

# BUILDING BRILLIANT TEAMS

Kate Fulton and Lorraine Dockerill



# Meet the Authors

Kate and Lorraine are the authors of this paper. We have spent the last 10 years individually and together exploring what it takes to support a group of people to become an effective team. We have done this for two reasons. Together we have found that team cohesion can have such a significant impact on of course, the **outcomes achieved** but also the **wellness of the individual members** (it can be pretty stressful being a member of a dysfunctional team!).

We have also witnessed both as team members ourselves and as facilitators of Building Brilliant Teams<sup>1</sup> (a team development approach) the amazing results teams achieve once cohesive. We have also seen the impact it has on individual member's health and wellbeing including their own personal development in their personal and professional lives.

Largely we have focused our interest on two areas of teams in Human Services. These could be **Person Focused teams** who are focused on supporting a person and their family. Or a **Service Focused team** whose aim is to lead, manage or provide a service in Human Services.

We have learned that irrespective of the kind of team and their unique goal or common purpose the process to develop a team is the same. The stages that help us understand what a good team looks like, has applied to all of these teams. The techniques we have discovered to help teams develop are extensive and this resource will outline some of those techniques. However, we have also learned that once teams learn about the ingredients that make up a brilliant team they find techniques to develop themselves and their teams. Therefore no one approach will suit all teams.

We have captured our experiences for one reason – **to support anyone who wants to build brilliant teams**. This may be a team member themselves, a person with the responsibility of leading a team or a person who needs the team to assist them in living their life and is the director and affected by the team's goals.

## Anyone can build a brilliant team.

We have drawn on some significant team experts over the years including Patrick Lencioni, Daniel Goleman, Bruce Tuckman, Fredrick Laloux and many more. We have included a list of references and resources that you may want to explore further at the end of this guide.

However, alongside this we have drawn on the real practical experience of working alongside many teams in Human Services who, one by one, have shared their own insights as they have worked to make their team brilliant (and who continue to do so).

# Why a focus on teams?

TEAM – A GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT SKILLS AND PERSPECTIVES, WHO WORK TOGETHER ON A COMMON GOAL WHO OFFER MUTUAL SUPPORT TO EACH OTHER.

Research shows<sup>2</sup> that human beings need to be connected to others, as much as a need for food, water and shelter. In fact, some of the recent findings teach us that people's lives literally depend on it. Our health is boosted and extended when we are well connected. Our levels of happiness, satisfaction and sense of purpose are significantly impacted upon when connected to others.

It also shows that the strength of a connected group of people working together can be way more powerful than people going it alone. We inherently know this, when any of us have worked in an effective team the sense of individual contribution to the collective group is understood and more often than not, the focus on achieving the goal is the common thread that knits us all together. Maybe more significantly though, we also know that our experience in effective teams makes us **feel** valued.

Human services have a strong 'team' culture – whether this be teams of support staff around an individual who requires assistance and their family or teams who have a collective goal to provide a service to the community - such as Advocacy or Community Support.

Many of us will be invited or selected into teams and asked to contribute to their common endeavour.

However, why are some teams really effective when others spend more of their time negotiating each other through confusion and fear?

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2 Happiness Advantage, Shaun Anchor, 2015.

## What can you see in teams – the good, the bad and the ugly?

The kind of teams we are focused on in Human Services largely fall into two types of teams.

### Person Focused Teams

Teams whose focus is to support people and families requiring support. This may be people who have a disability, require psychosocial support or people who are considered to be vulnerable i.e. homeless, ventilator dependent, at risk of exclusion.

This team's common purpose is to provide support to the person and/or family who directs them, is flexible and shaped in a way that makes sense to their personality, context and community.

### Service Focused Teams

Teams who are leading, managing or providing a service in Human Services. This includes Executive teams, Management teams, Co-ordination teams, Advocacy teams, Commissioning teams, Monitoring teams etc.

The common purpose of these teams is to provide a function to meet the goals of the organisation.

The power of teams when working well is so evident – the kinds of things you will see include:

- Autonomous thinkers, who know their perspective matters and are happy to share their thoughts, ideas and opinions
- Results focused and driven to collectively achieve outcomes
- Respectful team gatherings with some robust debates and discussions
- Team members holding each other to account for their performance and contribution
- Developing people – who have a sense of connection, purpose and safety

Practical things we have seen in brilliant teams include:

- Interesting and lively team meetings, where people are not afraid to share thoughts, to disagree and to work at the conversation to find a resolution that all team members can live with
- People who have a strong understanding of what they bring to the team, areas of their own personal development they need to work on and are willing to draw support from the team to achieve this
- Strong individual commitments that are shared and supported
- Tough conversations hosted with integrity and commitment
- People who are not reticent in celebrating the success, but being upfront about the failures

However, as Patrick Lencioni<sup>3</sup> has taught us there are some common things you will see in teams that are not cohesive or effective including what he calls the 5 dysfunctions of a team. The 5 dysfunctions include:

- A lack of trust among team members, so a reason to feel unsafe
- Minimal robust conversation to work things out
- Little commitment from team members to the collective goal
- Difficulties in holding team members to account for their contribution
- Minimal results and confusion from team members on how the team is progressing

Practical things we have seen in teams who are struggling include:

- An apathy and active dislike of team gatherings
- Silent and guarded members whose willingness to pass comment is often left to two or three members who are yet to learn the real skills of listening
- Small cliques within a team, members looking for allies to keep themselves safe
- Confusion about success or failure – just getting by day by day is considered success in itself

We have also learned from individual team members that they often find themselves confused, fearful and stressed. Spending a lot of time, energy and effort negotiating with their colleagues and trying to make sense of confusing purpose, goals and strategies.

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3 Patrick Lencioni 5 Dysfunctions of a Team, 2006.

## Investment in relationships

Human services have a poor history of investing in teams. This has, for too long, been seen a privilege of senior teams. The opportunity to have an 'away day' or Leadership Retreat where teams get to do some outward-bound activities.

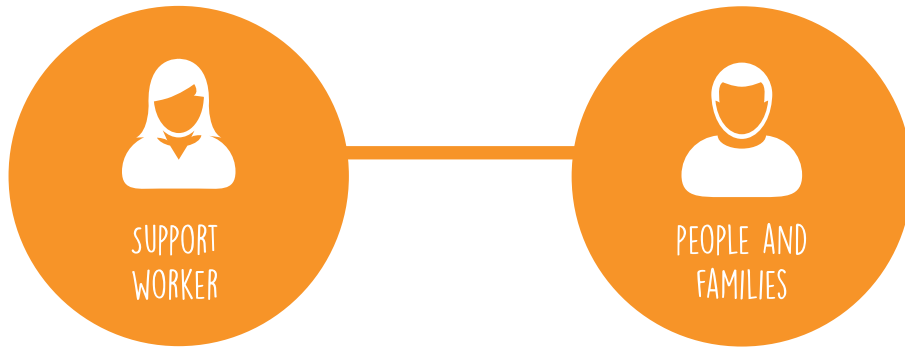
There has been less investment in teams focused on supporting people other than, if you're lucky, team meetings and a once a year planning meeting.

Typically we have found that Organisations tend to operate in this way with 3 important elements and a typical flow of energy and effort.

The usual paradigm is that the organisation drives the workers to behave in a particular way based on the organisations policies, procedures, values and culture. In some more thoughtful organisations people and families influence and shape the organisation's focus.



We know the real work is happening in people's homes and in the relationship between the Support Workers and the person and or family. So, a focus on how we support the relationship between the Support Worker and the person is critical. **Investment in this relationship is at the heart of our work.**



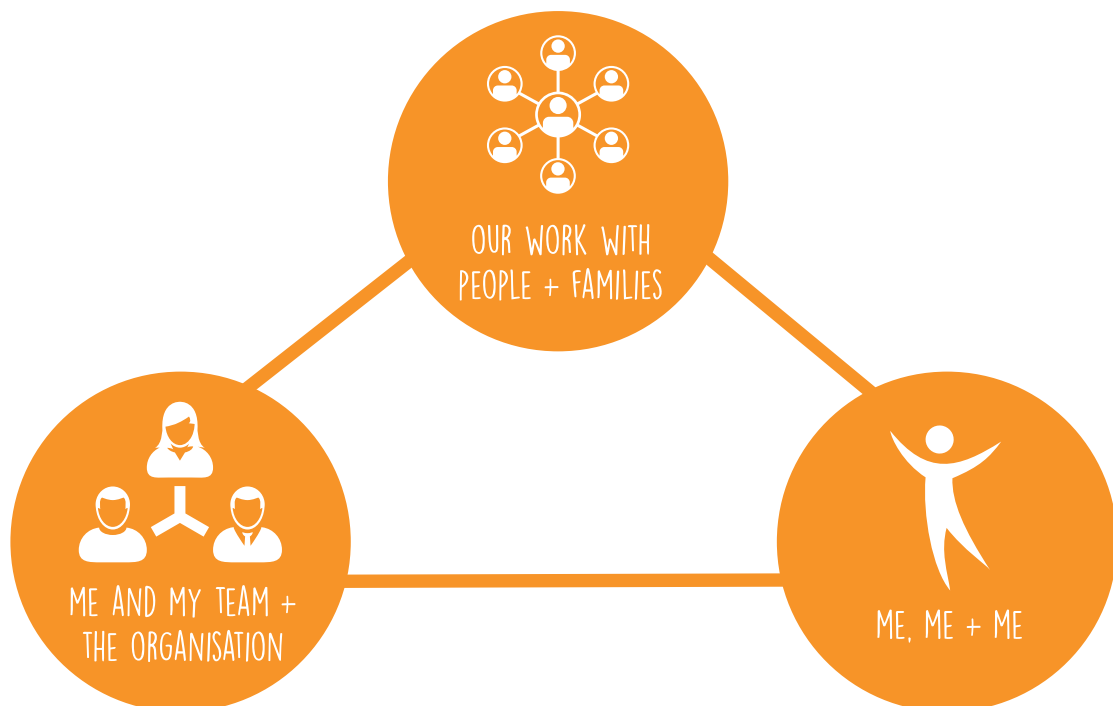
However, where there is more than one worker – a potential team, there is little invested in supporting this group of people to work well together. **We consider investment in these relationships the heart of our work.**

## Developing Teams – what is really going on?

'IT'S AS MUCH ABOUT YOU, AS IT IS THE TEAM,  
AS IT IS ABOUT THE GOAL'

We have learned that when building or supporting brilliant teams we are working with 3 themes at all times. These are all interrelated.

