

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Helping Your Team To Be Effective

There are several things that you can do to insure that your team is effective:

- Team membership requires that you conform to standards and timetables set by the team. Do your best to stick to those timetables and standards! Do not let you team or yourself down by shirking your responsibilities.
- Maintain perspective regarding team goals, and help your team members to keep the "big picture" in mind too. Consensus is a good thing when it can be reached, but sometimes teams end up wasting time trying to come to a consensus that will never happen, concerning an issue that isn't all that critical. In such cases, it is more efficient to "agree to disagree" and move on after choosing the path forward that makes most sense to the team as a whole. It is not a good idea to continue to debate settled issues, unless you are convinced that not doing so will cause a greater harm to your team than remaining silent.
- Team effectiveness will be undermined if leaders revert to authoritarian (rigid, dictatorial, close-minded) styles of exercising authority. Help your teammates deal with such tendencies should they occur by reminding them that authoritarian behavior alienates team members and destroys team effectiveness, which can only thrive if all members feel valued and are motivated to contribute to the best of their abilities.
- You will almost certainly be called upon to lead the group in some capacity at some time during your membership. When this happens, knowing something about how leaders can help their team to be effective may prove helpful. Good team leaders should try to do the following:
- Share power and deemphasize individual glory and recognition
- Help other team members achieve team goals
- Behave in a manner that inspires other team members
- Emphasize group consensus over imposed decisions when possible (but don't get stuck seeking a consensus that won't come)
- Accept responsibility when you make mistakes
- Be open minded when opinions are offered that are contrary to your own
- Try your very best to develop good working relationships with other team members
- Try to ignore little irritations and keep focused on the team goals

Cooperation is the key. If other team members become irritating to you (and they will from time to time) it is often helpful to remind yourself that if the team succeeds it will reflect well not only on the team but also the team members (which means you). In order to be strong as a whole, teams need each individual link to be strong. Don't let minor irritations get in the way of your being a strong link for your team.

Above all - keep your discussions professional and be respectful of your other team members at all times. Do not belittle the contribution of others. Conflict and criticism can be productive and constructive forces, but only when they are delivered with sensitivity and respect. By keeping your discussions constructive and professional, you help maximize the chances that your team will be able to accomplish great things.

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