CHAPTER 4 ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR LEADERS: COLLABORATION AND TEAM BUILDING

By Dr. Kevin Lowe, Marti Anderson and Anne Seymour
National Victim Assistance Academy Text

ABSTRACT

Strong, positive working relationships are essential to both leaders *and* the organizations they lead. Collaboration and partnerships with allied professionals and community members who share concerns about victims' rights and assistance contribute to the success of the discipline as a whole. The capacity to build and strengthen team initiatives that assist victims and promote public safety—both within and without an organization—is a crucial skill for leaders in this field.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, students will understand the following concepts:

- Distinguishing features of the four types of working relationships, and challenges to successful working relationships.
- Guidelines for successful collaboration to promote victims' rights and services and public safety.
- Practical approaches for building, implementing, and evaluating team initiatives.
- Characteristics of high-performing teams.
- Characteristics of a strong team leader.

INTRODUCTION TO WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

> Let us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.
>
> — John F. Kennedy, 1963

There are many phrases utilized in the victim assistance community to describe efforts that bring people together with a common cause. George Keiser of the National Institute of Corrections (1998) describes these terms and their meanings:

> Some recurring words are often used in a very cavalier fashion to describe types of working relationships. It is important to be clear about the depth of involvement contained in the meaning of these various words, and then to use the appropriate word for the relevant circumstances.
>
> These words include cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and partnership.

COOPERATION

Cooperation does not require much depth of relationship from the parties involved. Typically, a couple of people identify how what they are doing in their organizations would benefit each other. They agree to share what they do, but are not required to do anything differently. The activities engaged in are very informal. No resources are transferred, and the life of those involved goes on much as it has. This may be the initial point of developing relationships between the involved organizations. A key element for initiating cooperation is personal trust.

COORDINATION

Like cooperation, the depth of involvement between organizations is not required to be great. The relationship tends to be more definitive with specific protocols or conventions commonly being established. The business of the various organizations does not change significantly. The number of people involved in the process is increased, and the participants are more cognizant of how their independent activities can be integrated for common benefit, or can influence the work of another organization. This level of working together requires more discipline and more formal structure in following the established protocols. The importance of integrity of the various participants and their activities becomes more apparent.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration introduces the concept of organizations coming together to create something new, commonly a new process. Generally, the organizations bring a business they already know well and identify how, by joint actions, they can redesign a process to their mutual benefit. There must not only be trust and integrity as a foundation, but the parties now need to understand the perspectives of the other collaborators' self interest(s). This understanding suggests a greater depth of involvement between organizations. It is not merely exchanging information, but developing a sense of awareness for whom the other parties are, what motivates them, and what they need out of working together. Unlike cooperation or coordination, for the first time something new is being developed through the relationship of organizations. Even with the increased intensity of involvement, the various organizations retain their independent identities.

PARTNERSHIP

Partnership is the bringing together of individuals or organizations to create a new entity. This may be the extreme extension of collaboration. The depth of involvement is reflected by a commitment referred to as ownership. No longer are there independent organizations agreeing to work together on some initiative as long as it is convenient. Nor is this a group of organizations buying into someone else's plan. With a partnership, there is an agreement to create something new which, through joint ownership, requires that the partners make it succeed. One measure of success is whether the partnership makes all the partners successful.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF COOPERATION, COORDINATION, AND COLLABORATION

While the words "cooperation," "coordination," and "collaboration" are often used interchangeably, there are features that distinguish notable differences between both the words and their applications. A summary of research on factors that influence successful collaboration, developed by Martin Blank (1992), is included in *Figure 1* below:

	COOPERATION	COORDINATION	COLLABORATION
VISION AND RELATIONSHIPS	Based on individual relationships that may be mandated by a third party.	Individual relationships are supported by the organizations they represent.	Commitment of organizations and their leaders is fully behind their representatives.
	Organizational missions and goals are not taken into account.	Mission and goals of the individual organizations are reviewed for compatibility.	Common mission and goals are created.
	Interactions occur as needed and may last indefinitely.	Interaction is usually around one specific project or task of definable length.	One or more projects are undertaken for longer-term results.
STRUCTURE, RESPONSIBILITY, AND COMMUNICATION	Relationships are informal; each organization functions separately.	Organizations involved take on needed roles, but function relatively independently of each other.	New organizational structure and/or clearly defined and interrelated roles that constitute a formal division of labor are created.
	No joint planning is required.	Some project-specific planning is required.	Comprehensive planning is required that includes developing joint strategies and measuring success in terms of impact on the needs of those served.
	Information is conveyed as needed.	Communication roles are established and definite channels are created to facilitate interaction.	Many levels of communication are created beyond those needed to merely promote interaction, as clear information is a keystone of success.
RESOURCES AND REWARDS	Resources are separate, serving the individual organization’s needs.	Resources are acknowledged and can be made available to others for a specific project.	Resources are pooled or jointly secured for a longer-term effect that is managed by the collaborative structure.
	Rewards are mutually acknowledged.	Rewards are mutually acknowledged.	Organizations share in the products; more is accomplished jointly than could have been individually.
AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	Authority rests solely with individual organizations.	Authority rests with the individual organizations, but there is coordination among participants.	Authority is determined by the need to balance ownership by individual organizations with expediency to accomplish purpose.
	Leadership is unilateral and control is central.	Some sharing of leadership and control.	Leadership is dispersed and control is shared and mutual.
	All authority and accountability rests with the individual organizations, which act independently.	There is some shared risk, but most of the authority and accountability falls to the individual organizations.	Equal risk is shared by all organizations in the collaboration.