These include the goal or common purpose – this may be people and families, delivery of a service or leading an organisation, then the team and then yourself in the team. These 3 elements are always at play.



Fundamentally the Building Brilliant Teams approach is focused on these three foundations:

1. Clarifying and agreeing the goal (i.e. how to best serve a person, how to best deliver a service or how to best lead an organisation)
2. Exploring how this team needs to work to achieve the goal and respect its members
3. Figuring out your individual contribution to the team and being supported and held accountable for this contribution



There is a range of ways that a team can embark on a journey of development. Most common is securing an external facilitator or Coach to support the team along the journey who offers an impartial perspective and is in a great position to ask good questions.

'OUR TEAM HAD GOT ITSELF INTO A PICKLE DUE TO LOTS OF REASONS. WE WERE STRUGGLING TO PHYSICALLY COME TOGETHER AND BEGAN TO DRIFT AWAY FROM OUR AGREED APPROACH. WE BEGAN DOING OUR OWN THINGS – SOMETIMES GOOD AND SOMETIMES NOT SO GOOD. WE WERE ALSO NOT ALWAYS COMMUNICATING WELL, SO THIS WAS LEADING TO MISTAKES AND CONFUSION AND AT TIMES BLAME!

WE AGREED TO DO SOME WORK ON US, AS A TEAM, AS WE KNEW WE COULD BE A GREAT TEAM – WE HAD JUST LOST OUR WAY. SOMEONE OUTSIDE OF THE TEAM TO HELP US FELT LIKE THE RIGHT DECISION – SOMEONE WHO WAS NOT VESTED IN SOME OF THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS.

However this is not the only way.

Teams can choose to do the work as a team or with a team leader, be-it a person with a disability or a professional manager who can also support a team on this journey.

Practically, we suggest the journey of team development never ends – however agreeing time together over a series of months is a good starting point. For a new team, incorporating regular gatherings into the team's calendars ensures that the time to be a team is there from the beginning.

# Leadership

'IF YOUR ACTIONS INSPIRE OTHERS TO DREAM MORE, LEARN MORE, DO MORE AND BECOME MORE, YOU ARE A LEADER'  
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

There is much documented about Leadership but our approach essentially supports an approach called Servant Leadership<sup>4</sup>. Servant Leadership is focused on the Leader primarily being in a role that is focused on serving people – serving the team.

'THE SERVANT LEADER IS A SERVANT FIRST, IT IS A PHILOSOPHY AND SET OF PRACTICES THAT ENRICHES THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS, BUILDS BETTER ORGANISATIONS AND ULTIMATELY CREATES A MORE JUST, CARING WORLD'.  
ROBERT GREENLEAF

This approach is essential to Brilliant Teams. Leadership can be provided in many guises and, as we will demonstrate, does not always need to be an “appointed Manager” but can be provided by the team itself.

Good Leadership aims to do four things:

- Create an inspiring vision for the future
- Inspire people to work towards the vision
- Support people on the journey
- Coach and support the team to work together

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<sup>4</sup> The Servant as Leader, R Greenleaf, 1977, Pualist Press.

## What could this look like in a Person Focused Team?

- Clear understanding of what a good life could look like for the person – **the vision**
- Connection of team members to support the person to achieve the vision – **motivating and inspiring people**
- Working on difficulties or obstacles along the way, maybe applying for funding, or exploring the right supports – **managing the journey**
- Supports the team to consider how they are working and what they are learning via Team meetings, Individual Supervisions – **supporting the team to achieve the vision**

## What could this look like for Service Focused Team?

Clear understanding of what the Organisation or Service is trying to achieve – **the vision**

- Recruiting employees who can contribute to the journey or can shape the journey – **motivating and inspiring**
- Develop strategic or operational plans that outline how the team will achieve the vision – **managing the journey**
- Supporting colleagues to clarify their contribution and how they can give their contribution – **coaching and supporting the team to achieve the vision**

Teams need leadership to help them focus on where they are going, what they want to achieve and define what kind of support they need to get there. In our experience leadership when only focused on **managing** a team and not **servicing** the team, can get in the way of the team's development.

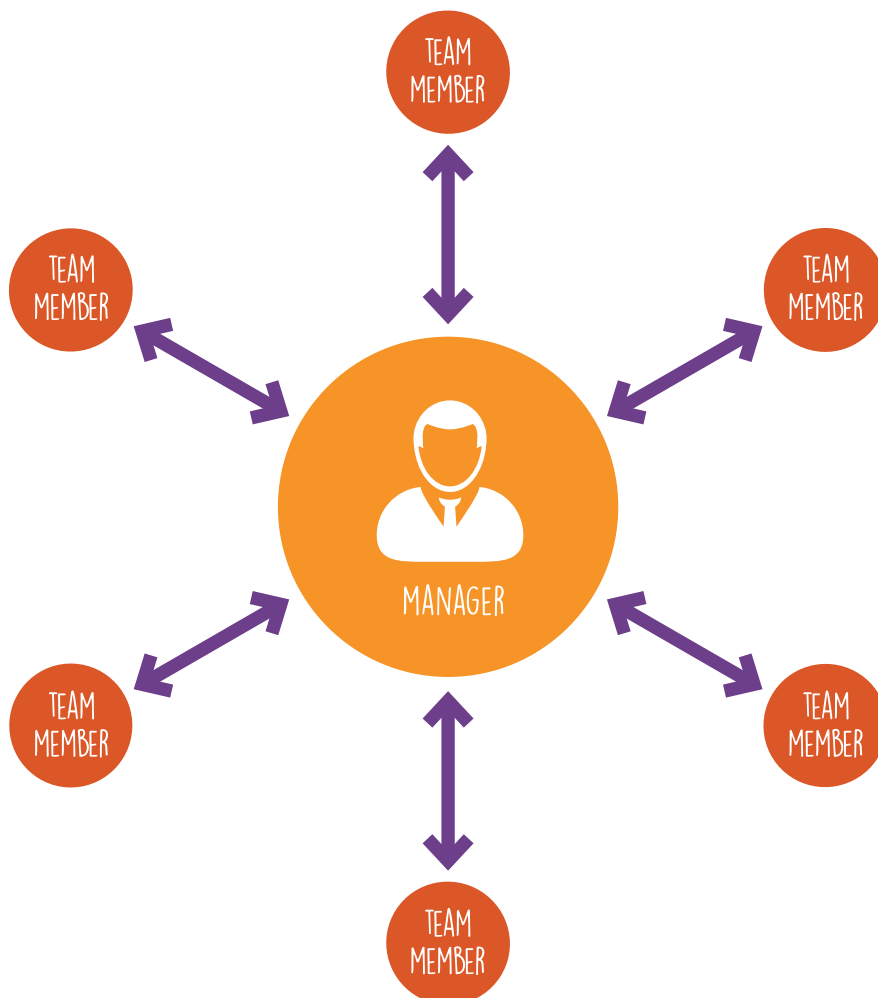
# What do we mean by managing or serving?

## Managed Teams

Many teams operate in a way where the appointed Manager is generally the conduit for team communication, team members talk to the manager and then the manager directs each team member separately. This usually looks like the Manager is the pivotal point in a team.

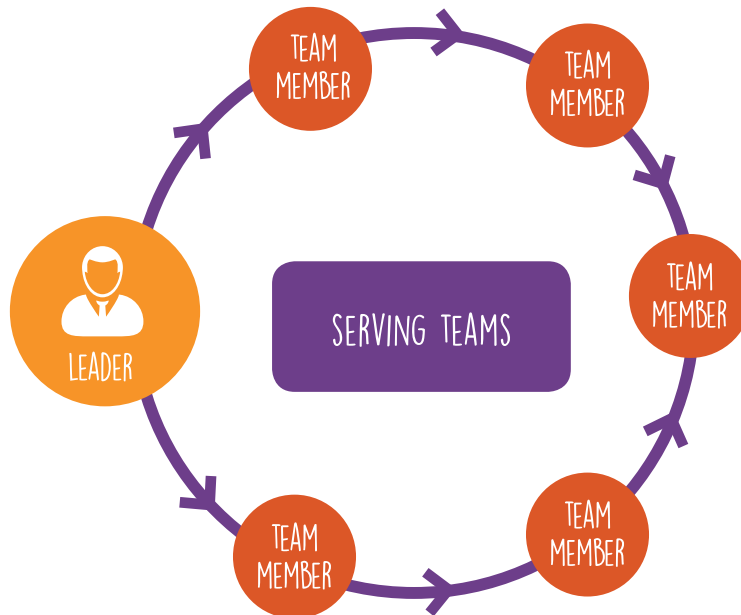
This doesn't support team cohesion – it can get in the way of good team communication and particularly in supporting teams to hold each other to account.

