

GUIDE TO THE TEAM DEVELOPMENT MEASURE[©]

Version 1.1
October 2010

Evaluate and improve the work of your
team

- ◆ The Team Development Measure[©] is useful for identifying ways to improve teamwork.
- ◆ Additional resources describe the value of implementation and suggest ways to enhance group effort

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For a full copy of the TDM and other evaluation resources, please visit:

http://vaww.portal.gla.med.va.gov/sites/Research/HSRD/CIPRS/Evaluation_Resource_Guide/default.aspx

Please send any questions and/or comments to ciprs@va.gov

THE TEAM DEVELOPMENT MEASURE[®] (TDM) OVERVIEW

Teams are an integral part of the delivery of care and the work of systems improvement at the Veterans Health Administration. Team development is vital to the creation of high performing improvement teams. The Team Development Measure[®] (TDM) is designed to help you evaluate your team and identify strategies for working together more effectively. The TDM targets key elements of team development: 1) cohesion, 2) communication, 3) clarity of team roles, and 4) clarity of team goals and the means to achieve them.

About the Team Development Measure[®]

The TDM was constructed by Bill Mahoney, Ph.D. and Carolyn Turkovich (PeaceHealth), with support from the John A Hartford Foundation, Inc., the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and PeaceHealth to promote quality improvement in team-based health care settings. TDM is based on literature specific to teams and health care teamwork. The measure has been used to evaluate teams as small as 3-4 people and as large as 43, with team membership ranging from executive teams to outpatient clinics and inpatient hospital care units.

Who should use this tool?

This tool is for any front line work team or project team that wants to improve the effectiveness of their performance by evaluating the way they work as a team.

Why should we use this tool?

The TDM will show where your team currently stands along the measure of team development. You can work as a team to target opportunities for growth and track progress over time.

The accompanying “[Tips for Successful Teamwork](#)” offers specific ideas for improving team work and results. Improving team skills benefits your current project as well as your work on future teams.

When should we use this tool?

This tool can be used during any phase in the life of a team. Using this tool early in the life of a team can help maximize the team’s effectiveness from the start. Consider using the survey at the project or team initiation, six months later, and after twelve months. After that, you can track progress annually or use the survey when the team needs to refocus on the basics.

What time and resources do we need to use this tool?

Each team member spend about 10 minutes completing an anonymous 31-item online survey. A report with the team’s results is sent to team members for review. A 60-90 minute group session is then conducted to discuss the results and identify strategies for advancing team development.

We *strongly* encourage the use of a facilitator for this exercise. Check with your Systems Redesign Point of Contact or Quality Management professional to identify potential facilitators.

The following guide includes information about the TDM, including the components of team development, and instructions for using the measure with your team, including how to request an online TDM survey and conduct a meeting to review the results as a team. Psychometric properties of the TDM are presented at the conclusion of this section.

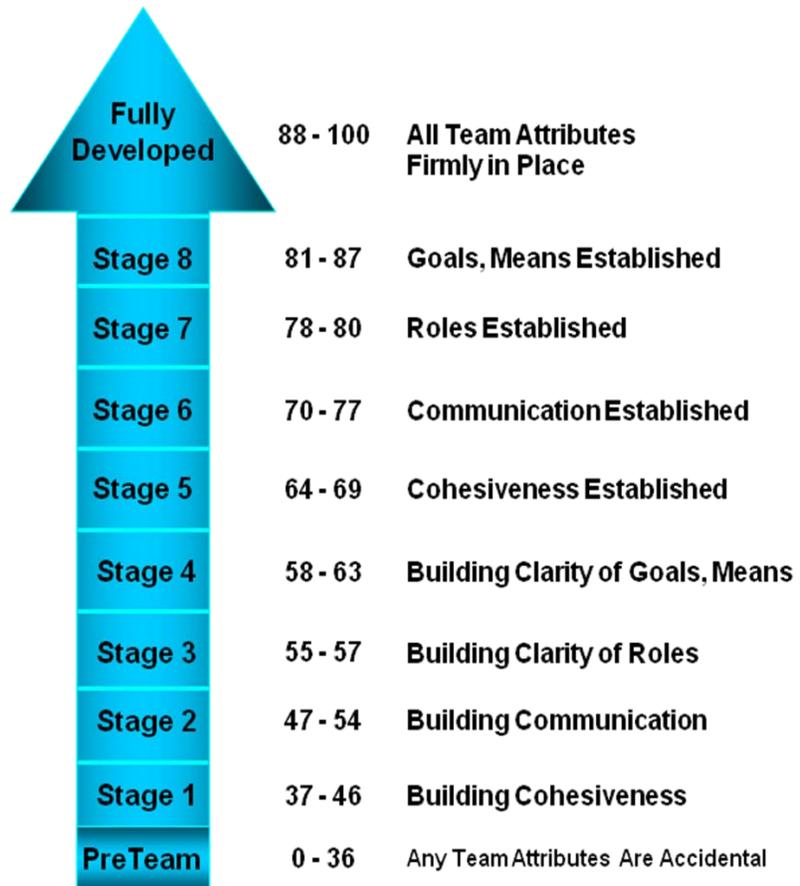
ABOUT TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Team development is an important factor in the creation of high performing teams. The TDM indicates the degree to which a team has and uses the components needed for highly effective teamwork. Teamwork components consist of cohesiveness (a sense of “oneness” or working well together), communication (including participation, problem-solving, and decision-making), role clarity (understanding the roles of each team member), and goals and means clarity (agreement on the team’s goals and the strategies to achieve them).

