

## ▷ Module 1: Team Vision

### 1.1 Introduction and Rationale

The Best Practices in Interdisciplinary Team Work research project identified developing a shared philosophy and set of values as a best practice that enabled high performing interprofessional teams in CHCs.<sup>41</sup> A philosophy that values participation, fairness, freedom of expression and interdependence is essential for the development of collaboration.<sup>42</sup> Scholars of team effectiveness define high performance teams as “groups of people with complementary skills who are equally committed to a common purpose, goals, and a working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable” and have “members [that] are also deeply committed to one another’s personal growth and success.”<sup>43</sup> To assist your team in developing this working approach, this module contains ideas for developing a shared vision. Other modules include suggestions for discussing values and agreeing on team goals. By discussing visions together from time to time, your team will set the stage for clear, shared goals and respectful working relationships, which are two other prerequisites for effective teamwork. By discussing vision and values together, you also begin a dialogue that articulates the shared approach that supports teams and high quality work.

By building a shared vision, you engage the analytical and creative aspects of your team, creating a space for reflection and inspiration that nourishes team members in the challenging tasks and environments that permeate primary health care.

Vision means an ideal and unique image of the future for the common good. It implies a choice of values and something that brings meaning and purpose to our lives. Visions are statements of destination and describe the ends of our labour. Visions give focus to human energy.<sup>44</sup>

### 1.2 Learning Objective for the Module

- Team members will have a greater awareness of the role of vision in contributing to personal and team effectiveness.
- Team members will articulate elements of personal and team vision that contribute to a shared philosophy that inspires teamwork.

## APPENDIX 1

### Building Better Teams

#### Promising Practice Example

*Flemingdon Community Health Centre and the Anne Johnston Health Station in Toronto are co-sponsoring a diabetes prevention program. Before hiring the new staff for the program, the CHCs met to discuss the vision, values and cultures of each centre in order to ensure that the staff members who were hired would be able to work with and feel comfortable with the teams in both centres.*

### 1.3 Considerations for Use and Facilitation Notes

Vision activities are most useful when the team is forming, when re-forming after some turnover, or when the team is feeling stagnant and needs to re-engage head and heart in their work together. This type of activity often leads to personal and team reflection that facilitates regeneration.

Vision activities can set a positive tone for beginning a retreat or a team building workshop. Teams of 8 - 12 can carry out this activity in approximately 90 minutes. If you are not doing this as part of a retreat, allow enough time for people to shift gears from their usual workplace responsibilities. If you are working with a larger group, you will need to consider how to manage time for everyone to speak, such as breaking in to smaller groups and pooling the contributions into the team vision. Vision activities can be lead by team members or team leaders. Consider outside facilitation when you want everyone to be able to participate fully or if there are deep differences in philosophy or approach that need to be explored. Vision activities would be out of place when the team has a specific problem to solve.

### 1.4 Learning Activity: Vision

One way to articulate your shared philosophy for team accomplishments and approach to teamwork is to explore, then merge, your visions for what you are seeking to accomplish together. Begin with presenting an overview of what vision is and how it differs from the more concrete goals and objectives usually discussed in our work. Share your purpose for the session. For instance: This session will allow team members time to connect with their personal vision for their work and share some of their thoughts to contribute to a shared vision for the team and their work together.

Encourage an atmosphere of reflection and creativity.

(Option: You might consider dimming overhead lights or playing soft background music if your team will experiment with these approaches.)

Remind participants that there are no right or wrong answers. This is an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with co-workers about what matters to them in their work together.

## APPENDIX 1

### Building Better Teams

#### Step 1: Ponder and Write

Take some time for individual writing and reflection. Provide copies of the *Vision Worksheet* included in this section for each person and encourage participants to daydream, muse and generally get in touch with their own thoughts. The goal is to see in your mind's eye a desired future state—in this case, a strong, effective team. You might wish to distribute and discuss the *About Visions...* handout to help situate and distinguish vision from organizational mission, vision and values statements.

#### Step 2: Share

Depending on the size of the group and how well they know one another, you may decide to proceed to the next step in smaller groupings of 4-6 people. Ask participants to describe to other members of the team what they have generated, with the proviso that some personal reflections can of course remain private. Participants share only what they are comfortable to share. Have each person describe the important elements that are in their vision and why these are meaningful to them. When each person has contributed, have the participants discuss what they have heard, noting commonalities or differences.

#### Step 3: Report and Synthesize

Ask participants to create a report back that synthesizes and represents everyone's contribution. The emphasis is on synthesis and inclusion, strengthening the whole, not moving to the lowest common denominator. Emphasize creativity and inspiration and encourage the use of analogies and symbols. Ask the groups to avoid words and lists and to instead draw or depict their conversation in illustrations. (Option: Have collage materials on hand and encourage three dimensional creations.) Encourage laughter and fun, as well as discussion.

#### Step 4: Display

Have each group display and explain their creation to the remainder of the participants.

#### Step 5: Discuss and Agree

Facilitate a learning-focused discussion with questions along these lines:

## APPENDIX 1

### Building Better Teams

- What are your reactions to this experience? To envisioning?
- What similarities emerged? Differences?
- What would you like to keep from this discussion? Why?
- What are the “ends” you are working towards?
- Is our team vision aligned with the overall Centre vision?
- How can we apply this in our teamwork?
- How can we keep our dream (“ends”) alive, given the other demands of our work?

Conclude with agreements and assistance to translate the outcome and/or products into a written statement. The team vision statement can become part of the record of the team’s work and can be used to orient new members or to set the tone for teamwork on values. If desired by the team, find a place to post the creations as a prompt or as a memento of their work.

### 1.5 Resources

---

Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday.

This book is an excellent overall resource and was the main influence for the development of the concept of the learning organization. It contains an extensive section on the importance of visioning and would therefore be a good reference for those who are interested in the topic in more depth.

## APPENDIX 1

### Building Better Teams

#### Vision Worksheet<sup>45</sup>

A compelling vision inspires and guides your work. It is a picture in your mind's eye of a desired future state, what you aspire to. A good vision statement articulates what is worthwhile and creative in your endeavours. To start you thinking about your vision for the team, consider:

1. What is your ideal and unique image of the future for the team?  
What are your hopes, dreams and aspirations for the team?
2. What is your ideal work community?
3. What do your clients or the people and communities you serve really need that you could provide?
4. What images come to mind when thinking of our team in the future?
5. What does it look like, sound like, taste like, feel like? What symbols or pictures best represent your vision of the future?

## APPENDIX 1

### Building Better Teams

#### About Visions...<sup>46</sup> Handout

- A vision engages your heart and spirit.
- A vision taps into embedded concerns and needs.
- A vision asserts what you and your colleagues want to create.
- A vision is something worth going for.
- A vision provides meaning to the work you and your colleagues do.
- A vision is cloudy and grand compared to a goal.
- A vision is simple.
- A vision is a living document that can always be expanded.
- A vision provides a starting place from which to get to more and more levels of specificity.
- A vision is based in two deep human needs: quality and dedication.