

November 7, 2019

Working Together Better:
Lessons from Organizational Development

Presented by Linda Cohan and Jeff Fink to ADFP/APFM/MCFM

What Leads to a Poorly Functioning Team?

Address each of these in order!

- Absence of Trust. Teamwork begins by building trust. For people who have not worked together before, how do you build trust? What does the absence of trust among professionals look like?
- Fear of Conflict. If people don't trust each other, they are not going to be able to engage in constructive conflict, but will either fall into destructive conflict or artificial harmony. Conflict-handling skills are also an element. What does fear of conflict look like?
- Lack of Commitment. Professionals may not fully commit to the process or group decisions if they do not feel their story has been heard. Do not browbeat the other professionals, even if you think they are wrong! At the same time, the whole team must pay attention to the next bullet. What does lack of commitment look like?
- Avoiding Accountability. Poor results come from low standards. Low standards come from low expectations. Low expectations come, in part, from difficulty in holding each other accountable for living up to high standards. This difficulty can come from absence of trust, fear of interpersonal conflict or lack of buy-in to the process. What does avoiding accountability look like?
- Inattention to Results. The goal is not to follow a process or to build the egos of the professionals. The goal is to achieve good client outcomes. Professionals who want to be seen as heroes to their clients or who have difficulty separating the steps of the process from the outcome are not working together toward the common goal. What does inattention to results look like?

Based on the book The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni

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QUESTIONS ABOUT TEAM DYNAMICS AND DYSFUNCTIONS

Overview (see separate sheet): how can you tell a dysfunctional team from one that is working well together?

1. What do you look for when putting together a team? To the extent you have input into team member selection, how much should be affected by the clients' personalities and how much by the preferences of the other professionals?
2. If you haven't worked with someone before, how do you go about establishing a good working relationship?
3. When you are forming the professional team, do you explicitly discuss expectations, process or other goals and priorities? How does the group go about making sure that all members buy into stated or unstated goals and priorities?
4. How do members of a professional team show that they trust each other? Does it matter? Why or why not?
5. How should you handle deviations from the kind of behavior you expect? How do you respond if someone else on the professional team makes constructive suggestions to you on how to be a better team member? How can you make sure you are able to have a frank and open discussion?