

Team Feedback Form

- The purpose of this form is to help you look at how your overall team/department is doing. It is intended to stimulate mutual feedback between you and your leader and between group members when done as a joint exercise. Your assessment will hopefully lead to constructive changes for you and your work.
- Directions: Use the five point scale below to rate the following 15 areas. Feel free to make additional comments for any of the items. Note—virtual teams may want to adjust some of the items.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Strongly Disagree Basically Agree Strongly Agree

1. The objectives of my team/department are clear to me.
Rating _____ Comments:

2. The objectives were formed with ample discussion and prayer.
Rating _____ Comments:

3. I am involved in the decision making process in my work area.
Rating _____ Comments:

4. We meet often enough as a group.
Rating _____ Comments:

5. There is a good sense of team spirit in our work.
Rating _____ Comments:

6. The communication process is adequate within our group.
Rating _____ Comments:

7. I understand what is expected of me.
Rating _____ Comments:

8. I receive timely and sufficient feedback on my work.
Rating _____ Comments:

9. I feel respected and encouraged by my leader/supervisor.
Rating _____ Comments:

10. I feel encouraged and respected by my colleagues.
Rating _____ Comments:

11. I regularly try to encourage and support my colleagues.
Rating _____ Comments:

12. My communication with my leader/supervisor is adequate.
Rating _____ Comments:

13. I have sufficient time to fulfil my responsibilities.
Rating _____ Comments:

14. I am growing as a person as a result of my work involvement.
Rating _____ Comments:

15. Overall I am satisfied with and enjoy my work.
Rating _____ Comments:

Scores:

- **Individual:** Your overall rating (total divided by 15); also note your three highest and three lowest scores
- **Group:** Composite score for your group (total scores divided by 15 then divided by the number of raters)

It is also helpful to look at the following areas:

***struggles/successes that affect my work (CHOPS Inventory www.ethne.net/MemberCare/pages/resources)
***ways to improve the work we do TOGETHER, rated on a scale of 1-5, along with comments:

We trust... We plan... We discuss... We own... We commit... We perform... We review... We grow...

Doing Teams Well

Member Care Checklist for Team Leaders

Among their various duties, team leaders are charged with making sure there is adequate supportive care for team members. What should that look like, and how much is enough? The following checklist is offered as a guide. It is given from the point of view of an individual team member, following him/her through all stages of participation in team life.

Stage 1: Prefield Communication

Goal: Adequate preparation to smooth the stress of transition.

- Is there a standard description sent out to all potential team members in which the field situation has been adequately and accurately described? Does the new member know what to expect in his/ her first months on the ground?
- Is there a team Memo of Understanding which includes requirements of new members?
- Is there a basic support team in one's passport country, functioning together well with a designated coordinator, and in contact to with the field/team leader and ministry situation?

Stage 2: Welcoming the New Member: Reception and Orientation

Goal: Quickly integrate new team members, reduce isolation, and promote bonding within the team.

- How will the new team member get to know the individuals on his/her team? We recommend that within the first two weeks, every team household invites the new member over to dinner, or for some similar social function.
- If in your location, there is more than one team working, how will the new team member be introduced to the wider group?
- Who has primary responsibility for helping that person with logistics? (Ex: housing, banking, transportation, language learning plan, etc.) Some teams have instituted a mentor/ link person program, with specified tasks assigned to the mentor to insure that the new member has the information s/he needs to function in the new environment. This person should be appointed by the team leader and be someone who has successfully bonded with the culture. The ideal would be that the new team member could also be assisted by a national, to promote bonding with the new culture.
- Does your team have a "welcome" ritual? A party? A gift basket? A trip to a special place? Rituals that celebrate milestones in team life go a long way to improving team solidarity.
- Is the team member aware of culture shock issues, and particular language/ cultural pitfalls which commonly occur in your setting?
- If your team has a crisis/ contingency plan, has the team member been informed of it?

Stage 3: Maintenance and Growth

Goal: Facilitate an environment where team members can function at full capacity—spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Promote stability and ongoing growth.

