



Keeping the Team Going

Keeping the team going and fully informed is a challenge for most in the best of times, but when disruptions and stressful situations are added to the mix, as they likely will be, teams can fall apart. This chapter provides valuable insights with action items and explanations of ways to help a team be productive and rewarding for all. In addition, participants will gain insights into the challenges they may face with their teams and how to navigate through them. (See [Summary of Chapter 5](#) [1].)

Chapter Talking Points

- Engage participants in talking about the rewards of care-share teams: sense of connection, awareness of gift, fragility of life and wisdom gained from the experience.
- Engage participants in openly discussing care share teams with which they have experience: there will likely be times of stress and this won't feel good, but isn't personal. A cranky care partner, personal issues and unreasonable demands may all emerge. This is normal.
- Discuss the value of scheduling regular meetings with care partner and care team – It provides time for reevaluating what's working well, what's not and changes needing to be made. Open and honest dialogue works best. Setting a schedule (in person, by Skype, "go to meeting" or with some other format) allows for greatest engagement and is superior to meeting only when there's a problem.
- Impress upon participants the importance of known roles and clearly expressed boundaries. See Chapter 5 in the book, and appendix in the workbook.

Getting Started: Keep the Team Going and Fully Informed

Chapter Objectives

- Participants achieve an awareness of what it takes to keep a team going. Participants gain a comfort level with and knowledge about what they can do to have care teams function well.
- Challenges with teams are to be expected and don't have to be a negative experience or produce a negative outcome when values and vision are shared and honored.
- Participants are introduced to and learn how to make use of the tools for scheduling and using a phone tree or online applications.
- Care partners, if able, participate and are participants in a functional team, especially in setting a vision.
- Impress upon participants the importance of praise, gratitude, rituals and traditions and also the need for prompt apologies when mishaps or intrusions occur.
- Boundaries are clarified, understood, expressed and honored.

Skills to Focus On

- Courage: Interconnectedness, working with a team and the challenges that surface, takes courage. Being willing to let go of some control when necessary will take courage for many.
- Management of emotions: During crisis and stressful situations emotions tend to heighten or get out of control. Practice emotion control technique. (See [Ask for Help](#) [2].)
- Management of conflict: Many conflicts are not really serious, and others quite possibly cannot be resolved completely. Most don't have to be. A useful goal is to find acceptable solutions to



managing differences. Apologies, when appropriate and needed, can be a conflict calmer and evidence of good will

- Problem solving: PSN care partners and teams are problem solvers. It's important to solve the problem, though, not a symptom.
- Trust: There are four zones of trust: 1. Total; 2. Some but not total; 3. Neutral/not sure; 4. No trust. When confidentiality is required, total trust in the team member is vital. Check to see if the match between people and tasks is appropriate. If someone in the team has demonstrated little or lack of trustworthiness, tasks should be given that, if not completed or timely, will do no harm. If these are then done well, trust may increase
- Personal responsibility: Care partner and team members have a personal responsibility to fulfill commitments made or to seek help in finding an acceptable solution if they are unable to fulfill a commitment. Willingness to be a reliable team player is important to all PSN team members.
- Honesty and Integrity: These character traits are the foundation to a productive and rewarding PSN. An effective and efficient team relies on honesty and integrity of the care partner and the team, especially the team leader.

Mistakes to Avoid

- Glossing over the importance of how effective, functional teams need a point person or leader to coordinate and manage the team and tasks.
- Minimizing the importance of shared values, gratitude, honesty and integrity in keeping the team going.
- Failing to remind learners about confidential documents being kept in a secure place.
- Not including other community resources as part of the team.
- Omitting the Website links to tools.

Exercise 1:

To demonstrate that even if someone is frail or weak, a supportive team will make the difference.

1. Have between 6 and 8 pencils ready
2. Crack one pencil ahead of time so that it is not quite broken, but is obviously bent
3. Show the cracked pencil to the class, and point out that this pencil by itself is weak.
4. Place the cracked pencil in the middle of the rest of the pencils.
5. Try to bend the entire bunch of pencils. Ask a volunteer to also try.
6. Point out that even though the pencil in the middle is bent, the rest of the pencils support it.
7. Consider continuing this demonstration, removing one pencil at a time until the slightly broken one

breaks in two. How many parts (pillars) of a PSN needed support to be really helpful?

Exercise 2:

To create a powerful and meaningful team bonding experience. This exercise works best with more than 10 participants.

1. Have all participants stand up around the room. It doesn't matter where they are.
2. Use the [Milling Exercise](#) [3].
3. Be sure to debrief this very powerful exercise. What did people notice about how they felt as they encountered each other at different points? Did they feel increasingly vulnerable? How did this feel?



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