Figure 1

Beyond Traditional Collaboration

In issues affecting crime and victimization, there are several conventional stakeholders: crime victims, service providers, and juvenile and criminal justice officials and agencies (from law enforcement through the appellate process). Today there are new and exciting partnerships forming between victims, their allies, and disciplines whose foci include issues relevant to crime and victimization. Victim advocates need to closely evaluate *exactly who resides in the orbit around victimization*. These partnerships, while surprising in some cases, offer new, important alliances in the fight against crime and efforts to aid victims. They are identified below:

- *Members of the clergy* are often the professionals to whom victims turn following the crisis of victimization. As such, clergy members are important partners in any effort that seeks to help victims cope with trauma and loss. For example, clergy members were key partners in the Colorado-Oklahoma Resource Council (CORC) that was created to assist and support victims who attended the Oklahoma City bombing/murder trials in Denver, Colorado in 1998.
- *Mental health and public health professionals and agencies* possess expertise and resources that can assist victims of crime. When violence was cited as a major public health concern by the Surgeon General, a variety of partnerships emerged that combined the knowledge and practical experience of health professionals with that of professionals in public safety and victim assistance. In 1998, the Centers for Disease Control provided a five-year grant to a consortium of mental health and victimology researchers and practitioners to form the National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Consortium. The Consortium fosters interdisciplinary research and resources among researchers, practitioners, criminal justice agencies, and public health officials.
- *Public policy makers* have historically had a significant role in effecting changes in laws that define and protect victims' rights. In recent years, state legislators, state-level executive branch officials, and local elected officials have worked closely with crime victims and advocates to forge public policy agendas dedicated to victims' rights and public protection. In 1998, the Council of State Governments Northeast Region (with support from OVC) sponsored a regional symposium with representatives from ten states, including victims, service providers, legislators, and justice professionals, to develop public policy recommendations and action plans for their respective states, specific to improving victims' rights and services.
- *The news media* wield tremendous influence over public policy and program development in the disciplines of victim assistance and public safety. Timely information about trends in crime and victimization, model programs, and responsive public policy is available to concerned citizens, elected officials, justice practitioners and victim advocates through the news media. In a number of communities, informal partnerships have emerged through regular "bench-bar-press" sessions, in which the news media and justice professionals (which can include law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and victim advocates) meet to discuss media coverage of trials and public safety issues. These sessions often result in collaborative efforts to increase responsible news media coverage and create avenues through which the media have access to timely, accurate information for their stories.
- *Researchers and practitioners in the field of substance abuse* have much to contribute to the discipline of victimology. Many crimes are committed while offenders are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, and many victims (particularly of domestic violence) live in environments where substance abuse is pervasive. Numerous research studies have

shown that some victims use alcohol, prescription drugs, and even illegal drugs following their victimization to cope with trauma. Unfortunately, alcohol and other drugs are the stress reducer of choice for professionals involved in high-stress occupations, such as victim services. Collaborative efforts focusing on substance abuse treatment, education about the devastating effects of alcohol and other drugs (particularly related to crime and victimization), and drug abuse prevention offer meaningful insights to the field of victim services.

These five examples are indicative of the types of natural allies who can join together to improve victims' rights and services. Collaborative efforts such as these can be developed at the local, state, and national levels as well as across these jurisdictions. If an individual or entity is in a position to further the cause of victims' rights and the provision of quality victim services, then they have a rightful and meaningful role in collaborative networks and coalitions.

COLLABORATING FOR VICTIMS' RIGHTS AND SERVICES

There are a number of ways that crime victims, service providers, and allied professionals work together at the local, state, and national levels, as follows:

- *Fiduciary relationships* primarily involve financial support from government sources for victim services from the federal level to states and localities, and from states to local jurisdictions.
- *Public policy initiatives* have led to the passage of over 30,000 federal and state victims' rights statutes. Often, good ideas for laws cross over jurisdictional boundaries. For example, when California passed the nation's first anti-stalking statute in 1990, the other forty-nine states followed suit within eighteen months. The strength of America's grass roots victims movement has also been instrumental in organizing to support key federal initiatives, most notably the proposed federal constitutional amendment, and the successful passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994.
- *Implementation of victims' rights* helps ensure that no matter where a victim lives or what type of crime he or she has been hurt by, help is available. With over 9,000 victim assistance programs operating in the public and private sectors, and advocacy services provided by numerous national organizations, collaborative efforts have strengthened crime victims' ability to understand and seek implementation of their rights.
- *Research initiatives* are increasingly involving partnerships between researchers and victim assistance practitioners. National and regional public opinion surveys, research of specific victim populations, and focus groups have been conducted by national, state, and local practitioners, with the results guiding the development of innovative and effective approaches to victim services.
- *Training and technical assistance*, with substantial leadership provided by OVC, to develop curricula and training tools help increase professionals' and volunteers' knowledge of victims' rights and services. Standardized training programs have been developed for law enforcement, the judiciary, prosecutors, institutional and community corrections, and juvenile justice professionals as well as for allied professionals such as mental health and public health practitioners, clergy, and educators.
- *Information and referral services* constantly cross jurisdictional boundaries to provide timely resources and referrals to victims in every region of the nation. The use of the

Internet, national toll-free telephone numbers, and the U.S. Department of Justice-sponsored Resource Centers have greatly enhanced the ability to provide information and referrals to crime victims and concerned citizens.

CHALLENGES TO SUCCESSFUL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Whether victim advocates cooperate, coordinate, collaborate, or partner with allied professionals, volunteers, and communities, there are ten common challenges that can hinder the success of these important working relationships:

1. *Lack of a shared vision or mission*. When people work together toward a common goal, it should be clearly understood, easily communicated, and shared by all involved parties. If a vision or mission is pre-established by an individual or a small faction of a larger group, it may not achieve "ownership" that is needed by the whole group to ensure success. It is crucial to take time and process through a shared vision or mission with all stakeholders and establish goals and objectives that are supported by all.
2. *Lack of agreement about the problem or issue to be addressed*. While diversity is one of the essential elements of collaborative efforts, it also results in differing and often unique perspectives about the basic issue that is being addressed. In developing good working relationships, stakeholders must seek a consensus that respects different views and opinions.
3. *Lack of incremental successes on the pathway to an ultimate goal*. Too often people working together aim for one definitive goal that, in their view, connotes success. It is necessary to determine incremental, smaller successes that can help stakeholders ensure that they are headed in the right direction, and evaluate possible alternatives along the way to the ultimate goal if warranted.
4. *Egos*. The concept of "turf wars" is not foreign to most victim advocates. When such battles expand to incorporate even more stakeholders (and more egos), the results can be highly damaging to collaborative efforts. All interested parties must be willing to break down turf barriers and "leave their egos at the door" in their mutual attempts to reach a common goal.