- Does the team member have a clear understanding of his/her job, and related expectations?
- Is the team leader aware of the member's financial situation, and relationships with the sending organization?
- Is there a regular schedule for team retreats, where members can get away and be refreshed? Recommended: annually.
- In team meetings, is there a regular time for personal ministry?
- Are there regular times of worship which are refreshing for the team members?
- Is the atmosphere on the team an open environment, where both individual and group needs can be expressed? (ministry as well as personal)
- Does the team leader meet individually with each member at least twice a year? At these times, does the team leader review with the individual his/her personal and ministry goals?
- Is there someone available should the team member have problems that go beyond the team and team leader's ability to help? Does the member know who this person is and how to get help?

- Is cultural diversity among team members openly addressed?
- Are there conflict resolution guidelines which are understood and followed?
- Are in-service trainings available, and connections to the broader Y family encouraged?
- Is the team member taking regular breaks and holidays?
- Does the team have “fun” times together?
- Are debriefings provided at appropriate junctures?
 - before and after furlough
 - after critical incidents

Stage 4: Saying Goodbye

Goal: *Promoting healthy closure for both the departing and remaining team members.*

- Does the team have a ritual (both team-wide, city-wide, etc.) for members who are leaving? For example, in one location, at the going-away party, departing team members are given a book with pictures of all the team members and their families, with “good-bye” notes written beside the pictures. Gifts and mementos such as a video of the good-bye party can also be helpful.
- Is the departing team member prayed for and blessed (if possible) in a formal time together?
- Have all team members received adequate notification of the team member’s departure?
- Are the remaining team members given opportunity to talk about how the leaving affects them?
- Are departing team members debriefed, and encouraged to debrief again after returning home?

The above guidelines are based upon the following three-tiered approach to member care. It is very important to be part of a Support Team in one’s passport country. This team provides the ongoing, multifaceted support that is needed to be healthy and effective.

Tier 1 Normal Growth and Development

Who is responsible for the care?

Team members, ministering to one another. Support team in one’s passport country.

What is the level of care?

Help with normal bumps and challenges of life

Tier 2 Issues which arise on the Field

Who is responsible for the care?

Team Leader and/or person designated by Team Leader. The ideal is that every team has a designated Team Member Care Coordinator, who receives specialized training.

What is the level of care?

Help with problems which are serious enough to impede stability and growth. An example of this level of care would be a member care coordinator meeting weekly with someone who is having trouble with authority figures. This is not ongoing counseling, but is time-limited and focused directly upon a particular issue which is impairing the team member’s functioning.

Tier 3 Crises

Who is responsible for the care?

Member Care Specialists, from within company, and from without.

What is the level of care?

In the event of crisis which are beyond the ability of the Team Leader and designated assistants to address, consultation with the Regional Member Care Coordinator is recommended. When direct assistance cannot be given by the Regional MC Coordinator, every attempt will be made to give appropriate referrals.

Building a Healthy Team Lessons from the book "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team"

Dr. Kelly O'Donnell
International Y, March-May 2007

I think almost everyone has been on a struggling team. It can seem like such a waste of time and energy—a real distraction that is filled with relational wounds. A few years ago, I was looking for a simple, practical model to help strengthen our teams, and to prevent team meltdown. The book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni has been a real answer for me. The first section of this popular and easy-to-read book is a fascinating narrative about how a dysfunctional leadership team overcame its entrenched problems. The second section discusses the five-part model of team life which was used to help this leadership team. And with some adjustments for multicultural contexts, this model can be very useful for our teams too.

Lencioni's model starts with the premises that true teamwork is elusive, and that teams "unknowingly fall prey to five natural but dangerous pitfalls." The antidotes for these pitfalls are straightforward, yet challenging to put into practice: build trust, engage in constructive discussions and debate, make appropriate commitments, embrace mutual accountability, and scrupulously attend to results and collective performance. Each part builds on the other, and a deficit in any one of them will wreak havoc on a team.

