## Laying the Foundation: Identify Values and Developing Team Norms

One foundational impediment to a high functioning team is lack of alignment when it comes to inter-personal and behavioral norms. If we think about behavior in terms of a bell curve, most people are clear about which behaviors are at either end – either exceptional or egregious. Where we get tripped up is somewhere in the middle, at the top of the bell curve, sliding down toward egregious, but perhaps not quite there yet. How do we "slow the slide"? How do we create safety nets so that we never hit the bottom of the bell?

This section will walk you through laying the foundation and creating group norms that outline and define successful inter-personal interactions among the members of your team. In establishing these norms, you create an opportunity for each member of your team to be an active participant in figuring out how to "slow the slide", recognize when behaviors are moving toward the egregious end of the curve and hold themselves and others accountable to a clearly defined set of expectations.
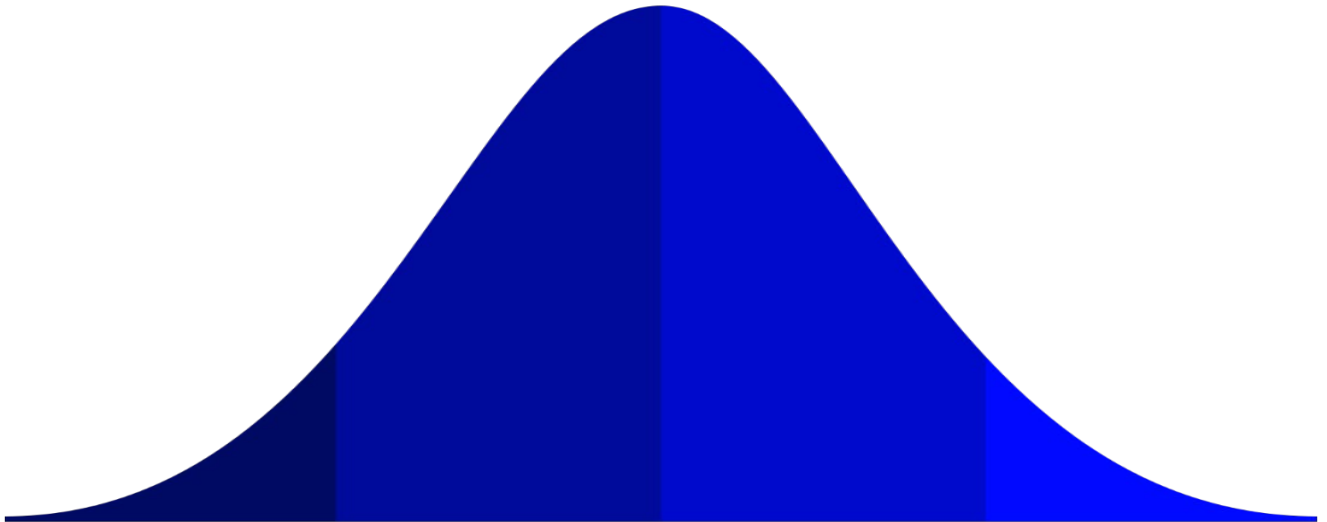
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A. Understanding and Aligning Your Core Values

The first step as you think about creating or identifying your team norms is to think about the values that you want to model through the behaviors articulated in your norms.

Exercise: Consider the list of values below. Circle the ones that you believe are most important to your team's success. Add any that are missing and important to your team and/or in your work context.

Autonomy	Growth	Courage	Reciprocity
Authenticity	Honesty	Balance	Enjoyment
Security	Adventure	Compassion	Happiness
Loyalty	Kindness	Relationship	Harmony
Intelligence	Teamwork	Knowledge	Peace
Connection	Communication	Patience	Respect
Creativity	Learning	Change	Professionalism
Success	Excellence	Prosperity	Insight
Respect	Innovation	Wellness	Dedication
Invention	Quality	Gratitude	Directness
Diversity	Strength	Grace	Candor
Generosity	Speed	Perseverance	Dependability
Integrity	Power	Facilitation	Responsiveness
Openness	Cooperation	Effectiveness	Humility
Order	Love of Career	Fun	Trust
Advancement	Relationship	Fame	Equality
Joy/Play	Encouragement	Justice	Accountability
Forgiveness	Pride	Appreciation	Investment
Excitement	Clarity	Willingness	
Engagement	Humor	Patience	
Wisdom	Leadership	Understanding	

![PRISM Conflict Solutions logo]

Exercise: Split the team into groups of 3-4. Have each group identify the 5-10 values they think are most important for the team. Ask for a volunteer to report back to the larger group. Keep a list of the values that each group identified.