### MANAGED TEAMS



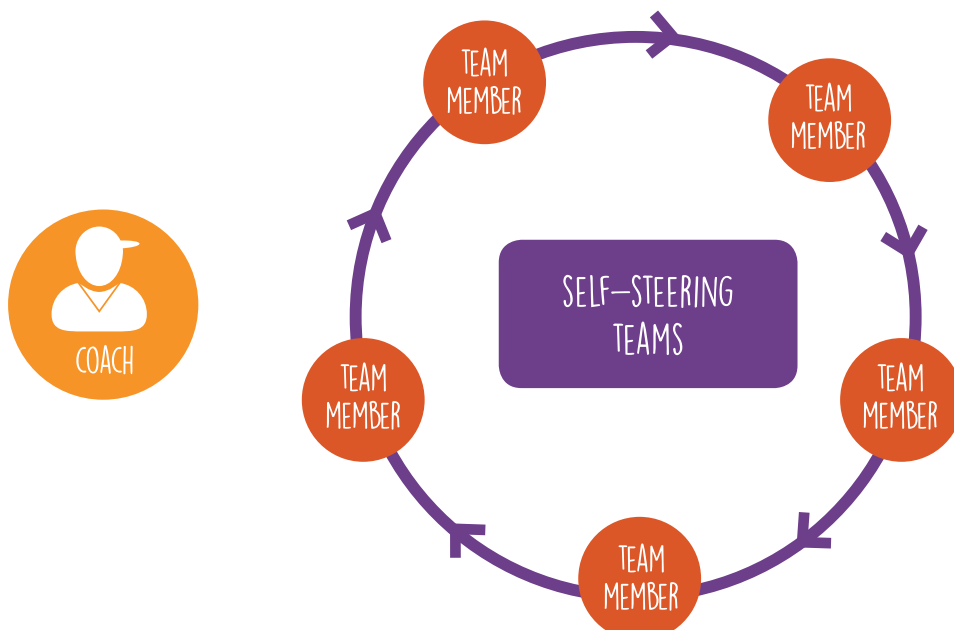
## Serving Teams

If the Leader is clear about their role in serving a team to achieve the vision and work in the best way possible, then the Leader develops and supports team cohesion – by supporting teams to communicate with each other and hold each other to account. This takes a different style of leadership that often looks more like coaching. Often this requires the Leader to be outside of the team and whose focus is on supporting the team to function well, not to get directly involved in the team's functions and dynamics.



## Self-Steering Teams

Many teams don't necessarily have an appointed Leader but draw on all members of the team to provide leadership and support to each other. This can take more work for a team but can lead to solid team cohesion. Teams operating in a self-managing or self-steering way often draw on external resources to help them at times of difficulty or if they require specialist skills for example a Coach or an external facilitator.



Brilliant leaders and coaches understand their critical role in developing and serving teams to be the best they can be. Leaders come in many different guises and in our experience the best leaders are not always the ones with the assigned titles. Some of the best leaders in Human Services are people and families!

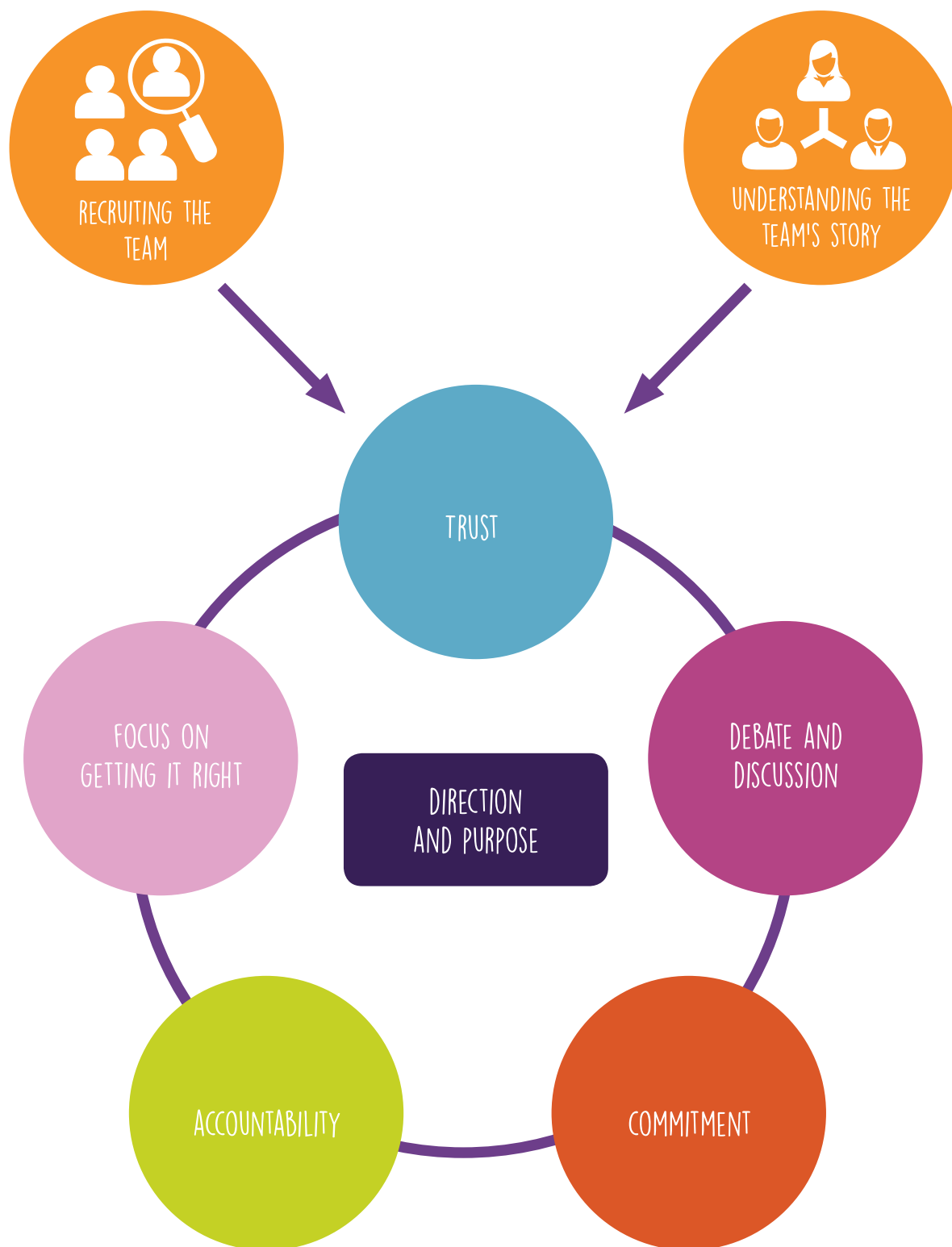
We have seen teams that are led by the person, their families, an ally or the team themselves. Leaders come in many different guises – but the best (in our experience) are the ones who understand their primary role is to **serve** the team.

## Servant Leaders have the following characteristics

- **Listening** – a deep commitment to really listen to the team
- **Empathy** – understanding others and recognising each team members strengths and contribution
- **Healing** – seeing the whole person and not just a job title, supporting people to be their best version of themselves
- **Awareness** – noticing and supporting the team's awareness
- **Persuasion** – convincing and inspiring not coercing
- **Visionary** - able to see beyond the day to day and keep your eye on the bigger picture
- **Foresight** – able to reflect on the past and draw lessons for the future
- **Stewardship** – a commitment to serve the needs of the team and hold this in trust for others
- **Commitment** - to the growth of the team individually and collectively
- **Building Community** – more than a job role, but a sense of collective community

## Overview of Building a Brilliant Team

This approach recognises that teams may be starting in different places. Some teams may be a newly formed team so we start at the point of recruitment. For others the starting point may be an already established team who have been working together for some time, who are recognising the need to invest in themselves.



## What can a team expect throughout the journey?

Teams who have used this approach have told us that the following are helpful tips to prepare them for what to expect.

Expect:

- Regular check ins with the team
- The opportunity to clarify and help people see and appreciate your contribution
- Get the **right** support for you from your team during the tougher stuff
- Self-discovery and the ability to use your team to explore areas of self-development
- Challenges – lots of debates and discussion, which can cause some discomfort but some significant learning
- Insights into yourself and others

"YOU GET MORE OUT OF IT – THE MORE YOU PUT IN –  
BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND AS A TEAM"

"GREAT OUTCOMES FOR THE TEAM – WORK THAT LASTS FOR  
A LONG TIME"

"IT CAN SHARPEN A GREAT TEAM OR DEVELOP A POOR ONE"

## Practicalities to consider

One consistent message we have heard from all of the teams we have supported is communication – methods for teams to communicate. **Teams need time to be a team.** Time together to do this work is important but so is regular time to plan, think and reflect.

TEAMS NEED TIME TO BE A TEAM



## Overview of content of Building Brilliant Teams

Stage of Team Development	What is the aim?	Tools, approaches and techniques
<b>1. Agreeing how we will work with each other</b>	For the team to feel safe to do the development work	Hopes and Fears Social Contract
<b>2. Understanding the team</b>	Recognising where the team have been up to now and clarifying areas of development for this team	Team story Individual Building Brilliant Team survey
<b>3. Agreeing the team purpose and direction</b>	Clarify and agree the purpose of this team and their goals for the future	Creating our team vision Supporting the development of a vision for the person
<b>4. Building trust amongst members of the team</b>	Explore and build trust among the members of the team	Behind the mask Personality Profiling Tools
<b>5. Comfort with conflict</b>	To support the team to become confident with conflict	Conflict Continuum Team meetings with a difference Round Robin Check in / Check out
<b>6. Commitment</b>	To support the team to commit to the team and their work	Host a debate Team planning Handy Doughnut
<b>7. Accountability</b>	To support the team to hold the team and each member to account for their actions and contributions	Regular self-reflection practices Individual self-accountability practices Self-Regulation
<b>8. Focus on results</b>	To develop ways for the team to keep focused on achieving the goals.	Being our best selves Time to talk and communicate Time to celebrate
<b>9. Continuing to grow and learn</b>	To develop mechanisms that work for the team to continue to develop their brilliant team long term.	Revising all the elements that support a team to work well

1. Agreeing how we will work with each other

2. Understanding the team

3. Agreeing the team purpose and direction

4. Building trust amongst members of the team

5. Comfort with conflict

6. Commitment

7. Accountability

8. Focus on results

9. Continuing to grow and learn



# Agreeing how we will work with each other

**What is the Aim:** For the team to feel safe to do the development work.

The team members **need to agree to do the development work in the first place.** We have learned that when teams are forced to do this work, the results can be pretty damaging. It is really important up front that the team agree how this will work for them to make sure they feel safe and positive.

We have tried a number of ways to do this including giving team members this book to learn more about what the work will entail, holding a team thinking conversation to explore the idea and connecting teams to other teams who have done the work.

## Is there such a thing as good discomfort?

Most of us live our lives predominantly in our comfort zones. Being in your comfort zone is a psychological state when things feel familiar and you are at ease and in control of your environment. So – of course we like to do things that are in our comfort zone!