Stages of Team Development:

The TDM describes eight stages of team development – determined by the four components described above and the level at which that component has been achieved (in place or firmly in place). Movement from one stage to the next is more of a flow in the direction of development of a team than a distinct step on the ladder of team development.

Scores on the measure are interval (one point is the same size anywhere on the scale) and measures team development on a yardstick. Scores range from 0-100 where 0 = no team development, and 100 = full team development. The following graphic shows the eight stages:



The Components of Team Development:

Cohesiveness: The first component put into place as a team develops is cohesiveness (attraction of the members to the team). Cohesiveness is the social glue that binds the team members together as a unit. Without cohesiveness, it is extremely difficult for a team to attain the other components of a developed team.

When a team is cohesive, team members:

- are attracted to the team,
- find membership in the team to be a personally meaningful experience,
- enjoy the company of the other team members,
- support, nurture, and care for each other,

- feel free to share ideas and suggest ways to improve team function,
- feel they are using their unique skills for the benefit of the team,
- have a strong “we” feeling, and
- routinely develop creative solutions to problems.

Communication: The next component of team development is communication. Communication involves a full range of topics, including decision-making and problem-solving. Effective communication becomes easier once the team has developed a certain level of cohesiveness. Communication is, of course, key, since further team development and effective functioning cannot occur without team communication.

When a team is effectively communicating, team members:

- always freely say what they feel and think,
- are always direct, truthful, respectful, and positive,
- openly discuss all decisions before they are made,
- handle conflict in a calm, caring, and healing manner,
- openly explore options to solve problems when they arise,
- do not talk about each other behind their back, and
- do not have a hidden agenda.

Role Clarity: The next component to becoming part of a higher functioning team is clear role definitions and expectations. The role of “team member” supersedes individual professional roles. While professional roles brought to the team give the team its potential strength, equally, if not more, important for team development is that individuals feel equally valued as members of the team. Additionally, team members should know who is doing what and what other team members expect of them.

When a team achieves role clarity, team members:

- feel that accomplishments of the team are placed above those of individuals,
- understand the roles and responsibilities of all other team members, and
- have a clear understanding of what other team members expect of them.

Goals & Means Clarity: The final component of team development to become a fully functioning and high-performing team is clearly defining team goals and the means to be used to reach these goals.

When a team achieves goals and means clarity, team members:

- have clarified and agreed upon what the real work of the team is,
- clearly understand the goals of the team,
- agree on how to reach the team goals, and
- agree upon clear criteria for evaluating the outcomes of the team.

IMPLEMENTING THE TEAM DEVELOPMENT MEASURE SURVEY

When to use the TDM: The TDM can be used during any phase in the life of a team. Temporary project teams are well served by using this tool early on so that they can maximize their teams' effectiveness from the start. Consider using the survey at the project or team initiation, 6-months later, and after 12-months. After that, you can track progress annually, or use the survey when the team needs to refocus on the basics.

STEP 1. INITIATE THE TEAM DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

- The Team Development Measure[®] (TDM) survey is available on the VA intranet at <http://vaww.vssc.med.va.gov/TeamDevelopmentMeasure>.

From this page, you can:

- Create a new survey that your team members will respond to. The system will automatically send a survey link to team members; the email will stress the importance of participating in the survey. You will need the name of your team and the names of your team leader and team members to set up a new survey.
- Manage surveys you have already set up. The system will allow you to add/delete team members, check on a survey's response rate, send out reminder emails regarding a survey, or close out a survey and generate a report of the results.
- Access TDM questionnaires that are waiting for your response. All survey responses will be collected anonymously.
- Access TDM reports available to you either because you set up the survey and/or because you are part of a team that responded to a TDM survey.

