



Elephants in the Room: Establishing Team Dynamics

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Workshop Objectives

- At the end of this session, participants will be able to:
 - Describe “elephants in the room” that can diminish the energy and productivity of interdisciplinary teams
 - Identify how fostering trust, handling conflict, and strengthening team dynamics will optimize team effectiveness and productivity

Agenda

Time	Topic	Facilitator
2:00	Introductions	Julie Klein
2:05	Building teams: Getting to know each other	Jeanne Andreoli
2:15	Elephant #1: Trust	Julie Klein
2:55	Elephant #2: Conflict	Andrew Feig
3:25	Elephant #3: Team Dynamics	Jeanne Andreoli
3:55	Wrap-up and survey	Julie Klein

Learn about others in your team

Directions

- Pair up with someone you do not know
- Spend 1 minute introducing yourselves
 - Include something unique; not related to work
- In two sentences, introduce your partner to the large group
 - “I’d like to introduce [NAME] from [INSTITUTION]. S/he [UNIQUE THING]”

Examples

- Coaches her kid’s soccer team
- Speaks more than one language
- Plays a musical instrument
- Has lived abroad
- Has more than 2 siblings
- Is a parent
- Makes a tasty lasagna
- Is a 1st generation college graduate

Elephant #1

Suboptimal Levels of Trust Among Team Members



https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRWzDLWl7_HlvC6wMR2yO5qgPUuyZWwOtKclakQKJZc-La373tCeg

What do Trusting Teams Look Like?

When It's Working...

- Focus on team efforts
- Open communication
- Constructive disagreement
- Data sharing
- Willingness to listen
- Mutual support of work
- Confidence in motives of other members
- Commitment to the group mission

When It's Not Working...

- Focus on self and individual effort
- Reluctance to discuss projects
- Reticence to acknowledge team dynamics
- Suspicious of others' motives
- Superficial discussions
- Competition



Case Study #1:

Group Activity #1

- **Elect a scribe, reporter and timekeeper for your group.**
- As a group, review Case Studies 6 and 7 from Collaboration and Team Science: A Field Guide, p22-23).
- After reviewing the case studies, discuss the following questions:
 - In Case Study #6, what behaviors or activities facilitated trust amongst the team members?
 - In Case Study #7, what behaviors or activities undermined trust amongst the team members?
- Be prepared to share your group's findings when we all reconvene as a large group.

Elephant #2

Conflict Among Team Members



<http://www.powerretail.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/elephant.jpg>

The Power of Team Conflict

When It's Working...

- Rank is left at the door
- All ideas welcomed
- Interpersonal civility
- Open explanation of motivations, rationales, methodologies, etc.
- Clear and uniform understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Ambiguities are quickly dealt with
- Team is committed to positively addressing conflict
- Team leader ensures positive outcomes to team conflict

When It's Not Working...

- Fear to confront conflict
- Factions or splitting
- Lack of interest in hearing alternative views
- Elephants in the room are ignored
- Poor listening
- Conflict seen as unhealthy
- Stifled communication
- Building resentments
- Misreading of silence or acquiescence as agreement
- Underestimating the damage conflict causes



Case Study #2

Conflict Resolution Styles

Style	Brief Definition
Competing	Using your personal power to win your position
Accommodating	Neglecting your own concerns to satisfy those of another
Avoiding	Side-stepping the conflict altogether
Collaborating	Working with another to find a solution that fully satisfies the needs of both
Compromising	Working with another to find a mutually acceptable solution to at least partially satisfy the needs of both

Group Activity #2

- **Rotate the roles of scribe, reporter and timekeeper for your group.**
- Read Case Study 15 from *Collaboration and Team Science.....*
 - Consider your group's assigned conflict resolution style. As a group discuss:
 - How would Dr. Lewis use this conflict resolution style to address the situation?
 - Consider the pros and cons of this style for dealing with the problem between these two team members and the larger issues of team dynamics. Is it optimal?
- Be prepared to share your group's findings when we all reconvene as a large group.

Elephant #3

Team Dynamics



http://www.passionatepachyderms.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/elephant_in_room_800_clr.png

Dynamic Team?

When It's Working...

- Regular opportunities to discuss team dynamics
- Safe environment
- Team members feel valued and value others
- When problems are brought up, they are addressed
- Shared expectations of how conflict will be handled
- Perception that decisions are made fairly and all input is welcomed

When It's Not Working...

- Uncertain and unsafe environment
- Discomfort with bringing up difficult issues in group setting
- “Water cooler” or side conversations
- Devaluing of other team members
- Low commitment to team performance
- Isolation and alienation
- Defensiveness and secrecy
- Gossip and splitting

Attributes of a Positive Team

- According to Hughes and Terrell (2009,) **positive mood** within a team enhances team resilience, energy, and flexibility. They cite **seven key attributes** of a positive team:
 - Positive, “can-do” attitude
 - Hopefulness
 - Curiosity
 - Perseverance
 - Attitude of abundance
 - Playfulness
 - Zest

Group Activity #3

- **Rotate the roles of scribe, reporter and timekeeper for your group.**
- Imagine that you are all leaders of a future team. Brainstorm the ways you would ensure a positive mood in your future team:
 - How would you, as a leader, demonstrate a positive attitude with your future team?
 - How would you ensure that your future team members demonstrate a long-term view and keep things in perspective?
- Be prepared to share your group's findings when we all reconvene as a large group.

Motivating Team Identity



The Sweet Spot

- Where personal strengths and passions align with essential work in a setting which provides opportunities for challenge and growth.
- Where individuals are the most valued and their contributions most valuable.

Maximize the Value of each Individual:

Aim to increase the overlap among these three circles, while keeping in mind the changing contents within each circle.

THANK YOU!