Brene Brown<sup>5</sup> describes our comfort zone as a place where our uncertainty, scarcity and vulnerability are at their lowest we feel safe.

Being in your comfort zone – a place and routine where you feel safe is good, but often results in slow development.

However if you are willing to step out of your comfort zone into a space that some call our 'learning zone' or 'performance zone' this is a place where your anxiety may rise because it's unfamiliar. Research shows that small amounts of anxiety enhances our concentration and focus, meaning our learning and development is increased significantly.

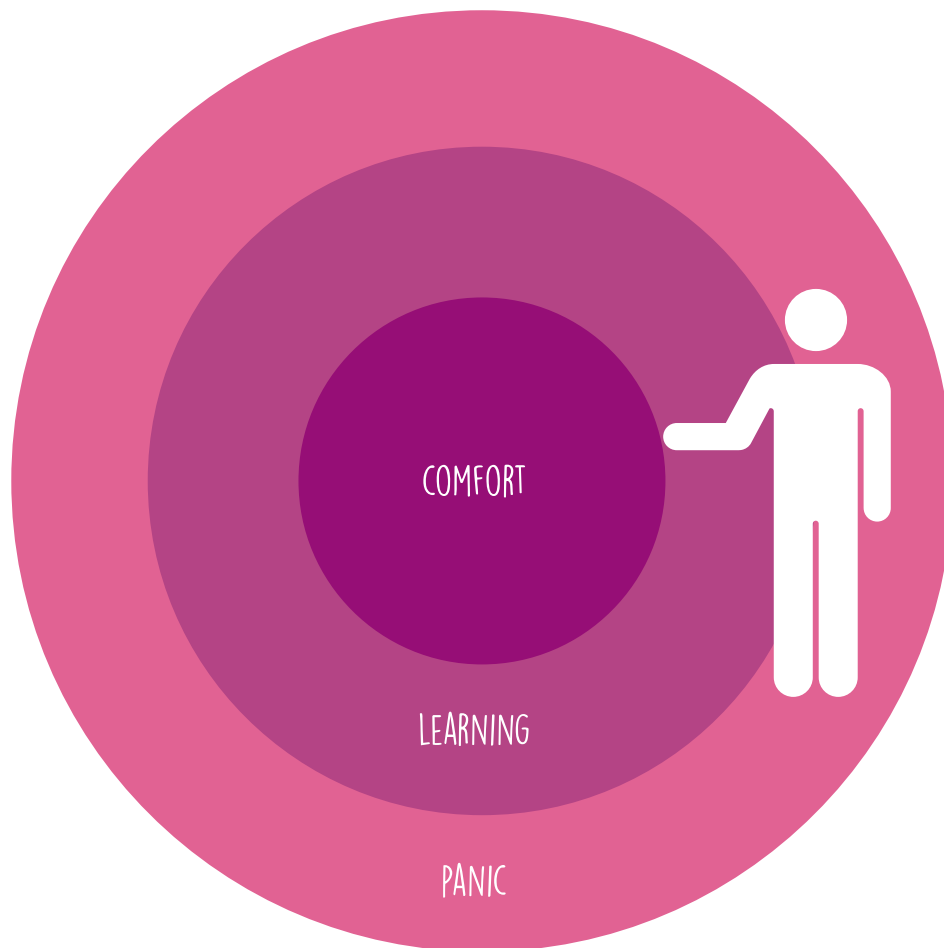
**So doing new things and asking new questions may create some discomfort, however this can be where the best learning happens.**

Beyond our learning zone is our panic zone and we don't want any team member to feel they have been pushed into their panic zone – no one learns here they just survive and keep themselves safe.

Team Development and self-development can be new to people, so having a way to understand positive discomfort can be helpful. Building Brilliant Teams works in the comfort zone and learning zone – with each team member ultimately in control of how far and how often they are willing to step out of their comfort zone (even if it is just to put your toes out).

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5 Brene Brown, The Gift of Imperfection, 2014.



## TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES:

**Hopes and Fears** - An opportunity to share your hopes and fears, explore the connections amongst the team, then theme them to ensure the team has clear expectations for what we hope to be achieved and what we need to consider as we do the work to keep people in their learning zone (not their panic zone).

Each team member has a block of post it notes:

1. Individuals are asked to note down their hopes and fears about team development. One thought per post it. No thought is considered stupid – this is an opportunity for each team member to share their thoughts safely.
2. Each Team member is invited to stick their notes on a wall, not randomly – but looking for other thoughts that may be similar. If there isn't a similar note, then that stays on its own. As the team stick their notes on the wall what will appear will be clumps of notes – themes emerging.
3. The group are then invited to look at the items and name them i.e. 'having to share personal details' may be one theme.
4. Once all the themes are named – the group then explores “how will we know if this happens and what does this mean for how we will work together”.

## Social Contract –

‘A team-designed agreement that acts as a contract for how a team would look and behave if it were the best it could be’<sup>6</sup>.

The aim of the social contract is for the team to write or list a set of behaviors and values that they believe in and use these as a team contract for how they will work together.

1. The team appoints a scribe (ideally on a white board or flip chart for all to see) and agrees to write down themes as the group explore the following questions:

- What do we value?
- What’s important to us?
- What would make this team powerful?
- What can we count on from one another?
- What will it look and feel like?

Once the group has explored these questions – it then reflects on what the scribe has captured. Then ask the question:

2. If we are going to work together in the best way possible – what do we want in our team social contract?

Bullet points are fine, images are also good – but most importantly it is recorded in a way that makes sense to the team.

Again the scribe notes down what the group agree.

3. Finally once the group is finished – a check in is required.

### **Is this our team social agreement – can we all sign up to this?**

If the answer is yes – each team member is invited to sign their name on the social contract. This is the guiding contract around the team, which needs to be updated, but critically will be the foundation to measure the teams progress over time.

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6 <http://agileforeveryone.com>



# Understanding the team

**What is the Aim:** Recognising where the team have been up to now and clarifying areas of development for them.

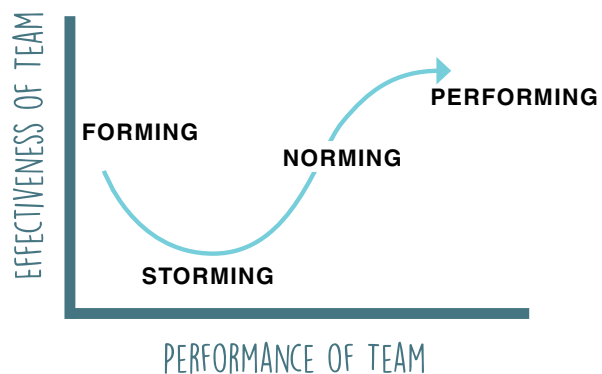
'ALL TEAMS HAVE A STORY, A SHARED EXPERIENCE THAT IMPACTS ON HOW THEY BEHAVE TODAY. HEARING THE STORY AND ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR EXPERIENCES IS THE BEST PLACE TO START DEVELOPING A TEAM'

JUDITH NORTH

A helpful framework to understand typical team development was developed by Psychologist Bruce Tuckman<sup>7</sup> who came up with a sequence that all teams go through.

1. **Forming** – The team is just getting to know each other and the purpose of the team. Most team members are polite and positive, with some team members being anxious. The team work to establish ground rules and ways of being together.
2. **Storming** – Individuals are finding their feet and forming opinions on the purpose and agreed way of being. Disagreements occur as people work out their preferred way of working. Team members can find this stage stressful and confusing.
3. **Norming** – Individuals start to resolve their differences, appreciate each other's strengths through experience of working together. Team members begin to ask each other for help or feedback.
4. **Performing** – The team is at its peak, performing well and achieving the teams goals. People are committed, focused and supportive of each other.
5. **Adjourning** – This applies if teams dissolve. It may be a project has completed or a service is no longer needed. Team members can grieve over the loss of their connection to the team.

## TUCKMAN'S TEAM + GROUP DEVELOPMENT MODEL



Understanding where a team may be now is really helpful as it can help the team understand why some of the things that are happening in the team may be occurring.

If a team reflects on their experiences so far, it is also a very powerful way of showing the team their strengths and their areas of development.

7 Tuckman Developmental sequence in small groups, Physiological Bulletin, 1965.

WE USED THE BUILDING BRILLIANT TEAM SURVEY INDIVIDUALLY AND WHEN WE SAW THE RESULTS TOGETHER AS A TEAM, IT SHOWED US THAT WE WERE A TEAM WHO WORKED BRILLIANTLY UNDER PRESSURE – OUR BEST TIMES WERE IN THE FACE OF A CRISIS! WE HAD ACHIEVED SO MANY THINGS.

HOWEVER WHAT IT ALSO SHOWED WAS THAT WE HAD A TENDENCY TO OVER DRAMATISE THINGS AND LET OUR EMOTIONS GET THE BETTER OF US AND LET OUR EMOTIONS DRIVE SOME PRETTY IMPORTANT DECISION MAKING.

WA TEAM

## **TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES:**

**Team story** – A process to help a team reflect on their experiences to date and highlight strengths of the team, areas of development and to learn what conditions help the team work at its best.

1. We have tried this exercise in many different ways. Asking a team to reflect on their team's story. One of the best ways and most fun is to ask the team to write the team story as a Disney film, if so inclined the team could perform it! Once upon a time....

