

## **Dental Consultant Master Academy**

evolve ■ emerge ■ influence

### **Action Sheet – Week 30**

Team Building: Overcoming Inefficiencies so the Glue Will Stick! Part I

### **Team Building Exercise**

**Purpose:**

- Trust is the one characteristic that must be present to have a cohesive team.
- A cohesive team means that you can have implementation of what you have been hired to support the doctor and team with.
- It means that the team will be more accountable for what you put in place.
- It also means that the team is more likely to be more successful in their professional and personal life.

**How it works:**

1. Schedule a team meeting.
2. Every team member will explain three things:
  - a. Where they grew up
  - b. How many children were in their family
  - c. What was the most important challenge or difficult situation during their childhood (Not their inner childhood but just as a child).

Don't be concerned that the team already knows each other and this is a waste of time. Usually everyone is shocked at what they learn during this exercise.

When the team reveals aspects of their life to their peers it develops a specific level of trust. The trust begins to grow deeper because they get comfortable opening up to learn things about each other. This helps people let down their guard about their strengths, weaknesses, opinions and ideas.

Sound manipulative? Well, it is! And it is in a very good way. People need to feel a sense of letting their guard down and opening up to their peers before they can dive in too deep.

Asking people to be vulnerable too quickly is not only unfair, but it often provokes a resistance that is hard to overcome later. This happened to me when I was thrown in the deep end of a swimming pool before I ever learned to swim! I have never been too comfortable in any pool since that day!

Going through this exercise will help team members to understand one another at a more fundamental level. Team members will learn how they got to where they are today when they are able to share their personal history.

The result of this exercise is there is a greater likelihood of empathy and understanding. This will trump judgment and accusation when it comes to interpreting questionable behavior.

**Difficulties with the exercise**

Some people will state they didn't have any difficulties/challenges in their childhood.

This is usually the result of them not wanting to open up to the group. They also appear to be genuinely stumped!

On the flip side some people will disclose some very personal and touchy subjects to the group. This may be the death of a sibling or friend.

This is when the facilitator needs to be sensitive to the person and relay focused listening and be respectful with appreciation during these moments.

The best way to show respect is to be quiet, smile at the person talking and say “Thank you for letting us know.”

The important part here is that we treat one another with respect. It doesn't mean that someone not wanting to participate and making up this story is faking it. By and large people are good people and I would not take this they are “Not” a part of the team by stating they have nothing to say about a challenge or situation in their childhood.

You can also ask them to talk about their first job or a first time they discovered they made a mistake. Try to ask a different situation if a person says they did not have any challenges in childhood. The idea is to become vulnerable, open up, let down walls and build trust with the team members.

### **Helping the team to understand each other AND their patients as well:**

- Understanding each other can also help develop cohesive teams.
- The Myers-Briggs Personality Index is an easy assessment and simple to understand.
- Have your teams take this and share with each other.
- Ask your teams to identify patients with these various personality types.

**Here is a link to the Myers Briggs:**

<http://bit.ly/1e0Y8QJ>

## **Key Points**

### **Building Trust**

- Trust is the foundation of teamwork.
- On a team, trust is all about vulnerability, which is difficult for most people.
- Building trust takes time, but the process can be greatly accelerated.
- Like a good marriage, trust on a team is never complete it must be maintained over time.

### **Mastering Conflict**

- Good conflict among team members requires trust, which is all about engaging in unfiltered, passionate debate around issues.
- Even among the best teams, conflict will at times be uncomfortable.
- Conflict norms, though they will vary from team to team, must be discussed and made clear among the team.
- The fear of occasional personal conflict should not deter a team from having regular, productive debate.

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