

# Learning Guide

## Working in a team or group



9681 Contribute within a team or group which has an objective

Level 3

3 credits

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Workplace:



# Careerforce

## Creative commons



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial Licence. You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work and to adapt the work. You must attribute Careerforce as the author. You may not use this work for commercial purposes. For more information contact Careerforce at [www.careerforce.org.nz](http://www.careerforce.org.nz)

# Contents

Introduction .....	1
Being part of a team or group .....	2
What is a team? .....	2
Size of a team or group.....	3
A small team or group .....	3
A larger team or group .....	3
Creating an effective team or group .....	3
Working together as a team or group .....	5
Undertaking tasks .....	7
Communicate within a team or group .....	10
Ways to communicate.....	10
Collaboration skills.....	12
Listening.....	13
Questioning.....	13
Respect and etiquette .....	14
Sharing and persuading .....	14
Decision making.....	14
Participating within a team or group .....	15
Commitment.....	16
Attendance .....	16
Completion .....	16
Contributions .....	16
Feedback.....	17
Evaluation and Reporting .....	18
Evaluation .....	18
Reporting .....	18
Planning future sessions .....	19



# Introduction

Your role as a member of a team or group is to work effectively with your colleagues. This learning guide gives you information about how to work with others and why that is important. This will help make sure you, your workmates and your supervisor or manager work together to do the job well.

## How to use your learning guide

This learning guide supports your learning and prepares you for the unit standard assessment. There are activities to do to guide your learning.

This guide relates to the following unit standard:

- 9681 Contribute within a team or group which has an objective (level 3, 3 credits).

This learning guide is yours to keep. Make it your own by writing notes that help you remember things, or where you need to find more information.

Follow the tips in the notes column.

You may use highlighter pens to show important information and ideas, and think about how this information applies to your work.

You might find it helpful to talk to your workmates or supervisor.

Complete this learning guide before you start the assessment.

## What you will learn

This topic will help you to:

- explore your role and working with your colleagues.
- make relevant contributions to the team's functioning.
- participate with your team members to meet an objective or work outcome.

My notes ↘

## **Being part of a team or group**

In your work role you will at some time be part of a team or group working on a common goal or objective. This may be a work outcome that is requested.

# What is a team?

What is a team?	What does it mean to be part of a team or group?
<p>A team is a group of people who are working together to achieve a common goal or objective or work outcome.</p>	<p>Each person will have a unique role to play in the team or group and it is the combination of each person's skills and contributions that determine the effectiveness of the team or group and how well the team or group performs.</p>
<p>A team or group of people will all bring their own experience and expertise to the group.</p>	<p>Each member of the team or group can help the others to learn, raise ideas which individuals may not have come up with on their own, or achieve an outcome that would not be possible if they were not part of a team or group.</p>



## Size of a team or group

Some of the teams or groups you work with may be small, and occur ‘on the job’. Other groups may be formed that are larger and more formal as they may require specialist knowledge and input from a variety of people. These larger teams or groups are developed with the purpose of achieving common goals and objectives.

You may work by yourself, but you will still be part of a work team, with your supervisor or manager. This team may also include your co-workers, even though you may rarely see them.

### A small team or group

A small team or group may be, for example, when staff are rostered on a shift together or where two people are required for a task. Small groups allow face-to-face contact, regular contact and encourage the formation of relationships.

### A larger team or group

A larger team or group may be, for example, a multidisciplinary team, where you could be working with others from a variety of different backgrounds. In a health setting, your team or group could consist of a registered nurse, an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist. Working in large groups may mean you only have contact during planning sessions and when evaluating the goals that have been set.

### Creating an effective team or group

For any team or group to work effectively you must have, across the team or group, knowledge of:

- clear objectives and when they need to be achieved.
- trust, respect and rapport between members.
- accountability for all team or group actions as well as your own actions.