The main strength of the book is also its weakness: the use of a "simple" model that emphasizes open, direct communication. Of course, teams are not always so simple. Team members from different cultures—including organizational, gender, disciplinary, and generational cultures—have different preferences for "doing teams." This is especially true in the areas of negotiating "power distance" between leaders and members, showing respect, tolerating diversity, and welcoming opinions.

Often it seems that the most articulate and verbal will influence their teams the most. And this puts others at a disadvantage. Further, when those "others" are from a different culture, with the team language being a second or third language for them, and they are dependent in some ways (financially) on the other more verbal folks, then we see what regularly happens in multicultural groups: namely, *cultural domination*, even if it is not "intentional or malicious."

The book also deals a lot with trust, and this raised some questions for me about how trust is built and broken. What can we do once trust in teams is shattered? It is so easy to destroy trust. Team building, when trust is unstable, often seems more like team re-building.

I like to distinguish between *functional trust* and *foundational trust*. Lencioni does not. Nor do most of the teams with which I have worked. Functional trust is *assumed*, and needed so that we can work together. Foundational trust is *earned*, and developed over tough times together. These two types of trusts overlap. Yet it is a real mistake to think that being friendly colleagues in a work context (functional trust) is the same as being true friends in a non-work context (foundational trust). The shift from functional to foundational trust is slow, easily hindered, and essential to understand as a team!

"Trust shifts" happen via consistent demonstrations over time that people are seriously and sacrificially committed to each other. This is especially evident during crises, such as a natural disaster that forces people to work together closely, with mutual dependency. Further, there is the genuine willingness to put someone else's best interests over one's own. There is also the deep sense that people are doing their utmost to respect and understand each other. People communicate regularly and equitably. And finally, people simply follow through on their promises. Where foundational trust flows, entrenched conflicts usually break up—or never form in the first place.

Here are some more ideas that may help create or re-create this foundational trust:

- verifiable contrition and behavior change (over time) on the part of one or both of the parties
- exploring different "ways of being"—leadership styles, work styles, processing styles, etc.
- new leaders or power structures are put into place in an organization
- changing departments or teams for a better "fit" and not trying to make a relationship work that is not working—people then connect with each other better in their different settings/roles
- personal therapy
- good conflict mediation
- interventions (organizational) that can appropriately remove and require restoration for dysfunctional people and the dysfunctional systems that they help engender
- going through an interpersonal skills course together
- unilaterally humbling oneself and/or unilaterally making amends and/or unilaterally changing

Another consideration for me is Lencioni's emphasis on "debate." Teams are encouraged to passionately discuss important ideas and issues of an ideological rather than personal nature. In practice however, it is not always so easy to separate the ideological from the personal. Also, people wound easily. As part of our commitment to "love truth and peace" in our relationships (Zech. 8:19), we want to discuss matters in ways that honor each other and help us to connect. Yet I do appreciate the author trying to free us up from just being nice with each other when honesty and sharing differences are more important.

I want to advocate for *responsible openness*, which acknowledges that personal disclosures must consider the best interests of the group. For example, "spontaneous and authentic" comments can actually be too much for a group to handle at times, especially poorly-timed, negative ones shared by a person of influence. I also want to endorse the idea of having *realistic relationships* which acknowledges that there will be different levels of intimacy between team members. Not every one can be best friends with each other, and so connecting with most people as colleagues rather than as confidants is likely to be the norm.

I find that the prevailing organizational culture in Y—reflected in our Y values—can really help us to harmonize our cultural diversity, and provide common ground for relating well (e.g., confession, reconciliation, laying down rights, hearing God, hospitality). The weakest area in Lencioni's model for us, generally speaking, would be the fear of conflict. We need to continue to develop acceptable, safe forums where people can share their ideas and concerns in ways that foster trust, commitment, accountability, and ministry effectiveness.

In summary, I really appreciate this creative book and recommend it widely. Get it, consider its multicultural applications, and discuss it in depth as a group!

