

Module 2 - Effective Teaming: Important tips for making committees and councils work effectively

1.1 Effective Teaming



Notes:



This module provides a basic overview of what ingredients are needed to make teams, committees, and councils work effectively. Included is a checklist you can use with a committee or team you serve on and some additional teaming resources.

1.2 PPD statement

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Notes:

This module is part of a series of training developed by Project Living Well staff who work at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University. The Partnership serves as Virginia's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. Project Living Well is a grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Administration on Community Living. More information about this project and the Partnership can be found by calling (804) 828-3876 or visiting www.partnership.vcu.edu

1.3 Effective Teaming

Effective Teaming	
Effective ef-fec-tive /ə'fektiv/	Teaming tea-ming /tēmiNG/
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• successful in producing a desired or intended result.• fulfilling a specified function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• coming together as a team to achieve a common goal.• work done by several people with each doing a part to contribute to the whole.

Notes:

What do we mean by effective teaming? We are using the word, “team”, throughout this module to refer to a group of people working together to achieve a common goal. We often think of a sports team - like a football team - where each player has their unique role to carry out. When all of the players work in cooperation together, they can throw, catch, run, and kick the ball to make scores.

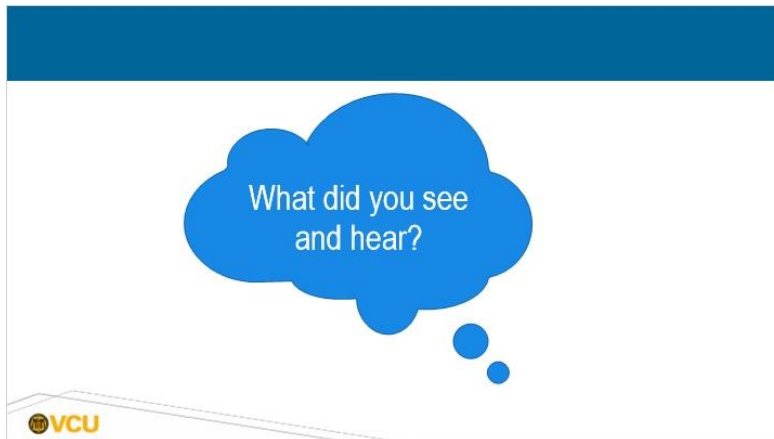
1.4 Guitar with Ten Hands



Notes:

Take 4 minutes to watch this video of [ten hands using the same guitar](#).

1.5 What Did You See and Hear?



Notes:



What did you notice in that video? Did you see each person having their own role - one plucked strings, another sang, another person held the guitar stable? What about how everyone had to be in sync or in coordination with the people around them? Where can you see potential conflicts or challenges? Does everyone understand the outcome? Does everyone have to learn their parts in the same way or is there room for unique perspectives? Were there set rules in

place?

1.6 What makes a team effective?

What makes a team work?

- Building a sense of fellowship among members
- Listening
- Accepting responsibility
- Placing the team's common goal above individual interests
- Focusing on solving problems
- Defining team roles
- Working together



Notes:

So thinking about what you just saw and heard in the guitar video, what makes a team work? Teams work when members cooperate with each other to focus on getting things done. It is about:

- Building a sense of fellowship among members
- Listening
- Accepting responsibility
- Placing the team's common goal above individual interests
- Focusing on solving problems
- Defining team roles
- Working together

Let's take a closer look at each of these important parts of effective teams

1.7 Building a Sense of Fellowship

Building a Sense of Fellowship

- Start meetings with “icebreakers”
 - Name
 - Agency and role
 - Something about you
- Pair experienced team members with newer team members



Notes:


Building a sense of fellowship among members

The more freely you talk to your fellow team members, the more comfortable you are in sharing insights and ideas. Many teams use ‘icebreakers’ or opening rounds at the beginning of each meeting to warm up the team before conversation starts and to get to know each other better. An example of an icebreaker or opening round is asking everyone at the table to share 1) their name, 2) the agency where they work or their role (for example, support coordinator at ABC community agency or I receive services from a Medicaid Waiver), and 3) something about you such as your favorite flavor of ice cream, what made you smile today, your favorite movie or TV show. These opening rounds and ice breakers help us learn more about each other and are fun. We should start all meetings with a little bit of fun! At the end of this module is a resource slide where we have listed a few websites for icebreaker ideas. Another idea to build a sense of fellowship is pairing an experienced or veteran member of the team with a newer member. By matching these members, they can talk between meetings or before meetings, to nurture relationship building.

1.8 Listening

Listening

- Clear your mind so you can focus on what the person speaking is saying.
- Watch the speaker's body language.
- Restate what you heard to show you were listening.
- Ask questions if you don't understand words or statements the speaker made.





Notes:

The most important part of communication is listening. Listening is not just a way to find things out. It is also a sign of respect.

Listening also includes watching body language

Is the person speaking looking down?

Looking at one particular person on the team?

Is their posture welcoming?

