**Characteristics of effective teams**

This activity aims to enable a worker to investigate what makes a team effective and to reflect on how to use this knowledge in the workplace. It provides a format for team leaders to develop a set of team guidelines for use by the team.

**Who is the activity aimed at?**

This activity is designed for a worker who recently has taken on a leadership role. Identifying simply what the expectations of a leader are and the group he/she leads is often an early step towards gaining confidence as a leader and the support of the group being led. This activity enables a new leader to work with other leaders and workers to develop team guidelines for his/her team.

**Outcome:**

Workplaces often involve working in teams to achieve outcomes. This activity allows a worker to review what makes an effective team and apply this knowledge to their workplace team/s.

**Preparation:**

It is suggested that a colleague/s be identified and used to moderate the outcome to ensure ‘’team guidelines’’ are consistent with organisational goals. Other leaders and team members can help build the team approach and ownership of the product.

**What will you need?**

You will need a quiet room away from day to day activities to undertake this activity and a pen and paper to write your ‘team guidelines’. The new leader will work through their view of the team guidelines first and then be able to discuss it with fellow team leaders and workers. This can be as part of a regular review process or as a specific exercise for the new leader.

**Activity: Characteristics of effective teams**Think about what makes an effective team in your workplace and use the list below to help create your own list of team guidelines.

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| 1. There is a clear unity of purpose and open discussion about the objectives. This will enable team members to commit themselves to the purpose of the group.    2. The group is conscious of its own operations and has taken time to discuss group processes – how the group will function to achieve its objectives. The group has a clear, explicit, and mutually agreed- approach (norms, expectations, rules, etc). Frequently, it will stop to examine how well it is doing or what may be interfering with its operation. Whatever the problem may be, it gets open discussion and a solution found.   3. The group has set clear and challenging performance goals for itself and has translated these performance goals into well-defined concrete milestones against which it measures itself. The group defines and achieves a continuous series of "small wins" along the way to larger goals.   4. The atmosphere tends to be informal, comfortable, relaxed – there are no obvious tensions, a working atmosphere in which people are involved and interested.   5. There is a lot of discussion in which everyone participates and the discussion remains relevant to the purpose of the group. If discussion gets off track, someone will bring it back. The members listen to each other. Every idea is given a hearing. People are not afraid of being foolish by putting forward a creative thought even if it seems odd.   6. People are free in expressing their feelings as well as their ideas.  7. There is disagreement and this is viewed as good – disagreements are not suppressed or overridden by premature group action. The reasons are carefully examined, and the group seeks to resolve them rather than dominate the person who brought up the issue. If there are basic disagreements that cannot be resolved, the group figures out a way to live with them without letting them block its efforts.   8. Most decisions are made at a point where there is general agreement and those who disagree with the general agreement of the group do not have to keep their view to themselves. The group does not accept a simple majority as a proper basis for action.   9. Each individual carries his or her own weight, meeting or exceeding the expectations of other group members. Each individual is respectful of the mechanics of the group: arriving on time, coming to meetings prepared, completing agreed tasks on time, etc. When actions are taken or tasks planned, team members willingly accept.  10. Criticism is frequent, frank and relatively comfortable, and the criticism has a constructive flavour – oriented toward removing an obstacle that faces the group.   11. The leadership of the group shifts from time to time – the issue is not who controls, but how to get the job done.  *Based on text from http://web.stanford.edu/class/e140/e140a/effective.html.* |

**Team Guidelines**

What is the purpose of the team?

How will the team function to achieve its outcomes?

What is the team trying to achieve? What are the steps to achieving the outcome?

Identify what your expectations are of acceptable team behaviour? (Points 4 – 11)