Effective Team Work
in Social Work

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Preface :

Some people spend most of their time by ignoring the view points of others. The successful person should know that the first lesson is that his opinion represents only one side of the fact.

If, for instance, you would like to see the elephant, you should come closer to it and examine it from all points of view. When you might be able to communicate and sympathize with those who examine it from the other side. You might think of moving the elephant to another more suitable place but to move the elephant on your own even if you planned it you won't be able very well.

What you need is a team work to carry the elephant from all sides. The team should know the objective and how the elephant will seen the public in its new location.

(Rachel Mckee and Bruce Carlson ٢٠٠٢) said that people are the most important resource available to any organization. Yet most organizations struggle with how to gain the best from that resource.

How do you create a working environment that stimulates creativity and innovation without losing control of the process? How do you foster commitment and personal stake so that everyone performs with enthusiasm? How do you introduce dramatic change so that people embrace challenges with enthusiasm, vigor, and belief?

The answer to all of these questions is by creating a culture of sound teamwork. The team is the single most powerful unit of change in an organization from the executive team down.

Teams that thrive are characterized by several strengths that can be summarized in key phrases like strong leadership, shared vision and goals, positive attitudes toward change, resilience in the face of conflict, sound problem-solving skills, and an ability to confront the brutal facts of reality. The list goes on and on, but what it all boils down to is that they have strong relationships based on mutual trust and respect.

When considering how to build strong teams, most organizations focus on technical skills and capital resources and often overlook the most important feature of sound teamwork: relationships. We think we can simply

throw people together, tell them what to do, and off they will go in pursuit of creativity, innovation, and commitment.

Relationships are the connecting link between individuals on a team. When they are based on trust and respect, a healthy flow of ideas, energy, and support travels back and forth creating breakthroughs and value added on a regular basis.

When trust and respect are absent or in question, very little of value is ever exchanged beyond basic information, and common undertakings lead to only average outcomes at best. In fact, it is the quality of the relationship in a team or in an organization as a whole that is the single biggest determinant of results.

Teamwork is often a crucial part of a business, as it is often necessary for colleagues to work well together, trying their best in any circumstance.
Teamwork means that people will try to cooperate, using their individual skills and providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between individuals.

Articleُ s Aims :

The aim of this article is to define the concept of team work and stages of team building and development. Also, team members' roles have been identified. Furthermore, characteristics of effective team leaders and members are introduced in details.

In the beginning of the article , the importance of teamwork in social work is introduced .

Team work & Social Work :

Team work as a kind of work to achieve diverse task collectivity should be a part of the educational curriculum for social workُ s students , at the undergraduate and graduate levels . We should prepare social work students and social workers for working in interdisciplinary teamwork effectively .

Social work students and social workers should read and learn more about team work. Field training for social work students should train them on team work skills . Also, training departments in organizations which social workers work should provide training programs on "Team Work" for them .

Also , any social worker should posses many traits to be an effective team leader or team member. Team work is very important for social workers to achieve their aims and functions effectively.

work at the present time requires ة   The nature of the social workers collaborative work with various professional disciplines (such as : medicine , nursing , education , special education, rehabilitation , training , sociology , psychology , law , …) in the form of teamwork , due to the complexity of problems and multiplicity of the therapeutic approaches , which ةclients overlapping with other sciences and professions .

In other words , the social worker cannot work alone in most cases and times , he or she works in organizations have other professional disciplines and they also practice roles in providing services to clients and in helping them to cope with their problems .

If we want to apply and increase total quality management to social attention and interest to many services for our clients , we should give more matters, one of them is using team work style by social workers when it necessary .

Teams and groups:

1- Teams and groups are words that are used interchangeably but when group concepts are applied to certain features of organizational functioning, it is customary refer to teams and team- building.

2- The term of group refers to two members or more who have interpersonal relationships. The behavior of members is influenced by shared norms. Members strive to achieve a common objectives, normally under the influence of a leader or a chairman.

3- Teams are task oriented work group and are very useful in performing work that is complicated and interrelated that one person cannot handle.

Teamwork :

The idea of employees working in a "team" has been with us since the early 1930s when the so-called Hawthorne experiments found that productivity increased when workers felt supported and involved.

The following are some definitions to the concept of teamwork :

1- The term teamwork refers to cooperation takes advantage of all the skills represented in a group as well as the f mysterious process by which that group becomes more than the sum of its parts.

2- Teamwork is work done by several associates with each doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole (Merriam-Webster Dictionary :2015) .

3- Teamwork is the process of working

collaboratively   with   a group of   people   in order to achieve a goal
(Business Dictionary : 2015).

Primary Dimensions of Teamwork :

six ، Whenever two or more people join forces as a achieve an outcome primary dimensions of teamwork emerge to shape their effort. These six dimensions are interrelated so that actions in one dimension impact others to cause a ripple effect throughout the whole team interaction.

we can understand more ،By analyzing these dimensions one by one clearly how to create high quality teamwork on a day-to-day basis whether in a new or an existing team.

1- Critique.
2- Norms.
3- Leadership.
4- Structure.
5- Morale
6- Goals (Rachel McKee & Bruce Carlson, 2002).

