

# EFFECTIVE GROUP LEADERSHIP



"Effective Group Leadership", was developed for youth members, ages 15 to 21. The purpose of the workbook is to help young people understand, develop, and strengthen their leadership skills so that they might serve as more effective leaders in group situations. The suggestions and activities presented in this guide can be worked on individually or in groups and are applicable to breed association or other youth club work.

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## A TRUE LEADER

*A true leader accepts responsibility for his/her choices and the impact those choices have on others;*

*A true leader has the courage to stand up for his/her convictions even in the face of unpopularity;*

*A true leader shows compassion for others, not just in words, but in deeds and actions;*

*A true leader serves humanity for a greater purpose, not just for earthly rewards.*

— Anne Davis

# What is Leadership?

Leadership involves a variety of skills. Leaders must have skills in communicating effectively, listening actively, working with people, and helping others work together in groups. Leaders must have integrity and honesty. Good leaders must first learn to be good followers. Leaders do not dominate a group, but lead by their actions.

Leadership needs change with the situation, thus different people can lead at different times. The best leaders take on many different roles to support the needs of the group. True leaders focus on helping their group achieve its goals rather than on their own personal recognition.

## Can You Be a Leader? . . . YES!

Leadership is not like freckles or red hair. It is not a genetic trait that you are necessarily born with. Leadership can be learned, just like other skills, but it requires practice and determination. At one time or another, everyone is a leader. When a group member contributes an idea, they become the leader. Leadership passes from person to person as each one contributes to the achievement of the group's goals. Being a good leader means that you should have a desire to serve, to achieve goals, and to leave things better than they were.

## Leadership Skills Can Be Learned!

The best way to learn leadership is to work on leadership-related skills and apply them in situations requiring leadership action. Focusing on the five leadership skills areas below will help you strengthen and improve your leadership abilities.

### ***Understanding Self*** —

Understanding and developing a positive attitude about who you are, what is important to you, and setting goals for improvement.

### ***Communicating*** —

Effective two-way sharing of information through speaking, listening, writing, and body language.

### ***Getting Along with Others*** —

Developing an understanding of how you relate to other people and accepting and appreciating the differences between others and yourself.

### ***Managing*** —

Learning steps and approaches to making decisions, setting goals, and choosing resources (time, things, people, or money) to achieve those goals.

### ***Working with Groups*** —

Learning how to work together to help groups accomplish goals.

*"Leaders, by and large, are not born — they are developed."*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — UNDERSTANDING SELF

Understanding yourself is important to becoming a good leader. By developing a better understanding of yourself, you can gain appreciation for the things that make you special and work on areas you'd like to improve. Having confidence in your own abilities and sticking with your convictions will inspire others to follow you. The activities below will help you begin to explore your feelings, values, and personal goals.

## **ACTIVITY 1: Qualities of an Effective Leader**

1. Think of someone in your life that is a good leader, maybe a teacher, club leader, parent, or friend.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What qualities does this person have that make you admire he or she as a good leader? Write some of them below.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

3. Which of these qualities do you possess? Put a star beside those qualities that you think are your strong points.
4. What traits do you need to improve on? Think about how you can become more like the leaders in your life.

## **ACTIVITY 2: Build On Your Strengths**

In a notebook, keep a record of specific situations where you showed good leadership and situations you feel you didn't handle very well. These events could happen at club meetings, at school, or just with your friends. Keeping a record will increase your awareness of how and when you behave in ways that show good leadership. In cases when you didn't show good leadership, write in the notebook how you would like to handle these situations better.

Think about how some of the situations are similar. What were your feelings when these situations happened? How were you able to decide that there are better ways to handle the situation?

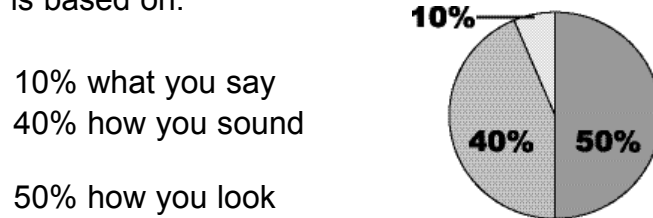
*"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."  
— Oliver Wendell Holmes*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — COMMUNICATING

Good communication skills are among the most important of the leadership skills. Good leaders must be good communicators. Communicators must have skills both in sending good messages and in receiving others' messages. Sending messages involves speaking, writing, and non-verbal communication skills. Receiving messages requires good listening and observing skills.

