



Exploring Leadership

TEAMWORK: TEAM NORMS & EXPECTATIONS

In a youth council, every member’s contribution and collaboration are key to its success. The way members communicate, interact, and perform directly affects the team’s overall effectiveness. To help a team consistently reach its full potential, leaders often establish *team norms*—guidelines or rules agreed upon by all members.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the importance of each individual’s voice.
- Learn to create and establish team norms.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

Think about the worst team you were part of—what made it so frustrating? Now think about the best team—what made it so successful?

Team norms help create a positive and productive culture by shaping how the group works together. They focus on key goals such as ensuring safety, boosting productivity, and encouraging respectful and positive behavior.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Paper
- Pens, pencils and markers
- A way to display answers (e.g., projector, sticky notes, poster board, or whiteboard)

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

In this activity, you’ll brainstorm team norms to help everyone contribute and work better together as a group.

- Divide participants into teams of 4–6 people and pass out paper and pens to each team.
- Have each team brainstorm and list 10 guidelines for effective teamwork.
- Come back together as a group. Have each team share their list, and write all ideas where everyone can see them.
- Look for common themes in the lists. Discuss which ideas are most important for addressing team challenges.
- Work together to narrow the ideas to 5–8 critical team norms that everyone agrees on to guide actions and decisions.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Refer to the Appendix for examples of team norms.
- Ask teams to consider their goals and dynamics when creating norms.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Did you feel like your ideas were valued during the discussion? Even if not all ideas were included, were they listened to and respected?
- Do you think all the selected Team Norms are practical and realistic? Why or why not?
- What was your experience narrowing the list to 5–8 norms? Was this helpful or challenging? Why?
- What role can you play in helping ensure these norms are followed and supported by the team?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What are some ways we can encourage ourselves and others to follow these norms?
- Why do you think Team Norms are important for a team's success?
- How should we respond if a team member doesn't follow the Team Norms?



CONCLUSION:

Councils and teams who establish their own norms are more likely to commit to them because they reflect shared values and goals. The culture and environment the council creates will depend on the norms they prioritize and uphold.

Setting norms is not a one-time task but an ongoing conversation about effective teamwork and trust-building. As the team evolves, revisit these norms to ensure they continue to support the group's success and positive culture.

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REFERENCES

- 10 Steps for Establishing Team Norms: <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/the-real-world-guide-to-team-norms/>
- Establishing Team Norms: A Guide for Leaders: <https://www.indeed.com/hire/c/info/establishing-team-norms>



APPENDIX:

Example Team Norms:

- Focus on the team's purpose and objectives in all activities.
- Speak respectfully in all conversations or meetings.
- Actively listen and be considerate of others' opinions.
- Keep an open mind when sharing ideas or handling disagreements.
- Always come prepared when attending meetings or giving presentations.
- Arrive on time or early.
- If you're unsure about a task, don't hesitate to ask for help.