

## **Effective Teamwork Ideas and Principles**

Effective teamwork is an important part of promoting a healthy team environment.

Having a successful team can be challenging. Here are some of the ways effective teams can work in an organization:

### **Positive Environment**

Providing a positive environment is one way that an organization and its leaders can reduce conflict. A positive environment has:

- Teams who have a clear sense of direction and foster a sense of friendliness and trust
- A culture that promotes respect, celebrates successes, and deals with mistakes as opportunities to learn
- Team members who behave ethically
- Employees and board members who feel appreciated, and are given opportunities to grow professionally
- An understanding that everyone has commitments outside of work or volunteer work that need to be respected

### **Managing Conflicts**

Conflict management is frequently one of the most challenging aspects of teams.

Here are some of the ways team members can help manage conflicts:

- Listen with empathy and respect
- Allow others to express their concerns
- Look deeper, beyond what is being said, to understand the real meaning
- Be self-reflective and accountable—acknowledge if you are at fault
- Express emotions in a positive way—to encourage understanding and dispute resolution
- Prioritize—try to separate what is important and what gets in the way of understanding
- Learn from difficult behaviors—use what you have observed to see if outcomes can become positive learning situations
- Negotiate and collaborate to resolve the issue

## These tips may help you manage and resolve touchy situations

Here are a few common approaches to prevent or overcome potential issues before they become major obstacles:

### **1: Ask questions**

Conflict can arise due to poor communication -- someone didn't say what they meant to say or perhaps misstated what was intended. Before you allow an escalation, ask questions. It won't cause any loss of face, and may result in a quick resolution.

### **2: Analyze expectations**

Often, conflicts develop as a result of unmet expectations on one side. If the other party -- expected something they didn't get or something that didn't happen, the whole conversation can become negative and closed. If a conversation seems to be getting rocky, take a step back and review together with the other person to try to uncover what just occurred.

### **3: Recognize differing perspectives**

Keep in mind that conflict may arise due to people having different perceptions. You, or the other person, saw things differently. This happens most frequently when one is dealing with someone from another organization, background, or culture. It's easy to believe that we all see things the same way and then get derailed unexpectedly.

### **4. Identify mistakes**

Honest and unintended mistakes frequently result in conflict. Before you let temperatures rise, do a reality check of your understanding with the other person(s). Mistakes, even small ones, can erode one's credibility -- someone made a mistake.

### **5: Watch out for emotional triggers**

Beware of emotions. Fear of someone or somebody, loss of face, whether real or perceived, anger, and surprisingly even excitement can all result in unintended conflict, which may cause your interaction to go downhill.

### **6: Focus on preventing escalation**

Dispute resolution always starts with one or both parties making an honest attempt at avoiding further escalation. This recognition, even if only by one of those involved, often causes a more objective review to occur.

### **7: Take action to control the situation**

Escalation-avoidance tactics may involve one of more key steps including separating the parties, changing the location of the discussion, signaling empathy to the other involved.

### **8: Commit to working it out**

Take charge of the process by committing to reach a resolution. A powerful impact occurs when one person makes this statement. It can turn down the temperature immediately.

### **9: De-escalate the conflict**

De-escalation is next: This can be accomplished with a joint statement of the facts at hand, always eliminating exaggerations, embellishments or personalities, which may inadvertently apply judgments and re-created the cycle of escalation.

### **10: Stay calm**

Cooler heads prevail in even the most difficult disputes. Whether you're in a business or personal situation, you can take control of it by keeping cool. And when you're maintaining your calm, it will be easier for others involved to get back to the task at hand.