

## Working in Teams, Unit 10



### Barriers to Success: Reading Early Warning Signs to HIT Team Failure

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## Objectives:

At the end of  
this unit, the  
participant  
will be able  
to:

- Recognize key signals to team failure.
- Use appropriate response mechanisms to address team dysfunction.
- Facilitate consistent scanning for symptoms of potential team failure.

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## Introduction

### Activity:

- To get started, think about a team you have currently been on in the past or are currently participating in.
- Please answer the **five questions** below to help get started:

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## Five Key Questions

1. Is your team living up to their full potential?
2. Is your team meeting the expectations of key stakeholders in your organization?
3. Do you feel like it is impossible to make any substantial progress towards your strategic goals?
4. Is an unproductive, conflict-ridden team causing low employee morale throughout your organization?
5. Have you tried everything conceivable to get your team to work together as a cohesive unit with little or no success?

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## Team Dysfunction

**Team:** a group of people working together sharing common goals, rewards, and responsibilities for achieving them.

**Dysfunctional Team:** A team that lacks trust of other team members, lacks commitment, accountability, and shared goals.

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## Are we really a team?

**Lencioni's two fundamental questions:**

1. Are we really a team?
2. Are we ready for heavy lifting?



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## Causes of Team Dysfunction

Cause #1: Absence of Trust

Cause #2: Fear of Conflict

Cause #3: Lack of Commitment

Cause #4: Avoidance of Accountability

Cause #5: Inattention to Results

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## Team Dysfunction: Absence of Trust

### **Absence of Trust:**

- Individuals are unwilling to admit their mistakes
- Team members are reluctant to be vulnerable to one another
- Weaknesses are identified



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## Team Dysfunction: Fear of Conflict

The team is incapable of engaging in unfiltered passionate debate about key issues.



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## Team Dysfunction: Lack of Commitment

Difficult for team members to commit to decisions.



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## Team Dysfunction: Avoidance of Accountability

Teams don't commit to a clear plan of action.



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## Team Dysfunction: Inattention to Results

Team members tend to put their needs ahead of collective goals.



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## Organizational Structure and Culture

When we think of trust, we normally think in terms of reliability:

- I trust that if I do x then y will occur.
- I trust that if I ask Ray to do something, then he'll get it done on time.
- I trust that if I assign a work item to Randy, he'll complete it within our company's expectation of quality.

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## Organizational Structure and Culture

But how do you build this? How do you create good intentions, focus on team more than self, remove personal defenses? This comes down to commitment from two areas:

- Corporate Commitment
- Personal Commitment

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## Corporate Commitment

If the decision makers, leaders, and owners of a team don't buy into this, then it doesn't matter.



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## Personal Commitment

Each member of the team needs to make Trust their personal commitment, and hold each other accountable to that commitment as well.



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## Trust

If you don't have trust your team will never achieve its top potential.

Your team will never achieve the type of goals they might be able to if they didn't have to spend so much time defending themselves or worrying that their ideas and thoughts may be rejected.

Trust ultimately starts with each one of the members.

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## Signs and Symptoms of Team Dysfunction

It's tough enough to lead a dysfunctional team when you can see the members and speak openly eye-to-eye.

But when you're leading a team that's become disengaged and dispirited, it takes special skills and approaches to re-engage and motivate those who have drifted away.

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## Symptoms of Dysfunction

Dictatorial Leadership

No 360 Degree Feedback

Personal Agendas

Political Compensation

Inefficient Use of Resources

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## Symptoms of Dysfunction

Empire-building Practices

Unequal Workload Distribution

Too Much Management

Fragmented Organization Efforts

Too Much Talk

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## Symptoms of Dysfunction

Ineffective Meetings

Lack of Collaboration

Low Productivity

Constant Crisis Mode

Morale Deterioration

Backstabbing

Highly Stressful Workplace

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## Goals for Dysfunctional Teams

- Truly cohesive teams are obvious.
- They trust one another.
- They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
- They commit to decisions and plans of actions.
- They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
- They focus on the achievement of collective results.

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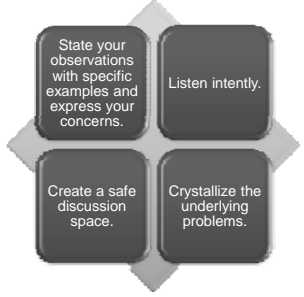
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## Strategies to Manage Dysfunctional Teams



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## Strategies to Manage Dysfunctional Teams

- Collaborate on the best solutions.
- Seek commitments to be part of the change.
- Take the team's temperature often.
- Reach out to disaffected individuals personally.

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## Strategies to Manage Dysfunctional Teams

### Model best practices behavior.

- Treat team meetings as the most important event on your calendar.
- Let people know what's expected of them in advance
- Come prepared with an agenda and stick to it. Check in to see how people are doing.
- Project enthusiasm and energy.
- Applaud team and individual achievements both large and small. Check in with the team as soon as possible.

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## Group Think-Another Strategy

A **“Road to Abilene”** is when a group collectively decides to do something which no individual in the group really wants to do. The term comes from the Abilene Paradox, demonstrated by the story of a family who decides to travel 53 miles north to Abilene for ice cream. On the way back, they begin arguing after realizing that none of them wanted to go in the first place.

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## Lessons Learned From The Road to Abilene:

Avoid false consensus.

Overcome the fear of speaking out .

Encourage effective decision-making within a group.

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## Results/Awards expected from Managing a Dysfunctional Team

### Results Expected from Managing a Dysfunctional Team

- A **sustained competitive advantage** gained through greater collaboration, improved communication, and a sense of team unity.
- Improved organizational **performance** as team members are able to work together towards common goals.
- Increased **employee morale**
- Reduced **employee turnover**
- **A reduction in unproductive interpersonal conflict**
- **Increased productivity**

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## Summary

Embracing common sense and uncommon levels of discipline and persistence make successful teamwork.

By acknowledging the issues and problems of the team members, members of functional teams overcome the natural tendencies that make teamwork so challenging and non-transparent.

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