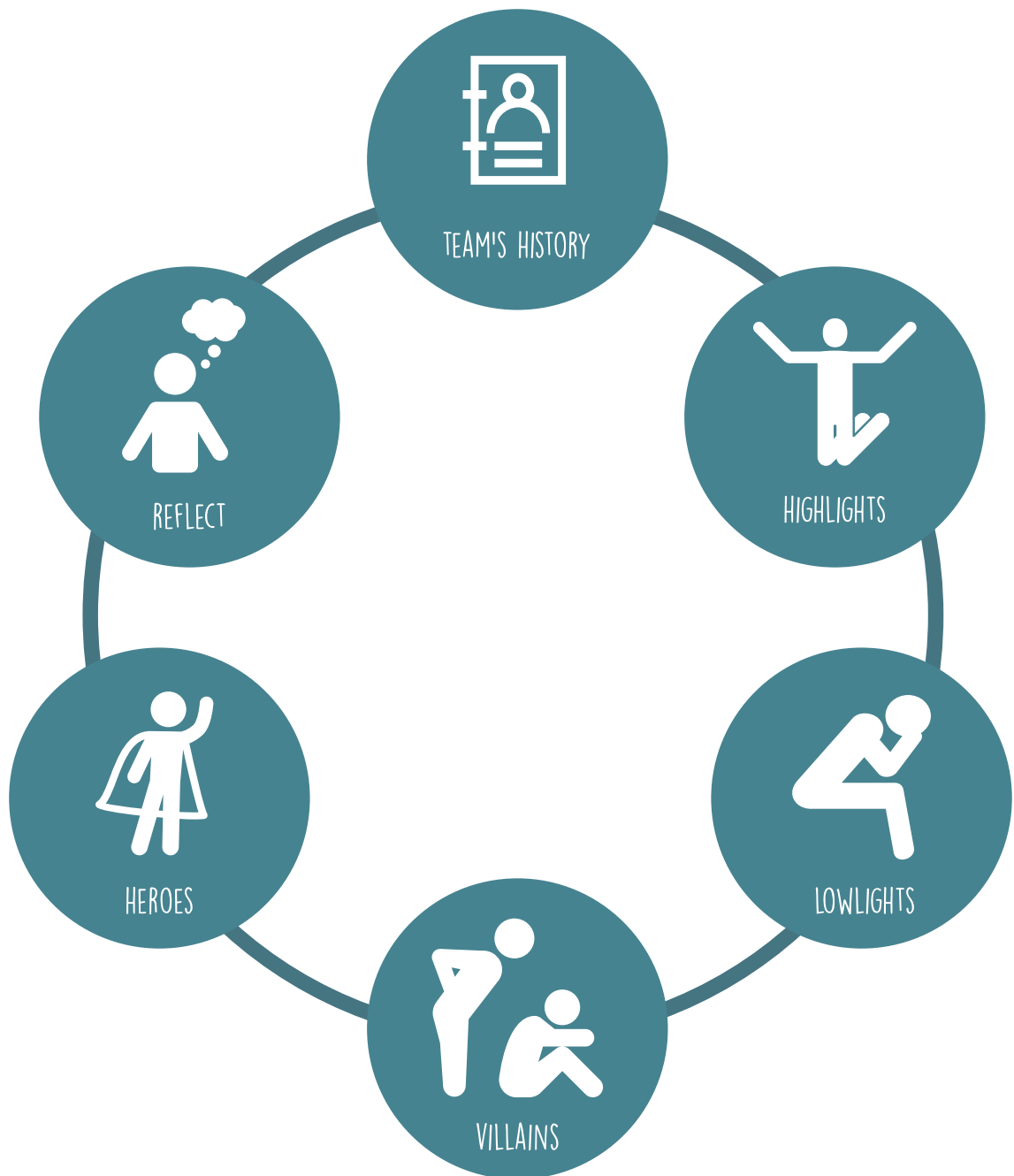
- What's this team's history? – A focus on the significant events that have happened.
- Highlights - What good things have happened?
- Lowlights - What bad things have happened?
- Were there Villains and how did the team react to them?
- Were there Heroes and how did the team support them?

If Disney doesn't cut it, a timeline works just as well. Inviting the team to share their perspective over time, starting at the beginning...

- The journey of this team – significant events
- Great times
- Difficult times
- Surprises

The key to this is to share the story in a way that is respectful and to understand why we are doing it – to learn about what helps this team work well together and what gets in the way or derails the team.





2. Once the story has been told – invite the team to share their observations. What do you notice upon reflection about:

- When this team has worked well together?
- When this team has not worked well together?

This can be tough for a team particularly if they are not cohesive now. However, trading softly is the key – **no one person** is to blame for a team's performance – what do we notice about how the **team works?**

3. Finally inviting the team to identify two big headlines that they think the team need to focus on to be the best team they can be. What would they be?

## Building Brilliant Team survey

For some teams thinking collectively about the team's journey may be too hard right now. We have found hearing each individual's views about the team then sharing them collectively with some theming and analysis is great learning for a team.

To see collectively what each team member thinks about when the team works at it's best and when the team is at its worst is very powerful to help clarify where the team needs to focus their attention.

There are a range of team surveys around and links can be found at the end of this book.

If a survey is not an option then asking each individual team member questions about the team to date and then sharing everyone's perspective collectively is as useful. However this needs to be done sensitively and thoughtfully. Remember the teams Social Contract that outlines what is right for this team particularly.

The kind of questions you may want to include are:

What do you like about being in this team?	
What do you not like about being in this team?	
When do you think this team has been at its best? What do you notice about what worked well for the team during this time?	
When do you think this team is at its worst? What do you notice about what was happening that contributed to the team performance?	
What is your best contribution to this team?	
What do you do that derails this team from their goal?	
What do you want the team to get better at?	

Sharing this information collectively supports the team to identify areas of focus of development and also learning for themselves individually about their own contribution.

# Purpose and Direction

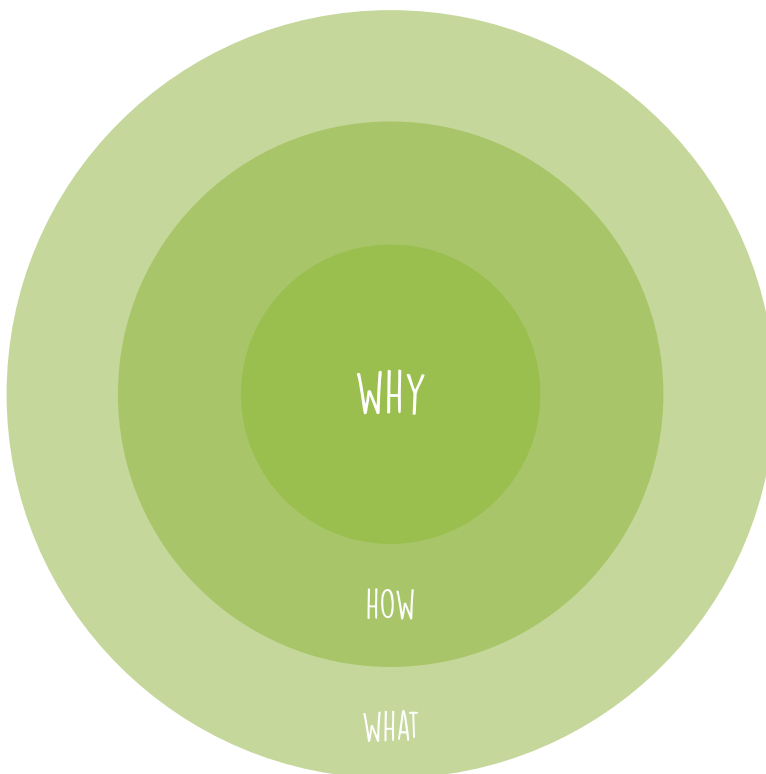
**What is the Aim:** Clarify and agree the purpose of this team and their goals for the future.

All teams need to know what they are working towards, what they are trying to achieve. This helps them see not only where they are going but clarifies their purpose – why the team exists.

'PURPOSE – THE REASON FOR WHICH SOMETHING IS DONE OR CREATED FOR WHICH SOMETHING EXISTS'  
OXFORD DICTIONARY

Clarifying our purpose is a critical element at the heart of a team. This provides the answer to why we exist. Research teaches us that when we have the opportunity to be part of something whose purpose is something that we really connect to, it inspires us to work together to achieve it.

Simon Sinek<sup>8</sup> teaches us with his research that some of the leading organisations and teams start with why they do what they do, not with what they do. Sinek argues that if we are clear about our why – this is the drive and inspiration that achieves success.



## WHY – Your Purpose

Your motivation?  
What do you believe?

## HOW – Your Process

Specific actions taken to realise your Why

## WHAT – Your Result

What do you do?  
The result of Why. Proof

EVERYONE HAS A WHY. YOUR WHY IS THE PURPOSE, CAUSE OR BELIEF THAT INSPIRES YOU.

SIMON SINECK

If we can support individual team members to explore and state their own why - imagine how powerful it would be to draw these together into a team WHY?

We have supported teams who previously start with the what they do i.e. 'we provide home support to John'. However once they discover and agree their Why – they now say things like, 'we support people to claim their place in the world and live meaningful lives'. (Just a little more compelling eh?)

## **TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES:**

**Creating our team vision** – A process to help a team create a collective vision of what they are aiming to achieve.

There are many ways a team can develop their vision for the future. Sometimes it is as simple as spending time exploring simple questions such as:

- What are we here to achieve?
- If this team was hugely successful what would we see in the future?
- What is this team's purpose?
- What are we here to do and what could this look like if we were doing it well?

However one of the most effective ways we have found to support a team to develop a vision is as follows:

## Supporting a vision for the person in a person centred team

If the team has been created around an individual and their family, then essentially it is the person's vision of what a good life could look like for themselves that is at the heart of the team's purpose. If this is the case, we recommend doing some person centred planning<sup>9</sup> beforehand with the person and their family to create and develop a vision for the person's life.

There is much documented about person centred planning and the various tools that assist people and families to develop a plan. O'Brien, O'Brien and Mount<sup>10</sup> define the question at the heart of person centred planning as 'What particular assistance do you need in order to pursue the life that we have envisioned together'.

This then sets the scene for the team's purpose - to develop this assistance in order to support the person to pursue the life they have envisioned with others. Of course the team need to define and own their purpose in relation to assisting the person to achieve this life.

Once a vision for the person's life has been created then asking the team the following questions support them to define their vision and purpose. We strongly recommend graphically recording the team's answers to these questions and capturing a strong image of;

- What do we know and understand about what the person wants to create for their future life?
- What would great assistance look like in order to support the person to achieve this vision?
- What kind of team is required to do this well?
- What would this team look like? (gender, personalities, interests and passions)
- What would this team be really good at? (skills)
- What would this team know about? (knowledge)
- How would this team work together? (collectively and individually)
- Based on the person's vision if this team were the best it could be what would it look like?

