TEAMWORK and CO-OPERATION (TW)

Teamwork and Co-operation is the ability to work co-operatively within diverse teams, work groups and across the organization to achieve group and organizational goals.

This Means...	*This Doesn't Mean...*
• soliciting and utilizing the skills, ideas and opinions of team members	• preferring to be left alone to get on with your own work
• keeping others informed and up-to-date about any relevant or useful information	• attending team meetings without contributing
• when taking action, keeping in mind the concerns of other members as well as your own concerns	• engaging in win-lose competition with other members of the team
• supporting and encouraging team members; defending the team's reputation when others criticize	• playing blame or making judgements about other team members and keeping quiet or ignoring critical comments about your team members
• speaking of team members in positive terms	• expressing negative expectations and opinions of team members
• bringing group issues out in the open which may be personally threatening to you or difficult for you to deal with	• only offering opinions on other group members' behaviour without being willing to examine your own short-comings
• regularly soliciting input in team meetings or circulating reports for comments; then amending reports or actions as a result of the input	• going through the motions of soliciting input but never applying or synthesizing the gathered information
• defending the team's reputation when others criticize	• keeping quiet or ignoring critical comments about your team members
• encouraging the exchange of information and flow of ideas with others	• using excuses (e.g., time, cost) as ways to exclude others from discussion

Developmental Activities	## Level 1 Activities

Demonstrate co-operation in working with others.

- Place emphasis on listening actively, drawing out the interest, concerns, needs and objectives of others.

- Demonstrate that you are listening and taking others seriously by restating what you are hearing and reflecting back your understanding of what others are communicating.

- Avoid taking control of the agenda, or being the first to make suggestions, instead try playing different roles within the group.

Seek feedback from your staff, leader, and peers on your teamwork and co-operation behaviours.

- Ask a co-worker to help monitor your actions and give you feedback.

- Ask for his or her perceptions of when you were effectively participating as a team member to solve problems and when you have missed opportunities to do so.

- Take note of these observations.

- Take measures to improve upon those actions that are less effective when working in a team.

Keep a record of your contributions in committees, meetings, informal team gatherings, and other team settings for one month.

- Determine your overall impact in each situation.
    - ⇒ Did you contribute a great deal or very little?
    - ⇒ Was the effect of your participation positive, negative, or neutral?
- Write down why you think your participation turned out to be positive or negative.

- Think about your attitudes and behaviours in team situations and write down how your behaviour influences your effectiveness as a team member.

- Ask a co-worker to observe how you behave in team settings.

- Think about their comments and what you could do better.

- Develop an action plan to improve your teamwork.

Spontaneously offer to help someone.

- Make a little time to help a team member, especially if there is someone new in your work unit.

> Reflection Tip:
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> ✲ By helping others, you will establish good will with your team members so that they will be willing to return the favour in the future.

Make an effort to participate on project that will require a high level of Teamwork and Co-operation.

- Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to improve your Teamwork and Co-operation skills.

- Prior to beginning the project, create a list of behaviours and actions which you believe a good tem member needs to demonstrate.

- Review your objectives with you team.

- Meet with members of you team during or after the project to discuss how you demonstrated Teamwork and Co-operation and whether you fulfilled your initial list of behaviours.

> Reflection Tip:
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> ✲ Which behaviours were most difficult to achieve? Why do you think this was?

Level 2 Activities

Avoid destructive messages such as:

- Communication Shut-down - a statement or action that cuts off discussion with no plan to continue.

- You Should - statements like "You should do this..." which sound parental and insinuate that I know better than you.

- Discounting - minimizing another person's comments by inappropriate reassuring, distracting or humouring.

- Threatening - expressing an intention to do harm.

- Communicating Through Someone Else - a statement that expresses dissatisfaction indirectly to the person but through someone else.

- Mind Reading - assuming that your perception of a confusing message is right without clarifying or assuming the other person can read your mind.

- Silent Treatment - feeling resentment or anger toward another, but not addressing it directly with that person.

- Double Bind - sending a message where the words say one thing but the body language or attitude convey a different meaning.

- Judging/Blaming - placing blame or making judgments about another person; often involves finger pointing.

- Premature Advice - offering immediate advice to someone without showing concern for their feelings, listening, or helping them problem-solve.

Reflection Tip:

* Share this list with a peer, and then ask them to evaluate your Teamwork and Co-operation skills.

Conduct a self-audit.

- Monitor the way in which you speak about your clients and members of your work group.

- Check yourself to ensure that you speak positively about the strengths and capabilities of others and refrain, whenever possible, from criticizing others in your conversations.

- Strive to deal directly with individuals with whom you are displeased rather than complaining to others.

- Refrain from engaging in conversations with others who do not follow these guidelines, withdrawing from discussions about the weaknesses of co-workers.

Listen during team meetings.

- Don't answer your own questions, practice remaining silent for at least 10 seconds after you ask a question.

- If you disagree with someone in a team meeting, first acknowledge that person's point of view before offering your opinion.

- Summarize objectively differing points of view on issues and explicitly acknowledge that there is a difference of opinion.

- Ask for the group's help when there appears to be conflict in the group.

Level 3-4 Activities

Solicit opinions from all team members when making a decision that affects the team.

