lem or creates new solutions. The opposite of blame is accountability. To be accountable means that the team or individual members can be counted on to keep agreements, accept responsibility, and perform their work to their best ability.

To avoid the tendency to blame, do the following (Paul, 1997):

- Define and assign responsibilities in advance.
- Conduct contracting discussions in groups, along with a commitment to avoid blame and focus on accountability.
- Remember that others are acting rationally from their own perspective. it may not be rational to you but it is to them.
- Realize that you probably have contributed in some way to the current problem.
- Remind yourself that judgment and criticism mask vision.

Consensus Decision Making

Consensus decision making is one of the most commonly misunderstood work processes. Many teams fail to reach consensus because they do not use formal ground rules or consensus tools. (See *Team Consensus Worksheet* at end of this chapter.) Yet ground rules help members develop a mental picture of the behaviors needed to reach consensus.

Consensus decision making ensures that each member's choice is a free one, to which he or she commits. The process of understanding every person's perspective equalizes the distribution of power and participation. Each member's concern must be heard; each member's support is necessary.

Ground Rules for Consensus Decision Making

1. *Test assumptions and inferences.* Do not assume something to be true unless you have verified it. Do not infer conclusions about things you do not know based on things you do know.
2. *Share all relevant information.* Both facts and feelings are relevant information. Articulate concerns in a manner that fosters understanding of your experience.

Consensus Decision Making: How Do You Know You Are There?

My personal views and ideas have been listened to and considered.

I have had the opportunity to listen and consider the views of every other team member in our discussion of this issue.

Even if this decision was not my choice, I can support it and work toward its implementation.

3. *Focus on interests, not positions or solutions.* At the beginning of the discussion, each team member should state his or her personal interest in the issue at hand. Why is it important? What do you hope to see accomplished here? Solutions can be conflicting even when interests are compatible.

4. *Be specific; use examples.* Describe the observable behaviors or outcomes that will result should the team adopt your position. Agree on the meaning of important words. "This is what this word means to me. Does it mean the same thing for you?"

5. *Explain the reasons behind statements, questions, and behavior.* Tell other people why you are doing what you are doing. "I am not participating in the discussion right now because I am reflecting on what Jenny just said." Or "When I am silent it does not mean that I agree or disagree." Help people interpret your behavior correctly.

6. *Disagree openly with team members.* Open disagreement tests inferences and assumptions. It the foundation of valid information. Unchallenged assumptions can lead to poor solutions.

7. *Test disagreements.* Design ways of testing disagreements. Apply CQI techniques such as value analysis to verify individual member predictions. Ask "Could both be correct?" (See *Team Consensus Worksheet* at end of this chapter.)

8. *Always discuss the undiscussables.* Team members sometimes need to open up forbidden topics to share valid information.

ORGANIZATIONAL DISCIPLINE

When discipline is absent from team efforts, solutions suffer from incomplete implementation because crucial steps are overlooked. Inadequate information, authority, resources, and influence plague the work of the team. Tough decisions are not made because they are unrecognized.

- In disciplined teams, there are clearly identified outcomes and indicators for any major task. These outcomes are negotiated and committed to by each and every team member. By clearly defining anticipated outcomes

at the beginning, problems such as inadequate resources for implementation or lack of organizational support can be addressed in time to avoid failure.

- A clear team infrastructure is documented. There is a formal approach to chartering teams. A common set of team strategies is applied to work problems. Member roles and competencies are delineated.
- An implementation methodology is consistently applied. Team leaders are skilled in project management technology.

Team-based systems suffer from many traps that, if not ameliorated, can derail team efforts and spiral downward all evidence of team performance. Teams cannot recover from organizational blunders in their development. The collision of work cultures can have crippling effects, particularly if cultural strategies are poorly thought out and implemented in a careless or haphazard manner. If teams are not developed by leaders, early successes may be dismissed as flukes because there has been no transfer of learning. If performance problems are unidentified or misunderstood, there will be a strong decline in team performance. The key to successful team outcomes is to keep teams at the heart of all work performed, insist on leadership, and always focus on team capability.

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TOOLCHEST
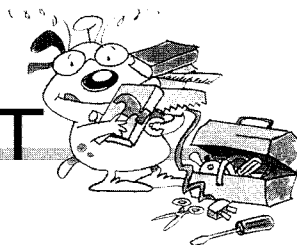
TOOL A: Cultural Assessment Tool

Instructions: The periodic assessment of your culture is an investment in maintaining the effectiveness of a team-based system.