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The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable, by Patrick Lencioni; published in 2002 by Jossey-Bass. Also, consider Lencioni's *Overcoming The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Field Guide*; published in 2005 by Jossey-Bass. (www.tablegroup.com is Lencioni's web site/resources for teams)

Guidelines for Doing Team Building

Kelly O'Donnell, ch 14 of M. Care book (1992)

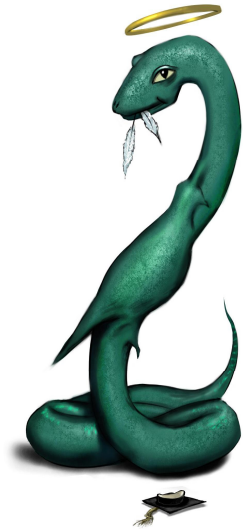
- To begin, team development is something to regularly plan into your schedules. It is an ongoing process, involving much more than the initial orientation period or annual performance appraisals. A team development event every one to three months should be standard for most teams.
- Team development helps prevent major problems erupting within the team by dealing with issues that may otherwise not be discussed. They are a necessary complement to regular times of prayer together, fellowship, annual retreats, and conferences. Some teams benefit from special team sessions that are extended over two to three days, even when there is not some kind of crisis.
- Team exercises work best when the team ethos encourages openness and speaking into each other's lives. Team members, especially leaders, must be willing to take some risks with each other and be willing to show weaknesses.
- Choose one or more "growth facilitators" on the team who can coordinate team exercises. These should be individuals who are sensitive to the needs of others and to group process. Facilitators usually serve as moderators for these times, drawing people out and keeping things on track. They need not be the team leader nor a pastoral counsellor to be effective.
- Be aware of the team's *current focal point*--that is, the area which is the immediate concern of the group at any given time. This is the point of interest that a team would usually move towards if there were minimal resistance or reluctance to do so. It also represents the next step towards growth as a team seeks to become more viable. Sometimes the real focal point only becomes apparent during the middle of a team session or series of sessions.
- The focus of the sessions will change as the needs of the team change. Make sure that you are really dealing with felt needs of the team members, not just someone's good ideas. Frequently an issue or particular theme needs to be addressed over a period of time.
- One important goal in almost any session is to help people speak and listen to one another in new ways. Another goal is to encourage people to make contact with each other at fairly deep levels. People usually want to put aside their work roles and be themselves. Effective team exercises allow the real person to emerge from the role.
- Keep team development and team building times as practical and enjoyable as possible. Experiential approaches can produce more insights and change than simply sitting around and talking about "things." Use some novelty to keep people motivated and engaged. Make sure everyone on the team is included and contributes without feeling forced.
- Find ways to elicit group competencies and call on the collective wisdom of the team. No one should dominate. Important resources lie within the group, not just in some outside specialist.
- Encourage people to try new behaviours. Respect any hesitations to do an exercise. Sometimes people may need to be gently challenged; other times it is better to modify or change the exercise.
- Children are members of teams too. Do not overlook their need for growth and involvement in team exercises. They can also contribute a lot to the overall group.
- When giving feedback, be an encourager. People need to know their contribution. Avoid using generalities, so be specific and direct. Avoid making statements about intentions. Try using statements prefaced by "I think" or "I feel" rather than "You are."
- Always debrief at the end of the session. Discuss what it was like, what was helpful, not helpful. Let people express their thoughts and feelings and put closure on any unfinished matters.
- Consider using a coach/consultant at times, someone with an ongoing relationship to the team. Helps to: clarify issues, look at hard questions, mediate, bring fresh perspectives, encourage, equip.

Wise as Doves and Innocent as Serpents?

Kelly O'Donnell, Excerpted from January 2007, *EMQ*

(article available in 12 languages: <http://mcaresources.googlepages.com/realitydose>)

Table 2. Ten Suggestions for Dealing with Dysfunction/Toxicity



1. There is a continuum of responses to carefully consider. It ranges from prudently withdrawing and protecting oneself (Proverbs 27:12) to prudently confronting and holding one's ground (Proverbs 25:26). Act with integrity, without wavering, based on your convictions and wise advice.