The TDM report will include a description of the Team Development Measure[®], similar to that in this guide, so that the team members understand the framework. Your team's report will give you an overall score to indicate your position in the stages of team development. It will also provide information on your team's performance on each survey item, grouped by the components of team development (cohesiveness, communication, role clarity, goals & means clarity), and Tips for Teamwork.

STEP 2. DISTRIBUTE TEAM REPORT IN PREPARATION FOR MEETING

- Provide copies of the report to each team member several days before the team meeting.
- Ask them to review it and highlight anything that stands out for them or that they would like to discuss.

STEP 3. HOLD A MEETING TO REVIEW TDM REPORT

- Review the purpose of the meeting: to identify ways to improve teamwork.
- Ask if everyone has had a chance to review the report. If not, give them a few minutes to review before beginning the conversation.

Guiding the Conversation

1. Begin broadly; ask, “*What jumped out at you?*”
2. Next ask, “*What does everyone agree that the team is doing well?*”
3. For items where there isn’t agreement that the team is doing well, ask, “*What could we do to improve in this area?*”
4. The TDM developers recommend beginning by working on the items where there is variation in responses. It’s hard to begin on an item if everyone rates it poorly.

Facilitation tips

- ✓ *Encourage full participation. It is important that everyone feels that they can share*
- ✓ *Be sure to maintain a balance between positive and negative. It is easy to focus on just those areas where there is disagreement. Opportunities for improvement should be discussed against a backdrop of what you are already doing well*
- ✓ *Some prompting questions for reluctant participants:*
 - *What do you think might account for the variation in team members’ responses?*
 - *What are the things that we think are most important to work on?*
 - *Think about a team that you were on that worked really well and felt really good about (work team, sports team, drama, music)? What happened in that team that enhanced cohesiveness, communication, role clarity, and an understanding of goals and means? What could we do to get that feeling here?*

Wrapping up

1. Ask the team to identify 1-3 behaviors that they would like to work on. (see Action Plan Worksheet, pg. 8)
2. Plan to include these in the points for future team meeting evaluations.
3. Use the *Tips for Successful Teamwork* in this guide for ideas.

CONDUCTING A BRIEF TEAM REVIEW:

If you don't have time for a full meeting review, consider asking:

- *What do you consider to be the team's two or three greatest strengths?*
- *What are two or three things that the team should change or improve immediately that will make it more effective?*

PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE TEAM DEVELOPMENT MEASURE

The TDM was tested on 145 teams ranging from 3 to 30 members. The measure has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.97 and a Rasch/IRT: person reliability of 0.96. Mplus exploratory factor analysis all loaded heavily on a single factor (range 0.66 -0.85).

The Team Development Measure[®]

This questionnaire is a measure of team characteristics. Please indicate how much you strongly disagree – disagree – agree – strongly agree to each statement as it applies to your team at the present time. There are no right or wrong answers, just your perceptions. This survey is totally anonymous.

| | Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|----------------------|----------|-------|-------------------|
| 1. Team members say what they really mean | | | | |
| 2. Team members say what they really think | | | | |
| 3. Team members talk about other team members behind their back | | | | |
| 4. Team members participate in making decisions about the work of the team. | | | | |
| 5. All team members feel free to share their ideas with the team | | | | |
| 6. All team members feel free to express their feelings with the team | | | | |
| 7. The team practices tolerance, flexibility and appreciation of the unique differences between team members | | | | |
| 8. The team handles conflicts in a calm, caring and healing manner | | | | |
| 9. Regardless of the topic, communication between the people on this team is direct, truthful, respectful and positive. | | | | |
| 10. The Team openly discusses decisions that affect the work of the team before they are made | | | | |
| 11. On this team, members support, nurture and care for each other | | | | |
| 12. The team has agreed upon clear criteria for evaluating the outcomes of the team's effort | | | | |
| 13. As a team, we come up with creative solutions to problems | | | | |

| | Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 14. In the team, there is more of a WE feeling than a ME feeling | | | | |
| 15. There is confusion about what the work of the team should be doing | | | | |
| 16. There is confusion about how to accomplish the work of the team. | | | | |
| 17. Roles and responsibilities of individual team members are clearly understood by all members of the team | | | | |
| 18. Team members place the accomplishments of the team ahead of their own individual accomplishments | | | | |
| 19. The goals of the team are clearly understood by all team members | | | | |
| 20. Team members define the goals of the team as more important than their own personal goals. | | | | |
| 21. I am happy with the outcomes of the team's work so far | | | | |
| 22. I enjoy being in the company of the other members of the team. | | | | |
| 23. This team is a personally meaningful experience for me | | | | |
| 24. I have a clear understanding of what other team members expect of me as a team member. | | | | |
| 25. The work I do on this team is valued by the other team members. | | | | |
| 26. I am allowed to use my unique personal skills and abilities for the benefit of the team. | | | | |
| 27. Some members of this team resist being led. | | | | |
| 28. Information that is important for the team to have is openly shared by and with all team members. | | | | |
| 29. All individuals on this team feel free to suggest ways to improve how the team functions | | | | |

| | Disagree Strongly | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 30. When team problems arise the team openly explores options to solve them. | | | | |
| 31. On this team the person who takes the lead differs depending on who is best suited for the task. | | | | |

Team Development Measure[®]

Action Plan Worksheet

Team/Project Name: _____

Date of Review: _____

Participants

| Name | Job Title | Role in Team |
|------|-----------|--------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Project Summary

| Observations About the Team | Recommendations for the Future |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL TEAMWORK

Adapted from The Team Handbook®, Third Edition, Scholsted, Joiner and Streible, Oriel Incorporated, 2003

TIPS FOR IMPROVING COHESION

Establish Ground Rules

Every team should establish ground rules, or “norms,” addressing how meetings will be run, how team members will interact, and what kind of behavior is acceptable. Each member is expected to respect these rules, which usually prevents misunderstandings and disagreements.

Ideally the team should:

- Openly state or acknowledge norms

Symptoms of a problem:

- Certain important topics are avoided
- No one acknowledges norms
- Recurring differences about acceptable behavior
- Behavior that signifies irritation
- Conflicting expectations

Some strategies:

- If ground rules were not established and agreed to at the start of the team, take time to do this
- From time to time, review the ground rules, adding, deleting, or revising them as needed

Encourage Balanced Participation

Since every team member has a stake in the group’s achievements, everyone should participate in discussions and decisions, share commitment to the project’s success and contribute his or her talents.

Ideally the team should:

- Have balanced participation
- Build on members’ natural styles of participation

Symptoms of a problem:

- Some team members have too much influence
- Members contribute only at certain times or about certain topics

Some strategies:

- Send agendas out before meetings to allow participants to prepare for discussions

- Use brainstorming or a nominal group technique ¹to elicit input from all team members during discussions

TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

Clear Communication

Good discussions depend on how well information is passed among team members.

Ideally, team members should:

- Speak clearly and directly
- Be succinct; avoid long examples
- Listen actively
- Avoid interrupting when others are speaking

Symptoms of a problem:

- Members unable to say what they feel
- Sense that there is more going on than is said
- Opinions expressed as facts
- “Plops” – statements that receive no acknowledgement or response
- Bullying statements
- Discounting opinions

Some strategies:

- Develop strong communications skills and learn to recognize problems that result from poor communication
- Use a meeting evaluation to discuss how well team members communicate
- Consider having observers (team members, coach or outsiders) watch the team and give honest feedback on communication dynamics

Beneficial Team Behaviors

Teams should encourage all members to use the skills and practices that make discussions and meetings more effective.

Ideally, team members should:

- Initiate discussions
- Seek information and opinions
- Suggest procedures
- Elaborate on ideas
- Complete assignments on time
- Summarize
- Test for agreement

¹ “Nominal group technique is a structured method of generating a list and then narrowing it down. The first phase is silent brainstorming. In the second phase, members vote to reduce the list.” The Team Handbook®, Third Edition, Scholtes, Joiner and Streible, Oriel Incorporated, 2003. Pg 3-14.

- Act as gatekeepers, manage participation
- Keep discussion focused
- Be creative in resolving differences
- Ease tension and work through difficulties
- Get agreement on standards
- Refer to documentation and data
- Praise and correct others fairly
- Accept both praise and complaints

Symptoms of a problem:

- Failure to use discussion skills
- No shared responsibility – reliance on one person
- People repeating points – not sure heard the first time
- Discussions are stuck – inability to let go of one topic
- Discussions are not candid – real discussion happens outside meeting

Some strategies:

- Learn principles of giving constructive feedback (Team Handbook 6-24) ²
- Review Ten common team problems and solution strategies (Team Handbook 7-14) ³
- The team leader can focus the team on developing effective discussion skills. For example, team members could pick two or three skills for the whole team to practice at a meeting, reviewing their performance during the meeting evaluation

Well-Defined Decision Procedures

An important characteristic of teams is the process used for decision-making. A team should always be aware of the different ways it reaches decisions.