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9 O'Brien and O'Brien, A little book about Person centred planning, 1998.

10 Person Centred planning O'Brien, O'Brien and Mount, 1997.

Your notes about this section:

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# Building Trust

**What is the Aim:** Explore and build trust amongst the team.

Patrick Lencioni<sup>11</sup> argues that one of the fundamental pillars of a brilliantly performing team is the trust amongst the team. If a team trust each other they are much more likely to support each other at times of difficulty and assist each other to achieve success.

Where there are low levels of trust, team members can be spending a lot of time, energy and effort just simply protecting and covering themselves because of fear of retribution.

**Put simply – you are much more likely to do your best work when you feel safe, than if you are fearful and have to protect yourself.**

However Lencioni is not talking about team members having to trust each other with their life – but more about feeling confident that in this team, team members don't have to be careful because there is a belief amongst the team that each colleague's intention is good.

'THE CONFIDENCE AMONG THE TEAM THAT OUR COLLEAGUE'S INTENTION IS GOOD. THERE IS NO REASON TO BE PROTECTIVE OR CAREFUL IN THIS GROUP.'  
LENCIONI

Just think about what this means. Consider someone you work with who you trust. If an incident occurred, you are much more likely to offer support because you believe they have good intentions.

Now consider someone whom you work with whom you don't have such high levels of trust. Imagine again that an incident occurred, it is highly probably that your thinking will be much more negative and accusatory than supportive.

## So if trust is key – how do you build trust?

Trust is deeply personal and the truth is no one can make anyone else trust people. However, research shows that some simple approaches can provide a stronger platform for people to develop trust.

- Leaders openly demonstrating trust in colleagues – if others do it, you're more likely to do it
- Transparent and open communication - no secret conversations, or restricted information
- Time to get to know each other personally as well as professionally – team gatherings that focus on who we are, not just what we do
- Talk openly about how to build trust in the team and resist blame – trust is a topic of conversation that matters

11 Patrick Lencioni 5 Dysfunctions of a Team, 2006.

## TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES:

### Getting to know each other – who is behind the mask?

Supporting teams to learn about each other personally is critical in assisting a team to develop trust. There are a range of ways of doing this, but we have learned that our understanding of what it means to be 'professional' can get in the way and this is where we need to start.

Laloux<sup>12</sup> who researched some of the most progressive organisations in the world, argues that many people believe they have to put on what he calls a 'professional mask' when they arrive at work. He claims many people are hiding most of themselves – up to one – sixteenth of themselves (that's a lot to hide!).

Not only is this draining and unrealistic, it is fake, which clearly has an impact on levels of trust – **how do you trust someone wearing a mask?**

'WE NEED TO DEVELOP A CONSISTENT SET OF PRACTICES THAT INVITE US TO DROP THE MASK, RECLAIM OUR INNER WHOLENESS AND BRING ALL OF WHO WE ARE TO WORK'  
FREDRICK LALOUX

Spending time finding out who is behind the mask involves helping teams to explore the whole concept of who they are, or pretend to be, when they are at work. This undoubtedly requires people to be vulnerable – showing who you really are takes courage, so tread softly.

We suggest that teams begin slowly with hosting these conversations, maybe in pairs to begin with and then choosing what to share with the wider team, but making sure there is always a focus on who we really are behind the mask.

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12 F Laloux, Reinventing organisations, 2014.



## Useful questions to focus conversations around:

What do people like and admire and respect about you? (this works really well if you invite the team to ask 3 loved ones this question and then share the answers with the team).

These questions work to understand who is behind the mask.

As a member of this team...

- What I love about my work and why?
- What I find difficult or scares me about my work and why?
- What I most appreciate about my team members and why?
- What I see myself doing that can derail the team or negatively impact on them?
- What I see others do that positively impacts on the team and negatively impacts on the team?

## Personality Profiling tools

There are a range of tools available that aim to provide an evaluation of personal attributes, values and life skills to help maximize people's role in teams and organizations. Most of these tools aim to work behind the mask, highlighting the person's unique perspective and skills that can work best for the team and how best to work together.

### Some of these tools include:

**Belbin team<sup>13</sup> profiling** – outlines what team role you're most suited towards and how to get the most of out that role.

**Myers Briggs<sup>14</sup>** – explores psychological preferences on how you see the world and make decisions.

**DISC<sup>15</sup>** – outlines people's behavioral differences and how to work together.

Explore these tools, they all work slightly differently but most are easy to use and readily accessible. We have had the most success using Belbin Team Profiling and Belbin kindly offers a range of resources to use on their website [www.belbin.com](http://www.belbin.com)

### Why are these tools helpful?

We have found that once people begin taking off their mask, it makes them vulnerable as focusing on who you are can create a level of discomfort. The profiling tools help to explore who we are with a focus on our preferred behaviors or way of seeing the world, that can be less intrusive to begin with. It gives the team a shared language to use which can be helpful when calling your colleagues on behaviors that are not always helpful, for example all teams we have supported now know what it means to 'tame a Shaper!' (check out Belbin to understand that one).

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13 <http://www.belbin.com>

14 <http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/home.htm?bhcp=1>

15 <https://discprofile.com/what-is-disc/overview/>

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# Comfort with Conflict

**What is the Aim:** To support the team to become confident with conflict.

The best thing about working in a team means that you have collective knowledge and experience as opposed to just one person's perspective. However, to really use this collective knowledge we need to welcome disagreement, challenge and conflict.

Conflict can be challenging, uncomfortable and not something most of us enjoy. However imagine a team where there is no questioning, challenging or exploring – chances are this team could be making some big mistakes.

Welcoming conflict is easier said than done. Most of us shy away from conflict and perceive it to be a 'bad' thing, but as Lencioni reminds us, a healthy team is a place where everyone can give their opinion (irrespective of people not agreeing) without fear of getting into trouble.

IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THIS. WHEN PEOPLE DON'T UNLOAD THEIR OPINIONS, AND FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE BEEN LISTENED TO, THEY WON'T REALLY GET ON BOARD!

PATRICK LENCIONI

Being comfortable with robust conversation and active disagreement or challenge is essential to a brilliant team and in our experience, takes some practice.

## What if we don't encourage conflict? Wilful Blindness

Margaret Heffernan<sup>16</sup> who is an author and lecturer on Business Management claims that some of the biggest mistakes in business, didn't happen because people didn't know the idea was flawed, she claims most mistakes are known in teams, but people are too scared of conflict to speak up. Margaret calls this **Wilful Blindness**.

'WE KNOW INTELLECTUALLY THAT CONFRONTING AN ISSUE IS THE ONLY WAY TO RESOLVE IT. BUT ANY RESOLUTION WILL DISRUPT THE STATUS QUO. GIVEN THE CHOICE BETWEEN CONFLICT AND CHANGE, THE OSTRICH POSITION CAN SEEM VERY ATTRACTIVE.'

MARGARET HEFFERNAN

So it is highly likely that team members can see and predict mistakes but would rather watch a mistake happen than voice their opinion because of fear! We need to focus on getting comfortable with conflict to avoid these mistakes and use all of that collective wisdom in the team.

You may notice when colleagues are avoiding conflict. Maybe opinions have been shared privately or a particular view has not been heard. We need to find ways for everyone to be able to voice their opinions and be heard by the team.

## What can help?

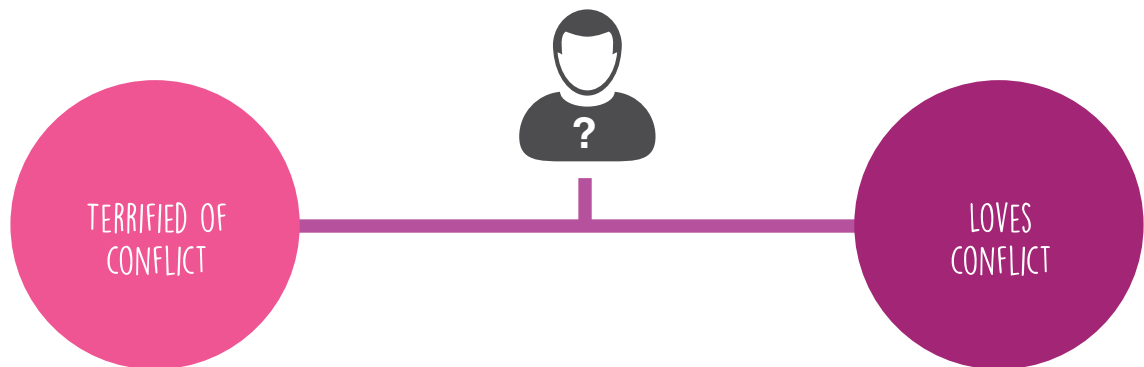
There are many ways a team can support conflict including;

- Understanding our conflict profile and what support we each need to speak up
- Facilitate meetings and conversations with the intention of highlighting moments for challenge, disagreement or appointing a role of 'Devil's Advocate'
- Practice disagreeing – staging debates around topics to work on our 'conflict muscles'
- Leaders demonstrating conflict and supporting people to feel safe during and afterwards

## TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES:

### The Conflict Continuum - We are all different at welcoming conflict

A critical aspect of exploring conflict in a team is understanding how each team member feels about conflict. One way of doing this is to explore where each member is on the conflict continuum.



At one end is, 'Terrified of Conflict' and at the other end is 'Loves Conflict' (although we haven't met many people who describe themselves as full on lovers of conflict!).

We will all sit somewhere on that line. It will be based on our life experiences, values and beliefs – for example;

- you may have been brought up in a family where a debate was an entertaining past time, chances are your very comfortable with conflict
- or bought up in a family where a disagreement was perceived negatively which may mean you avoid conflict and public disagreements

Whatever your life experiences this will have shaped your comfort with conflict and where you sit on this line. There is no right way or wrong way it is simply understanding where people sit on a continuum of comfort with conflict.