## **ACTIVITY 3: Making a Good Impression**

In your everyday communication, the impression you make on others is based less on what you say than on how you say it. Specifically, research has shown that the way people perceive you in day to day communication is based on:



At first this might surprise you. However, think how much we depend on tone of voice and body language to determine what someone is communicating to us. "Come here" can take on two entirely different meanings: first, when said by a smiling friend waving to you to come join in a group activity; or, secondly, when said by a frowning parent with arms crossed over his or her chest. Very different messages are being communicated with the same words!

As a leader, you may be called upon to communicate with others in many different ways. Perhaps you may be called upon to introduce a guest, thank a speaker, give a committee report, lead a discussion, share some information, or conduct a meeting. What impression will you give?

Here are a few simple **Do's and Don'ts** that can help you in making a good impression when asked to address a group:

- DO's:**
- |  |                         |                  |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|
| Smile  | Stand when you speak    | Use Good Posture |
| Face your Audience   | Make eye contact        | Speak clearly    |
| Dress appropriately  | Use positive statements | Be enthusiastic  |
| Hold your hands naturally at your sides or use slight gestures |                         |                  |

- DON'Ts:**
- |                 |                         |                    |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Chew gum        | Wear a cap              | Look at the ground |
| Use slang terms | Use negative statements |                    |

Practice is the best way to improve your communication skills. Pretend that you have been asked to introduce a friend or guest at a club meeting. Stand in front of a mirror and practice your introduction. Notice how your body language conveys confidence and leadership when you use the DO's above. Think of some other situations you might be called upon to address a group and practice these as well. The more you practice, the more natural you will appear.

Observing others is another way to improve your communication skills. Add your own DO's and DON'Ts to the list as you observe how effectively others communicate. The more you observe and become aware of others, the better you will become at communicating as well.

*"Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in action."  
— Harold Green, Founder of MCI Communications*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — COMMUNICATING

## **ACTIVITY 4: Group Communication Skills**

Good leaders must be able to communicate effectively one-on-one and in group settings. Having good communication skills in a group means not only expressing your own ideas clearly, but actively listening to the ideas of others, plus encouraging others to share their ideas.

Below is a series of statements and questions aimed at getting you to think honestly about your communication behaviors in a group. These statements should prompt you to think about areas that you might improve on when working with groups or can be used to stimulate small group discussions.

Rate yourself for each of the statements below using the following scale:

Never (N)    1       2       3       4       5       6       7       8       Always (A)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. If I, as group chairperson, were giving a set of instructions and the other group members sat quietly with blank faces, I would encourage members to ask questions until I was sure all understood what they were supposed to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. If the group chairperson gave a set of instructions to the group and I did not understand, I would keep silent and later ask another group member what the chairperson meant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. If the group chairperson gave a set of instructions to the group and I did not understand, I would immediately ask the chairperson to repeat the instructions and answer my question until I was sure I understood.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. How often do you let other group members know when you like or approve of something they say or do?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. How often do you let other group members know when you feel upset or disagree with something they say or do?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. How often do you check out what other group members feel and how they react rather than assume you know?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. How often do you encourage other group members to let you know how they feel or react to your behavior and actions in the group?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. How often do you check to make sure you understand what other group members mean before agreeing or disagreeing?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. How often do you paraphrase or restate what other members have said before responding?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. How often do you keep your thoughts, ideas, feelings, and reactions to yourself in group discussions?

One of the hardest skills to master in communicating effectively is listening. On the surface listening seems like a simple thing, but in reality, listening is very difficult. Usually people are thinking more about what they want to say next than really listening to the person speaking.

*"Poor listening may come naturally, but good listening almost always requires effort and patience!"*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS

From the time you are born, you are interacting with and building relationships with others. Being able to get along with and understand others is essential in all situations in life — within your family, school, church, club, or work environment. People are different — everyone does not react nor behave to a situation in the same manner. The key to getting along with others is developing an understanding and appreciation of the differing gifts of others.

## **ACTIVITY 5: What's Your Style?**

Over the millennia, philosophers, writers, psychologists and scientists from all around the globe have been analyzing and trying to categorize people's personality types. Much has been studied and written about personality, but throughout time most studies have divided people into four distinct groups. Understanding your own behavioral style and that of others can provide useful insight and help you learn how to get along and work more effectively with others.