Purposes of Team Building:

1- To do a task.
2- To solve a problem.
3- To take a decision.
4- To implement a program.
5- To write a report.
6- To evaluate a program or project.
7- To negotiate with other organizations.
8- To have healthy competition.
9- To develop relationships

When Team Work Does Not Organize its Activities : (Carl E. Larson & LaFasto Frank M. :1989)

1- The results are unpredictable.

2- Work is haphazard.

3- Some tasks are not done at all.

4- Other tasks are delayed.

Team Building "Works" When The Following Conditions are Met:

1- Interdependence.

2- Leadership.

3- Join decision.

4- Equal influence.

Teamwork Processes:

Researchers have identified 10 teamwork processes that fall into three categories (Michelle A. Marks & et. al. , 2001 ; Jeffery A. LePine & et.al., 2008):

1-Transition processes (between periods of action):

- Mission analysis
- Goal specification
- Strategy formulation

2-Action processes (when the team attempts to accomplish its goals and objectives):

- Monitoring progress toward goals
- Systems monitoring
- Team monitoring and backup behavior
- Coordination

3-Interpersonal processes (present in both action periods and transition periods):

- Conflict management
- Motivation and confidence building
- Affect management

Stages of Team Development:

W. Brendan Reddy & et. al. (2015) Classify Team development process in four stages as following :

Stages	Description
1- Forming	It is a set of individuals, rather than a team
2- Storming	Because there can be conflict

3-Norming	The team works on the way it is going to operate.
4- Performing	The team really begins to perform at maximum capacity

We can draw these stages in relation to performance as following :
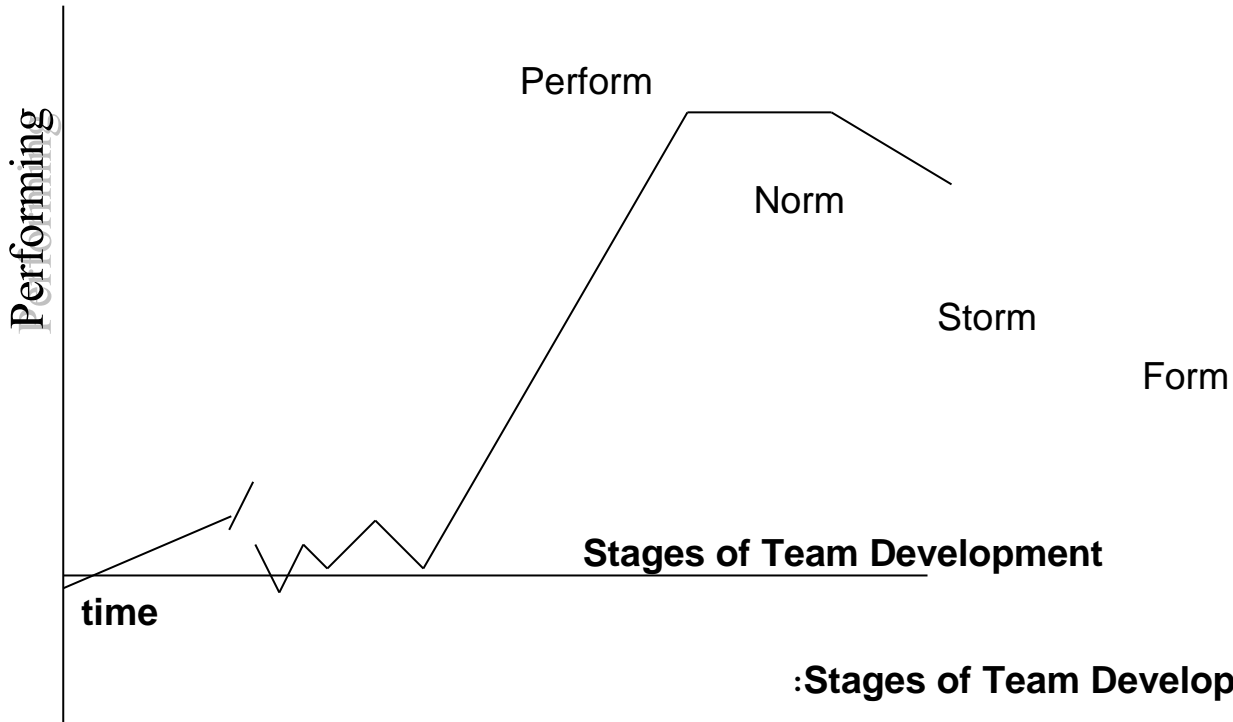
Stages of Team Development:

Stage 1: Forming

In this stage, team members discover what behaviors are acceptable to group. For newly established groups, this stage is the transition from the individual to member status For existing teams with new changes, forming is a period of testing behavior and dependence on group leadership. The team may:

- Identify tasks in terms of relevant parameters and decide how the group will accomplish the tasks.

- Decide what information is needed and how It will be used.

- Test behavioral expectations and hesitantly develop new ways to handle behavior problems.

- Feel initial attachment to the team.

- Rationalize the purpose of the team.