If team members sit down the low end of the continuum – fearful of conflict then the team need to consider how they support these people to feel safe to raise their opinions, especially if they hold a view that they disagree with. Remember the team could be missing out on some wisdom or gold!

If team members sit high on the continuum – so are comfortable with conflict, they need to consider how they give their opinions with enough space for others to contribute.

## Host a team meeting with a difference!

Team meetings should be a place where big and small issues are raised and the team gets the chance to explore, challenge and think together about the issues and potential solutions.

One safe way to support all team members to give their opinion is to hold regular Round Robins – so a pause for each team member to give their perspective one at a time with no interruptions – the key is for the rest of the team to listen.

## Round Robin – going back to basics

How do we each see the issue – what's important in this issue?	
Is there anything that you can see or understand that the group needs to know?	
What would be your solution for the team to consider?	
What would success look like in this scenario?	

Round Robins take practice. We have learned that simply moving from one person to the other to give their thoughts is not enough if colleagues interrupt or provide 'counter arguments' when each person is giving their perspective. Each team members takes their turn to talk whilst the others listen - Discipline is the key!

## Check In and Check Out

A simple yet effective practice that teams can adopt that encourages everyone to share their thoughts and opinions can be included at the beginning and end of a team gatherings called Check Ins and Check Outs.

Each team member takes it in turns to check into the gathering, by sharing with the group their thoughts as they bring themselves to this conversation. This could be an emotion, 'I'm excited about this discussion and where it might take us' or an opportunity to share thoughts that they are trying to put away ready to be present at this conversation i.e. 'I'm working on leaving my emails or phone calls that I've just been doing to get myself ready for today'.

A Check Out is the same but held at the end of a conversation or team meeting and is often used as a reflection on the discussion i.e. 'I'm happy about the discussion we had about best supporting John's family' or 'I'm still thinking and considering the actions we explored about how best to hold each other to account'.

# Commitment

**What is the Aim:** To support the team to commit to the team and their work.

A team that is truly committed to their vision, goal or purpose is a powerful force! However, commitment is deeply personal, as it's a personal pledge to work towards an outcome.

TO BE COMMITTED IS TO BE DEDICATED TO A CAUSE OR ACTIVITY

We will all have experienced examples when you have been asked for your commitment but not really wanted to give it. Maybe you have agreed in principle, but your head and heart are not really behind it. Maybe you have experienced a team doing similar by watching them nodding and agreeing only to find outside of the meeting that they don't really believe in the course of action, either way this is not real commitment – this is called passive commitment.

Brilliant teams personally and collectively commit! A really important understanding is that commitment is not the same as consensus. Teams can commit to something even when they don't necessarily agree AS LONG as they have had the opportunity to share their thoughts and have them considered by the team.

## Types of Commitment

Kevin Eikenberry<sup>17</sup> argues that teams need to pay attention to three levels of commitment to be successful:

1. Commitment to each other and each other's success
2. Commitment to the team and the team's success
3. Commitment to the organisation and the organisations goals



One of the big areas we have seen that derails team commitment is not getting really clear on what exactly team members are being asked to commit too?

Making sure the team purpose and vision is explicit is one thing, but then collectively designing the right strategies for the team to achieve these goals is critical. A significant aspect of this, is that all team members create the plan for how they will achieve the goals – this requires some trust and conflict if we are to hear everyone’s perspective.

Irving L. Janis<sup>18</sup> a Psychologist warns of the dangers of ‘group think’.

‘WHEN INDIVIDUALS STOP THINKING CRITICALLY FOR THEMSELVES AND SIMPLY ALIGN THEMSELVES WITH THE GROUPS PERSPECTIVE WE HAVE CREATED GROUP THINK!’

We want to avoid the group think and encourage individual thought for the team to find collective action.

We want to get to a point where everyone is clear about what is to be done and what they are committing to.

What needs to be done to help the team?	Who is committing to this?	How will we know it’s working?

18 Irvine L. Janis 1982, Group Think, 1982, Houghton Mifflin.



## TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES:

### Host a debate!

An easy way to encourage and develop comfort with conflict is to host a debate.

A debate is a structured disagreement where two sides with opposing views discuss their views and articulate their perspective, aiming to convince the other party that their view is the right view. Debates can be lively but overall need to be fun – remember you are aiming to practice conflict. We have found that starting simple and choosing a topic that is removed from the team helps to get people relaxed. So – choose a topic that is not necessarily close to people's hearts and emotions, but topical and newsworthy i.e. Vegetarianism is the future, bicycles versus cars – whatever opposing views will work.

- Appoint a facilitator or debate master whose job is to support the teams, keep time and make sure people are safe
- Invite people to choose a side of the debate i.e. all those who want to argue vegetarianism is the way forward join a group, all those who think not join a group (remember this is a staged debate and people are choosing to take one perspective)
- Give the teams time to prepare – think about your claim, your content information to support your claim and then how you will present your perspective
- Agree who goes first and for how long

The facilitator or debate master needs to ensure that each group has equal time and that the debate remains light hearted and fun.

After the debate support the team to not supporting the team to reflect on the experience by really focusing on how it felt to have active conflict in the team:

- What did it feel like?
- What worked for you?
- How can this team learn from this to best support conflict and disagreement in this team?

## Team planning

There are so many ways that a team can plan how to work together to achieve their goals. One way that is particularly helpful is shape it up – a process we have used regularly with teams.

Assuming the team have already done the work to create a vision or goal, Shape up is a process to help teams create the plan of how they are going to get there.

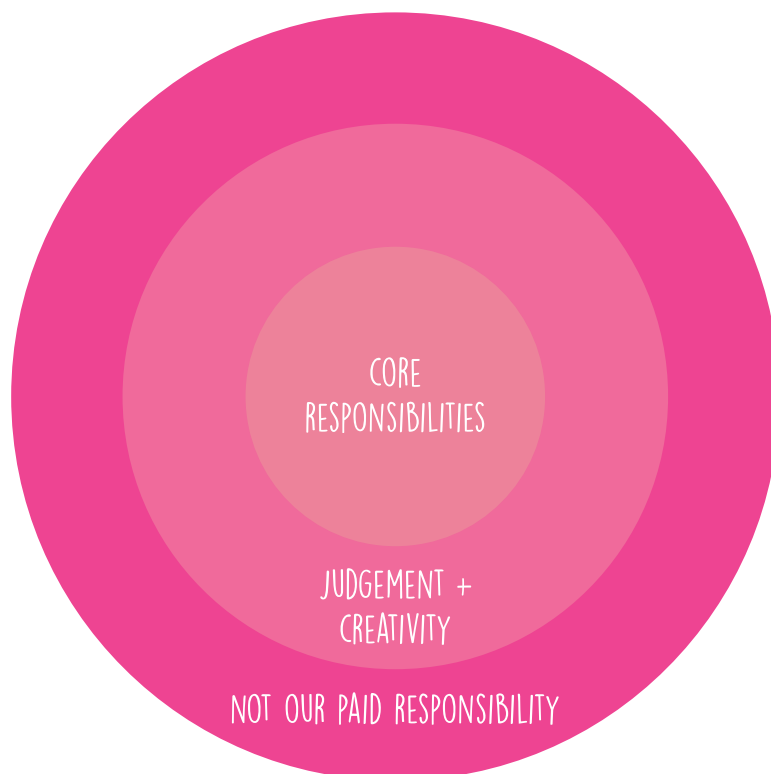
1. Outline the vision or goal	
2. What tasks do we see might be needed to help us reach the vision?	
3. What are our strengths to help us get this plan into action amongst the team members? – What do we all bring?	
4. What do we need to complete these tasks? What do we not have in the team yet and need to develop?	
5. Am I committed? Can I live with this plan and see a way for me to commit my contribution?	

## Handy Doughnut

Charles Handy<sup>19</sup> developed a process called the Doughnut principle, which helps teams get really clear on what are their core responsibilities are and what is open to creativity and judgement. Supporting a team to work through this and agree the team's core responsibilities enables each team member to understand exactly what they are committing to.

Within the team begin by:

1. Outlining the doughnut and its principle of supporting a team to get really clear on their responsibilities and then their individual and collective commitment to work together to pursue their purpose.
2. Ask the team to 'thought shower' (shout out their ideas) all of their core responsibilities, i.e. What is our role here? What are we here for? (capture all ideas on flip chart paper).
3. Once we have a list of core responsibilities the next question is the next layer of the doughnut. What do we do that is not our core responsibility, but is required if we are to achieve our purpose? Thought shower and record all ideas. This list should demonstrate areas that the team can use judgment and creativity about.
4. Finally, what do the team need to understand and agree is not their paid responsibility?
5. Ask the team to agree and complete the final doughnut, support the team to debate and discuss their ideas – remember reaching agreement may need the team to remember the question 'can I live with this?'. Once agreed, the team are then individually invited to commit. To sign the doughnut as a sign of their commitment.



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19 Charles Handy, *The Empty Raincoat*, 2007.

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# Accountability

**What is the Aim:** To support the team to hold each member and the team to account for their actions and contribution.

ACCOUNTABILITY IS ABOUT DELIVERING ON A COMMITMENT

In an ideal world once team members have committed to the plan and to the team, everyone will do what they have committed to, behave in a way that they have declared they will and the team will achieve what it set out to. However as I'm sure you have realised in the real world this is not always the case.

People are people and for a variety of reasons, we don't always do or behave in a way that we intend to. Sometimes this may be because we have gotten distracted by something else or we don't understand the impact our own behaviors are having on our fellow team members. Whatever the reason – brilliant teams work hard at noticing and reflecting on what might be getting in their way and then supporting each other to act and develop.

This requires courage, practice and the willingness to look at ourselves and our colleagues.

## Feedback versus self-reflection - which is more effective?

Feedback from others is often seen as the only way we can gain insights into our own blind spots. After all, how do I know if I'm doing a good job if I don't ask others?

Many of us have worked in organisations where the practice of giving and receiving feedback is inherent in our culture. Maybe this is in the form of an annual appraisal process that typically is led by managers who request feedback about an individual. The feedback is then given to the individual with a focus on what they need to 'change' about themselves. The person themselves often has little control over this.