On the next page are descriptions of the four basic personality styles, labeled A, B, C, and D, into which most people can be grouped. Read through these descriptions and check off the statements that are most like you. Because parts of each of the four styles can be present in a person, it is likely that you will not find one particular category in which all the statements apply to you. However, you will probably have one style that seems and feels most like you. It is important to realize that **no one style is good or bad and no one style is better or worse** than any other style.

Which behavioral style (A, B, C, or D) is most like you? \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Complete Activity 5 before moving on to Activity 6.

## **ACTIVITY 6: What's in a Name?**

Many different names have been given to each of the behavioral styles. Listed below are some of the names that have been used to describe each of the 4 styles.

Style A: Inspirational, Expressive, Experiential, Socializer Style

Style B: Feeler, Amiable, Supporter, Steady, People Style

Style C: Duty, Analytical, Thinker, Compliant Style

Style D: Director, Driver, Dominant, Competent Style

**Individual Activity:** Think of an animal that would best represent each of the four groups. Why do you think that animal is a good representation of that personality style? Now think of your family and close friends. Do any of them have the same style as you? What styles do you think they are?

**Group Activity:** Have group members form four smaller groups, based on the 4 different behavioral styles. Have each group decide on an animal that they feel represents them. Then have each group make a poster depicting the traits that they feel they possess and which are represented by this animal. Each group can decide how they want to make the poster. Various writing instruments (pencil, pen, marker, crayons, etc.) should be made available. Each group should then share their poster with the others, explaining what they have created!

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS

## FOUR BEHAVIORAL STYLES

### A

- I like to do things on the spur of the moment.
- I like to perform for others and show what I can do.
- I am fun loving and turn work into play.
- I get bored with structured jobs, classes or activities.
- I sometimes have trouble following rules and respecting authority.
- It is hard for me to be neat and organized.
- I like physical activities and taking risks.
- I can sometimes be off-the-wall.
- I trust my impulses and don't usually want to wait to do something.
- I like to learn by doing, not by reading or hearing a lecture.

### B

- I love to be around other people.
- People would describe me as a good listener.
- I like to please people and I don't like arguments or conflicts.
- I like to talk, and sometimes get into trouble for talking too much.
- I enjoy sending notes, letters, and cards to people.
- Friends come to me to talk about their problems.
- I am a good and loyal friend.
- I really like to make others happy.
- I am motivated by compliments and respond well to encouragement.
- I may be overly self critical.

### C

- I like to be neat and organized.
- I like to get my work done before I play.
- I am stable, people can depend on me, and I stick to tasks until they are done.
- I enjoy school and respect authority.
- I like to be on time and follow rules.
- I like structured activities with clear boundaries.
- I am loyal, faithful, and true to my word.
- I don't like things to change very much.
- I know what is right and wrong, and I feel guilty when I do things that are wrong.
- I am considered serious about life and get upset with myself if I can't follow through on a commitment.

### D

- I am always curious and have lots of questions.
- I try to understand the "whys" of the universe.
- I like to study things and play games that interest and challenge me.
- Often I see things differently than others.
- I question rules and authority until I understand the reasons for them.
- I get bored with routine.
- Before I can make decisions, I like to analyze all the possibilities.
- I like to explore and figure out how everything around me works.
- I often like to work alone.
- I am straight forward and logical.

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS

## **ACTIVITY 7: What it all Means?**

Which behavioral style makes the best leader? The answer is that **there is no right or wrong style for leadership**. What is important is not which style you are, but understanding and accepting your own strengths and weaknesses as well as appreciating the natural differences in others. Good leaders learn how to work with, motivate, and inspire others by understanding how others view and respond differently to the same situations. Good leaders understand that in order to get along with others, you cannot try to change their style, but you must adjust your own behavior in response to them.

Everyone has people in their lives with whom they sometimes have difficulty getting along, maybe a friend, fellow club member, leader, or even a parent. **First**, think of someone that you sometimes find challenging to get along with and would like to do a better job.

**Second**, if you know this person well enough, use the behavioral styles chart to try and determine which of the four basic styles is most like him or her. Sometimes people with whom you have trouble getting along have the same style as you! Often it is said that two people don't get along because "they are just like each other!" This may cause unhealthy competition between two people. For instance, someone who is style D likes to organize and direct the activities of a group. If two people in a group are both style D, conflict can often result.