Objectives:

1. To examine the beliefs and values of key stakeholder groups in an organization before the implementation of a team-based system for monitoring congruence with team principles.
2. To determine gaps between stakeholder groups.
3. To create a forum for cultural dialogue.

Time requirement: 90 minutes per focus group

Supplies: cultural assessment questionnaires, a flip chart, and markers

Method:

1. Prepare a list of the key stakeholders to be included in this assessment. Consider not only those in formal stakeholder positions but also formal and informal subgroups.
2. Before eliciting input, explain to participants the mission and charter of the team-based system and how it relates to the organization's goals. Make clear the realities that the organization faces in the implementation of teams. (Structure your comments so that participants understand the cultural characteristics needed to support team success.)
3. Distribute the first copy of the cultural assessment questionnaire. Ask people to think about what the culture is at this point in time and then to complete the survey.
4. Distribute the second copy of the survey, which has been copied on a different color of paper. Now ask respondents to answer according to what they believe the culture should be, if teams are to be successful.
5. Put three headings across the top of the flip chart: *current culture, desired culture gap,* and *strategy.* List the question numbers on the left side of the flip chart. Work through each of the questions and record respondent conclusions.
6. Once everyone has provided their input, discuss the feedback. Use the following focus questions: Why does the gap exist? How critical is it to close each gap? What are the consequences of not closing each gap? How can we go about closing these gaps? How will we know if we are successful?

Cultural Assessment Tool

This assessment tool has been adapted for team-based systems from Greene.*

Instructions:

1. Please review each of the questions below. You will be given two copies of this questionnaire. On the first copy, circle the number closest to your beliefs about how our organization really works.
2. After you have finished, receive a second copy of the instrument. Now think about how our organization *needs* to operate, if our teams are to be successful.
3. Once you have completed the two forms, use the Gap Analysis Worksheet to identify differences between how we work now and how we need to work.

1. Performance is defined as:

1	2	3	4	5

• Budgets being met	• Patient needs met
• Individual action	• Team action
• What the boss wants	• What patients need

2. Good performance is because of:

1	2	3	4	5

• A few key people	• Everyone
• Individual determination	• Shared destiny
• Working within the rules	• Challenging assumptions

3. Success is defined in terms of:

1	2	3	4	5

• Job descriptions	• Competencies
• Organizational goals	• Team goals
• Short term	• Long term
• Quick fix	• Sustainability

4. Information is:

1	2	3	4	5

• Individual power	• Critical to teams
• Tightly managed	• Flowing in all directions
• What the boss wants	• What patients need

5. Management is:

1	2	3	4	5

• Layered	• Flat
• Control	• Resource
• Policy and procedure	• Values and vision

6. The future requires:

1	2	3	4	5

• Financial rigor	• Financial investment
• Improved services	• New services
• Continuous improvement	• Balanced risk

Greene RJ: Culturally compatible rewards strategies, *ACA Journal* 40(3):60-71, 1995.

7. People are managed as if they are:

1	2	3	4	5
• Children		• Adults		
• Costs		• Assets		
• Task oriented		• Outcomes oriented		

8. Resources are allocated:

1	2	3	4	5
• To individuals		• To support team performance		
• To the winners		• To add value		
• From manager self-interest		• From our mission		

Gap Analysis Worksheet

CULTURAL TRAIT	IS NOW	SHOULD BE	GAP
1. Performance is:			
2. Good performance is:			
3. Success is:			
4. Information is:			
5. Management is:			
6. The future requires:			
7. People are managed:			
8. Resources are allocated:			

TOOL B: Self-Assessment: Strategies for Building TEAM Commitment

Instructions*:* Appoint a recorder and timer for your group. You have _____ minutes in which to complete this activity.

  Objectives*:*

1. To teach team members the value of building team commitment
2. To develop strategies for building commitment in the team

Supplies: team commitment survey

Time requirement: 1 hour

Step 1. Jot down a few actions, under each of the four strategies below, that your team now uses to build TEAM commitment.

Building clarity:

Developing proficiency:

Extending control:

Showing recognition:

Step 2. Have each member share his or her conclusions with the large group. Generate a list of commitment strategies that you will continue to use, develop new, or discard.