- Discuss problems peripheral to the task.

- Hear complaints about the organizational environment.

- Accomplish some work.

Stage 2 : Storming

In this stage, some of the members begin to establish then-individuality. Members recognize the extent of the task and may respond emotionally to the perceived requirements for self-change and self-denial.

Other characteristics of this stage include:

- Some disunity and increased tension.

- Resistance to task demands because they are perceived to interfere with personal needs.

- Polarization of some group members.

- Fluctuations in relationships.

- Concern of excessive work.

- Establishment of hierarchy.

- Some modest work accomplishment.

Stage 3 : Norming

During this stage, members begin to accept the team, their team's norms, their own roles, and their individual personalities. Emotional conflict is reduced by patching up previously co relationships. Other characteristics of this stage include:

- An attempt to achieve maximum harmony by avoiding conflict.

- A high level of intimacy characterized by confiding in each other, sharing personal problems, and discussing team dynamics.

- A new ability to express emotions constructively.

- A sense of team cohesiveness with a common spirit and goals.

- The establishment and maintenance of team boundaries.

- Moderate work accomplishments.

Stage 4 : Performing

Now the team has established its interpersonal norms. It becomes an entity capable of diagnosing and solving problems and making decision. This stage a desirable stage not always reached by many teams. In this stage, members experience insight into personal and interpersonal processes, undertake constructive self-change and accomplish a great deal of work (AMIDEAST, 2004).

Team Work Functions :

We can determine two kinds of team functions:

1. Task functions; and.

2. Maintenance Functions.

Team members can carry these two functions, if they practice the following skills

Members' Skills

Task Functions	Maintenance Functions
• Initiating activity	• Encouraging
• seeking information	• Gate keeping
• seeking opinion	• Standard setting
• Giving information	• Following
• Giving opinion	• Expressing group feeling
• Elaborating	• Testing for consensus and
• Summarizing	• Commitment
• Testing feasibility	• Mediating
• Eval	• Reli

uating	eving tension

Team Roles:

W. Brendan Reddy and others (2015) suggested three main types of team roles as following :

1-Task roles , such as :

- Initiator
- Information- Seeker
- Information- Giver
- Achiever
- Co-coordinator
- Orienteer
- Evaluator

2- Maintenance Roles , such as :

- Encourager
- Facilitator
- Harmonizer
- Gate Keeper
- Standard- setter
- Follower

3- Anti-Team Roles , such as :

- Blocker
- Recognition-seeker
- Dominator
- Avoider
- Aggressive
- Absconded from taking responsibility

Criteria for an Effective Team:

1. Understanding, mutual agreement, and identification with respect to the primary task.

2. Open communication.

3. Mutual trust.

4. Mutual support.

5. Management of human differences.

6. Selective use of the team.

7. Appropriate member skills.

8. Effective Leadership (Amideast : 2013).

 (1980) listed the "D. MC Gregor in his book "The Human Side of Enterprise

following characteristics of effective groups or teams:

1-informality, relaxed atmosphere, involvement; interest.

2- Much discourse; high contributions.

3-Understanding / acceptance of common aims.

4-Listen; consider forward ideas.

5-Examine disagreements; dissenters are not overpowered.

6-Consensus decision making; member feels free to disagree.

7-Constructive criticism.

8-Feelings and attitudes are aired.

9-Awareness of decisions/ actions; clear assignments.

10-Leadership role undertaken by most suitable member.

11-Frequent review of group operations

Effective Team Leaders:

Team leaders should possess many traits to be effective such as: (James Stoner : 2015)

- Communicate
- Are open, honest, and fair
- Are decisions with input
- Give subordinates the information they need to do their jobs
- Set goals and emphasize them
- Keep focused through follow-up
- Listen to feedback and ask questions
- Are loyal to the company and their subordinates
- Creates an atmosphere of growth
- Have wide visibility
- Give praise and recognition
- Constructively criticize and address problems
- Develop plans
- Have and share their mission and goals
- Are tolerant and flexible
- Are assertive

- Exhibit a willingness to change
- Treat subordinates with respect
- Are both available and accessible
- Wants to be the boss/take charge
- Has ownership for team decisions
- Sets guidelines on how to treat each other (ethics, conduct, ect.)
- Represent the team and fights a "good fight" when appropriate

Effective Team Members:

- Team members should possess many characteristics to be effective, such as:
- Support the leader
- Help the leader succeed
- Insure all views are explored
- Express opinions, both pro and con
- Compliment the leader on team effort
- Provide open ،honest, and accurate information
- Support, protect, and defend both the team and the team leader
- Are positive and constructive
- Provide appropriate feedback
- Understand personal and team roles
- Bring problems to the team (upward feedback)
- Have ownership for team decisions
- Recognize they are a team leader
- Have a sense balance towards appropriate levels of participation
- Voluntarily participate
- Maintain confidentiality
- Are loyal to the organization, their leader, and the team
- Are open to criticism and view it as an opportunity to lead
- State problems, along with alternative solutions/options
- Give praise and recognition when warranted
- Operates within the parameters of team rules

(James Stoner : 2015)

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