Whilst feedback may have some value, there is growing evidence emerging to suggest it can have a damaging impact on people and most importantly doesn't encourage self-reflection and self-accountability.

Carol Sanford<sup>20</sup> argues self-reflection is far more accurate and useful to practice as way for people to identify their own restraints and areas of development.

Developing opportunities within the team for people to reflect on their commitments and progress is essential. **Brilliant teams believe each individual is responsible for monitoring their progress and identifying their barriers or difficulties.** This encourages self-responsibility and accountability to themselves and the team.

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20 Carol Sanford, The Regenerative Business, 2017.

Of course, each person can use the team to help them see what might be getting in the way of their progress. The team member can use their fellow team members to explore what the barriers are or what is getting in the way for them to act or progress.

It's not always easy to have the courage to share what you are noticing about a colleague, but what we can tell you is the more **you** practice the more you develop **AND** the team develops.

'COURAGE IS CONTAGIOUS. EVERY TIME WE CHOOSE COURAGE,  
WE MAKE EVERYONE AROUND US A LITTLE BETTER AND THE  
WORLD A LITTLE BRAVER.'

BRENE BROWN

How do we notice when a team member is drifting from their path or notice when a team member's behavior is hurting the rest of the team?

## Accountability for Tasks

Keeping a clear shared record of our commitments really helps a team to understand who is doing what and when – this gives each team member their own record of their commitments and supports the team to see if things are going awry. Checking in whenever the team meets on their commitments and providing the space for each team member to check in their progress is the starting point. Encouraging people to firstly notice if something has gone awry and then to reflect on what is getting in the way.

## Accountability for Behaviors

A team social contract that is developed in the early days provides the team with a reference point to go back to, especially if they are noticing behaviors that work against this team commitment. Regularly revisiting the social contract is a good way to check in but it is important to ask two questions –

- How am **I** doing at behaving in a way that I said I would?
- How are **we** doing at behaving like the team we all described?

## TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES:

### Developing a regular practice of self-reflection and accountability in our everyday

Many teams hold regular team meetings, however often these are seen as mechanisms to impart information and not vital opportunities to continue to build a brilliant team. We know you can do both.

Holding a team meeting that has self-reflection at its heart is simple.

Our team meeting structure includes the following elements;



1. **Check in** – how are you coming to this meeting?
2. **Agreeing our topics for the meeting** – a collective opportunity to say what needs to be shared or discussed today?
3. **Reflection on our social contract and on our actions / commitments from last time**  
– we recommend using a round robin approach for each team member to update us on their commitments and progress
4. **What are we noticing about our progress?**
  - What is getting in the way for me?
  - What can others see that I may be unable to see yet?
5. **Areas we need to pay attention to?** This may be from our own reflections or from business since we last met (if there are actions – make sure they are recorded and added to the action / commitment list – what, who and when)
6. **What can our team do to support and develop each other?**
7. **Facing the future – What are we thinking about as priorities for the weeks ahead?**  
Round Robin
8. **Check out** - how are you feeling leaving this meeting?

## Individual Self-Accountability

Taking control of our own development is liberating!

Imagine a team where you explore your own development. You invite others to share what they are noticing about things you find challenging and you create your own plan for your own growth and development.

As adults we are all responsible for our own growth and development. There are many tools that can help with this but essentially the essence is focusing on what you and others are learning about you and what might be some of the barriers that prevent you from moving on.

Self-reflection can take many forms and to begin with, we suggest using journaling. Journaling is a form of self-reflection. Taking time to reflect on the day or week can help people learn about themselves, deal with tough situations better and develop strategies to be their best selves going forward.

Many people think journaling requires lots of time to write down everything you have done that day or week – however we suggest finding a routine that works for each team member. Maybe once a week each team member records what they have noticed about their week – any big events that occurred, any tough situations, causes for celebration or something that inspired them. Sometimes it may be pages or it may be a paragraph – it doesn't really matter what or how much you record, the key is taking the time to reflect and explore.



Some helpful questions when reflecting on the day or week include:

- What do I notice about myself that was helpful to me or others?
- What do I notice about myself that was unhelpful to me or others?
- What am I grateful for in this experience?
- What was I thinking about in this experience?
- What I intend to do differently this week?

## Self-Regulation

Daniel Goleman developed the concept of emotional intelligence in the 1990's based on the developing understanding of neuroscience and psychology and it took the world by storm.

'EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS THE CAPACITY TO BE AWARE OF CONTROL, AND EXPRESS ONE'S EMOTIONS, AND TO HANDLE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS JUDICIOUSLY AND EMPATHETICALLY.'  
DANIEL GOLEMAN

## There are four aspects to emotional intelligence

- Self Awareness – You think about your reactions
- Self Management – You can modify your emotions
- Social Awareness – You can recognise and understand other people's emotions
- Relationship Management – you can read social situations and work well with others

One aspect we have found to have a significant impact in teams, is team member's ability to self-manage and regulate their emotions and the impact they have on others.

Learning about self-regulation or self-management is never wasted in both our personal lives and professional lives. When we under regulate (pay little attention to our emotions and the impact they have on others) this can undermine and damage a team. There are many resources to assist a team to learn about self-regulation and an area of long term development for us all.



# Focus on Results

**What is the Aim:** To develop ways for the team to keep focused on achieving the goals.

A team focused on their results is a powerful force. Knowing what you are working to achieve and being committed to the results is critical in a brilliant team.

However the truth is people need to really be focused on the results and outcomes to be motivated to achieve them. For a long time organizations have believed that money is the main motivator for team members. However Daniel Pink<sup>21</sup> argues that for most people, once secure pay and conditions are in place, there are other factors that motivate us and these are surprisingly simple.

According to Daniel Pink the three areas that motivate us include:

**Autonomy** – the desire to self-direct and to be in control of ourselves

**Mastery** – the desire to get better at things and learn new ways of working

**Purpose** – the desire to do things that matter and that make a difference

## How can we keep these as a focus in the team?

Brilliant teams pay attention to these areas and explore together how they can make sure these things are important in them. Below is an example from one team in Australia.

Themes	What this could look like in our team?
<b>Autonomy</b> – the desire to self-direct and to be in control of ourselves	As a team we have a decision making agreement – this outlines decisions that our team members can make alone and the decisions they need to call on colleagues for advice or support. We want each team member to know they are trusted and valued to make decisions.
<b>Mastery</b> – the desire to get better at things and learn new ways of working	As a team we want to develop individually so each of us has our own development plan. We take it in turns at our team meetings to hear what each team member is focused on developing and collectively we explore ways or opportunities for the person to further develop in their area of focus.
<b>Purpose</b> – the desire to do things that matter and that make a difference	We are all in our team because we are committed to making a difference. We have a rule in our social contract that we notice and celebrate everyone's achievement. We have a 'team member of the month' and at our team meetings we do a round robin and share something that we have noticed about a colleague that's worth celebrating in our team.

## **TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES:**

### **What helps you be your best self?**

In 2017 we asked teams a question and we recorded the data. The question we asked over and over was as follows:

### **What helps you be your best self? Think about times in your life at work when you think you have been your best self – what helped?**

We quickly found that the responses from each team member had significant similarities.

The following themes emerged:

- Contributing to something that matters to me
- People who support me to be me and believe in me
- Freedom to do things in the way I believe is right
- The opportunity to try something that helped me grow
- Feeling safe to explore
- Security to know the basics are covered
- Connection to something more than me – the chance to help others

This is interesting data and we have used this as a framework to help us focus on the things that people tell us matter to them in teams.

## The Brilliant Teams Framework



Asking the team to reflect regularly on this framework and exploring how this team is working towards these areas is very powerful. It provides the team with a regular way to check in together about the things that matter to us individual and collectively.

## Time to talk

One of the biggest areas we have seen that hurts a team is no time to actually be a team. This includes a method for communicating as a team and time to be a team together.

Team gatherings are essential to a team's health however so is everyday communication. Many teams don't work together every day, so finding a way for the team to talk together, share, problem solve and chat is essential. There is a plethora of mechanisms available today to support team communication. The team need to agree which one is best for them and practice using it, until it becomes integral to the team.

These may include:

- Group email
- Apps including Slack – a platform for teams to talk and share
- Microsoft teams – a platform to support team communication
- Whats app – a platform for teams to text each other in the group
- Skype or zoom – a platform to video in together

It doesn't matter which one is used, what matters is the team find a way to communicate daily with each other.

## Team time – celebrate and time to be a team

Nothing in our opinion is more important than the people in a team having the opportunity to connect with each other beyond their role. Time for people to share who they are, what matters to them and not just what they do in their role.

We are people and getting to know each other is at the heart of brilliant teams. Time to celebrate and be with each other socially should be at the top of any brilliant team's priority list. It doesn't have to be every week, or even every month – just make sure it happens at some points in the year.

# Continuing to learn

**What is the Aim:** To develop mechanisms that work for the team to continue to develop their brilliant team long term.

Once a team has found its feet and is becoming brilliant, it is really important that the team remember brilliant teams don't happen by accident. They are intentional about how they work together and focus on the things that help the team work well to continue to grow and develop.

It doesn't have to be rocket science, but it does have to be intentional.

Brilliant teams pay attention to all aspects and keep revisiting them.



- Agreeing how we work together
- Understanding who we are in our team
- Revisiting the purpose and direction of the team
- Continuing to build trust amongst the team
- Practicing conflict – keep the debates and discussion going
- Revisiting and refining our commitment to the purpose and the team
- Holding ourselves and each other to account
- Keeping our eye on the results – success

Anyone can build a brilliant team – anyone can be part of a brilliant team – we know this through real life experience.

WE HOPE THIS RESOURCE ACTS AS A USEFUL RESOURCE TO STEWARD  
YOUR JOURNEY AND THE TEAM'S JOURNEY INTO BRILLIANTNESS!



# Further Resources

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Building Brilliant Teams – Fulton & Dockerill

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Patrick Lencioni 5 Dysfunctions of a Team, 2006

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Carol Sanford, The Regenerative Business, 2017

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