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# DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEADERS

## PARTICIPANT'S PACKET

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# BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS FOR COMMUNITY WORK



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## Introduction

Why do we work in teams?

The short answer is . . . we work in teams because the challenges facing communities are too complex for one person or one organization to tackle alone. However, working in teams can pose many challenges. When people from different backgrounds and experiences, with varying talents and skills, and possessing diverse cultural orientations set out to work together on a common goal, internal struggles may lead to failure. The ordinary community project team is a complicated creature. Members must work out personal differences and find individual and team strengths on which to build. Furthermore, team members must balance commitments to the project against the demands of their everyday job, personal, and family responsibilities.

How well community teams function depends largely on the dynamics that develop among the members. Despite people's good intentions, true equality does not exist in any group. Some individuals tend to dominate others through strong personality traits. There are also factors in our society such as class, race, cultural differences, and gender that influence status in the group. All teams that endure the test of time to meet their goal go through stages of development and growth to deal with these issues, a process of learning to work together. The purpose of this module is to help community team members to better understand group dynamics, to learn to communicate with each other in meaningful ways, to appreciate and value diverse backgrounds and talents, and to honor different perspectives about issues in their communities.

## Objectives

By participating in this module, you will learn to:

- Understand principles for developing and managing teams
- Determine how unique backgrounds and expertise of individuals can contribute to effective teams.
- Understand the stages of team development.
- Develop ways of communication that make group dynamics work effectively for community change.

## Building Blocks for Teams

Functional teams generally share these characteristics:

**Trust** – Members trust each other to add value to the project, and members work to ensure that everybody does contribute and that appreciation is expressed for different contributions.

**Cohesiveness** – through Social/Business Balance: Although teams should not socialize 100% of the time, it should not be all business either. Knowing each other better leads to improved working relations.

**Shared Decision-making** – All team members contribute their time and energy to projects. More importantly, all team members participate in the decision-making process. Successful teams are willing to review their output and processes collectively to ensure that the final product or solution meets or exceeds the team goal. Having a dominant leader may work for the very short term, but may lead to morale problems later.

**Open Communication** – This is the main glue that holds a team together. Communication is effective when all members:

- Contribute ideas
- Provide feedback constructively
- Ask for clarification on anything that might be confusing
- Provide frequent updates
- Listen to each other carefully

**Credibility of Leader** – Trust, shared decision-making, cohesion, and open communication will build the credibility of the leader(s).

**Clear Roles** – Teams tend to function better if member roles are defined. There are several ways “roles” can be defined, and they need not be mutually exclusive. For example:

- **Initiator** – Puts ideas on the table
- **Facilitation/Leader** – Defines problem and sets agenda
- **Recorder/Secretary** – Records all ideas; can also act as a timekeeper
- **Devil’s Advocate/Skeptic** – Reviews ideas for potential problems

- **Optimist** – Person who keeps a positive frame of mind and searches for solutions
- **Summarizer/Clarifier** – Summarizes and clarifies results
- **Reflector** – Observes process and reports results to the group

One warning is that members should not become “stuck” in their roles. You can require teams to rotate roles throughout the project, so each member can experience all functions of the team.

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## Case Study - The Case of Mann Gulch: A Tragic Team Failure

### The Location

Mann Gulch was located in a rugged and remote area of central Montana where fire was always a major concern, but on August 5, 1949, the danger was greater than usual. By late summer, central Montana was so bone dry that the U.S. Forest Service put the fire potential at 74 on a scale of 100. A small thunder-shower moved through the area offering momentary respite, but the storm also meant lightning and fire!

### The Crew

The 15 men who checked their parachutes and climbed on board a plane at the smoke jumper base in Missoula were young (one only 17 years old), eager, and conditioned. They had been fighting fires all summer and were ready for this one. Some were college students who had volunteered for the summer; others were career firefighters. Several were World War II veterans.

The crew was a team only in the loosest sense; the men had all undergone a three-week training program earlier in the summer, and they had been disciplined to work together, react quickly, and follow their commander without the authority of military drill. Under U.S. Forest Service policy, it is the amount of rest, not the amount of camaraderie that determines how men are assembled for a day’s jump group. Several of the men had worked with the crew chief before. All knew him, but they had never worked together as a single group. The crew chief knew some of the men but was not even sure of all of their names.