Or, two people may not get along because they have very different personalities and just can't understand each other. For instance, someone with style A who is very spontaneous and not detail oriented may be viewed by a person of style C as irresponsible. Yet the style A person may see the style C person as too serious and rigid. Someone of style B, who is very concerned about how decision affect others, might find a person of style D to be cold or uncaring. While a style D person may not understand why a style B doesn't see the logic in the decision that is being made.

**Third**, think of some situations that have occurred in which you and the other person have not gotten along. Considering your behavioral style and that of the other person, can you think now of better ways that you might have handled the situation? How could you have adjusted your behavior?

**Fourth**, in future interactions try and see situations from the other person's point of view. Try to be aware of the natural differences in how people react and adjust your behavior accordingly. You just may be surprised — for when you respect other's point of view, they begin to respect yours!

*"While we can't always chose what happens to us, we can always chose how we respond!"*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — MANAGING

Management skills are part of many everyday situations — whether in your club, at your farm, or in your home, things run more smoothly when managed properly. Management involves making sound decisions about what you or your group want to accomplish, determining the resources available, and developing a plan of action to achieve your objectives. While there's more to leadership than just managing, good leaders need good management skills.

## **ACTIVITY 8: Decision Making**

Making decisions can be hard. People usually want to do more than they can with the time and resources they have. Choices have to be made as to how you will use your time, talents, and possessions to achieve what is most important to you. Your decisions guide what you do and how successful you will be in getting the things you want and need.

Whether making an individual or group decision, you can improve your skills in making decisions when you think about and follow these Decision Making Steps:

1. Identify or define the problem. Recognize or know when a decision is needed and that you must make it. Describe it in writing.

**For example, suppose your club must decide on a slogan for their club T-shirts sales.**

2. Gather information

**Someone from the club would be designated to contact the T-shirt printer to determine information such as what type of print and shirt is available, the cost of shirts, time needed to produce the shirts.**

3. List alternatives.

**The group can brainstorm ideas, writing all of them down for consideration.**

4. Weigh alternatives. Think through different choices and how each would likely turn out.

**After brainstorming ideas, now the club can throw out the ideas that don't fit the criteria or image the club wants to project.**

5. Decide on action.

**Select the most appropriate slogan.**

6. Take action.

**Contact the T-shirt printer and have the shirts made.**

7. Evaluate the results.

**Your club can evaluate the quality and popularity of the shirts and determine any changes to make next year.**

Think about a decision you need to make and write it on a sheet of paper. Using these steps as a guide, work through the decision making process. Are some steps harder than others? What happens if you skip steps? Were you more confident in your final decision after using these steps?

If working in a group, have the members of the group choose a problem that the group needs to solve and write it down. Go through the decision making steps, being sure to have all members of the group contribute to the discussion. Have one person act as a scribe, recording the ideas that are generated on a large poster or chalkboard so that everyone can see as you go along. What are the advantages to making decisions as a group? the disadvantages?

*"If you don't know where you are going, how can you expect to get there?"*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — MANAGING

## **ACTIVITY 9: Goal Action Plan**

Goal setting, either for yourself or for your group, is very important for effective leadership. People want to follow a leader who has a clear sense of the direction he or she is going. Without clearly stated goals, you are not likely to realize your full potential. Yet most people don't have clearly stated goals. Many young people don't have definite goals because they are afraid that if they set a goal, they may not reach it. Too often people think that failure is a bad thing, when in fact most goal-oriented people see failures for what they are — steps along the path of success. Think of some of the great discoveries and inventions of the last two centuries — electricity, telephones, light bulbs, automobiles, computers, satellites — suppose their inventors gave up after the first try?

## Steps to Achieving Goals:

Below are explanations for use with the steps found on the Goal Setting Worksheet. This worksheet can be used for individual or group goal setting.

### **1. Goal**

- **Decide what YOU want!** The goal must be something you want to achieve and it must align with what is important and meaningful to you. If you are doing something just to satisfy someone else, chances are you may not complete the goal.
- **Be Specific and WRITE it Down!** Writing down your specific goal helps you concentrate on what you want to achieve, makes you more likely to commit the time and resources to accomplishing the goal, and helps build confidence in your ability to achieve the goal.

### **2. Benefits**

- **What is the PAYOFF?** Write down the things you can expect to gain by accomplishing this goal. Keep visualizing these benefits in your mind — this will help motivate you when things don't always go as planned.