## Clear objectives

There must be mutual agreement around the objective(s). Each member of the team or group must know what their tasks are and believe that they are important. Each person needs to know what they are to accomplish and what the other team or group members' roles and tasks are. Each person must understand how they will all work to achieve the objective and the time frame for it. You may have to compromise, negotiate and trust that others will do a task to the high standard that you set yourself.

It may be that your supervisor sets the objective or work outcomes for you, your team or group, when it needs to be done by, and the standard that has to be achieved.

## Create an environment of trust, respect and rapport

To build trust it is important that there is an environment where members of the team or group can discuss problems openly, and that each team or group member is fully informed. Everyone should work for the common purpose of the team or group. Respect is required for others' opinions and contributions and their input should be valued.

It is important that confidence and/or private information is kept confidential.

## Ensure mutual accountability

There needs to be a common purpose in the team or group and this means that all members must be accountable. You must fulfil your roles and responsibilities to the best of your ability and work co-operatively with other members of the team or group.

You will be accountable for the tasks you need to do. You are also part of the larger team or group and you will contribute to the overall actions of the team or group

Individual accountability means that each team or group member is held responsible for their contributions to the completion of the project. Team or group members do not 'slack off' or allow other members to take on their workload or responsibilities.

# Working together as a team or group

You need to work hard to have a well-functioning and cohesive team or group. This can be done by:

- showing respect for other people and their ideas.
- valuing the strengths of every member.
- co-operating with all members.
- believing in yourself and other members.
- having and practicing good communication skills.

Once your team or group has been established you need to ensure:

- you know who is in your team or group.
- what roles, purpose and experiences each person has.
- what the expectations are of the team or group behaviour and roles.

The team or group will need to discuss and agree upon attitudes and behaviours. This should include discretion and confidentiality and how you work together. To work effectively your team or group will need to:

- 1 Draw up the ground rules by which your team will operate.
- 2 Identify and have mutual understanding and agreement around the goals and objectives.
- 3 Generate ideas about possible ways of tackling a project.
- 4 Divide up the task to be done and allocate roles and responsibilities to members of the team or group.
- 5 Define a time line to achieve the project.
- 6 Ensure everyone understands how success will be measured.

***Together***

***Everyone***

***Achieves***

***More***



**Write**

What are the agreed ground rules of your team or group?

What is the team or group's objective or work outcome?

How do the team or group generate ideas on how to do the project?

How are the tasks divided up and roles allocated?

What was the time line to complete the project?

How was progress and success measured, ie what was a good result?

## Undertaking tasks

Each member of the team or group will have a specific purpose for being part of the team or group. You need to know your role and what your responsibilities and tasks are.

You will be given a share of tasks that you are responsible for achieving. Completing your tasks will reinforce the work of the team and help the team to achieve the objective.

To ensure you are able to carry out a task, you will need to be organised. Depending on the task that you have been given, there are many things that you may need to consider.

Considerations	Description
Understanding	<p>Do you know exactly what you need to achieve?</p> <p>Are the requirements of the task clear?</p> <p>Do you know what standards you need to meet?</p> <p>Is it clear how this task helps to achieve the objective?</p> <p>Is it clear how this task fits with tasks that other team members may be doing?</p>
Planning	<p>Do you need to make a plan so you know how you are going to achieve the task?</p> <p>What equipment or resources will you need?</p>
Communication	<p>Who will you need to communicate with?</p> <p>What will you need to communicate?</p> <p>When will that communication need to occur?</p> <p>How will that communication need to occur, eg face-to-face, meetings, emails, text, telephone?</p>

*My notes* ↘

Collaboration	Will you need to work with others? What information, communication or support will they need?
Timeframes	What is the deadline for the task? Are there set times for the task to be completed by? Does the task need to happen at a certain time?
Reporting	How will you monitor your progress? How will you report your progress to the team? eg delays? How will you report successes that have occurred? Any unexpected issues that may have arisen?

*My notes* ↘



## Write

Think of a situation at work where you are part of a team or group. Even if you work alone, you are part of a team along with your supervisor.

What is your role within this team or group?

Who else is in your team or group, what roles do they have, and what experience do they bring to the team or group?

Name of the person	Role they play in the team	Experience they bring

# Communicate within a team or group

As a part of your role, you may need to communicate with:

- your supervisor.
- team members.
- other colleagues.
- clients and customers.
- people in other organisations.

Everyone should be aware of the dynamics of the team and do their best to ensure that each member is heard.

All members of the group or team need to use their communication skills effectively.

## Ways to communicate

Good communication is essential for teams and groups to work effectively. On a daily basis we may communicate on the phone, by text, in a team or group meeting situation, in person, in an email, in a letter or in notes for a plan or report.

We communicate in many different ways.

**Written communication** is information that is written down. Examples include reports, memos, emails and text messages. Written information can also include pictures, symbols and drawings.

**Verbal communication** is what you say and the words that you use. Use simple, everyday words that most people would understand. Examples of verbal communication are conversations, meetings and talking on the phone.

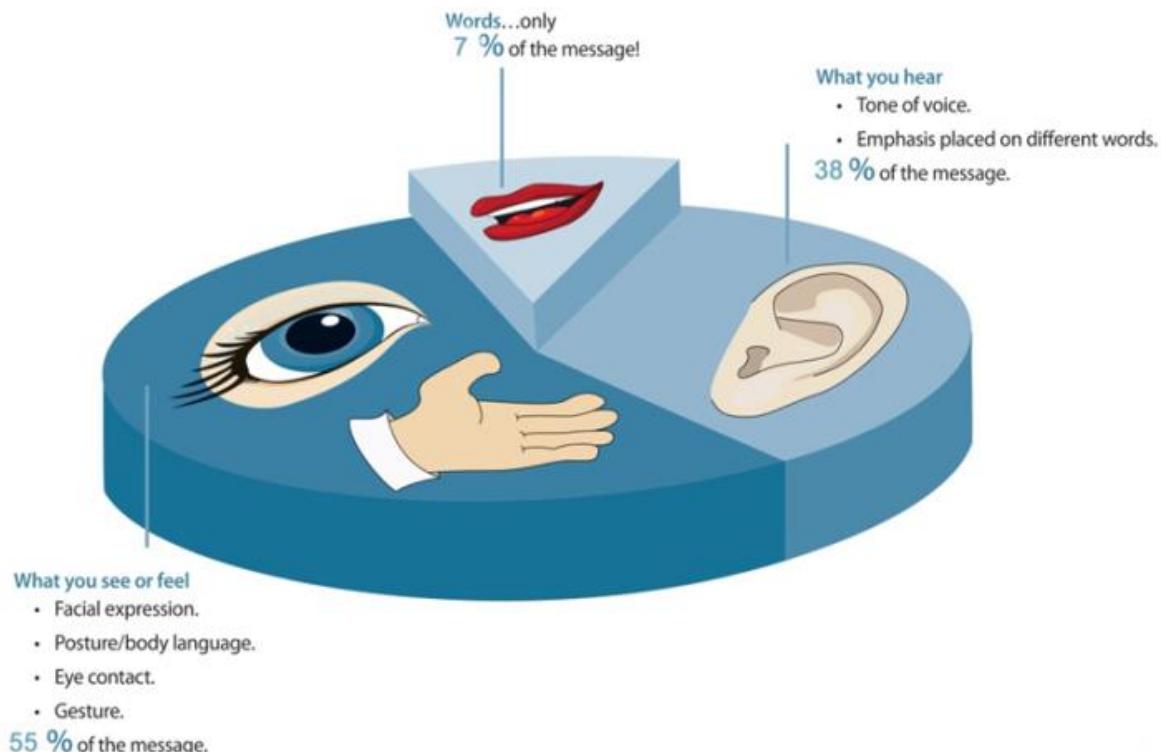
**Vocal communication** is what you hear - how you use your voice, the clarity of your speech, and your voice volume, tone, pitch and pacing (speed).

Vocal communication can be defined as: 'It's not what we say, but the way we say it.' When an emphasis is placed on different words, the 'message' may be different.

When we are excited or angry our speech tends to become more rapid, louder in volume and more highly pitched. When we are tired or bored our speech can be flat and slow.

**Non-verbal communication and body language** is how we mostly communicate face-to-face, rather than with the actual words we say.

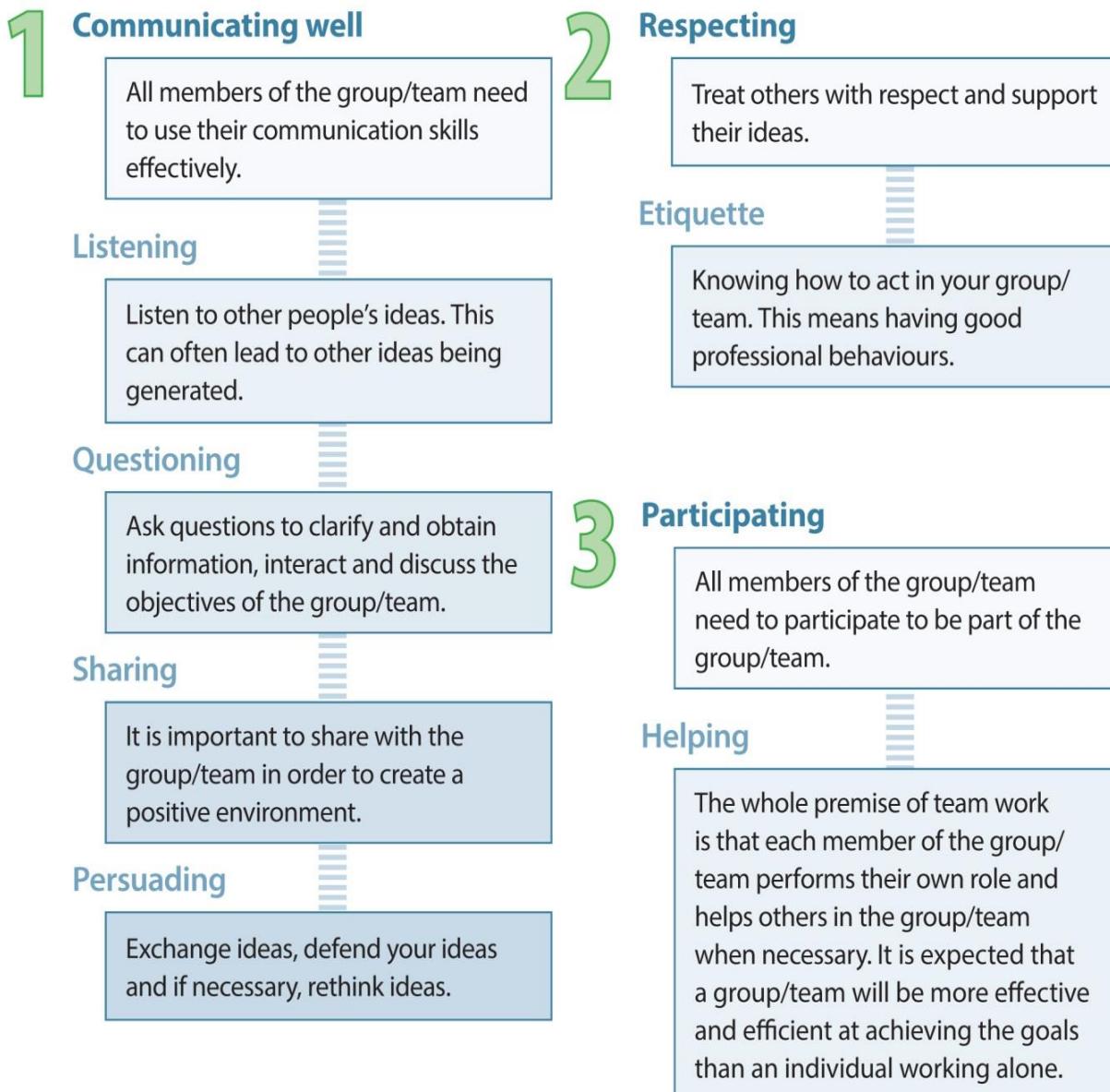
Non-verbal communication is exchanging information without words. It includes what we do and how we do it. Examples are touch, a certain look, and the use of space. Physical contact like shaking hands for instance gives a different message from patting a person on the back.



Body language includes facial expressions, eye contact, posture, gestures, and all the ways we use our body to communicate. Examples include smiling, nodding, shaking your head, making eye contact or not making eye contact, and gestures like shrugging your shoulders.

# Collaboration skills

Collaboration skills are important when working as part of a team or group. It is about working together. It is expected that working as a team or a group is more effective and efficient at achieving goals and objectives than a person working alone.



**More info**

Remember, there is no 'I' in team.

## Listening

Listening to what someone is telling you is essential for communicating effectively. Some basic principles of listening well include being accepting and respectful of the other person's point of view, and being sincere and empathetic.

There are a number of key listening skills you need to be an effective listener, for example:

- pay attention to the person speaking.
- be aware of the speaker's other ways of communicating through non-verbal means.
- pay attention to the words being spoken and the feelings that are being expressed.
- do not interrupt others when they are speaking or contributing their ideas.

You should be aware of the dynamics of the team or group and do your best to ensure that each person is heard and respected.

Do not monopolise (take control or dominate) a team or group discussion.

Let others have their say and voice their opinions. Listen to them and respond to what they say.

## Questioning

You may need to ask questions to get information. You need to be clear on what it is you need to know before you start your task so that you have all the relevant information to hand. You may need to ask for clarification of your role, or further explanation of something someone has said.

During the team work you may need to ask further questions to be fully informed. For example, you may need to get specialist information from a team or group member, or ask a person for their viewpoint.

Questioning enables you to:

- seek information.
- clarify (make clearer).
- elaborate (expand on the information provided).
- summarise.

Use open questions – questions that require more than just a 'yes' or 'no' answer. You will get more information this way.

## Respect and etiquette

Treat others with respect and support their ideas.

If you need to clarify what has been said, wait until the person has finished speaking, and then ask your question.

Use discretion about what you share. Make sure you respect information which should be kept private or confidential.

## Sharing and persuading

It is important to share with the team or group to create a positive environment. All members of the team or group need to participate, generating ideas.

Each person needs to contribute, sharing their ideas, opinions and providing information. One person's ideas can lead to more ideas being generated by the rest of the team. Acknowledge and build on the ideas of others where possible.

You may need to justify and defend your ideas, and make people think about your opinions.

## Decision making

Your team may need to make decisions that affect how well objectives are achieved.

You will need to use your communication skills to contribute to your team's decision making process, which may involve:

- listening to the opinions or positions of others.
- contributing your thoughts or opinions.
- explaining your perspective.
- commenting on another team member's view.
- considering the facts and information that you or other team members
- have presented.
- evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of possible options.
- evaluating the forces for and against a proposed plan.
- stating what you agree or disagree with and the reasons why.

You will then need to look at the facts and make decisions around what will make the most improvement with the best use of resources.

# Participating within a team or group

An essential part of your role in the team or group is to fulfil the role that has been agreed on. It is important that you carry out your role and participate:

- according to the expectations of the rest of the team or group.
- to the best of your ability for the benefit of everybody.
- meeting the standards of the team or group.
- in a timely manner.

It is expected that each member of the team or group performs their own role and helps others when necessary.

A team or group will be more effective and efficient at achieving goals and objectives than an individual alone.

## P

### Purpose

Know what the purpose of your team is and be clear on your role and responsibilities.

## E

### Empowerment

You are part of your group/team because you add purpose and skills to that team. Make sure you use them and share them with others.

## R

### Relationships and communication

Where possible form positive relationships within your group/team. Make sure you communicate with other team/group members. Ask to help when required, share your 'expertise' and knowledge.

## F

### Flexibility

Be flexible in your thinking. Be prepared to negotiate and compromise when in situations that could prove unproductive. Be prepared to take new ideas on board and accept others will have good ideas as well as you.

## O

### Optimal productivity

Work to the best of your ability. Always give 100%.

## R

### Recognition

Recognise the good things you and your team/group have done or are doing. Share your achievements.

## M

### Morale

At times working in your group/team can be hard. Always try to keep a positive mind and remain focussed on the goals and tasks you perform/work towards.

## Commitment

Each team or group member must demonstrate commitment to the team or group and the agreed objectives.

This can be done by:

- attendance at work and at all team or group meetings.
- completion of allotted tasks.
- making contributions to the team or group.
- reporting on outcomes.

## Attendance

Attendance includes:

- turning up on time for work and meetings.
- being organised.
- having good time management skills.
- being where you are meant to be, for the agreed period of time.
- concentrating on what is going on, be it your work task or the meeting.
- being in attendance mentally as well as physically.

## Completion

Completion of tasks includes:

- carrying out tasks as required.
- reporting/recording when this has been completed or could not be completed due to circumstances which arise.
- carry out tasks effectively and efficiently within given time frames where possible.

## Contributions

Making contributions to the team includes:

- verbally and in writing.
- sharing ideas in meetings, or on the job with other team or group members.
- passing on information to others.
- voicing your opinions on doing the task.

## Feedback

Feedback to team or group members should be:

- given as soon as possible after the event.
- respectful of others' contributions.
- given as constructive feedback.

Constructive means offering valid and well-reasoned positive/negative comment in a helpful manner, for example, "I really appreciated how well you explained the new job to me."

If the feedback is negative, avoid being personal or emotional (angry, frustrated, disappointed). Express concerns about the situation, for example, "I noticed that Joe has not completed his part of the task, even though he had extra time to do so."

One model for giving feedback is CRC:

**C**ommend – talk about what was done well.

**R**ecommend – suggest what could be said or done differently.

**C**ommend – finish with a positive comment.

# Evaluation and Reporting

## Evaluation

After a task has been completed, you need to think about how you worked as a team or group.

Reviewing your team's or group's performance is an important part of any team or group project and is particularly valuable if you are going to work again as a team or group.

Questions you might want to ask are:

- What did your team or group do well?
- What did the team or group not do well?
- Were all the members of the team or group clear about the objective?
- Was everyone clear about what they individually should have been doing?
- Was it easy to contact other members of the team or group when necessary? How did this occur?
- Did you fulfil your role?
- In what ways did this experience develop your knowledge and skills?
- Were there any discrepancies between what team or group workers thought they were doing and what their colleagues thought they were doing?

## Reporting

Completing reporting requirements is an essential part of evaluating how well the team or group is working, monitoring progress and setting new objectives as required.

This can be done by:

- participating in team or group evaluations.
- completing reports on time.
- passing on information in a timely manner to those who require it.
- reporting accurately.

## Planning future sessions

Sensitivity to changing needs and team or group development is an important skill and adjusting to these needs or developments is a very important factor in being effective as a team or group.

Check the following:

- are the roles the team or group adopted at the beginning still appropriate?
- are adjustments necessary to objectives, methods or activities?
- are the skills and styles of each member helpful to the team or group?
- how can the team or group consolidate what has been achieved?
- what other or next steps are appropriate?



Write

Think of when you have contributed within a team or group working towards achieving an objective or work outcome.

What was the team or group objective?

What was your role and responsibilities?

What ideas did you share/contribute?

What information did you provide/contribute?

What opinions did you make/give?

*My notes*

Give an example of a question you used to obtain further information.

Give an example of a question you used to clarify information.

Describe an example of constructive feedback you gave to another team or group member. Outline the situation, and explain what happened.