TOOL C: What Do We Expect from Our Team Leader?

Instructions: This self-assessment tool is to be used when the team leaders wants feedback from team members about their performance, to strengthen leadership in the team.

Objectives:

1. Provide an opportunity for the team to practice giving constructive feedback.
2. Assist the leader to understand what the team believes are leadership behaviors that help or hinder the team in the accomplishment of its work.
3. Positive reinforcement of leadership actions that support group development and identification of areas for improvement.

Time requirement: 1 hour

Supplies: What Do We Expect? worksheet, flip chart, and colored markers

Method:

Step 1: Setting the context. The team leader or a designated outside facilitator sets the stage by asking team members to be open and candid in their reflections about leadership. They are encouraged to provide feedback that is both positive and supportive of the leader's strengths as well as areas for growth.

Step 2: Silent brainstorming. Team members are asked to reflect on their own expectations of leaders by answering the following questions:

• How does the leadership enacted in your home department compare with what you experience as a member of this team?

• Who was the most effective leader with whom you have worked? List the traits that stand out for you. Next to each trait describe why it was effective. (See worksheet.)

Step 3: Feedback exchange. Record on a flip chart the format described on the following page. Then ask each team member to report his or her ideas on leadership, collected from the responses to the previous brainstorming questions.

Once all ideas have been collected, the leader and team members review each item and select three areas of strength. Discussion should focus on why these leader actions assist the team in completing its work. Circle these traits in red.

Next review the list again. What areas of growth might the team leader pursue in the future? Team member discussion should become more specific on why team members need a certain kind of behavior from the leader. How will it support the team member personally or improve the team's efforts? Circle these items in green.

Step 4: Validation and improvement. The team leader summarizes the feedback received. Both strengths and opportunities for improvement are identified. The leader identifies actions that will be taken to improve leadership and sets a date for reevaluation with the group. If the feedback is largely overwhelming to the leader, the leader commits to review the information with his or her coach and to get back to the team at the next meeting with action plans for improvement.

What Do We Expect from our Team Leader

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR	IMPACT ON ME?	TEAM IMPACT?
1. Admits mistakes	• I can learn from my mistakes	• We correct errors befire they get out of hand.

Four Tips for Managing Conflict in Work Teams

Consider the following steps when you anticipate conflict-prone agenda items:

1. *Disseminate a full agenda early.* This allows group members to prepare for all discussions before the meeting. Consider ordering the agenda so that the least emotional issues are taken care of first.

Outcomes:

Provides a focus to the meeting

Allows enough time for real discussion

Desensitizes the group to the more emotional issues

2. *State the team accountabilities for dealing with conflict.* Identify the negative consequences of destructive conflict. Reinforce team norms. Consider developing a conflict management guide, if you have none in place, that outlines what team members believe about how they will work together.

Outcomes:

Group recognizes dangers of destructive conflict and self-corrects

Behaviors of constructive conflict management displayed

3. *Script the meeting ahead of time.* Identify the outcomes you wish to achieve for each agenda item and the strategies you will use to assist the group in getting there. Use a more experi-enced leader to help you identify both strategies and anticipated outcomes. Understand your own "hot-buttons" about the issues at hand and think about how you will prevent them from interfering in the resolution of team conflict. (*Hint:* If you feel strongly about the issue you might ask someone else to lead the discussion or temporarily step down from your team leader role, announcing to the group you wish to participate as a member. In this way, you do not risk imposing your beliefs as a leader on the whole team.

Outcomes:

Expected outcomes of the group's work conveyed clearly

Processes applied to foster cooperation and openness

Conflict planned for and managed

4. *Manage the physical environment (seating, room size, and tables).* This strategy is often overlooked or minimized in its importance to group effectiveness. Preparing the room so as to maximize dialogue and minimize subgroup can be very helpful.

Outcomes:

Coalitions seated in neutral positions

Power differences neutralized

Networking/team building emphasized

TOOL D: A Self-Assessment: What Do I Believe about Conflict?

Instructions: As a member of a team, you are bound to encounter conflict, which must be managed if your team is to be successful. Conflict management causes us to think (or perhaps rethink) about our professional roles, ourselves, our values, our relationships, and our organization. The statements below, which you are to complete, should help us get started on this. Try to be as candid as you can in making your responses. After you have finished with this form, be prepared to share your conclusions in discussions with other team members.

