Leading Successful teams in Churches and Christian faith-based organisations

How to develop and maintain them in practice

About the Authors

Bethan Edmunds is a fully qualified counsellor who specialises in working with clients in the field of burnout, trauma and leadership health. She has worked for a number of Churches and Charities developing best practice for integrating faith and positive mental health as well as running an award-winning wellbeing housing project. Bethan is also a published writer and continues to develop her passion in emotionally equipping individuals, groups and organisations for the Kingdom of God.

Richard Field is a recently retired leadership development specialist with nearly forty years' experience in working with leaders across all sectors. Richard is a Church of England, Authorised Local Preacher, licensed to his local church, for which he has also held various roles over the years, including periods as Treasurer, Church Warden, Chair of the Finance Committee, and member of the Parochial Church Council. Richard worked for many years as a Company Director and University lecturer and has authored and edited several leadership texts.

Catherine Knight, who is an Associate Member of the CIPD, is passionate about Human Resources, having commenced her HR career in healthcare from 2004. With more than 16 years practitioner experience, including 7 years at Senior Management level, she advocates the importance of looking after your team, understanding what the law says and going beyond that for best practice. Together with her family, she belongs to a large church in Bath. She has served in and led many teams both as an employee and volunteer, including worship, prison ministry, hospitality, administrator, Company Secretary and, more recently, facilitating money management courses. Having started a family in 2020, she is now happily focusing on her new, (and busier!), role of "mummy", yet remains committed to encouraging Human Resource practice.

Nina Smith is a qualified counsellor who specialises in the area of trauma and spiritual wounding. She also teaches on a master's Course in Counselling. Prior to this, she was a nursing sister and a Management Consultant with PwC and has raised two girls. She is married and, with her husband, sits on the Trustee board of her church. She has been involved with churches in various guises throughout her life from large-scale change projects to mentoring projects and women's groups. She currently helps oversee pastoral care in her church and is passionate about churches equipping themselves to systemically cope with the spiritual and emotional health of their congregants.

Professor Keith Brown was the founding Director of the National Centre for Post Qualifying Social Work and Professional Practice and he is an Emeritus Professor at Bournemouth University. In 2005, he was awarded the Linda Ammon memorial prize sponsored by the then Department for Education and Skills awarded to the individual making the greatest contribution to education and training in the UK. He was awarded a Chartered Trading Standard Institute [CTSI] 'Institutional Hero' award in 2017, recognising the significance of his research into financial fraud and scams. He sits on the DHSC safeguarding advisory board, the joint DHSC and MOJ National Mental Capacity Leadership forum and the Home Office Joint Financial task force. He has written over 35 text books in the fields of social work and leadership and is particularly known for his contributions in the areas of Mental Capacity and Leadership. Since his retirement from a full-time academic post, he has been the Independent Chair of the NHS Safeguarding Adults National Network, the Chair of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Chair of Love Southampton, a body that represents 3 food banks and 4 debt advice centres. He is also an Ambassador for Faith in Later Life and a member of Above Bar Church Southampton. He continues to write in the area of the interface between the welfare state and the church and is passionate about encouraging the church to minister to the marginalised and vulnerable.

Forewords

Having worked alongside Professor Keith Brown for a number of years, I believe he is a much needed voice that we need to listen to in the UK church. Keith and his team bring much needed wisdom to the area of working as an effective team in a Christian context.

It doesn't matter how long we have been part of any given team, I've discovered in my many years of ministry that there is always more we can learn. We should not be afraid to admit when we have struggled in our working as a team.

So often, we can struggle to know how to operate effectively in teams, whether as a paid or voluntary member in a Christian context.

Working in teams, especially in a Christian context can be where we hope or pray for the best and yet the reality is different.

This new resource speaks realistically and authentically into the challenge that many of us feel.

I sincerely pray that, as a result of studying and considering this resource in your own team, better practices might emerge and will serve you well for the future.

Adam May
UK Director of Neighbourhood Prayer Network

We know the difference that Faith Communities make to their locality. This is what the APPG for Faith and Society celebrates. There has been an increased recognition of this work during the pandemic.

This is why it is important that teams in faith contexts operate effectively, whether that's in a paid or voluntary setting.

I fully commend this new resource on behalf of the APPG for Faith and Society.

I am grateful to Keith and his team for compiling such a helpful resource to enable churches to be the best they can be.

The Rt Hon Stephen Timms
Chair of the APPG for Faith and Society

In the summer of 2020, Richard Field, Bethan Edmunds and myself produced Guidance on preventing stress and burnout in churches and Christian faith-based organisations based on our many years of working in the area of leadership within the church context. This text was welcomed by many, particularly as we opened up the risk of burnout within the context of full-time Christian ministry. Following positive feedback on this text, we turned our attention to leading teams effectively. Our working hypothesis was that when teams are functioning well leadership is relatively straightforward, but when teams are not functioning well that is when leadership is both challenging and often stressful.

We therefore wanted to offer further guidance and advice on how to develop effective teams, including how to recruit the right people into roles alongside what to do if you have the wrong people in roles within your teams. In particular, we wanted to offer this advice within the context of church or Christian faith-based organisations where many 'team' members might be volunteers and/or people who feel called by God to undertake their roles. These are some of the most rewarding and yet sometimes most challenging teams to lead. We also wanted to recognise that these teams provide hugely valuable and beneficial services to society. Church communities and faith-based organisations are at the very cutting edge of providing support to the marginalised, the lonely and the vulnerable in our society. However, this support is often not fully realised or appreciated by wider society, and so we are delighted that this new guidance has been produced as an All Party Parliamentary Group Faith and Society Report. This recognises both the immense contribution that the wider church plays in our society, and also offers clear and practical advice and support as to how this work might be enhanced and developed via committed, dynamic and well-functioning teams.