## The Crew Chief

R. Wagner Dodge was the crew chief. A man of few words, he had fought many fires during his nine years in the business, and he was deservedly the team boss for the technical expertise he brought to this assignment.

## The Fire

The crew flew to the site with little or no conversation. Dodge and the spotter decided on the jump spot. During the jump they lost their radio and map – key pieces of technical equipment. Dodge soon realized that the blaze was far more dangerous than he had guessed from aerial reconnaissance. He became alarmed but did not share his concern with the crew.

Without conversation, he decided to place his crew between the fire and the Missouri River just south of the jump site so they could swim to safety if necessary. Once again he made a terrible discovery. In the few minutes since their arrival in the gulch, fiery eddies had closed the escape route. Dodges' alarm bells – all of them – were sounding.

Dodge reversed course, saying nothing to his men, but they surely knew why, since they too had seen the wind-whipped smoke across the gulch's mouth in front of them. The crew kicked into a run up the gulch. Within minutes, Dodge passed word down the line that all equipment was to be discarded and that they must move as fast as they possibly could. He knew, and they must have known, that what had been a routine jump was now becoming a dash for their lives.

## The Solution

Dodge's mind, still in steely control, estimated that the towering wall of fire would soon overtake the crew. The apparent options offered no escape. . . stand and be fatally burned; turn and be fatally burned; run and be fatally burned. Dodge abruptly stopped, lit a match from a match book he carried, and threw it into the prairie grass in front of him. His fire resulted almost instantly in a widening circle of flame burning fast. As the ring of his new fire spread, it cleared a small area of non-flammable substance. It was not much of a safety zone, but it would have to do. He jumped over the blazing ring, moved to its smoldering center, wrapped a cloth around his face and frantically waved his crew into the circle.

The crew dashed past Dodge. Two men headed up a hill and were saved in a rocky outcropping. The rest ran to their death. Dodge heard one man say, "to hell with that, I am getting out of here."

Dodge used his good sense and technical ability to create a solution, but why didn't it work to save his crew?

## Discussion:

*Using the building blocks for teams, discuss why this tragedy occurred.*

What team building principles could have been used to decrease the likelihood of this tragedy occurring?

How do these principles relate to teams working to address challenging community issues?

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## How Teams Grow: Stages of Development

Research and experience have provided some understanding of how teams grow. A popular model for understanding team development identifies five stages of development. Each stage has a theme that describes the group activity or overall driving force of the team during that state of development. The overall driving force is a snapshot of the processes and ways team members relate to each other.

The model that follows indicates that for the team to make progress on its work together, certain group activities must be accomplished and problems resolved at each stage. The model describes broad behaviors that are task related and relationship oriented. When reviewing the model, keep in mind:

- Each stage is predictable. If the team survives, the theory is that every team will go through each stage.
- Each stage is manageable by the leader. Knowledge of the stages makes effective interventions in the team's activity more predictable and somewhat easier. It offers a plan for leadership.
- Knowledge of the stages helps both the leader and members understand what is happening in the team and why. The model gives a context for diagnosing the problems in the team.

<b>The Stages of Team Development</b>			
<b>Stage</b>	<b>General Theme</b>	<b>Task Goal</b>	<b>Relationship Goal</b>
1. Forming	Awareness	Commitment: Becoming oriented	Acceptance: Resolving dependency
2. Storming	Conflict	Clarification: Overcoming resistance	Belonging: Resolving feelings of hostility
3. Norming	Cooperation	Involvement: Promoting open exchange of information	Support: Increasing team cohesion
4. Performing	Productivity	Achievement: Solving problems	Pride: Promoting interdependence
5. Adjourning	Separation	Celebration and closure: Recognizing and documenting team efforts	Satisfaction: Encouraging comments on team performance

### Recommended Actions for Each Stage

Awareness of the developmental stages for a team is an excellent way for members and leaders to know what to expect as teams move toward accomplishing community development projects and goals. As team leaders, here are some actions that are recommended to help teams during each stage of development.