Reflection Questions:

1. What values are most important to you?
2. What values are most important to the success of your team?
3. Do your team members share this perspective?
   a. How do you know?
   b. Have you asked in a way that truly invites a difference of opinion?
4. What other values are important to members of your team?
5. Are there members of your team who might have a different perspective on what values are most important?
6. Are you seeking diverse opinions?
7. Are you encouraging other values to be shared and considered?

B. Defining and Measuring Success

The second step in creating team norms is to define what successful inter-personal interactions look like on your team, and how you will measure and acknowledge that success. The values that you selected above can form the basis of your definition and measurement of success.

Exercise: This can be done individually or in small groups. Take your top 3-5 values and create a statement that outlines your vision of successful interpersonal interactions on your team.

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Reflection Questions:

1. What behaviors are present?
2. What behaviors are absent?
3. What obstacles must be removed for the team to embody these core values?
4. How will you, as a leader, contribute to modeling these behaviors?
5. Do you expect anything of your team members that you do not expect of yourself?
6. How will you respond/react if a team member points out that you are not modeling these values yourself?
7. Will you encourage team members to let you know if they observe you to be acting inconsistently with these values?
8. How will you encourage/reward team members for speaking up in this way?
9. If you asked an impartial observer to describe the values of your team, would they include the values that you have identified?
10. How will you hold yourself and others accountable to living, not just professing, these values?

C. Creating Team Norms

Now that you have identified your core values and crafted a clear picture of what successful interactions will look like on your team, it is time to create team norms. We recommend a four-step process for creating team norms. Before embarking on this four-step process, however, you will need to determine who should be a part of the norms building process. The answer to this will depend on the size and structure of your team, the make-up of your team, and other organizational factors. As you consider the question of who, think about:

1. Who needs to be a part of creating the norms for the process to succeed?
2. Should it be the entire team?
3. Should it be mandatory or voluntary?
4. Are there different ways to engage team members in your organization?
5. Could you use a survey or other tool to collect ideas?
6. Does it make sense to ask for volunteers? Or make participation mandatory?
7. If you are asking for volunteers, how will you ensure that all voices are considered, not just those that are loudest/most vocal?

We recommend using the PRISM Process™ as a framework for the creation of team norms. The PRISM Process involves 4 key steps: 1. Brainstorming, 2. Discerning, 3. Formulating, and 4. Implementing.

The first step – brainstorming - calls for an open and expansive generation of ideas. As long as the idea is relevant, it should be brought forth in the group and added to the options to be considered.

Step two - discerning - focuses on taking the list generated in step 1 and identifying the option or options that the group most wants to focus on next. Recognizing that every problem has a solution and every solution has a problem, which option best meets the needs of the group and its resources? Which option can the team agree to back, even if it is not each person's first choice?

Step three - formulating - is about creating the plan for putting the ideas into action. This step includes conversations to identify key tasks and contributors necessary to successfully implement the plan. This step should also include the creation of a timeline.

Step four – implementing - is "go" time. Any juicy conversation about what, how, when, etc. should have happened already and should be left in the past. Now it is time for the team to come together around the chosen plan and put the full force of its weight behind implementing it. Key to this step is a group agreement that even those who did not opt for the chosen plan initially will do their part to ensure its success.

Reflection Questions:

1. What are the top 10 norms generated by your team?
2. How do they reflect the core values identified by the team?
3. What specific behaviors will team members need to model to uphold your norms?
4. How will you as a leader support your team members in upholding the norms?