- Hold regular information meetings with your team to keep them up to date on activities in your department, the larger organization and the community.

- Solicit input from team members regarding how your team can best realize the organization's goals and contribute to area/department goals.

- Consider all of the ideas and suggestions you receive.

- Allow this information to have an impact on your team's discussion of priorities, objectives and approaches.

- Ensure that the team can explain why certain suggestions are utilized.

- Avoid taking significant action or making an important decision until the opinions of all the team members have been heard and all members agree to support the decision.

Reflection Tip:

* Observe the interaction of the group while they are discussing pieces of information. Is everyone participating?

Emulate a role model.

- Identify someone in the division who demonstrates a capacity to be an excellent team player.

- Observe this person in action and make note of what he/she does to encourage, facilitate and support teamwork and team morale.

- If the person is on the same team as you, ask him/her to observe you and give you feedback and suggestions about how you could improve your teamwork skills.

- Hold follow-up meetings for feedback and additional coaching at least quarterly to track your progress and maintain your motivation.

Reflection Tip:

* Does the individual have specific developmental suggestions for you? Are you surprised by any of your areas that need development? Why?

Ask questions that draw out the needs, interests, concerns, and objectives of other team members.

- Demonstrate your interest in and understanding of what was said by restating it in your own words.

- Seek points of agreement between your positions, making an effort to point out the similarities, not just the differences.

- Make a list of all the concerns.

- Brainstorm an action plan with other team members so that as many concerns can be addressed as possible in achieving the group objective.

Reflection Tip:

* Does this have an impact on the team's functioning?

Lead open dialogue and information sharing among your team.

- Encourage team members to identify what information resources they need to achieve individual and team objectives.

- Work to provide access to these resources.

- Circulate current organizational data regularly, including status reports, strategic documentation and any other information to help your team.

Show willingness to support team decisions.

- Identify one of your ongoing projects which would particularly benefit from involving others working together as a team.

- Identify which individuals are or will need to work together on this project.

- Organize a team meeting for the express purpose of deciding how the project will be conducted. Prior to the meeting, obtain two flipcharts or a room with a whiteboard.

- Ask the team, at the beginning of the meeting, to generate a list of the key decisions that need to be made and write this list on one of the flipcharts or on one side of the whiteboard.

- Make certain that you contribute your own views to this list but, in general, say as little as possible. Rather, focus your contribution on encouraging each member of the team to contribute to the discussion.

- Ask the team for their views on the best answers to each decision.

- Record their suggestions on the other flipchart or the other side of the whiteboard. Again, say as little as possible about yourself and encourage others to speak. Where you agree with the advice, say so and personally endorse the decision. Where you disagree, explain why and provide a more effective answer.

- Support your team decision even when it is different from your stated point of view, unless it has serious implications. In this instance, indicate that you will be requesting your Manager to participate in the decision-making process.

- Make a brief note of the decisions that were made and give a copy to everyone who was at the meeting.

Listen productively during team meetings.

- Don't answer your own questions, practice remaining silent for at least 10 seconds after you ask a question.

- If you disagree with someone in a team meeting, first acknowledge that person's point of view before offering your opinion.

- Summarize objectively differing points of view on issues and explicitly acknowledge that there is a difference of opinion.

- Ask for the group's help when there appears to be conflict in the group.

Reflection Tip:

✴ Share these guidelines with the team before a meeting. Then take time at the end of
the meeting to discuss the impact that they had.

Practice the following skills and behaviours when you have situations of potential conflict in your team.

- Emphasize people's common goals, and how everyone depends on each other.

- Treat each person and their opinions with respect.

- Practice good listening skills.

- Have the group develop its own rules of conduct (e.g., "Voice facts not emotions").

- Help to define the problem by coaching others to be concise and stick to facts.

- Coach them to avoid repeating the same points over and over.

- Insist on true consensus within the team.

Reflection Tip:

✴ When does conflict typically arise within your team? What could be put in place to help
prevent the conflict from escalating?

Look for opportunities to acknowledge team and individual success, formally or informally.

- Recognize the contributions of team members in public forums, referencing specifically
what individual members did well.

- Use formal communication channels to acknowledge successful team performance.

- Let individual team members know your appreciation through personal memos or face-
to-face communication.

- Encourage and support team celebrations at the completion of a new, difficult or
challenging task or project.

Reflection Tip:

✴ Recognition does not only have to come from the team leader. Reflect on your
opportunities to recognize the performance of your peers.

Make a list of the unique strengths and contribution of each person on your team.

- Review your list with your manager and ask for his or her input.

- Look for opportunities and plan projects to capitalize on the strengths of each
individual.

- Seek your manager's assistance to find opportunities to maximize team member strengths and to provide developmental opportunities for other team members to learn from the unique contributions of others.

Reflection Tip:

✽ Consider what opportunities exist to match people so that the people on your team are learning from each other.

Organize a team building event.

- Solicit advice from the team to ensure the event will appeal to everyone.

- Make the event fun for everyone and include elements that require people to co-operate and work as a team together.

- Encourage team members to assist you in organizing the event if they have time.

Reflection Tip:

✽ Did the climate in your team improve during and after the event? Why or why not?