

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

Working as Part of a Team

Teams of colleagues are an increasingly familiar part of the workplace. Bringing people together from different backgrounds as one productive entity can be highly effective. The combination of different talents, values, attitudes, interests, temperaments and experiences offers many benefits, but also demands considerable flexibility, insight and conflict resolution skills from all team members.

Although you are working as one entity, the work styles and personalities of different team members may require some flexibility in your approach to bring out the team's full potential. A team is made up of individuals, all with different:

- Strengths, talents and weaknesses
- Experiences, attitudes and learning
- Cultural backgrounds
- Values and personal goals
- Generational and gender-related differences
- Working styles
- Personalities, both introverted and extroverted
- Conflict resolution styles

Successful Team Leaders

Team leaders are charged with the challenge of uniting the team’s ideas, personalities and strengths to reach a common goal. Success as a leader requires:

- Welcoming different strengths, talents and ideas
- Clearly defining and communicating the team goal
- Inspiring team members and keeping them focused
- Providing a positive, enthusiastic role model
- Communicating rules, guidelines and timelines that the team will follow
- Establishing clear processes for work delivery and measurement
- Brightening team morale and repairing self-esteem when failure occurs
- Praising achievements and individual contributions
- Keeping the lines of communication open
- Managing conflict calmly and rationally

Successful Team Members

Every member of the team is important and, although they will have many differences as individuals, they will all contribute a few traits and priorities for a successful work group. Each member should:

- Welcome and respect the strengths, ideas and experiences of other team members
- Clearly understand the team goals or ask for clarification if they do not
- Follow team rules or guidelines
- Deliver individual assignments and meet deadlines
- Offer to help other team members if they experience difficulties
- Remain positive and enthusiastic
- Accept honest criticism and learn from mistakes
- Put the team agenda first

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- Resolve conflict calmly and rationally
- Communicate openly and honestly with both fellow team members and the team leader

Working as part of a team or group at work can have significant advantages. Not only does it bring diverse points of view together, but it can also offer each member more support and resources than they might have had access to when working alone.