A listening posture might include sitting up straight and looking at the person speaking.

An unwelcoming posture might include sitting back with your arms crossed.

Listen like you mean it. For example, re-state what you heard, ask for an explanation of words or statements you don't fully understand.

1.9 Video on active listening

Active Listening






Notes:


Here is a short video on [active listening](#).

1.10 Accepting Responsibility

Accepting Responsibility

- Set goals at the beginning of the meeting so each member knows their responsibilities.
- Ask questions.





Notes:

Accepting responsibility as individuals and as a team means that being a member of a team assumes you care about the outcomes of the team's work. At the beginning of the meeting discuss the goals and responsibilities of each member of the team and the desired outcomes. Being a responsible member of a team includes asking questions to fully understand topics being discussed as well as accepting responsibility for team mistakes and team successes.

1.11 Place the Common Goal Above Individual Interests



Notes:



Placing the common goal above the team members' individual interests is very important. Teams succeed when they understand, appreciate, and work with a common purpose. People join teams because they have personal and/or professional experience about what the group is discussing and problem-solving. Remember the work of the team is not about one person or one experience, it is about the whole team and the desired outcome of the goals of the group. Team members must move beyond their personal experiences, desires, and interests to focus on accomplishing the team's goal.

Maybe you are a parent of a child or an adult with disabilities. You are serving on a Special Education Advisory Committee helping your school division to plan for the needs of students with disabilities. Or you are serving on a Regional Quality Council looking at data about how people with disabilities in your community are doing who receive services under a Medicaid Waiver. What brought you to this team - this committee - is your personal experience as a parent and your passion to improve services and supports for people like your child. Your identity on that committee is related to your lived experiences and wisdom and those are important to the conversation at the table. It is equally important that we not view this opportunity to serve on the team as a place to advocate for your own needs or that of your loved one. But it is an opportunity to talk about the needs of all people with disabilities and their families. The same is true if you represent case management or a private group home provider. Serving on a provider committee or regional quality council gives you an opportunity to talk globally - generally - about the needs of case managers or providers. It is not the place to advocate for your own needs or that of your organization.

1.12 Focusing on Solving Problems

Focusing on Solving Problems

- Use team time wisely
- Decide on a process that will be used to make decisions
 1. acknowledge that there is disagreement, and as a team, we are going to solve the problem
 2. break down the problem
 3. gather data - not opinions or anecdotes – that explain the problem
 4. develop a list of ideas to try to solve the problem
 5. choose the best idea that everyone can stand behind



Notes:

Effective teams have open discussions. Differing and sometimes conflicting opinions within a team actually improve team performance. Trust is built between team members if they can air their views and ideas freely. But teams need to use their time wisely; particularly if they only meet 4 times a year or every other month.

Decisions need to be made quickly. Each team decides the process they will use to make decisions (for example, consensus, majority vote, unanimous).

When a problem arises within the team, common steps to problem-solving include:

1. acknowledge that there is disagreement, and as a team, we are going to solve the problem
2. break down the problem (list out exactly what the underlying problem is by breaking it into the tiniest details)
3. analyze available data (gather data - not opinions or anecdotes - that explain the problem)
4. list all possible solutions (come up with a variety of ideas to try to solve the problem, including the possible outcomes of implementing each idea)
5. settle on a solution and action steps (choose the best idea that everyone can stand behind)

1.13 Working Together



Notes:

Relationships are important on teams. Effective teams are cohesive. That means they are unified....they stick together...they remain united. This requires team members to understand and appreciate the experience and respect the perspective of each individual team member. This happens when the team members share a common purpose.

Team 1 (Slide Layer)



Google did research on its teams. One team was made up of smart, successful people who each talk about a topic for which they are an expert, where there are no side conversations, and everyone stays on track with the agenda as it was written. There is no idle chitchat or long debates. This is a team that figured out how to break up work evenly.

Team 2 (Slide Layer)

Working Together



TEAM 2



A second team is made up of people from all levels of the organization. They all jump in and out of the discussions in the group meeting and when the meeting time ends, people stay to gossip and talk about their lives. This is a team where everyone took a leadership role.

Which group would you join? (Slide Layer)

Working Together

? Which group would you rather join?



Which group would you rather join?

Team 2 final slide (Slide Layer)



As the researchers dug deeper into these two types of teams, they found more people wanted to be on the second team. While that team may have gone off on tangents and socialized a lot, every team member felt comfortable talking, everyone was sensitive to one another's moods - they formed a group culture of psychological safety. This means that the team members feel safe and confident that no one will embarrass or reject them for speaking up.

What are some ways to get your team to this place of psychological safety where there is mutual trust and respect for people being comfortable being themselves?