2. Confrontation of serious dysfunction is done as a group, with solidarity, not by oneself. Get ongoing, experienced, outside consultation, at times including legal advice. Well-intentioned colleagues wanting to help, yet with limited understanding of dysfunction/discipline, can create even greater problems. Refer to any organizational policies for conflict resolution, grievances, and whistle-blowing.

3. Confrontation is usually a necessary step (e.g., clinical/recovery interventions) prior to or as part of mediation and reconciliation approaches. This assumes though that there are people willing to take some risks and that there is an authority structure in place for leverage and accountability. Always include an historical review to help identify pervasive patterns. In mercy, focus on truth and justice, and don't get side-tracked or duped simply with anyone's "pain."

4. Core parts of the reconciliation process in dysfunction/toxic situations include truth, justice, contrition, forgiveness, restitution, and discipline. Prematurely seeking for reconciliation is never helpful. In certain situations, the reconciliation process takes years. And without verifiable contrition and change, sometimes all we can do is "cut our losses", move on, and entrust ourselves to our faithful Creator (I Peter 4:19). Forgiveness though, is a command in Scripture to intentionally pursue (Mathew 18: 21,22).

5. Impartiality and objectivity do not necessarily imply neutrality. Don't be afraid to take a stand. But beware of seeing any party as being "all bad" or "all good". Truth, packaged diplomatically, is usually a good way forward. Talking in terms of behavior patterns rather than personality problems, and situational influences rather than dispositional inadequacies, may help make the input/process more acceptable. But be realistic: certain pervasive and ongoing character/systemic issues are not so amenable to change.

6. Make room for cultural, generational, gender, and organizational variation. Difference is not deviance. Preferences are not usually pathogens. In many cultures, direct approaches may not be appreciated, no matter how diplomatic or respectful one is.

7. Expect there to be diverging accounts of "truth" and deflecting responsibility, plus being misunderstood, manipulated, and blamed. It is a messy process. One must be willing to live with compromise, incomplete closure on important issues, minimal contrition, and partial justice.

8. True trust is earned and not assumed. One needs good reasons, over time, to deeply trust others where there is a history of dysfunction. Trust is slowly built, easily broken, and slowly rebuilt.

9. If you think you are going crazy as you deal with toxicity, you probably are. Dealing with toxicity takes a high toll on our sanity. Get outside reality checks and support. Don't overestimate your ability to repel toxicity or to avoid becoming toxic yourself. Bitterness defiles. Resist it! (Hebrews 12:15).

10. Maintain a solid Biblical perspective: Our Lord cares for us often by refining us through desert experiences and through injustices. He zealously loves others, even dysfunctional people, as much as He loves us; and we are all major debtors in need of unmerited mercy (Matthew 18:23-35).

North Africa Case Study—Strong Teams
“The Water Project”
Adapted 12.07 from *M. Care* (1992)

This fictitious case highlights several aspects of the interpersonal, task, spiritual, and ethos dimensions of team life. Many of the issues affecting a community development team discussed in this case are also relevant for other types of teams. Read through the case and discuss it together as a team. Refer to the questions at the end.

Team North Africa

For the last 12 months, a years a five-person team has been working as “tentmakers” in a city (100,000 people) in North Africa [chose a country]. The team is part of Y and sent out from the Y MENA regions. The purpose of this team is to provide community services based on the felt needs of the people. Their main community development project is finding ways to purify water in the villages surrounding the city.

The team also exists to develop relationships with the people and to help form a community of followers of Isa. Hopefully there will be several communities formed. The original goal was to form the first community in two years. This goal has now been extended to four years due to minimal language skills in the team. There are also some concerns about the “religious” nature of the team from one the international NGOs in the city (Water for the World) as well concerns from two of the local imams. Lately too, there have been some “differences” developing in the team.