Objectives:
1. Assist teams to assess their conflict management methods for effectiveness
2. Provide an opportunity for team members to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with conflict management methods used in the team
3. Provide the opportunity for team members to explore how personal experiences contribute to beliefs about conflict management

Time requirement: 90 minutes

Materials: "Focusing On Conflict" Handout, 9 Flip Chart Posters and magic markers.

Method
1. *Reflection.* (20 minutes)

Have participants silent answer the 9 questions on the "Focusing On Conflict" Handout. While they are working, the team leader or facilitator creates nine "posters" by taping together four flip chart sheets to make a large poster. Tape each of the nine across an available wall. Print one of the nine focus questions at the top of each poster, using a different colored magic marker.

2. *Compilation* (25 minutes)

As team members complete their self-assessment, have them record each of their answers on the appropriate poster. When everyone is done, invite the team to mingle and review the comments on each poster, in preparation for a discussion of the team's conflict management beliefs and practices.

3. *Dialogue and Strategies For Improvement* (45 minutes)

Once everyone has recorded their responses, lead the team in a discussion of each poster. Ask the following questions about each poster:

- What Are The Predominant Themes For Each Question? Are Several Of The Answers Similar? Can You Consolidate These Into One Statement?
- How Do our Beliefs About Conflict Influence our Behaviors In This Team?
- How Do Differences In Personal Approaches To Conflict Management Help or Impede Conflict Management In This Team?
- Do We have Some Predominant Ways of Managing Conflict? Are They Effective?
- How Does Our Organization's Response To Conflict Influence The Way We Behave In Conflict Situations?
- What Do We Want To Do With This Information?

Focusing on Conflict

1. My biggest achievement on this team has been:

2. If I could redo one aspect of my position on this team I would:

3. If I had to state what the two most important things about conflict management in this team are, I would say:

4. My definition of a team-related conflict is when:

5. My biggest irritation when dealing with conflicts is:

6. My greatest satisfaction when it comes to conflict resolution is:

7. If my boss could change my conflict management style, he or she would:

8. If my peers could change my approach to conflict management, they would recommend that I:

9. If I could change the way our organization responds to conflict I would:

Identifying Milestones:
An Implementation Methodology Worksheet

Instructions: The practice of organizational discipline requires a consistently applied change methodology that specifies both steps to implementation and performance milestones. The following is an example of an implementation methodology worksheet that can be used for any change being considered by a team for implementation.

Implementation Methodology For City Hospital-Resource Management

Step:	1.0	Task:
		Set expectations and prepare/orient Resource Management Systems Work Team

Duration:	6/96–9/96	Task Objective:
		To assure that work teams are prepared to achieve assigned outcomes for resource management.

Sub-task Number	Description	Outcome	Performance Measurement Tools
1.1	Key roles assigned and defined	• Leadership accountabilities	• Role Definitions & Expectations assigned
1.2	Guidelines established	• Workgroup expectations documented	• Accountability Guidelines
1.3	Knowledge base expanded	• Orientation to critical work achieved	• Resource Management Workshop and literature review**
1.4	Workgroups infrastructure in place	• Leadership and membership for work groups identified and in place	• Nomination, Validation And Appointment Process Defined

Team Consensus Worksheet

TEAM ISSUE	STEP 1 YOUR VIEWPOINT	STEP 2 THE TEAM VIEWPOINT	STEP 3 THE EXPERTS VIEWPOINT	THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 1 AND 3	THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 2 & 3

Peer Review: Task Force Recommendation to Team
DATE: July 4, 1996
TO: Women's Health Service Team
FROM: Chris Jeans, RN, Traffic Task Force Chairperson
SUBJECT: Recommendations for Commuting Alternatives

Background	In August the State will begin construction on a new highway and an overpass will be built across the north end of the Health Center's campus. The hospital has asked all service divisions to consider methods for lightening traffic on campus during peak periods.
Problem	We need to identify commuting alternatives and make a decision as to what would work best for women's health, as soon as possible.
Alternative 1: Vanpooling	Advantages:
	Disadvantages:
Alternative 2: Flextime	Advantages:
	Disadvantages:
Task Force Recommendation	