#### **Forming:**

- Identify potential contributions of team members.
- Spend adequate time on introductions.
- Allow time for people to reveal why they are interested in being part of the group.
- Encourage each person to talk.

- Be a role model for open behavior.
- Be organized and ready to answer questions about what the team is supposed to be doing.
- Know the task, mission, and goals, especially if the task is set by an individual or group other than the team.
- Define and agree on individual roles team members will play to get the task done.
- Ask for and discuss, as a team, people's concerns and questions.
- Be a little more directive in style as a team leader during forming; the team needs more direction at this state.

**Storming:**

- Watch for fight, flight, or submission. Of the three, try to encourage direct conflict ("fight"), because it is easier to manage in the long run.
- Draw all members into the conversation.
- Seek opposing views.
- Listen carefully.
- Clarify and paraphrase positions.
- Summarize to determine areas of agreement.
- Help conversations move along.
- Watch for noncontributing team members; talk to them after team meetings to find out why they are not contributing. Be a role model for openness.
- Be able to clarify the team's mission, tasks, and goals.
- Raise questions you think other team members might be thinking.
- Allow for compromise.
- Focus on areas in which team members agree, at least in principle.
- Seek to resolve personal concerns and issues affecting the life of the team.
- Gently confront team member conflicts and try to openly discuss differences.
- Generate more options to problem solving.
- Use a coaching style of leadership.

**Norming:**

- Watch for conflict avoidance or agreement for the sake of agreement.
- Confront conflict in private.
- Check in with members individually to get viewpoints that may not be reflected in the group; remember that individuals behave differently when influenced by the group.
- Give rewards and recognition to encourage task accomplishment.
- Have accurate, up-to-date information on external conditions affecting the work of the team.
- Use a supporting, nondirective leadership style.

**Performing:**

- Continue one-on-one contract to accurately assess whether team members feel like they are accomplishing their tasks effectively.
- Frequently celebrate, reward, and recognize each other's progress and contributions to task accomplishment.
- Seek balance between individual recognition and team recognition.
- Look for opportunities to give the team visibility.
- Don't avoid conflict; bring it up and discuss it openly.
- Use a delegating leadership style.