5. *Lack of diversity among group members working toward a common goal*. If it is true that "great minds think alike," it is likely that "different minds think even better." One of the greatest strengths of professionals and volunteers involved in public safety issues is their diversity—by gender, age, culture, sexual orientation, profession, socioeconomic status, and geography. The many different viewpoints and perspectives of victim advocates and allied professionals are a key asset to collaborative efforts and, without them, such efforts are doomed to failure.

6. *Not having the "right players" at the table*. In many public safety initiatives, often the victims and their representatives are missing from collaboration forums. It is helpful to adopt a "global" view of the problem or issue that is being addressed in terms of *all* the stakeholders who are affected: victims, offenders, the community, system professionals, public policy makers, and the like. If a person or group of people is affected by a problem, it is absolutely critical that they be involved in developing a solution!

7. *Lack of understanding and implementation of change management techniques*. Most working relationships seek change: in justice processes, service delivery, and community involvement, to cite a few examples. If the road to a solution does not address the specific changes that will occur as a result and institutionalize these changes for the future, the outcomes will not be successful in the long run. Managing change is one of the most difficult, yet most important, elements of collaborative efforts.

8. *Lack of resources*. If time, level of commitment, and human or financial resources are not adequate to achieve a shared goal, failure is likely. Considerable attention should be paid to what type of resources are needed, at what point, by whom, and for how long, throughout the collaborative process.

9. *Lack of measures to evaluate success*. As stakeholders in collaborative processes begin their joint efforts, evaluation must be a key tenet of all their activities. Stakeholders' vision, goals, and objectives should all be measurable in concrete terms, and their plan should be flexible enough to accommodate changes that result from evaluative data that show a need to change course.

10. *Lack of understanding about victim trauma, rights, and needs*. While most collaborative efforts related to improving public and personal safety are well intentioned, some lack an overall understanding of how victims are affected by crime. It is important to incorporate training about victims' rights, needs, trauma, and sensitivity into any collaborative initiative that addresses public safety issues. The involvement of crime victims as active participants or advisors to guide the planning and implementation of such initiatives is also helpful.

COLLABORATION: A CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

While this chapter has offered a broad overview of the core elements of successful collaboration, they can be easily summarized in the following twenty points:

1. The problem(s) or issue(s) of concern are clearly defined.

2. All potential stakeholders and key leaders/change agents have been invited to participate in the collaborative initiative:
   - People who live with the problem.
   - People who have power to change the problem.
   - People who have the technical expertise to address the problem.

3. Diversity among stakeholders is sought and respected as a key tenet of collaboration.

4. A mission or vision statement that identifies the critical problems or issues and possible collaborative solutions is developed and shared by all key stakeholders.

5. The problem or issue is analyzed to develop theories about why it is occurring and what can be done to change the situation.

6. Possible strategies or solutions are brainstormed among key stakeholders, with consensus built around the most sound approaches to problem solving or intervention.

7. The consensus strategy is divided into strategic goals and measurable objectives.

8. Goals and objectives are assigned an order of priority, with a sense of urgency given to the highest priority issues.

9. Responsibilities for action are developed and assigned to the relevant stakeholders, with clear understanding of the interrelationships among goals and objectives.

10. A time schedule for completion of goals and objectives is developed that includes tasks, persons responsible, deliverables, and deadlines. This should be flexible, depending upon ongoing evaluation results (see #14).

11. If necessary, memoranda of understanding and/or interagency agreements are drafted to clarify roles, responsibilities, and interrelationships needed to accomplish the goals and objectives.

12. A list of resources needed for success is developed, which may include research, evaluation, training, technical assistance, marketing, funding, public policy development, direct outreach to core constituents, public education, media relations, and technology enhancements.

13. Stakeholders involved in the collaborative effort assume responsibility (often jointly) for developing and/or providing resources that have been identified as critical to success.

14. Significant attention is paid to evaluation measures that can delineate success or failure. Flexible approaches are in place to allow for revision of original goals and objectives, based upon evaluation results (this is an ongoing process).

15. Methods of ongoing communications and regular meetings for status reviews are institutionalized.

16. A commitment to managing the change that results from the collaborative initiative is institutionalized, with consensus on how stakeholders will each educate their professional peers and volunteers about the positive aspects of the change and help them adjust to the new policies, procedures, and/or programs that result.

17. Small successes and achievements are celebrated, and barriers to success are viewed as surmountable challenges.

18. An assessment of the overall collaborative effort is conducted, with participation of all key stakeholders.

19. Recommendations for revising or "fine-tuning" ongoing strategies for success, based upon the overall evaluation, are developed.

20. Efforts are made to identify other initiatives that could benefit from the collaborative efforts of the key stakeholders involved in this initiative.

LEADERSHIP AND TEAM BUILDING

> The real basic structure of the workplace is the relationship. Each relationship is itself part of a larger network of relationships. These relationships can be measured along all kinds of dimensions—from political to professional expertise. The fact is that work gets done through these relationships.
>
> — Michael Schrage in *No More Teams*

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a team as "a number of persons associated together in work or activity." This somewhat broad definition encompasses the fact that teams can be professional, social, or a combination of the two. While the outcome of many team efforts is most often defined in terms of *professional accomplishment*, what must also be recognized and emphasized is the value of teams in promoting social and interpersonal relationships that strengthen the professional partnership and its success.

The success of any collaborative effort relies considerably on teamwork. When individuals commit to a common goal and work together to achieve it, they *collaborate* in a *team approach* for a *common cause*. They rely on expertise and ideas from *individuals* that, when combined, hold *collective* promise.

WHEN ARE TEAMS NEEDED?

While there are many benefits to teamwork, it is important to recognize that *not every project or goal requires teamwork*. There are eight core elements to consider in deciding whether or not a team approach is appropriate or necessary:

1. *One person or entity cannot accomplish a goal alone.* The adage that "no person is an island" is, in itself, a critical reason for developing team approaches to a problem or issue. When ideas and input from a variety of resources can benefit a common goal, then teamwork is appropriate and necessary.