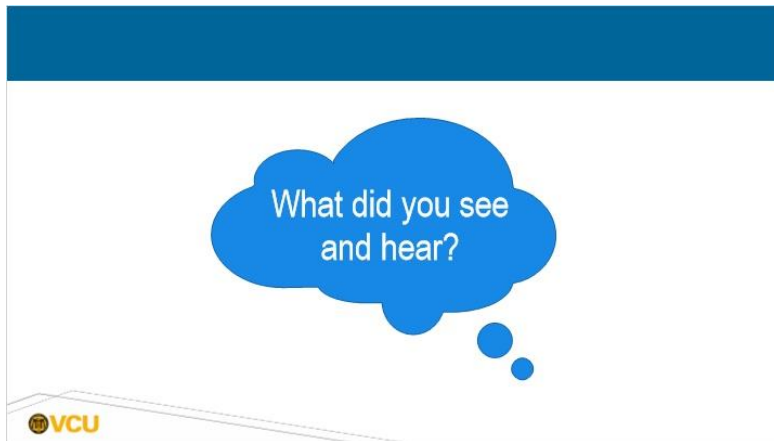
1.14 The Car Video



Notes:

Here is another [video](#). I know it is a little grainy and there is some background wind blowing but it runs less than a minute.

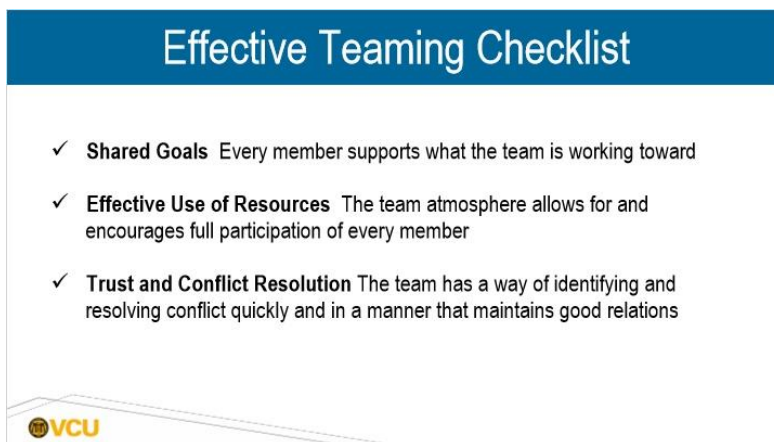
1.15 What did you hear and see?



Notes:

What did you see? While it looked like everyone was working together and that there was a common goal to get the car upright onto the road. In fact, there were too many 'leaders' involved deciding what would happen and not enough people talking through ideas and identifying what their unique role would be in helping to right the car. If they had spent more time weighing out options and roles, they may not have lost the car.

1.16 Effective Teaming Checklist



Notes:

The next several slides provide a sample checklist a team can use to answer

how effective they are at:

Building a sense of fellowship among members

Listening

Accepting responsibility

Placing the team's common goal above individual interests

Focusing on solving problems, and


Working together

1.17 Effective Teaming Checklist (cont'd)

Effective Teaming Checklist (cont'd)

This is a sample list of 6 questions team members might want to ask at each meeting to gauge how effective the team really is:

- ✓ **Shared Leadership** All members accept the responsibility to keep the team moving productively towards its goals
- ✓ **Efficiency** The team uses schedules, plans, agendas, and designated facilitators to ensure productivity, competence, and high levels of commitment
- ✓ **Communication** Members of the team always exhibit good listening skills, build on each other's thoughts, and provide equal opportunities for every member to contribute ideas



Notes:

This is a sample list of 6 questions team members might want to ask at each meeting to gauge how effective the team really is:

Is there a feeling that everyone shares in the leadership of the team? What does shared leadership look like?


Is the team using its time wisely and productively?

Does everyone get to talk at meetings if they want to? Are people really listening to what each other is saying?

1.18 Effective Teaming Checklist (cont'd)

Effective Teaming Checklist (cont'd)

- ✓ **Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Process** The team has an approach to solving problems and making decisions that make certain what they are doing right now is supported by every member
- ✓ **Creativity** The team moves beyond doing things "the way we've always done it" by opening up to new ideas
- ✓ **Ongoing Evaluation** The team regularly sets aside time to honestly identify things that get in the way of their effectiveness as a group




Notes:

What process is the team using to make decisions? Is that process working? What innovative and creative ideas were discussed? Were any of the ideas put into action? Was there resistance to trying new approaches? Is the team checking in at the end of each meeting to gauge how everyone feels about the meeting?

1.19 Module Development Sources

Module Development Sources

- VCU Center for Family Involvement Team Cohesion Presentation
- <https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/icebreaker-games/>
- <https://medium.com/@davidbridgeman/the-6-characteristics-of-effective-teams-as-revealed-through-escape-rooms-12fe515df53f>
- <https://medium.com/@mikeschoultz/10-team-characteristics-for-effective-teamwork-e0429b362ddd>
- <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/10-effective-qualities-team-leader-23281.html>
- <https://thinkgagnonassociates.com/nine-point-checklist-effective-teaming-doesnt-just-happen>
- <https://tallyfy.com/team-decision-making/>
- https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html?_r=0



Notes:

The module developers graciously acknowledge the following source materials used for this presentation.