**Adjourning:**

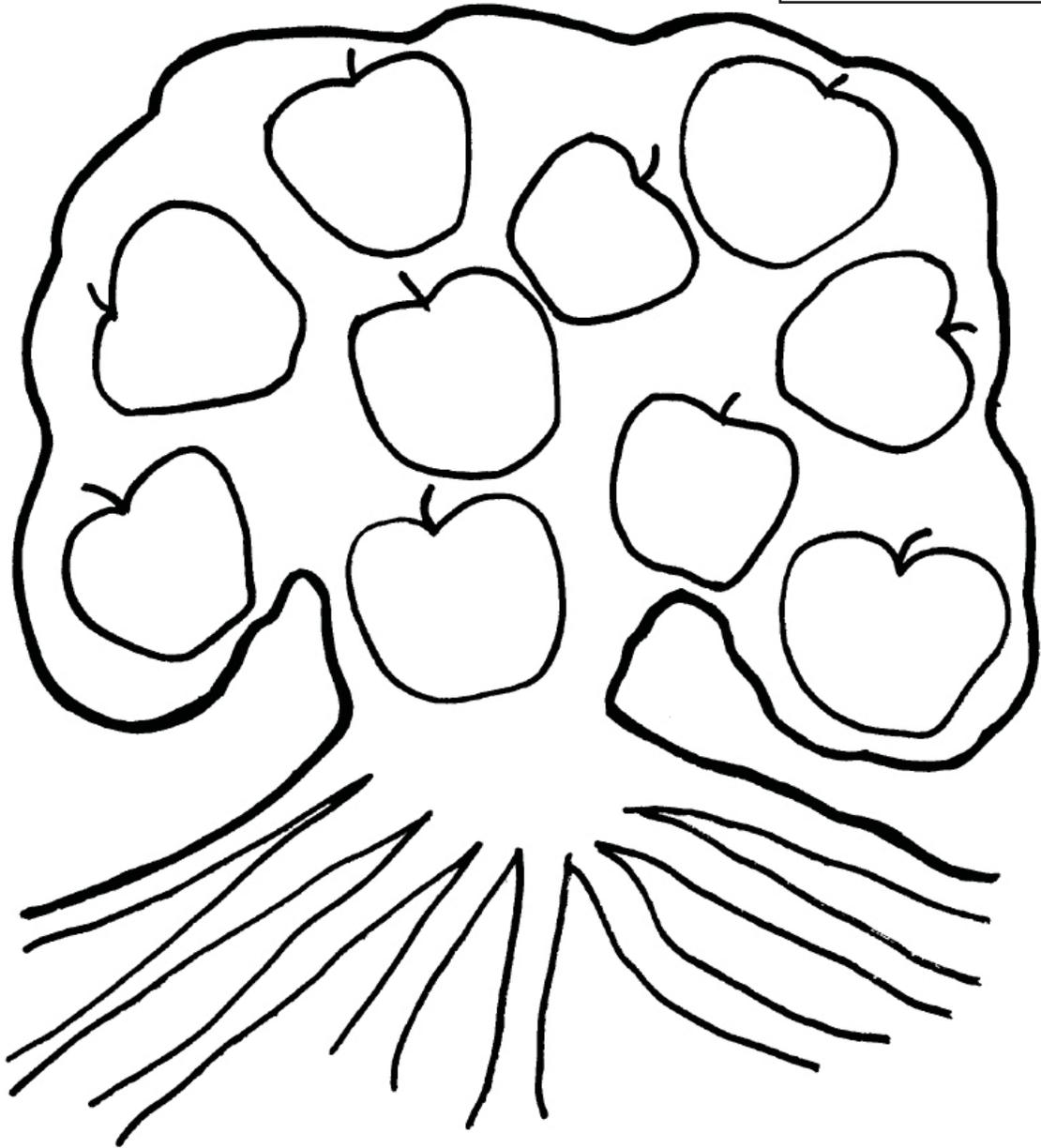
- Choose a time and place where the team members can all be present.
- Talk about what each person contributed to the team.
- If appropriate, involve some of the people affected by the team.
- Tell some stories about the team's work together.
- Choose some activities that everyone enjoys.
- This is the time to encourage team members to celebrate, reflect, and renew. The team is best able to plan its own adjourning event.

## Activity: Fruits of Success

Community leadership objectives require team work. Take a few minutes to identify the strengths you, as an individual, bring to the overall goal of your group. Start with the roots of the tree below. Identify such things as talents, skills, and competencies you bring to the group. Label one strength per root. Then, label each fruit as a success related to your organization's overall objective.

**Roots** = Strengths, Talents, Skills, and Competencies

**Fruits** = Successes and Accomplishments



Share your Fruits of Success with other members of your leadership class and discuss how as a team you will reach your overall community goal(s).

1. Overall, how would you rate this module?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I learned something new	1	2	3	4	5
I learned something I can use	1	2	3	4	5
Materials were clear	1	2	3	4	5
The module met my needs	1	2	3	4	5

2. What did you get from the module? (Check any that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Answers to questions    | <input type="checkbox"/> Insight and support from others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resource materials      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help in decision making | _____  |

3. As a result of this module, I	Not At All	Slight Extent	Fair Extent	Great Extent
View team building as an opportunity for community involvement and cooperation.	1	2	3	4
Have a better understanding of the five stages of team development.	1	2	3	4
Appreciate that teams allow individuals to use their strengths to reach the common objective.	1	2	3	4
Have a better understanding of the characteristics of functional teams.	1	2	3	4
Have a better understanding of how my personal strengths are imperative to my community.	1	2	3	4
Learned techniques for identifying individual strengths for team growth.	1	2	3	4

4. As a result of this module, I will apply the concepts to enhance my team's work.

- |                |              |           |               |            |
|----------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Definitely Not | Probably Not | Undecided | Probably Will | Definitely |
| 1              | 2            | 3         | 4             | 5          |

Please Explain:

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5. Further needs or comments:

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