2. *A project or goal is long-term and multi-faceted.* The more complex a project or goal is, the more likely it is that a team approach will be needed.

3. *There are many different points of view on a specific subject that should be considered.* If everybody agreed on a chosen outcome and the route to achieve it, then teams would not be necessary. However, there are often different opinions and insights that can bring a fresh perspective and valuable resources to a desired goal.

4. *There are many different resources that can contribute to a successful outcome*. When teamwork is being considered as an option, the sponsoring entity should consider not only the potential team participants as resources, but the full scope of what they "can bring to the table," including time, energy, commitment, new networks, new information, funding, and prestige, among other contributions.

5. *Time, person power, and resources are limited.* In any instance where resources are limited, a team approach should be considered to expand the base of support, and to ensure that a chosen path to a goal will not fail simply because of a lack of time and human resources.

6. *Diversity is sought and valued*. In the delivery of services to clientele, it is vital to mirror the demographics and characteristics of the ultimate customers. Diversity in gender, culture, ability/disability, profession, and geography contributes to the development of programs, processes, and goals that ultimately reflect the needs and interests of the client population.

7. *A team sponsor seeks a culture of inclusion.* Initiatives that overtly or covertly result in exclusion create adversarial relationships, and are almost guaranteed to fail. A "culture of inclusion" recognizes not only the diversity of populations that will be *affected* by any given initiative, but also the value of the wide range of input, ideas, expertise and resources that a culture of inclusion creates.

8. *The initiative or goal cannot succeed without a team effort*. There are many projects that can be accomplished by one or two people and, as such, team approaches are not always required. However, when an ultimate goal or desired outcome is dissected into objectives and tasks, and it becomes clear that increased and diverse resources are needed for success, then a team approach is recommended.

WHEN ARE TEAMS *NOT* NEEDED?

Management consultant and author Robert Bacal (2000) believes that "teams are not a panacea; neither are they useless. It is important to consider the entire system of doing work to determine if team building, or a team-oriented approach, is likely to justify the investment of time and effort needed."

In his article "When Teams Aren't Important or Desired," Bacal asserts that "teams work within an organizational context that will either support teamwork or discourage it. In some cases, other factors in an organization will totally preclude effective teamwork, and can suggest that a team-based workplace is inappropriate" (Ibid., 2). He identifies five factors that pose barriers to effective teamwork:

1. Autocratic leadership/management.
2. Predominance of independent job tasks.
3. Rigidly structured hierarchal organization.
4. Preference for individual-based work.
5. Extremely unstable, chaotic workplace (Ibid., 2-6).

AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT

Bacal warns against autocratic managers who decide to force people to work in participatory teams. In such situations, teamwork becomes something that is done *to* people *by* a manager or executive, resulting in the following outcomes:

- Team members sense the contradiction between participatory teams and autocratic management. They don't believe the rhetoric of the leader regarding his or her commitment to teamwork.
- There is a tendency for autocratic leaders to lack the skills needed to lead a team, so that teams end up directionless and confused. Some autocratic managers try so hard to "not be autocratic" that they refuse to give any hints as to what the team is expected to accomplish. Other autocratic managers supply such rigid constraints for teams that there is no point in having a team at all.
- Autocratic leaders tend to use elastic authority. While they make a game attempt to "let go" of at least some power, they will quickly pull the elastic band to remove any autonomy that a team has. This elastic banding confuses teams since they can never tell what the bounds of their authority are, or they realize it's all a sham, and they have no autonomy or power anyway—just the appearance of it.
- When an autocratic executive leads an organization, this makes effective teamwork at lower levels difficult, even though that work unit may have a more participatory leader. The work unit team may work as a team until they notice that someone "upstairs" is ignoring them, or rendering their ideas and work irrelevant or useless.

What results is: loss of credibility for management; increased frustration on the part of team members; difficulty in sustaining any team efforts; and difficulty in achieving even simple team goals.

PREDOMINANCE OF INDEPENDENT JOB TASKS

Some tasks require teamwork, while some tasks are best done by a single individual working alone. Some require a mix. If you have a predominance of job tasks that are best done independently, then productivity can suffer if you try to shoehorn them into a team situation.

Four criteria can be used to determine if any given task is best carried out by a team or an individual:

1. When tasks are simple and repetitive, teams are unnecessary and may create higher "overhead." Even if the overall task is complex but your organization breaks it down into teeny discreet tasks, a team may be unnecessary. An old style automobile assembly line is an example of a set of simple, discrete tasks that, when combined, yield a complex product.

2. When tasks require little communication between those carrying them out, putting them in a team context can result in reduced efficiency and frustration.

3. When the information needed to complete a task is held entirely by one person, teamwork may disrupt the task.

4. When jobs are so unrelated that each job or task can be carried out without the person knowing what another person is doing, teams may not increase productivity.

RIGIDLY-STRUCTURED HIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATION

Almost every organization is structured in some hierarchical way. However, organizations differ in terms of the rigidity of that structure. The more flexible organization is characterized by increased delegation of authority to lower levels of the organization, flexible communication paths, and decentralized decision making. The more rigid organization demands that its staff work through channels, refer most decisions to higher levels in the hierarchy, and restrict autonomy as well as communication. As a result of this rigidness, decision making (and action) take a great deal of time.

A rigid hierarchical structure restricts individuals, but also teams. Teams below the "decision-making level" may work very effectively internally, but when they are faced with obtaining approvals through "channels," their usefulness is curtailed. First, the process is too slow to sustain team commitment. Second, when teams realize that they have no authority to complete their tasks, they back off, knowing that their work is not very meaningful. Third, rigid organizations, by restricting communication, can limit a team's effectiveness by reducing access to information that the team needs to succeed.

PREFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL-BASED WORK

Some people prefer to work in teams, while others have a preference for working more independently, or alone. Moving to a more team-based approach may actually reduce the effectiveness of people who thrive on a higher degree of isolation, while at the same time increasing their frustration and even anger. This will be the case if a team environment is perceived to "slow them down," or reduce their autonomy. Not everyone wants to be a team member. What this means is that an attempt to force them into a team structure imposed upon them may be counter-productive, particularly if there are no clear reasons for the team approach.