The team members belong to the same sending agency and include:

Hani and Fatima, the leaders, both aged 35, Egyptians, spent 10 years working with Ms in Amman and Upper Egypt. They have degrees in business and sociology. They also have a business experience running bookshops in Egypt. They have **three daughters**, ages six, three, and one. Fatima teaches English to some neighbours. Hani is not sure what he wants to do, and how best to contribute. He feels “underemployed” and gets discouraged ,and he spends a lot of time on the computer.

Robin, aged 42, Australian, is an environmental engineer by profession, was divorced four years ago, and teaches students one class in the local college, with translation. His major work is developing clean sources off water, and this is the main reason why this team was able to come and live in this country (and get visas). Robin is very competent, and he thinks the local women are very beautiful.

Laura, aged 28, is single, and senses a strong “call” to work with the established Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches as well as Ms, She has previously participated in several short-term outreaches to a tribal group in South America. She is from Brazil. She is really not so interested in water projects, but has not told this to the team. Laura sometimes does not eat enough food, especially when she is feeling discouraged.

Ruth, aged 22, is a Korean who recently joined the team after having finished her bachelor's degree in international studies at the American University in Cairo. Ruth works with Robin in a small project to find clean sources of water. She has the best language skills on the team, and loves to spend time building relationships. Some people laugh at her Korean/American accent, but she usually does not mind. Although sometime she cries privately about not being able to communicate better, and not feeling so accepted as a foreigner and a woman who is not yet married. Her family wants her to stay in Korea, get a “real” job, and marry a nice Korean man.

Before departing for North Africa, each team member went through a three week program in language and culture learning principles in Cairo. They also met regularly for six months to strategize and pray about their upcoming work. Besides English, the languages spoken by the team before their arrival were Portuguese (by Laura), Korean (Ruth), and Arabic (Hani and Fatima). Their initial goal as a team was to immerse themselves in the culture and learn as much French and a major ethnic language as possible. The Arabic in this North Africa country is not easy to understand for Egyptians. Further, some of the people resent Egyptians, for political and social reasons. But they like watching Egyptian shows on TV—and this is a point of contact for relationships.

The first year in this country has been difficult. Progress in the ethnic language is slow although everyone is at least conversant in French. Team members live on their own with the exception of Laura and Ruth who live with local families. They all live within a 20 minute walking distance from each other.

The team has met once a week for prayer, worship, and discussion of their work. The strategy for developing a community has three parts: to make friends with local families who are respected in the city; to participate in "salat, zakat, and sawm" (prayer, almsgiving, and fasting); and to eventually hold a weekly Bible study. Hani and Robin have tried to pray in the mosques but each time have been asked to leave since they were not Muslims. The team also has agreed to abstain from pork, alcohol, and to dress like the people in this country. Laura and Ruth attend a weekly Bible study for expatriates held at the Catholic church.

There have been four "followers" from among the more marginalized of the city--i.e. the very poor and homeless. Two other college students have believed in Isa, but they are fearful of being rejected by family members if they openly share their faith.

Team relationships are generally good. But during the last two months they are marked with tension. One of the basic problems seems to be that Robin and Hani have different views on the direction for the work. Some team members also feel that Hani and Fatima are too involved with their kids, that Robin is too task oriented, and that Laura is distant from the others. Hani and Fatima are considering going on taking a three-month break back to Egypt, which has also stirred up some concern among the team.

There are a few other issues of concern to the team:

- **how to make decisions with less friction,
- **whether to have a university students from the USA work with them for one month next summer,
- **whether to become more involved with the local Catholic church,
- **whether to try to live together in community as a way to make their finances go farther,
- **how to improve their language and spend more time building relationships

In spite of some of their struggles and challenges, each team member is committed to the team and the "community" goals. Robin, however, is the only one who says he is really satisfied with the work he is doing. The others feel satisfied occasionally with life there, but usually do not like having to try to work—or to pretend to work--on a Water Project”.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the issues for this team?
2. What recommendations would you make to help this team be “stronger”?
