

## Developing Team Agreements

**Time Required:** 1 hour

### Objective

To strengthen the climate and cohesiveness elements by developing a better understanding of one another's needs and to commit to making an effort to meeting these needs.

### Background

If morale is low or there is conflict within the team it is often because the team has not taken time to explore the needs of its individual members. Team members may be hurt or frustrated because their expectations are not met. Frequently, however, these expectations have not been articulated and others are either unaware of them or do not understand the importance the team member attaches to them. Expectations are often based on personal needs.

Clarifying expectations and developing team agreements is a powerful activity that can quickly enhance team climate and cohesiveness.

### Materials Required

- None

### Steps

1. Select one of the following incomplete statements to act as a thought trigger for participants.

*"In order to give my best to the team I need my teammates to . . ."*

*or*

*"In order to be an even more effective team, we need to. . ."*

2. Post the statement on a flip chart and ask participants to complete the statement independently. Inform the team members they can complete the statement as many times as they need to in order to clarify all of their needs.

*Note:* Expectations identified are usually basic needs that can be quite easily met by other team members.

3. Ask team members to share their statements.

### Common Responses

(To the second statement, for example)

We need to...

- Keep each other better informed
- Be more readily available to help each other when we are not busy.
- Be open to questions.
- Invite ideas and opinions of others.
- Make team meetings a priority.
- Participate fully in our team meetings.

4. Discuss each of the statements, you might choose to use the following questions to structure the discussion.



#### Ask

Is this a realistic expectation?

#### Likely Response

Yes

If the answer is yes:



#### Ask

Is there anything preventing anyone from living up to (name of team member)'s expectation?

#### Likely Response

No

If the answer is no:



#### Ask

Is everyone then prepared to make a commitment to meet this need?

**Likely Response**

Yes

*Note:* If the team or any member feels that it cannot live up to a team member's need, this may lead to a recognition that a team member holds an unrealistic expectation. It may also present an opportunity for the team to look for a creative solution — what else might be done to solve this team member's concern?

Encourage follow through by asking,

**Ask**

How can you ensure that team members live up to these commitments?

**Sample Response**

We must each make a personal commitment to do so.

We can remind each other if we are slipping.

Everyone must be receptive to reminders if we are not living up to a commitment.

We can review and discuss them monthly at each team meeting.