EXTREMELY UNSTABLE, CHAOTIC WORKPLACE

A final consideration is the relative stability of the organization, including its structure, mandate, staffing, etc. It is unlikely that any team will be effective when it must interface with different masters; when its role in the larger organization constantly changes; or when its own membership is always in flux. Teams need some stability to function well and effectively.

THE LIFECYCLE OF A TEAM EFFORT

In "The Lifecycle of a Successful Team," quality and change management consultant David Hutton (1997) highlights steps needed to initiate and support teams so that they succeed and deliver results. Hutton observes:

> High-performing companies are usually very proficient in using team approaches, and typically employ a variety of team structures to complement or even replace the traditional organizational hierarchy. Some, such as Hewlett-Packard, are systematically striving to reduce the cycle time for team efforts—so that the gains can be obtained sooner and more team initiatives launched.

Hutton notes that "launching a team initiative is rather like launching an expedition to the moon—many actions must take place correctly, each at the appropriate time, for the expedition to accomplish its goal and for the crew to return safely. Many of these actions involve people on the ground, rather than the crew who go on the mission. Some minor malfunctions can be overcome by a resourceful crew, but a major error will usually cause the mission to fail" (Ibid., 1).

He analyzes the "lifecycle of a team effort" to determine the various actions that are essential, and hence the various failure points. *Figure 2* sets out the main phases of a problem-solving or process-improvement team initiative, and the key success factors at each phase (Ibid., 2):

LIFECYCLE OF A TEAM INITIATIVE

PHASE	KEY SUCCESS FACTORS
Formation	· A clear, measurable objective, linked to the organization's goals. · An appropriate mandate for the team. · Assignment of a high-level sponsor. · Selection of people with the required capabilities. · Allocation of sufficient time and resources. · Establishment of a mechanism for regular monitoring and review of progress—to completion.
Preparation	· Choice of suitable methodology and tools. · Timely provision of training and guidance. · Development by the team of a game plan.
Execution	· Access to support resources. · Effective application of methodology and tools. · Regular communication, monitoring and review of progress. · Removal of barriers by the sponsor. · Intervention by the sponsor to recover from setbacks.
Completion	· Recognition of the team's efforts. · Debriefing to learn from the team's experience. · Acknowledgment of the personal development gained.

Figure 2

Hutton recommends utilizing these phases and related success factors as a “checklist” for assessing which parts of a team lifecycle are working well and which need improvement.

TEAM IMPLEMENTATION

Teams can be established for a variety of reasons. They can:

- Be informal as a means of facilitating ongoing communications among professionals.
- Be formal in order to accomplish prescribed goals and objectives.
- Focus on a single purpose or project with a “beginning” and “end” that is arrived at when the goal(s) are achieved.
- Address a variety of issues that require input and ideas from a cross-section of participants.
- Be multifunctional and require participation from a cross-section of professions and personnel.
- Be a combination of several of the above.

The professional who decides to implement a team approach— who will often assume, at least initially, a leadership role in team development and implementation—should have a clear idea about the reason for creating a team. While this initial reason may change as the team evolves, it is helpful to be able to provide an initial “vision” to potential team members.

ESTABLISHING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

> The way to achieve success is first to have a definite, clear, practical ideal—a goal, an objective. Second, have the necessary means to achieve your ends: wisdom, money, materials, methods. Third, adjust all your means to that end.
>
> — Aristotle

While the person who implements the team may have a general idea about team goals and expected outcomes, it is important to solicit input and involvement from team members to either validate or expand these draft goals, or to develop new ones. In implementing teams, goals and objectives keep the group focused, and augment the cohesive structure of the group.

Goals are “macro statements” about the reality the team is trying to create. Goals take time to achieve. They are long term. Finally, goals need to be realistic and specific (Marshall, 7 October 1999).

Generally, goals include a:

- Description of the overall project or proposal.
- Statement regarding the importance of the project to team members, as well as populations that will benefit from its outcomes.
- Hypotheses about desired results.
- Timetable for completion of objectives and tasks.

- Designation of roles and responsibilities for individual team members as well as the collective team.
- Resources needed to complete the goal, such as personnel, communications, equipment, and money.
- Performance or evaluation measures to assess success.

An objective is a “micro statement” that provides a detailed and measurable description of how each goal will be attained. A single goal may have several objectives to achieve it. In addition, different objectives may have different team members—or even “sub-teams”—assigned to accomplish them.

SETTING “GROUND RULES”

Similar to goals and objectives, ground rules should be established through a group process at the onset of team development. While ground rules may differ based upon the team’s shared goal(s) and objectives, there are ten general guidelines for ground rules that are common to most teams:

1. There will be respect for, and encouragement of, diversity of opinions and ideas.
2. How will decisions be made, and by whom?
3. How will tasks to accomplish objectives be assigned?
4. How will tasks be accomplished, i.e., by individuals, sub-teams, the full team, or a combination of the above, based upon the task?
5. How will “leaders” within the team structure be delineated, i.e., by volunteering, by group consensus, etc.?
6. How will group members communicate with each other on an ongoing basis?
7. How will timetables be established?
8. What measures will be taken to address team members who fail to meet deadlines, i.e., will there be “troubleshooters” to address delinquencies? Will support be provided to team members who miss deadlines? How will chronic delinquency in task completion be addressed?
9. How will conflicts be addressed?
10. What are overall team members’ expectations of its individual members?

Once ground rules have been established, it is helpful to provide them in writing to all team members, review them regularly to ensure they are being met, and revise them on an “as needed” basis.

CHOREOGRAPHING TEAM MEETINGS

(The following section is adapted from “Choreographing a Meeting,” *Doing Journalism Tip Sheets*, by E. Miller, 1999, St, Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute.)

Pacing a meeting requires knowing when to propel certain people to center stage, and when to move them off-stage and bring others forward. There are distinct stages individuals and groups go through as they learn. Meeting leaders need to manage those stages and draw out those personalities who are most effective in each stage. Choreographing these roles will have a direct bearing on the pacing (and success) of a meeting.

