

Professional Development Activity on Team Effectiveness and Performance

Over the years, we have observed teams that are effective and high performing, as well as teams that are weak and dysfunctional. The cornerstones of effective, high-performing teams are generally predictable regardless of context. Building on the rationale that predictable characteristics for team effectiveness and performance exist, we offer an activity to engage the team in its own team experiences. We coined this activity “Great Teams Ask Great Questions.”

Time Frame

The team should allow thirty to sixty minutes for this activity.

Materials

This activity requires a facilitator, flip chart or butcher paper, and, for every participant, a pen, pencil, or marker.

Process

One team member should volunteer as facilitator. He or she should conduct the following three steps.

1. Ask participants to reflect on the following questions and, on the flip chart or butcher paper, individually write the answers they are comfortable sharing later in the activity.
 - “Why did you become a school counselor or administrator?”
 - “What is your biggest hope for the school counselor–administrator team?”
 - “Think of an effective team you have worked with in your personal life or in your professional life. What elements made the team effective?”
2. Solicit responses to the questions from team members, and develop a viewable response list on flip chart or butcher paper by combining on a single sheet, or displaying individual responses in close proximity.
3. Discuss commonalities, differences, surprising disclosures, what team members learned about each other, and how these things may strengthen the team. The team should also decide what next steps are appropriate.

Results

Participation in this activity builds the team’s capacity to better understand predictable elements of team effectiveness, better understand each other, and encourage the expression of vulnerability through truthful disclosure.