### **3. Obstacles**

- **What stands in your way?** Almost always there will be some obstacles to overcome before a goal can be achieved. Recognizing and writing these down from the start can help you develop a plan for achieving your goal. Of course, new obstacles will undoubtedly arise as you are working on your goal — learn to see these as stepping stones rather than stumbling blocks.

### **4. Action Plan**

- **What resources do you HAVE?** List the time, talents, and resources you already have that will help you accomplish your goal.
- **What resources do you NEED?** List what new skills you might need to learn or additional resources you might need in order to accomplish your goal.
- **What ACTION can you take?** List the ways or people that can help you learn the skills or obtain the resources needed. Taking action and seeking help from others makes you fully committed to the goal.

### **5. Completion Date**

- **When will you accomplish your goal?** Setting a date to complete your goal is important in order to keep you motivated. While the date should challenge you, it should be realistic and be adjusted as unexpected events occur.

*"The only time you have to succeed is the last time you try." — Philip Knight, CEO Nike, Inc*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — MANAGING GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

\_\_\_\_\_ Short Term

\_\_\_\_\_ Intermediate Term

\_\_\_\_\_ Long Term

1. Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Benefits: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Obstacles: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Actions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Date of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

*"It takes a lot of courage to show your dreams to someone else." — Erma Bombeck  
Leadership Skill — Working with Groups*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — WORKING WITH GROUPS

Groups are an important part of everyday life. Almost all of your time is spent in groups — going to school or church, working, playing, being with friends or with family. Your whole life is spent in a variety of different group memberships. Hence, developing skills to work effectively within groups is essential not only to becoming a more effective leader, but to leading a more productive life. Groups offer you a way to pool talents and resources to accomplish common goals more easily and quickly than can often be done alone. Yet for a group to achieve its goals, the members must develop the skills to work cooperatively and selfishly.

## **ACTIVITY 10: How are Groups Organized?**

Some groups are informal. They have no regular meetings, no officers and little advance planning of activities. They do interact with each other and can be identified as a group though. Your group of friends at school is an example of an **informal group**.

More **formal groups** are organized with officers, specific items of business, and meeting times. Your junior club, FFA chapter, 4-H club, school or church clubs are types of formal groups. This kind of group generally has established goals and guidelines.

Think about all the groups to which you belong. Make a list of the informal and formal groups of which you are a part.

### Groups That I Belong To:

Informal

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Formal

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Now think about, or discuss, the skills necessary to work effectively in these groups. Many of the skills discussed so far in this workbook are important for getting along in both types of groups.

## **Formal Leaders vs. Informal Leaders**

Just as there are formal and informal groups, there are formal and informal leaders. The **formal leader's** role is to manage and conduct the meeting. These roles are generally carried out by specific group members who have been appointed or elected as officers or committee chairs. In contrast, **informal leadership** functions of a group can and should be shared by all members. As group members contribute to the accomplishment of the group's goals, leadership is passed "around the table." Hence all members of a group have a responsibility to learn leadership skills, not just the formal or elected leaders.

*"The path to greatness is along with others."*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — WORKING WITH GROUPS

## **ACTIVITY 11: Conducting an Effective Meeting**

If you are the **formal leader** of a group, such as the president of a club or chairperson of a committee, one of your main responsibilities is to conduct the meeting. Listed below are some suggestions for leading effective meetings. To help you improve your skills at leading meetings, you can rate yourself (or have another member of your group rate you) on how well you display each of the suggested behaviors. Then you can focus on those areas that need improving.

Use the following scale to describe how often you exhibit each of the suggested behaviors:

Never (N)    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    Always (A)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Open the Meeting on Time:** Reward those who are on time, not those that are late. Waiting on late comers will not change their behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Set the Proper Tone:** Make participants feel welcome and comfortable, if members aren't acquainted with each other take time for introductions, be aware of physical comforts of the room like temperature, lighting, seating.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Be Prepared and Organized:** Never start a meeting without an agenda. At the beginning state the purpose of the meeting and briefly review the agenda. Don't ever make excuses for not being prepared like, "I didn't have enough time to get ready."

