



## TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION ACTION SERIES: *Improving Patient Outcomes through Effective Teamwork and Communication*

### Creating a Teamwork Agreement

#### Overview

Teams are more effective when each member knows what is expected of them and how members of the team will work together.

For this reason, one of your team's first steps in the action series is to take the time to establish a teamwork agreement. Your group's teamwork agreement should be simple and no more than a page. It should outline:

- a broad statement of what you want your team to achieve;
- how your team will work together to foster teamwork and communication; and
- how conflicts and challenges will be resolved.

Not sure how to do this? Don't worry, we've outlined the steps to make it easy for you!

#### Here are the supplies that you will need:

- Flipchart paper
- Pens
- Post-it notes
- Markers or dots for dot-voting
- Your team!

#### Here are the steps to follow:

1. Set aside a time for your team to come together to build your teamwork agreement.
  - Can't get together in person?
    - Follow the same steps on a whiteboard or bulletin board in your hallway and provide a couple of days for each step in the process to allow time to solicit feedback from each member of the team.
    - Alternatively, complete your collaboration agreement through a series of brief huddles where you work through the steps.
2. Using post-it notes, have team members identify things that they think will contribute to effective teamwork and communication. These might include:
  - Respect
  - Trust that others will do their work
  - Accountability
  - Direct communication
  - Address conflicts before they become destructive
  - Create the space for all team members to participate and have input
3. Have everyone post their individual ideas on your flipchart paper.
4. Review the ideas together as a team and theme into main categories.



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5. Looking at your ideas on teamwork and communication, consider those factors that may make it challenging for your team to work as a group:
  - Personality styles
  - Jargon/different language
  - Team members who don't contribute
  - How/when the team wants to communicate (in person, meetings, email, video conference, etc.)
  - How your team wants to address power distance index (PDI) or perceived hierarchies.
6. Add additional ideas/themes that you might want to include after you have discussed these challenges.
7. Provide a final summary of the different themes/elements that you wanted included in your collaboration agreement.
8. Get your team to “dot vote” by selecting the top 8-10 items that they wanted included in your teamwork agreement.
9. These items will form the foundation of your collaboration values and serves as the guiding principles for the relationships and how your team will work together.
10. Once your teamwork agreement is complete, it is important that you:
  - Share it with all members on your team;
  - Post your teamwork agreement somewhere visible;
  - Model the agreement in your own practice;
  - Challenge team members on adhering to the agreement early and often;
  - Refer back to the agreement when you sense that the team is not functioning as it should; and
  - Revisit the agreement occasionally – it should be a living document that reflects the needs of your team. In fact, as your team learns and grows, **we will encourage you to revisit your teamwork agreement after each webinar, so please keep it somewhere we you can easily refer to it.**

*Note: If your team is unclear how they want to work through conflict, we will be encouraging you to revisit your teamwork agreement after webinar 3 on conflict resolution. This will offer you a chance to revise the agreement.*

Adapted from: IPC on the Run. University of British Columbia, 2017. [www.ipcontherun.ca](http://www.ipcontherun.ca)



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### **Sample Teamwork Agreement #1**

To advance the teamwork and communication of the <<team name>> team, we have created this collaboration agreement to define how we will work together.

Each member of the team is responsible and accountable to uphold our collaboration values as we work together to improve our teamwork and communication as well as the outcome of our patients/clients.

The collaboration values we commit to be accountable include:

- Respect
- Direct communication
- A commitment to complete tasks for which we are responsible
- Kindness
- Appreciation of each other
- Trust

Where differences arise, our team is committed to resolving conflict by:

- Addressing differences in a timely, open and honest manner and
- Resolving issues at the staffing level at which they occur.

### **Sample Teamwork Agreement #2**

To advance the teamwork and communication of the <<team name>> team, we have created this teamwork agreement to define how we will work together.

Each member of the team is responsible and accountable to uphold our teamwork agreement as we work together to improve our teamwork and communication as well as the outcome of our patients/clients.

The teamwork agreement we commit to:

- Be respectful of our team members
- Direct communication, rather than side bar conversations
- A commitment to complete tasks for which we are responsible
- Kindness and compassion towards each other
- Trust in each other
- Not being afraid to say “I don’t know” and ask for help
- Avoid interrupting others when they are speaking
- Holding each other accountable when someone is not acting in accordance with this agreement

Where differences arise, our team is committed to resolving conflict by:

- Addressing differences in a timely, open and honest manner,
- Speaking to the people directly involved in the conflict first, before approaching a third party mediator, such as a manager or director, and
- Avoiding using blaming language. Use “I” language instead of “you” when talking about the issue.