



Advice for Groups & Teams

Adam Goodman

*What we know about
Teamwork at Northwestern*

“If I’m on an effective team,
things will get even better!”

“I know if my team is struggling.”
(And things are probably going to get worse)

“I know if I’m performing poorly.
Maybe I can just hide it?”

Setting a Context for Inclusion: Group Learning Through Dialogue

Goal: an environment that embraces differences so that each person feels welcomed, respected, supported and valued*

Practices Every Member Must Share

- Assume the best about each person
- Give others the same respect and benefit of the doubt that you would want
- Know that words and actions have impact
- Help and challenge one another to understand experiences, ideas and perspectives.
- Suspend judgement about others as you consider their idea(s)
- Be kind to one another, especially those with whom you might disagree

*Adapted from: NASEM. 2019. *The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEM* <https://doi.org/10.17226/25568>.

Additional Resource: *CFL on Learning, Inclusion and Access* at <https://lead.northwestern.edu/about/learning,-inclusion-access.html>

The advice we most often provide

Advance on Teamwork

- Be on time and ready to contribute
- Demonstrate success through small wins
- Play to your strengths, and create opportunities for others to play to theirs
- Get to know each other outside of project work
- Know what success looks like, and use a project plan to get there
- Learn how to have an honest conversation

Additional information at: <https://lead.northwestern.edu/teamwork/index.html>

“The Five Dysfunctions of a Team” Patrick Lencioni’s Model



Teaming



Amy Edmondson

- The changing nature of work makes it difficult to know ahead of time required specific strengths
- Teaming is an active learning process (not a static entity) that blends -
 - Relating to people
 - Listening to other points of view
 - Awareness of other's needs, roles & perspectives
 - Coordinating actions
 - Making shared decisions

When to Use Teaming



To combine and apply people's expertise to perform complex tasks or develop solutions to novel problems

- People must juggle multiple objectives with minimal oversight
- People shift to multiple situations while maintaining high levels of communication and tight coordination
- Useful to integrate perspectives from different disciplines
- Collaborating across dispersed locations
- Pre-planned coordination is impossible or unrealistic due to the changing nature of work
- Complex information must be processed, synthesized and put to good use quickly

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Teaming

Individual Requirements

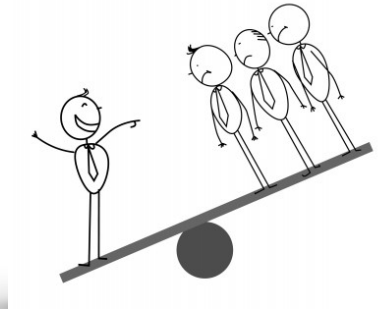
- Asking questions
- Sharing information
- Seeking help
- Experimenting with unproven actions
- Talking about mistakes
- Seeking feedback

Team Requirements

- Awareness and integration of different perspectives
- Communication, despite different mental models and expertise
- Trust and cooperation, especially to manage inevitable conflict
- Willingness to reflect

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Additional Ways to Reduce Risk & Increase Performance



- Establish and maintain a psychologically safe environment (more on next slide...)
- Expect roughly equal contributions for group *discussion*, rather than letting one or two people dominate discussion
- Seek and pay attention to non-verbal cues, and help those with poor abilities or who are inattentive

Amy Edmondson, Anita Woolley, Thomas Malone, and Christopher Chabris

Psychological Safety

“A climate in which people feel free to express relevant thoughts and feelings without fear of being penalized”

Can you and everyone else...

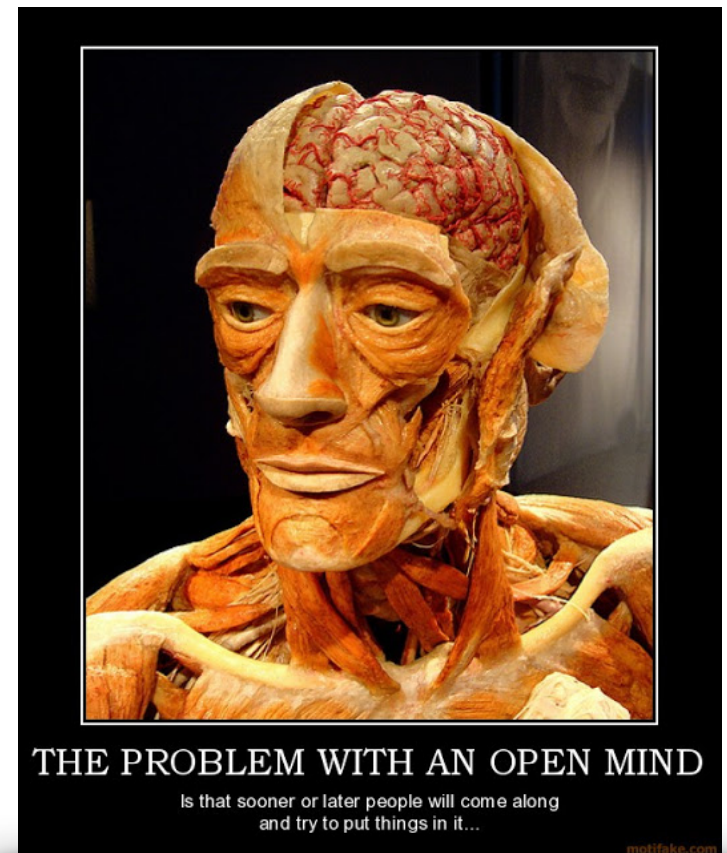
- *Ask questions?*
- *Seek help?*
- *Tolerate mistakes?*



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How to Cultivate Psychological Safety

- *Be accessible and approachable*
- *Acknowledge the limits of current knowledge*
- *Be willing to display fallibility*
- *Invite participation*
- *Highlight failures as learning opportunities*
- *Use direct language*
- *Set boundaries*
- *Hold people accountable for transgressions*



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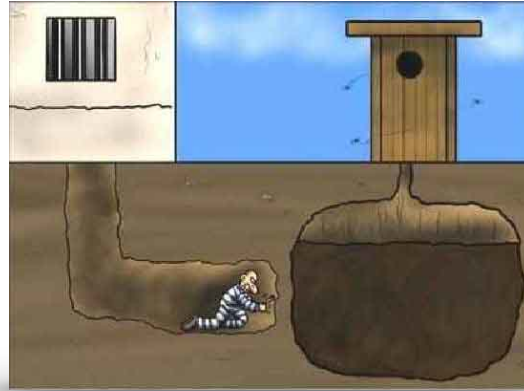
Functioning Effectively in Virtual Teams



- Operate with clear, simple and written processes
- Establish and maintain communication protocols
- Meet together at least once weekly, ideally using video and voice
- Show that you care about *both* the *people involved* and the *project*
- Be sensitive to tone when writing to others
- Choose a subdued and charitable tone to express dissatisfaction

Additional information at: <https://lead.northwestern.edu/teamwork/virtual-teams.html>

A BASIC PROJECT PLAN



- **What** work needs to be done?
- By **when**?
- **Who** (single person) is responsible for making sure that the work gets done? (Not who's responsible for doing all of the work.)