\_\_\_\_\_ **Stay with the Agenda:** Keep the discussion moving and focused on the agenda items, occasionally summarize and refocus discussion, avoid interruptions, call for votes and assign individuals to carry out actions when necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Encourage Participation:** Ask for possible solutions to a problem, encourage questions and discussion, don't dominate the discussion, express your own ideas only after all others have expressed theirs.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Maintain Control:** Do not allow any one person to dominate the discussion, never get in a one-on-one battle with group members, do not argue with a speaker, never allow personal attacks, ignore wisecracks.

\_\_\_\_\_ **End on a Positive Note:** Summarize accomplishments, outline future action, set time and date for next meeting, and end on time. When you stay on task and finish on time, members are happier and more willing to attend the next meeting.

*"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together is success."  
— Henry Ford*

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — WORKING WITH GROUPS

## **ACTIVITY 12: Team Building Skills**

Groups that function well and accomplish goals usually do so because all group members exercise good leadership skills — whether or not they are the formal leaders of the group. When group members work cooperatively and selfishly toward accomplishing a group goal a spirit of teamwork evolves. By developing certain team building behaviors, group members can improve their leadership abilities working with groups.

Some of the most common and helpful of these skills are supporting, gatekeeping, compromising, summarizing, and listening. Following the description of each skill is space for you to record your personal reflections on how you may have carried out these roles in your own experiences, or how you may have seen others carry out these roles.

**1. Supporting:** Being friendly, responsive to others, accepting other's contributions and supporting discussion of their contributions, particularly when it is a differing view. "I know your idea is something you take seriously, and I understand that even though I don't see it the same way as you do."

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Gatekeeping:** Attempting to keep communication channels open, facilitating communication of all members, inviting (or opening the gate for) quiet members to share and quieting (or closing the gate on) dominating members in a friendly but firm way. "Hey, Sue has been trying to make a point for the past ten minutes. I'd like for the rest of us to stop talking long enough to hear what she has to say."

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Compromising:** Offering a compromise, being willing to admit error, or yielding one's own status for the cohesion of the group. "I admit that I may have too many personal feelings about this, and that the group's decision may be more reasonable and objective than mine."

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — WORKING WITH GROUPS

4. **Summarizing:** Summing up the discussion so far, clarifying points of confusion, showing that the group has made progress, allowing summarizing of concrete points and allowing productive continuation of the discussion. "We've talked about so many things that maybe this is a good time to look at all of the ideas that have been offered. It would help me to organize things in my mind."

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Listening:** Actively listening, really hearing what others are saying without becoming absorbed in your own agendas and viewpoints, remaining open-minded and objective when your opinions are challenged, making sure that what you think you heard is actually what the speaker meant. Perhaps the most crucial role to success of a team, yet often the most difficult and overlooked. "What I heard you say is . . . . Am I correct?"

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Identifying Team-Building Behaviors:

Read the following statements made by participants in a group discussion, and identify each as one of the following team-building behaviors:

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| _____ a: Supporting   | _____ d: Summarizing |
| _____ b: Gatekeeping  | _____ e: Listening   |
| _____ c: Compromising |                      |

1. "We've tossed around so many ideas. May I review what I've written down so far, and the rest of you can tell me whether I have the gist of things?"
2. "Bobby, I can see that you feel strongly about this, but I think it is important to hear what the others have to say now."
3. "That's an interesting approach, Josh. I hadn't thought of it, but I'm glad you brought it up and I think we ought to look at it."
4. "Ashley, I think Tommy is trying to say that he thinks we should wait for more information before we make a decision. Is that right, Tommy?"
5. "I guess maybe I'm being too stubborn. If Kenny is willing, I'm willing to work out a solution we can both agree on."

# LEADERSHIP SKILL — WORKING WITH GROUPS

## **ACTIVITY 13: Trouble Shooting Group Behavior**

When working with and leading groups, there are a number of common behaviors that may be exhibited by group members that can be disruptive or harmful to the group's functioning. Not all of these behaviors will be present at any given time in your group. However, good leaders are prepared to handle difficult situations if they occur. Below are some examples of such behaviors, suggested ways of dealing with them, and space for you to record effective solutions that you may have used or seen used by others.

**1. Can't Get Group Started:** There is a lot of fooling around and people are wandering around. Remind the group that the time they are wasting is theirs and ask, "Can we get started?" Then start — talk in normal tones, do not try and talk over the background noise. Group members will quiet down in order to hear you.

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Group is Quiet or Unresponsive:** A quiet period in the group is not always something negative, however, if it lasts for an extensive period of time and becomes uncomfortable, then it may be a good idea to try and bring some of the quieter members into the discussion by saying something like: "Sue, you haven't said anything so far, what do you think?"

