good work team, let's take as an example the best team you know. Try your favourite sports team - football, basketball, swimming relay, or a team from the Arts field. It can be from any where, but you should know something about it.
- If you are not into sport or the Arts, you can think about a team in another area than sport. A political team? A debating team? A team at work? Even a group of friends, a particularly tight family group, a cast of a show or a team of dancers.
- *The only rule is that they must be a successful team.*

Activity 2:

Write the name of the team and what they do.

What are the qualities that made you pick this team?

A team of winners

Think about the team you've chosen.

Imagine them playing a winning game (or giving a winning performance in whatever it is they do). You might even recall the most memorable game you saw your team play. The team moves as one unit, not a collection of separate people. Yet they are individuals - someone gets the best and fairest player award or is the star.

How can people be both united and individual at the same time?

Winning teams get the perfect balance.

In a team, each person judges when to operate alone (for example, when to shoot for a goal) and when to think as a team member (when to pass the ball to someone else to score - and look good).

Share your ideas about the qualities of a winning team with someone else.

After talking with another person, add any other qualities you think apply to your team.

Activity 3: What do people want from their Job?

The purpose of this activity is to give participants an opportunity to consider what factors motivate workers.

Process:

FIRSTLY: Distribute copies of the form *“What do people want from their job?”* **(Next page)**

Divide the group into small groups of 3 or 4 and ask each person to give a score to the 10 items listed in order of importance with 1 being the least important and 10 being the most important until all numbers are used.

Ask each group to then total the individual scores within their group - this will give them a group score and therefore a group ranking with the lowest score being what the group considers the least important and the highest score being the most important to workers. Put the rankings in the column marked ‘Group’.

Now provide the following information to the participants:

These questions have been given to thousands of workers and supervisors. The typical result that supervisors thought were important for workers is:

1. High Wages
2. Job Security
3. Promotion
4. Good working conditions
5. Interesting work
6. Personal loyalty of supervisor
7. Tactful discipline
8. Full appreciation of work done
9. Help on personal problems
10. Feeling of being in on things

However, workers gave these answers:

1. Full appreciation of work done
2. Feeling of being in on things
3. Help on personal problems
4. Job Security
5. High Wages
6. Interesting work
7. Promotion
8. Personal loyalty of supervisor
9. Good working conditions
10. Tactful discipline

Note that the top 3 items marked by workers are the last 3 that supervisors felt were important for them by supervisors.

❖ What does this tell us about people’s workplace motivation?

❖ How can this help us when working in teams in the workplace?

❖ Does it suggest areas where conflict may arise?

What do people want from their job?

Score from 1 (least important) to 10 (most important)

Individual	Group	Factors	Supervisors	Workers
		High Wages Job Security		
		Promotion		
		Good working conditions		
		Interesting Work		
		Personal loyalty of Supervisor		
		Tactful discipline		
		Full appreciation of work done		
		Help on Personal problems		
		Feeling of being in on things		

Handout: Team Roles and Behaviour

Whether or not a team is effective depends on many variables so it is helpful to understand team behaviour.

You may have a formal role in a team e.g. as a chair-person, but you may find yourself taking on a particular role or roles because of the nature of the task or composition of the team. Roles can be categorised as follows (the list is not definitive as other roles can become evident)

Task oriented roles (helps accomplish the task)

- **Information giver:** offers relevant facts, information.
- **Initiator:** suggests new ideas, ways of doing things.
- **Coordinator:** brings together ideas, suggestions.
- **Evaluator:** measures progress, acts as time keeper.

Maintenance oriented roles (keep the group together)

- **Encourager:** praises and supports contributions of others.
- **Gate keeper:** opens channels of communication, ensuring that quiet members who want to contribute can do so and close-down over-talkative members.
- **Harmonizer:** attempts to reconcile differences within the group.
- **Group Coordinator:** calls attention to group processes and offers suggestions about problems the group may have in functioning

Self oriented roles

- **Aggressor:** dominates the group in a way that prevents others from contributing fully.
- **Blocker:** negative about task and/or group, prevents progress being made.
- **Clown:** fools around, refuses to take things seriously.
- **Non-participant:** makes a point of not wanting to be involved, may even physically move away from the group.

Activity 4:

Divide into groups of about 6 people.

