

**What is a TEAM?\***

- Group members must have *shared goals* or a reason for working together
- Group members must be *interdependent* (that is, they perceive that they need one another's experience, ability, and commitment in order to arrive at mutual goals).
- Group members must be *committed* to the idea that working together leads to more effective decisions than working in isolation.
- The Group must be *accountable* as a functioning unit within a larger context.

**Task/Process Balance**

The success of any group process is fundamentally lined to the ability of the group to balance its attention to the task at hand and to the group process.

Some groups emphasize process behaviors. This preference brings with it much strength. The group is usually aware of the big picture, sensitive to group members, open to new ideas, and creative. However, if a group is too process oriented, they may do nothing more than spin their wheels and find they have difficulty with closure. With too few task behaviors the group will be ineffective.

Other groups are highly task oriented. They emphasize efficiency, attention to detail, bringing things to closure, and in general, getting the job done. If the group is too task-oriented they will miss the big picture questions, the people issues and the importance of creativity and intuition. They may make quick decisions, but the outcomes may be less than desirable either in quality and/or the degree of commitment to them.

<b>Task Behaviors</b>	<b>Process Behaviors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing</li> <li>• Working independently</li> <li>• Making logic-based decisions</li> <li>• Acting</li> <li>• Moving things along</li> <li>• Focusing on details</li> <li>• Directing</li> <li>• Bringing things to closure (making decisions)</li> <li>• Controlling</li> <li>• Telling</li> <li>• Focusing on the job at hand</li> <li>• Resistance to change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking</li> <li>• Participating/teamwork</li> <li>• Using creativity and intuition</li> <li>• Talking</li> <li>• Exploring ideas more deeply</li> <li>• Focusing on the big picture</li> <li>• Facilitating</li> <li>• Opening up/looking for other ideas (generating alternatives)</li> <li>• Letting go and empowering</li> <li>• Asking</li> <li>• Focusing on the people, values, and vision</li> <li>• Receptivity to change</li> </ul>

## Developing Working Agreements

Working agreements are guidelines developed by the group as to how they must work together to create a positive, productive process. Working agreements describe positive behaviors that, although basic, often are not automatically demonstrated in group processes. For example, an agreement might be “We all agree to participate fully.” Agreements are the group’s power tool. Elements of the working agreement should be posted (written out on a chart or board, or giving in a hand-out) for easy reference throughout the group process.

Working agreements accomplish the following:

1. Develop a sense of shared responsibility
2. Increase members’ awareness of their own behavior
3. Empower the facilitator to lead the group according to the agreements.
4. Enhance the quality of the group process.

Agreements work well when:

1. They are well developed.
  - Important to the team
  - Limited in number (approximately 7)
  - Fully supported by each member
2. They are used.
  - Members are reminded of agreements during process checks
  - Members are reminded of agreements when they are broken

Some Examples of Working Agreement Guidelines are:

- Attack a problem, not a person
- Listen to other’s points of view without prejudice
- Do not take comments personally
- Show up on time, and if you cannot, contact the group
- Be prepared for meetings
- Be willing to take risks
- Be committed to ending on time if possible

Common Concerns: What to do when someone in the group is breaking an agreement.

Use the agreements: That means you refer back to them. You might simply do a process check, which means stopping the discussion of task for a few minutes to focus on process. You might say: *“Let’s pause for a minute to check back to the agreements we made at the beginning of the session. How are we doing? Which ones are we living up to the best? Are there any we are ignoring or not living up to?”* The negative behavior is usually recognized and acknowledged by the individual who has been demonstrating it. If you have been demonstrating negative behavior, live up to it and discuss it with your group members.

## **Difficult Behavior Types & How to Respond**

### **The Silent Type**

May simply be quiet by nature and/or may not want to be part of the process.

#### *How to respond:*

Use the silent generation of ideas techniques, or a round-robin brainstorming session to ensure that participation is comfortable and expected.