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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**3. Lack of Seriousness:** This can be a problem if it occurs at the wrong time. Try pointing the problem out and getting feedback from the group by saying, "I feel like some members of this group are not taking this seriously. That makes me feel bad because some members have put a lot of time and effort into this idea. Can you give it a chance?"

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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**4. Chaos! Everyone is Talking at Once:** It is best to simply remind the group of the ground rules by saying something like, "Let's remember our ground rules and listen while others are talking. We all have something important to say, but if we're all talking at once we may miss something." You can also try a visual signal, like an arm raised in the air to draw people's attention and get them to stop talking.

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Side Conversations:** This one is very common and can be a real problem as it not only disrupts the group, but can also cause it to lose focus. To handle this situation, you could say, "There are some side conversations going on and we're losing focus. Let's stay on target." Or you might ask, "Josh and Brett, you two seem to be discussing something, is it something you'd like to share with the group?"

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Group is Off the Subject:** If the discussion has veered off the subject, but is serving a purpose, you may want to let it go or go with the flow, so to speak. However, if the group is totally off track and the discussion is not serving a worthwhile purpose you could try saying, "This is an interesting discussion, but we've gotten off track. We need to get back on track. Perhaps we can discuss this later after the meeting."

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Cliques Forming Within the Group:** You can try doing more activities that will help the group members to mingle more and get to know others better. You might talk to the members involved individually outside of the group. Let them know that it's great that they are getting to know others, but to make sure they aren't being exclusive to some members.

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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**8. Conflict Within the Group:** If there are group members who disagree and are attacking one another, you should handle this right away. Say something like, "We aren't communicating very effectively right now. This is a subject that a lot of people feel strongly about, and have important comments to make. You don't have to agree, but you need to respect each other's opinions and listen."

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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**9. You are Nervous:** As the group leader, you are nervous and worried about leading the group. Guess what? You are normal! Look around. Make eye contact with everyone and smile. That will break the ice. Do a structured activity first to give yourself a chance to loosen up.

Personal Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

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# LEADERSHIP SKILLS ASSESSMENT GUIDE

This self-survey can help you determine in which leadership skills areas you have strengths and in what areas you may need to develop more skills. The survey can either be taken before beginning the workbook exercises, at the conclusion of the workbook exercises, or both. Rate the level at which you have developed your leadership skills. If you do it very well, circle a "3"; circle a "2" if you do it moderately well or okay; and circle a "1" if you need improvement or do it poorly.

	Very Well	Okay	Need to Improve
1. I am positive about my abilities.	3	2	1
2. I am enthusiastic.	3	2	1
3. I know what is important to me.	3	2	1
4. I can admit and deal with mistakes.	3	2	1
5. I can express myself clearly in writing.	3	2	1
6. I can speak before a group.	3	2	1
7. I am a good listener.	3	2	1
8. I can get my ideas across to others.	3	2	1
9. I understand and accept differences in others.	3	2	1
10. I care about and encourage others.	3	2	1
11. I can meet and get along with others.	3	2	1
12. I am willing to adjust my behavior.	3	2	1
13. I follow a process to make decisions.	3	2	1
14. I can identify and use resources.	3	2	1
15. I can set and carry out goals.	3	2	1
16. I can plan and conduct programs.	3	2	1
17. I can cooperate with others.	3	2	1
18. I can work as a team member.	3	2	1
19. I can organize a group activity.	3	2	1
20. I can involve people.	3	2	1

# LEADERSHIP SKILLS ASSESSMENT GUIDE

## Scoring

Each statement represents one of the leadership skills areas. To obtain an average score for each area, add together the numbers you circled for groups of questions as instructed below and divide by 4 for each leadership skills area.

Understanding Self: Add statements 1 - 5, divide by 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

Communicating: Add statements 5 - 8, divide by 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

Getting Along with Others: Add statements 9 -12, divide by 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

Managing: Add statements 13 -16 divide by 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

Working with Groups: Add statements 17 - 20, divide by 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

How did you do? Using these averages as guides, you can determine in which areas you may need to improve.

## Conclusion

By working through the exercises in this workbook you will be able to grow in your leadership abilities and be better prepared to serve the groups to which you belong. Whether you are just beginning or already on your way, leadership can be an exciting life long journey!

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