In this model, there are four stages of learning: reflecting, connecting, deciding, and doing.

First, people reflect on a problem or situation, coming up with several thoughts or options. They then make connections between the various bits and pieces of reflection. This leads to decisions and subsequent actions.

But each stage requires different skills. For example:

- *Reflecting* needs “divergent thinkers” to brainstorm and fantasize.
- *Connecting* requires “connection makers” who can take two different ideas, for example, and fashion them into a more useful third option not originally considered.
- *Deciding* depends upon “convergent thinkers” who can synthesize options and converge on a plan.
- *Doing* requires “accommodators” who can get things done.

Most everyone can play all four roles, but each of us has one area in which we particularly excel. The success of a meeting depends on how well the leader understands the personalities and skills of the participants, and puts those individual strengths to work at the appropriate time. For example, if you want to have a brainstorming session to cook up a lot of ideas, you need to stack the meeting with “divergent thinkers,” the best idea generators in any organization.

If you want a meeting to filter the raw ideas and come to some decisions about what to do, the key players will be the “connection makers” and the “convergent thinkers,” the ones who can best synthesize and focus.

Finally, if you are designing a planning meeting on how to implement the ideas, you want the “accommodators,” the people who are best at figuring out how to get something done.

Unfortunately, life is never that tidy. Invariably, you’ll find all four types at any meeting (or people who think they are good at all four roles). The challenge for the team leader is to know how to let people play to their individual strengths at the appropriate times. The “divergent thinkers” who surfaced all those interesting ideas need to be shut down during the *connecting* and *deciding* stages, or else they will clutter the process with more ideas you don’t need. Similarly, when you are entering a *deciding* stage, the “convergent thinkers,” who are often shy and withdrawn in the face of the gonzo “divergent” types, need to be coaxed onto center stage.

One tip: To cut down on digressions, ask people to silently hold up an index finger when they believe the discussion is digressing. This signals that the group must get back to the point and watch the clock. Try it—it works!

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

Robin Reid (1998) identifies sixteen characteristics of team members that contribute to high performance. (Note: Reid's key points [italicized bulleted items] are augmented by descriptions developed by this manual's authors):

1. *Share a common purpose and goals.* Team members must be involved in developing a shared mission, purpose, goals and objectives. Without "buy-in" from individual team members, the concept of a shared effort is lost, and disagreements on team processes are likely to be exacerbated.
2. *Build relationships for trust and respect*. Often, team members come from diverse backgrounds and bring many ideas and strategies to the common team table. Permission and encouragement must be given to participate, and team members' involvement at every level must be validated as valuable and important, regardless of potential disagreements.
3. *Balance task and process.* The "process" of team building and management must be broken down into manageable tasks. While the ultimate goal is team consensus and collaborative outcomes, it is crucial to recognize that a number of tasks – performed by a number of individuals with varying degrees of expertise, opinions and resources – is necessary for success.
4. *Plan thoroughly before acting*. A team without a plan is like a film without a script. And as in film making, there are a wide variety of talents that are needed for the final movie to be produced, disseminated, and enjoyed by the multitudes. A team leader must be careful to bring planning ideas and processes to the collective "team table" without dominating the planning process, and with a goal of providing plenty of opportunity for individual team members' contributions to the planning process.
5. *Involve members in clear problem-solving and decision-making procedures.* The simplest path for a team leader to take in problem solving and decision making is to "do it myself." It is also a clear path to destruction of team values, participation, and eventual outcomes. While all team members are not always involved in the creation of problems and the rendering of decisions, they are ultimately affected by the results. As such, an environment of inclusion in problem solving and decision making should be created and nurtured.
6. *Respect and understand each others' diversity.* Differences in team members' ideas and approaches—as well as demographics such as age, gender, culture, disability, geography, profession, and experience—must be valued as assets, and never perceived as barriers.

7. *Value synergism and interdependence.* Team dynamics and ground rules must emphasize the importance of "the sum of two equals," i.e., that the independent ideas and input from individuals, when combined with others, can create new, important, and innovative approaches that benefit the collective team.

8. *Emphasize and support team goals.* While consensus among team members for all team goals and expected outcomes is not *essential* for success, it is *helpful*. Individual team members should be provided with the opportunity to contribute to the initial development of overall goals, as well as making revisions, as needed, based upon team processes and incremental outcomes.

9. *Reward individual performance that supports the team.* "Team spirit" can sometimes preclude recognition of individual achievements that contribute to the overall "spirit." Team processes that reward individual achievement help recognize contributions; establish standards for achievement; and provide encouragement for team members to continue *wanting* to contribute to the overall team effort.

10. *Communicate effectively.* Standards and guidelines for group communications should be established. While some team members may not want to be "inundated" with information that they consider to be irrelevant to their individual goals and tasks, others want to be kept "in the loop" on all team communications. Electronic communications via web sites and e-mail ease the process of overall team communications. However, it is critical to establish individual preferences for information sharing and team communications as a component of establishing team "ground rules."

11. *Practice effective dialogue instead of debate.* The key difference between "dialogue" and "debate" is *respect*—respect for others' opinions, ideas, and input. A focus on commonalities, rather than differences, can help create opportunities for constructive dialogue that do not disintegrate into ongoing disagreements.

12. *Identify and resolve group conflicts*. Small conflicts that are not addressed quickly turn into significant problems that can affect team relationships, processes, and outcomes. Team members should agree up front to identify *anything* that even remotely resembles a potential conflict, and permission must be given for all team members to participate in conflict resolution processes. Guidelines should be established that create a team commitment to avoid "staff infection," i.e., individual team members taking sides in a conflict, creating divisions among the team members, and exacerbating the initial conflict into a potentially unmanageable situation.

13. *Vary levels and intensity of work.* Team plans and processes must identify and respect each team member's workload, within and beyond the confinements of the team. No single team member should be *expected* or *allowed* to shoulder the bulk of the work needed to complete a task, objective, or goal. The interdependency of individual team activities should also be linked to the overall success of the team endeavor, i.e., one team member's activities are often intricately linked to the outcomes or success of another's.