Give each group member the same problem solving scenario. Have 2 or 3 different ones prepared (eg deciding on a thank you function for the volunteers in your organization OR Change of menu for the day centre)

Then give each individual a role to play (I suggest 2 from each of the above lists to make up the 6 characters.)

This can be very active and very illuminating and emphasises that all group members have a responsibility to the whole.

Rewrite the two sentences below as they would be said by an **assertive** person:

- a) **Passive:** *'I might be wrong but I was going to say that we should take more care with our packaging. Well sort of.....'*

An assertive person would say:

- b) **Aggressive:** *'You are so dumb. I've been here longer and I know that our queues are too long on Thursday nights'*.

An assertive person would say: '

Handout: Team building exercises

Activity 5:

When teams are formed, they are usually expected to begin working together. There can be an assumption that this is easy. It is a good idea to make sure that the first few meetings are structured and take into account the stages of group development. An effective way to do this is to use a number of team-building exercises. The main aims of these exercises are to:

- open communication channels within the group
- encourage the social bonding process
- facilitate the sharing of information and expectations between group members

These exercises will help group members:

- get acquainted with each other
- participate in the group's opening exchanges
- feel comfortable with each other
- begin trusting each other

This activity will discuss some techniques to help teams get started

What team-building exercises could I use?

Most team-building exercises available to facilitate team work fall under three broad categories: 1) getting acquainted exercises, 2) norming exercises and 3) ice-breaking games.

1. Getting acquainted exercises

These exercises help members get to know each other. When people first meet, most do not like to ask too many questions. If people do ask questions they tend to be small talk and not questions related to the team work ahead of them. They tend not to talk about opinions or their strengths, likes and dislikes. Sometimes they find out this information the hard way. These exercises can encourage teams to discuss these issues early, so as to avoid the simple misunderstandings which often result in conflict.

One exercise requires members to interview each other on pre set questions which allow them to discuss issues such as their strengths and weaknesses as a participant and their likes and dislikes of team work. By the end of the exercise, members will have developed a much better understanding of their fellow group members.

2. Norming exercises

The main aim of team-building exercises is to help members develop a shared understanding of how they will operate. Teams work more effectively when they have set some common goals and ground rules. It is therefore crucial that members communicate their expectations to each other as early as possible. It is far easier to deal with mismatched expectations before, rather than after, they have come into play.

Norming exercises are those where teams discuss and document what they will be doing and how they will go about doing it.

Examples are those where a mission or vision statement, an agreement or contract is decided. Their purpose is not to make something "legally binding", but rather to produce a document that has emerged through discussion and agreement. It is the act of producing the document that is crucial in the norming exercise.

Teams can be asked to collectively answer questions dealing with ground rules (eg. where and when will meetings be conducted) and goals. Teams are then able to use this document as a point of reference to help keep them on track and to manage any minor disputes which may arise. It is advisable to run this exercise as soon as possible after the group has formed.

Managing meetings: for teams to be effective, they must have regular and productive meetings. Members need to know what their fellow members are thinking and doing. Open communication and a task focus is important. It can be too easy to avoid making decisions and let valuable time slip away. It is wise to take minutes in meetings and possibly to adopt a rotating role structure.

3. Ice-breaking games

The purpose of these is to encourage interaction between team members. This is usually achieved by making the task engaging and fun for participants. Whilst they aim to "ice break", they are also designed to help members bond and gain experience working together.

Most ice-breaking games are generic and many are available on the internet. The more "hands on" games tend to be the most popular. These games often require groups to build a structure together from items such as cardboard boxes, string and masking tape or solve a problem.

The tower building activity (where groups are required to build the tallest tower from drinking straws and masking tape), is probably the easiest to run within the least amount of time. It is a good idea to run these exercises in the first few weeks of the team's life. It can also be run as a "stand alone" exercise if needed, after the other two exercises.

Other strategies to keep in mind:

- Keep a copy of each team's charter. It may help resolve some of the many sources of conflict which arise.
- It is important for members to know why they are doing an exercise.
- Ice-breaking games work best when there is a little prize. (Smarties or jelly beans work well)
- Ice-breaking games can be used any time. They are often effective in the latter stages because they work as a "tension release", allowing the team to work together on something different.
- If you need a short exercise, try giving groups a brain teaser puzzle or riddle to solve (you can find lots of brain teasers on the internet). Alternatively, you could also run your own quiz either as a "one off" session or as an ongoing competition

Handout: Avoiding and Handling Conflict

We are so used to the devastation of wars that we tend to think that conflict is to be avoided at all costs. And generally this is right. A team working in peace and cooperation is better than a quarrelling, divided group.