Ideally the team should:

- Discuss how decisions will be made
- Explore important issues by polling
- Test for agreement
- Use data as the basis for decisions

Symptoms of a problem:

- Conceding to opinions that are expressed as fact with no supporting data
- Decisions by one or two people
- Too-frequent recourse to “majority rules”
- Decision by default; silence interpreted as agreement

Some strategies:

- Have the team leader or coach lead a discussion on decision-making by the team

² The Team Handbook®, Third Edition, Scholted, Joiner and Streible, Oriel Incorporated, 2003. Pg 6-24.

³ The Team Handbook®, Third Edition, Scholted, Joiner and Streible, Oriel Incorporated, 2003. Pg 7-14.

- Occasionally, designate a member or outsider to watch and give feedback on how decisions are made so the group can talk about any changes it needs to make

Awareness of the Group Process and non-verbal communication

Ideally, all team members will be aware of the group process – how the team works together – *and* pay attention to the content of the meeting.

Ideally, team members should:

- Be sensitive to nonverbal communication
- See, hear, and feel team dynamics
- Comment and intervene to correct group process problems
- Contribute equally to both content and process
- Work on group process issues

Symptoms of a problem:

- Avoiding group dynamic issues
- Pushing ahead on the task when there are signs of resistance or confusion
- Inattention to obvious nonverbal cues
- Members attributing motives to nonverbal behavior
- Remarks that discount someone’s behavior or contribution

Some strategies:

- Have a facilitator or coach observe and evaluate how well the team handles problems, confusion, discussions, and so forth
- Encourage the team to have several “process checks,” times when members can say how they think the meeting is going, or express thoughts for which there are no appropriate times in the meeting
- Routinely include group process issues in meeting evaluations

TIPS FOR CLARIFYING TEAM ROLES

Clearly Defined Roles

Teams operate most efficiently when they tap everyone’s talents and when all members understand their duties and know who is responsible for what issues and tasks.

Ideally the team:

- Has formally designated roles
- Understands which roles belong to one person and which are shared
- Uses each member’s talents
- Involves everyone in team activities

Symptoms of a problem:

- Roles and assignments that result from pecking order
- Confusion over who is responsible for what

- People getting stuck with the same tedious chore

Some strategies:

- The team must decide how roles will be assigned and changed
- Review your pre-work materials or the VHA Improvement Guide for suggested team and meeting role descriptions
- Have the team leader discuss the responsibilities and roles of all involved with the team
- The team leader might facilitate discussions on what duties must be assigned, how they will be assigned, and how they can be changed
- Reach consensus about roles within the team

TIPS FOR CLARIFYING GOALS AND MEANS

Clarity in Team Goals

A team works best when everyone understands its purpose and goals. If there is confusion or disagreement, they work to resolve the issues.

Ideally the team:

- Agrees on its charter or works together to resolve disagreement
- Sees the scope of the charter as workable
- Has a clear vision and can progress steadily toward its goals
- Is clear about both larger project goals and purpose of individual steps

Symptoms of a problem:

- Frequent switches in directions
- Frequent arguments about what team does next
- Feeling project is too big or inappropriate
- Frustration at lack of progress
- Excessive questioning of each decision or action
- Floundering

Some strategies:

- If team members feel they don't understand the charter, or are unclear on goals, review your team charter (if you have one) as a group to be sure everyone has the same understanding
- Encourage team members to ask questions about a decision or event until they are satisfied with the answers
- If you find the charter is too broad, work with your sponsor to make it more manageable

A Plan for Improvement

Work plans help the team determine what advice, assistance, training, materials and other resources it may need. They guide the team in determining schedules and identifying milestones.

Ideally the team:

- Has created a work plan



- Has a process map or description of work steps and refers to these documents when discussing next steps
- Knows what resources and training are needed

Symptoms of a problem:

- Uncertainty about direction
- Being “lost in the woods”
- “Fishing expeditions”
- “Filling the sky with lead”

Some Strategies:

- Consult The Office of Systems Redesign’s *VHA Systems Improvement Framework Guidebook*⁴ for tools and guidance on planning improvement projects
- If needed, seek assistance from a coach or technical advisor (e.g, Systems Redesign Point of Contact, Quality Manager, or other knowledgeable person)

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<https://srd.vssc.med.va.gov/Committee/si/VHA%20Improvement%20Framework/System%20Improvement%20Framework%20Guidebook%20-FINAL%20Jan%202020%202010.doc>