14. *Provide a balance between work and home.* Avoidance of individual and team stressors are closely linked to a balance in work/team demands and other aspects of team members' lives.

15. *Critique the way they work as a team, regularly and consistently.* Ongoing review of individual and collective goals, objectives, and expected outcomes help create an environment of flexibility, and allow for revisions in "original game plans," if or as needed. Critiques are never the function of one individual; rather, they should be expected and solicited from *all* team members.

16. *Practice continuous improvement.* The adage "practice makes perfect" is reflected in this characteristic of a high performance team. "Practice" of different ideas, approaches and processes contributes to both individual team member, and overall team, improvement.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A STRONG TEAM LEADER

While the principle elements of good leadership are addressed extensively in Chapter 1 of this manual, a strong team leader should possess the following characteristics:

- Commitment to excellence.
- Commitment to success, but willingness to accept failure with dignity.
- Willingness to learn and grow through the team process.
- Knowledge of group dynamics—"the good, the bad, and the ugly."
- High expectations of oneself and one's ability to lead.
- Positive thinking.
- Highly organized, or able to ask for support in maintaining the team cohesiveness.
- Strong conflict identification and resolution skills.
- Sense of humor.
- Capacity and willingness to mentor other team members.

THE TEAM LEADER AS "MENTOR"

> Each one, teach one. — Author unknown.

The exhaustive literature on teamwork emphasizes that *every individual has the capacity to lead.* Some people are thrust unwillingly and unexpectedly into positions of leadership; examples of victim activists who become strong leaders as a result of their personal experiences as crime victims abound. Some people lead when there is nobody else to "step up to the plate." And some people become leaders because *another person with strong leadership capabilities takes time to cultivate their motivation and skills as a leader.*

In a team environment, mentoring is essential for the survival of the team, as well as for the future of the disciplines represented by team members. Persons in positions of power often become overwhelmed by their responsibilities. Leaders can burn out, change jobs, seek more balance in their lives that precludes high levels of professional activities, and retire. Without ongoing and effective mentoring, a significant void results.

How can team leaders mentor other team members?

- **M**otivate others by example: Remain committed to the team's goals and objectives; always have a positive attitude; and complete assigned tasks on time and with enthusiasm.
- **E**xpect great things from themselves and other team members, and be willing to provide support, encouragement, and nurturing to help other team members reach their goals.
- **N**ever give up! Once the team establishes goals and expected outcomes, a strong mentor will do everything possible to support team members individually, as well as collectively, to attain them. Milestones on the road to success will be celebrated, and setbacks will be addressed in a positive and constructive way.
- **T**wo-way communications are essential and continual. The mentor must be open, honest, and forthcoming with team members. Opportunities for new ideas and input from protégés are encouraged and welcome.
- **O**rganize the team to be successful and, in addition, to demonstrate organizational skills by example. Trust that other team members will help "keep the wheels rolling," and be prepared to provide support and encouragement to those that are having trouble.
- **R**espect individuals and individual differences. "Model" this attribute by having self-respect and not being afraid to show it!
- **S**hare their vision, ideas, expertise, and resources with team members, and encourage them to do likewise.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMING TEAM MEMBERS

What constitutes a strong "team player"? The prolific literature on successful teams offers significant insight as to the characteristics of a high performing team member. They can be summarized in the following twenty points that provide a strong foundation—as well as a simple "checklist"—for individuals who seek to be successful team members:

As a strong team player, I—

- Will commit only to activities that I can accomplish with my knowledge, time and resources.
- Will "not bite off more than I can chew."
- Will ask for help from my fellow team members when I need it.
- Recognize that when I commit to a team task or goal, others are reliant on me to accomplish this activity for their own success.
- Am always willing and able to *lead*, and always willing and able to *follow*.
- Am flexible as an individual, and as a team member.

- Appreciate “strength in numbers” as well as the individual contributions that create that strength.
- Can benefit from getting to know my fellow team members as people *and* professionals, and recognize that building personal and professional relationships should be an individual as well as team goal.
- Help and support my fellow team members.
- Can learn from the experiences and expertise of my fellow team members.
- Need to leave my ego at home.
- Bring strong skills to the team table that can be augmented by my team members’ expertise and experience.
- Must be willing to seek out new skills and resources that contribute to my own personal growth and development as well as that of my team.
- Am willing to take risks, without jeopardizing either my own integrity or that of my team.
- Respect diversity of people, processes, and opinions.
- Commit myself to cooperate, not compete, with my fellow team members.
- Will be willing to bring my perceived conflicts out in the open so they can be addressed by the team in its entirety.
- Will not hold grudges if a team conflict is not resolved to my liking, and will recognize that conflicts can result in personal and professional growth for me as well as my team.
- Must be willing to consistently evaluate my own contributions to and participation in team processes, as well as the overall team accomplishments.
- Seek, recognize, validate, and celebrate both individual team members as well as overall team successes.

VIRTUAL TEAMS

(This section is derived from a speech given by Lisa Kimball at the Team Strategies Conference sponsored by Federated Press, Toronto, Canada, 1997.)

Teams aren’t what they used to be.

The nature of teams has changed significantly because of changes in organizations and the nature of the work they do. Organizations have become more distributed across geography and across industries. Relationships between people *inside* an organization and those previously considered *outside* (customers, suppliers, managers of collaborating organizations, and other stakeholders) are becoming more important. Organizations have discovered the value of collaborative work. There is a new emphasis on *knowledge management*—harvesting the learning of the experience of members of the organization so that it is available to the whole organization.

All these changes in organizations have changed how teams are formed and how they operate. The following table outlines the fundamental changes teams have undergone in today's workplace environment:

FROM	TO
Fixed team membership	Shifting team membership.
All team members drawn from within the organization	Team members can include people from outside the organization (clients, collaborators)
Team members are dedicated 100 percent to the team	Most people are members of multiple teams
Team members are co-located	Team members are distributed organizationally and geographically
Teams have a fixed starting and ending point	Teams form and reform continuously
Teams are managed by a single manager	Teams have multiple reporting relationships with different parts of the organization at different times

Figure 3

Although the technology that supports these new teams gets most of the attention when we talk about *virtual teams*, it's really the changes in the nature of teams—not their use of technology—which creates new challenges for team managers and members. Managing a virtual team means managing the whole spectrum of communication strategies and project management techniques as well as human and social processes in ways that support the team.