Conflict can arise due to many things, including: personality clashes, differing expectations, discrimination and prejudice, competition, fear, lack of information.

There are many **signs of conflict**, some of which are quite hard to notice. Think about a time that you have experienced conflict. How did you feel? What were the signs of conflict? You might have felt: irritated, restless, aggressive, aggravated.

However, sometimes conflict can be positive. It can mean people disagree because they care about getting something right. It can mean that creative ideas are being expressed and that people are lively. 'Peace at any price' can mean that a team is stale.

It is important to work out when conflict is positive and how to stop it becoming negative. Similarly it is important to know how to resolve destructive conflicts as quickly as possible - or to avoid them altogether.

Negative conflict - We can judge that negative conflict is present by its effects.

Signs of negative conflict are:

- The workplace is divided into in-groups and out-groups. People gossip and criticise, mostly behind backs.
- There are stand up arguments
- Some people are long term enemies.
- There are more resignations, requests for transfers and sick leave than you would expect.
- The productivity of the group is disappointing.
- People spend a lot of energy working out how to trip up the boss or each other. This is done slyly, not openly. They laugh at each other's misfortunes.
- People tell each other it is an unpleasant place to work without saying exactly why.
- People respond to criticism or suggestions for improvement by being defensive.

Signs of positive conflict are:

- Team members believe they are getting somewhere in solving problems and making improvements.
- There is lively discussion.
- If conflict becomes angry and hurtful, feelings are quickly mended.
- People forgive each other easily.
- People keep talking and debating after the meeting is over.
- People think about the issues in their own time.
- Everyone tries to keep a balance between being 'over nice' and 'over pushy': assertive behaviour is mainly in evidence.

Conflict can result in outbursts of anger that are potentially dangerous. Working relationships can be seriously damaged, affecting the productivity of the people involved and their general feeling of satisfaction with work.

There are several techniques you can adopt to manage conflict. It is important to remember that the sooner you identify a situation involving conflict, the sooner you will be able to resolve it.

Handling conflict - 6 techniques

1. Analyse the stage that the conflict is in
2. Name the conflict openly
3. Use a group discussion technique (such as brainstorming) to come up with creative solutions
4. Make 'I' statements
5. Be assertive
6. Aim for a 'Win-Win' solution

Stages of conflict: Analyse the stage that the conflict is in

Early stages: There are disagreements and 'digs' but people get over them. Things 'feel funny.'

Middle stages: The effects of the tensions last even after the little digs and disagreements are over

Late stages: People are noticeably upset and tense. There are flare ups. People talk openly about the conflict. They try to get away.

Technique 1

Think about a conflict situation you have had (or are having) at work or in your home life. What stage is it in? How did it get to this stage?

Technique 2: Name the conflict. How could you name the conflict openly to the people who are part of it?

There can be a relief in having the conflict named and described.

Make sure everyone has a go at naming it.

Technique 3: Use a group discussion technique (such as brainstorming) to come up with creative solutions. Write some of the possible solutions here:

Technique 4: Make 'I' statements - 'You' statements can sound blaming in a conflict situation. For instance:

- 'You stop me working properly'

- 'You make me feel upset'

- 'You never listen'

- 'You're dominating'

□ “You did-----

,

‘I’ statements take the responsibility for the point of disagreement away from the listener. The speaker accepts the responsibility. Follow up an ‘I’ statement with a clear unemotional statement about what you want.

Turn the above ‘You’ statements into ‘I’ statements:

EXAMPLE: ‘You never listen’

“I feel that you have not listened to what I just said and in future I would like you to pay more attention so that we can come up with a solution to this.”

Technique 5: Be assertive - as dealt with in this and Communication workshop

Technique 6: Aim for a ‘Win-Win’ solution

Decide that you will settle a solution in which everyone is a winner by:

- ⇒ confirming that the situation does indeed involve conflict and that you are not reading too much into it
- ⇒ acting quickly to resolve the conflict before it becomes worse by thinking about the cause(s), how the conflict affects you and what can be done to resolve it
- ⇒ exploring a variety of solutions by setting aside your emotions
- ⇒ adopting a negotiation style that fairly considers the needs of the other people involved
- ⇒ consulting other people, such as a colleague, and discussing possible solutions to the problem.

Some techniques you can adopt to show sensitivity to the differences of other people:

- ⇒ Acknowledge the fact that differences do exist and be prepared to identify them quickly so that you can think about a suitable approach.
- ⇒ Recognise the fact that everyone has prejudices and assumptions and set these aside when you are communicating.

Understand the norms and practices of other conventions, such as

- ⇒ cultural norms, so that you are in the position to respond effectively.

Activity 6:

After reading the following case study, answer the questions:

Sarah and Damien work together in the same aged care facility.

The small office space they shared was becoming more and more congested with paperwork, brochures, forms, folders and articles etc.

While they certainly completed their client records and filed them securely their busy schedules meant that neither of them had sufficient time to attend to all the other filing of other paperwork at the end of their shift and it began to mount up.

Damien spoke to their supervisor to ask if he could work on for 3 hours that day after he had finished his shift, as time off in lieu (toil) to deal with the paperwork and tidy up the office space. He had some spare time and decided it was a good opportunity to do it.

When Sarah came in the next morning she was surprised to see the office area tidied up and the mound of paperwork cleared away.

However, her surprise soon turned to dismay then frustration and finally anger because she could not find what she was looking for and had very little time to search for it. To make matters more frustrating still Damien was not in and so was not there to tell her where he had put things.

When Sarah complained to her supervisor she was told that Damien had worked back the previous afternoon to tidy up the area.

Sarah was furious and let Damien know. She was furious that he had touched her 'things' and made decisions about what to do with them and where to put them without any consultation.

She felt it was an invasion of privacy and that Damien had overstepped the mark.

She asked him why he hadn't told her he was going to do it and whether she would like to be involved.

Damien was taken aback with what he considered was an over reaction on Sarah's part. He thought she should have been grateful for what he had done.

Their working relationship deteriorated and Sarah found it difficult to be civil to Damien as her trust in him had been broken. Their interactions were limited to essential exchanges of information and the former friendly cooperative working relationship had ceased. Something needed to be done to repair the damage.

1. Discuss where there was conflict in this case study.

2. What caused the conflict?

3. Could/should the supervisor have acted differently to minimise/avoid a conflict situation occurring?

4. How could Sarah and Damien have managed the situation and avoided the conflict?

Activity 7:

List the qualities that you consider make a good leader then share your list with two other people.

Can the three of you come up with six qualities that you all agree on?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Checklist – Introduction to Working in Teams

To assess your understanding of an Introduction to Working in Teams, having attended the training workshop, work through the checklist below.

This checklist is designed to assist you to assess your level of understanding of the issues surrounding working in teams and whether you need to follow up on any point/s or not.

I feel confident that I can:

- Identify the characteristics of effective and ineffective teams
- Examine the motivations and roles of team members
- Understand stages of team development
- Consider expectations placed on work teams and obstacles to effectiveness
- Identify and practice the skills that enable members of a team to work together successfully

Introduction to Working in Teams

See below how this topic relates to the National Standards for Volunteer Management

1. Policies and Procedures	2. Management Responsibilities	3. Recruitment	4. Work and the Workplace	5. Training and Development	6. Service Delivery	7. Documentation and Records	8. Continuous Improvement
<i>General Policy</i> ✓ <i>Management System (1.4)</i> ✓ <i>Operating Procedures (1.8, 1.9)</i> <i>Policy and Procedures</i>	✓ <i>Management Systems (2.6)</i> ✓ <i>Authority & Responsibility (2.10)</i> <i>Social Responsibilities</i> ✓ <i>Management Review</i> <i>Resources</i>	✓ <i>Policy and Planning (3.3, 3.4)</i> <i>Selection Procedures</i> ✓ <i>Volunteer Orientation (3.14)</i>	✓ <i>Volunteer Roles (4.1)</i> ✓ <i>Work Satisfaction (all areas)</i> <i>Health and Safety</i>	✓ <i>Policy and Resources (5.1)</i> ✓ <i>Training and Development (all areas)</i> <i>Work Appraisal</i> <i>Volunteer Recognition</i>	✓ <i>Management Responsibility (6.6)</i> ✓ <i>Services Review (6.10)</i>	<i>Personnel Records</i> <i>System Documentation & Control</i>	<i>Policy & Resources</i> <i>Data Collection & analysis</i> <i>Quality Improvement</i>