It is important that people be challenged to participate but at the same time not made to feel uncomfortable. Establish a reasonable expectation at the outset by making reference to the importance of full participation. Add that you are not expecting that everyone has the same amount to say, or speaks in the same style. What you want to emphasize is that no one should ever leave a meeting without expressing an idea or concern with the group. After the fact is often too late.

### **The Monopolizer**

Full of ideas, usually the first and most frequent to speak, this person's confidence can intimidate or unduly influence others. May tend to repeat points.

#### *How to respond:*

A monopolizer may keep repeating their point if they don't feel as though they are being heard. If they are known to be habitual monopolizers there is often a tendency on the part of group members not to recognize their ideas for fear of encouraging them to go on. The lack of recognition often has the opposite effect! The monopolizers have no evidence that they have been heard and so continue to speak and repeat points. To combat this:

- Use a flip chart to visually show the ideas that have been brought up.
- Be direct. There are times when you will have to explain that others' ideas need to be heard too.

### **The Intimidator**

Forcefully spoken, judgmental, has strong opinions; to this person the answer is obvious; often critical of others; tends not to listen.

#### *How to respond:*

Communicate that you understand how they are feeling (pressured for time, or that the decision is an obvious one); however, not everyone feels that way and the group needs to... (Examine the pros and cons), and that each member's needs have to be met as fully as possible if the process is to be a successful one.

### **The Nice Guy**

Always wants to please everyone; agreeable, hesitant to take a position.

#### *How to respond:*

Be direct. Say something such as "Susan, I'm not sure I understand your position on this. What do you believe the best option to be?"

Before closing a group meeting check with each member to ensure that they support the meeting's outcome. This is particularly important when a group member often "appears" supportive, but ultimately is not.

### **The Unhappy Camper**

Negative, looks for fault with the process and/or others' ideas.

#### *How to respond:*

Acknowledge that they appear to be unhappy with the process, and ask whether there is anything the group has the power to change that would change the way they feel. Get them involved, (perhaps by asking them to facilitate a meeting, or act as a scribe for notes). Ask them if they feel they can make a productive contribution to the process feeling the way they do. If all else fails, it may be appropriate to free them from the process.

\*Adapted from L. Bendaly, (2000) The Facilitation Skills Training Kit, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

# Burnout Remedies Information Sheet†

## Individual Burnout Symptoms:

- Tendency to blame others
- Excessive complaints
- Low energy
- Boredom
- Physical Illness
- Failure to see friends
- Misplaced priorities
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Agitation
- Denial of burnout
- Insomnia
- Feeling of being trapped
- Fatigue
- Short temper
- Chemical abuse
- Decreased creativity
- Non-productivity while busy
- Inability to focus on matters at hand.
- Dejection
- Absence of physical well-being
- Feeling of ineffectiveness
- Lack of enthusiasm

## Remedies:

- Ask for help
- Examine priorities
- Choose to become burned out for a set period of time.
- Contact support-group members for help
- Take a week off
- Engage in energizing activities
- Examine the balance between personal time, social time, family time, and work time.

## Team/Organizational Burnout:

- Non-productive, nervous energy while working on tasks.
- Little energy for accomplishing maintenance concerns.
- Tendency to blame “outside” forces
- Non-productive meetings
- Request for relief
- Team members exhibit one another’s negative symptoms.

## Remedies:

- Ask for help from fellow team members or other co-workers.
- Ask for help from an outsider such as a professor or aide.
- Have a team lunch outside the work setting or go on a field trip with fellow team members.
- Suspend operation until the team feels capable of resuming (1-2 days).
- Eliminate meetings held during mealtime or after a long day of school/work.
- Recognize that everyone will lose unless an effort is made to recover.
- Recognize that the situation is systemic and requires a major intervention.

†By Eileen F.N. Collard, Warren Sam Miller and William Grimberg. Adapted from A Trainer’s Manual for Process Politics, B. E. Guthrie, W.S. Miller, and W. Grimberg, 1981, CA: University Associates.