Some of the things that need to happen in order for organizations to make effective use of virtual teams include:

- Processes for team management and development have to be designed, defined, piloted, tested, and refined.
- Team managers have to be trained in new team management strategies.
- Team members have to be trained in new ways of working.
- The culture of the organization has to be reshaped to support new structures and processes.
- Organizational structures have to be modified to reflect new team dynamics.
- Reward systems have to be updated to reflect new team structures.
- New information technology (IT) systems have to be built to support teams.
- New management, measurement, and control systems have to be designed.

A NEW MANAGEMENT MINDSET

The following are some aspects of a virtual team manager's mindset which must shift in order to be effective in contemporary organizations (Metasystems Design Group and Catalyst Consulting Team):

FROM	TO
Face-to-face is the best environment for interaction and anything else is a compromise.	Different kinds of environments can support high quality interaction. What matters is how they are used.
Collaboration is what happens when teams interact at a fixed time and place.	Collaboration happens in an ongoing, boundaryless way.
Being people-oriented is incompatible with using technology.	Using technology in a people-oriented way is possible and desirable.
When the communication process breaks down, blame the technology	When the communication process breaks down, evaluate management and interaction strategies, not just the technical tool.
Learning to manage virtual teams is about learning how to use the technology.	Learning to manage virtual teams is about understanding more about teams and the collaborative process.

Figure 4

Different media raise different sets of questions for managers, which are highlighted in Appendix D-6, *Virtual Teams*.

TECHNOLOGY FOR VIRTUAL TEAMS

Different communication technologies can be used to support different purposes and participants. Many organizations are using their corporate Intranet to support communication within each virtual team. It's also important to manage the communication among the teams as well as communication between the organization and other stakeholders. Creating an integrated communication strategy that addresses all these dimensions is important.

There are no rules for what an Intranet must include, but most Intranets employ a suite of applications, including:

- *Web pages* to provide members of the organization access to documents that can be searched, and that may include text, graphics, and multi-media.
- *Web conferences* to provide places for interactive discussion.
- *E-mail* (both internal and, if desired, connected to the public Internet).
- *Directories* of people and offices.

Note: Additional team-related communication technologies utilized, for example, by victim assistance organizations include compressed video and/or satellite teleconferencing for distance learning, audio conferencing for team and training initiatives, and list serves or user groups that share electronic communications based upon a common interest.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING VIRTUAL TEAMS

Virtual teams form and share knowledge based on information pulled from individual members, not a centralized push. Knowledge-based strategies must not be centered around collecting and disseminating information, but rather on creating a mechanism for practitioners to reach out and communicate to other practitioners.

The goal is to *find ways that support the transformation of individuals' personal knowledge into organizational knowledge*. That goal requires designing environments where all the individuals feel comfortable (and have incentives) to share what they know. It's important that this activity not feel like a burdensome "overhead" task, which is why doing it in the process of what feels like an informal conversation works well.

In order to have productive conversations among members of virtual teams, you need to create some kind of common cognitive ground for the group. Even teams from the same organization can have a hard time developing conversations deep enough to be significant without some kind of specific context as a beginning frame. Contexts can be created by guest speakers, training courses, requests for input to a specific project or question, and special events.

Managers of virtual teams can support their teams by:

- Recognizing them and their importance.
- Encouraging members to explore questions that matter, including questions about how they are working together.
- Supporting the creation of some kind of shared space (the feeling that there is an infrastructure *where* people are working together).
- Facilitating the coordination of the technology, work processes, and the formal organization.
- Recognizing reflection as action and as legitimate work (getting the infrastructure of the organization to support the learning process).
- Supporting activities that make the informal network visible.

CONCLUSION

The very foundation of victim assistance is based on the concept of "people reaching out to people"—in times of need, in times that require a "chorus" rather than a "solo performance," and in times that recognize there is, indeed, "strength in numbers." The value of collaboration, partnerships, and team initiatives is clear. With the knowledge gained from this chapter, the challenge to the leader is to recognize and overcome barriers to collaboration and team building, and demonstrate "team leadership" by always being a strong "team player," knowing that his/her efforts will result in the "strength in numbers" necessary to promote victims' rights and services, as well as public safety.

CHAPTER 4 REFERENCES

Bacal, R. 2000. *When Teams Aren't Important or Desired*. <www.themestream.com>.

Blank, M., et al. 1992. *Collaboration: What Makes It Work? A Review of Research Literature on Factors Influencing Successful Collaboration*. Minneapolis, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

Hutton, D. 1997. *The Lifecycle of a Successful Team*. Ottawa, Canada: David Hutton Associates.

Keiser, G. 1998. *Types of Working Relationships*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections.

Kimball, L. 1997. Speech. Team Strategies Conference sponsored by Federated Press, Toronto, Canada.

Marshall, J. 7 October 1999. *Developing Goals and Objectives*. San Diego State University: <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/Courses.EDTEC532/jobaids/Design/goals.html>.

Metasystems Design Group and Catalyst Consulting Team. *Boundaryless Facilitation*, paper based on joint inquiry.

Miller, E. 1999. "Choreographing a Meeting." *Doing Journalism Tip Sheets*. St, Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute.

Reid, R. 1998. *Characteristics of High Performing Teams*. Reid Moomaugh & Associates, <http://www.improve.org/team1/html>.

ADDITIONAL READING

Burnley, J. N. (now J. N. Sigmon), and M. A. Murray. 1997. *Restitution Reform: The Coordinated Interagency Approach*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

Hinzman, G. 1994. *Reciprocal Forbearance: How to Collaborate and Be Successful*. Cedar Rapids, IA.

National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC). 1994. "Working as Partners with Community Groups." *Bulletin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance.