Trust

“If people like you, they’ll listen to you, but if they trust you, they’ll do business with you.”

-Zig Ziglar

What is trust?

A firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something.

**Common Trust:** This is the assumption, belief or confidence that colleagues will follow generally accepted laws, norms, policies etc. In driving, we “trust” others to follow driving rules such as lane-driving and traffic lights. Within an organization or workplace, common trust is that a co-worker will not steal or misuse company, but will follow the law of the land and rules of the workplace. Membership in a team typically grants this type of trust automatically. “Common trust” is the backbone of operations in an organization or even in larger society.

**Vulnerability-Based Trust:** This is a much deeper confidence in teammates that allows admission of vulnerabilities without fear of negative consequences. This can be related to admitting mistakes, sharing weaknesses, and acknowledging others’ strengths etc. For example, vulnerability-based trust in a team setting allows a team member to admit uncertainty in their ability to tackle a certain task, and ask for help. An effective, trusting team would help and divide tasks more efficiently considering this, without humiliating the member or retaliating negatively. “Trust is built when someone is vulnerable and not taken advantage of.” Common trust is not enough for high-performing and effective teams, and the best team have a strong foundation of vulnerability-based trust. This bond of *acceptance* is key to successful collaborations.
Why do we need trust within our teams?

**Trust** is a characteristic that builds respect and loyalty, as well as a supportive and safe **work environment**. Distrust increases tension and negative "on guard" behavior, which can erode the spirit of the team and ultimately productivity. If we are not working as a team it will not only affect us but the patient care we can deliver.

In Patrick Lencioni’s five dysfunctions of a team he makes the point that trust is the foundation for any team to be able to achieve results. If trust is not present in a team then they will struggle to perform to the best of their ability.

If we in BHT can get the foundations of trust correct then the rest should follow and lead to excellent results and patient care.

**Team Exercise part 1 – 10mins**

- Talk to the team about why we need trust and what will that give us as a team.
- Explain how trust is the foundation of any team.
- Explain the difference between common trust and Vulnerability based trust.

![Patrick Lencioni - Five functions of a team](image)
Team Exercise part 2 – 10 mins

The aim of this exercise is to get people to reflect and think about how they can build trust within their team. Once this part of the exercise is complete you could get individuals to write on a card what they are going to do differently in the future to build trust and they keep this to themselves, or take the key points from the exercise and write up a trust agreement for the team that they all agree on. This could then be displayed in the work area.

- Break the group down into small groups no more than 5 per group.
- Provide them with A3 paper/ flip charts and pens.
- Pose the question – What builds trust in a team?
  What erodes trust in a team?
- Give them 5/10 minutes to talk about these issues and then share with the rest of the group.
- Dependent on the personalities in the team the leader may need to control this tightly.
- All members of the team need to be present to prevent the lack of trust to be blamed on others.

Team Exercise part 3 – 15 mins

This trust exercise requires some setting up before it can be executed. It also requires some room, such as a room without furniture or the car park (do not use this as a reason not to do it). The leader must distribute "hazards," which they place haphazardly around the area. These "hazards" can be balls, cones, etc. This exercise gives the team a chance to work on their relationships and trust issues, which is why they are paired into teams of two. One team member will be blindfolded and cannot talk and the other can see and talk, but cannot enter the field or touch their blindfolded teammate. The challenge requires each blindfolded person to walk from one side of the field to the other, avoiding the “hazards” by listening to the verbal instructions of their partners. Penalties can be put in place for each time a blindfolded person hits a hazard, but the real idea behind the game is to get the team members to trust their partner’s directions and to teach them to communicate in a more effective way.

Conclusion

Finish off with reminding how the teams need to be able to trust each other to perform to their best, and if unsure speak to each other, don’t talk about people talk to them. Remind them on what has been agreed in our trust agreement and how we can be become an even better team in the future.