We also wanted to expand our writing team to include professional experience of human resource management and also wider experience in the counselling and support of leaders under pressure. We were therefore delighted to have Catherine Knight and Nina Smith join our team. Together, our experience and professional expertise is both extensive in terms of time (well in excess of 150 years) and also depth as we have worked across a range of national, regional bodies, major corporations and also local churches and national Christian faith organisations. I am so grateful for the insight, wisdom and honesty that the team brought to this project.

We trust that this guidance will help facilitate better leadership, clarity of purpose for team development and function and the ability for all who engage in church ministry and Christian faith-based work to more effectively serve the communities that they work with. A word of warning though; there are often no quick solutions or fixes. Developing an understanding of effective leadership of teams and the ability to perform these roles takes time. We offer this guidance as part of your journey, to help you reflect on and further develop your leadership abilities. If we are serious about wanting to see the Church and Christian faith-based organisations being effective in their ministries then we will all take this material seriously, as without effective, well-functioning teams these ministries will not achieve their full potential.

Please do feel free to send us any feedback. We have faithfully worked for a year in developing this guidance, during the difficulties of lockdown due to Covid restrictions and we are more than willing to accept that we might have missed out on some important areas for consideration, but we have settled on this version and we trust it inspires you, your colleagues, your team members and those around you to be the very best you can be in fulling your Ministry.
March 2022

Professor Keith Brown
Chair of the NHS England Safeguarding Adults National Network

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This purpose of this text is to help Christians understand what constitutes a successful team, and how to develop and maintain one in practice. Within this text we explore why some teams excel and others do not, introduce techniques and leadership behaviours that work, in different church or Christian faith-based contexts.

Furthermore, we include material that will help the reader understand what people may unconsciously bring into a team, what might be going on for them and how this can play out when working with others.

Lastly, we offer 'Team Traffic Lights', a framework for leaders to use as the basis for reflecting on their team and to consider development.

Through careful application of this learning, teams should become or remain successful; achieving what is desired, and doing so in a way that is sustainable and minimises the likelihood of team leadership or membership becoming a source of toxic stress, as defined by Brown, Edmunds and Field (2020).

We believe that correctly constituted teams are integral to effective, healthy, and safe Christian organisations. Teams, in particular top leadership teams, such as Trustees, are an important part of the checks and balances that minimise the likelihood of a single 'rogue' leader successfully furthering their own ends, whether this involves pursuit of celebrity status, financial impropriety, or abuse in one of its many forms. The importance of top teams in protecting individuals, organisations and wider society cannot be overstated. As an example, this is evidenced by the significant number of recommendations aimed at the leadership team of Emmanuel Church, Wimbledon, (Independent Lessons Learned Review, 2021), concerning Jonathan Fletcher. However, it is not just top teams that are important; all teams throughout Christian organisations should play their part in challenging inappropriate behaviour, holding people to account, whistle-blowing, etc.

In their guidance on preventing stress and burnout in churches and Christian faith-based organisations, the authors (Brown, Edmunds, and Field, 2020) identify six causes of potential stress related to the ways organisations operate. The interplay between three of these; relationships, handling of staff and volunteers and leadership, play out every day in team life, and can cause significant problems for all involved. Chronic or acute problems within, or with a team can trigger stress, which if unrelieved may become toxic and then progress to burnout. We believe that the risk of team-induced toxic stress and burnout is increasing, particularly where a Church is experiencing significant changes in membership. Growth, while welcomed, can bring a resource lag where the demands placed on Church leaders and teams exceeds their current capacity. This can be very stressful, as are situations where congregation numbers and resources are falling to the point where Ministers are required to work across two or more Churches and increased lay participation is required. In the future, it is likely that the use of teams will increase, team composition will become more diverse and the environment within which teams operate more challenging. The ability to lead teams that are successful and healthy will become more important with time.

The target audience for this text are leaders who are responsible for leading teams in delivering a set of outcomes, mission, etc. This includes leaders of senior or top teams, such as Management Boards, Minister Teams, Parochial Church Councils (PCCs), Trust Boards, Corporate Leadership Teams, as well as teams that have narrower more specific responsibilities such as Finance, Mission, Worship and Welcome Teams, etc. Leaders may be licensed ministers or laity, all having in common the authority and accountability that flows from being elected or formally appointed. This text will also help those chairing committees, leading partnerships, and collaborating with individuals from the wider community.

Whilst the focus of this guidance are relatively senior teams, the content will also be appropriate for, but not tailored to, leaders of operational teams, informal leaders, and team members.

As authors, we come from a range of backgrounds, with experience of team leadership, Christian leadership counselling, human resource management, research, team coaching, facilitation, and leadership development. We have seen first-hand the impact that an effective team can have and how great it is to be a part of one. Equally, we have seen how ineffective team leadership and poor relationships can lead to thoroughly unproductive, unpleasant and destructive experiences.

Writing this text has been a journey of discovery, which started with a strong belief that teams in Churches and Christian organisations was something we were being called to explore. We started our journey with a basic, typical definition of a team, this being where:

'Two or more people share a commitment to act together to achieve a common goal'

As our thinking developed, the inadequacy of this statement for our purpose became clear, in that it did not indicate what a great team might look like, nor did it reflect the Christian context and no way was it aspirational. As a result of 'grinding out' our thinking, we now have a clear sense of what we believe a great Christian team looks, sounds, and feels like. We label this type of team, a 'green team', which we describe as follows.

Green teams perform consistently well, are safe, enjoyable places to be, with good prospects. With good leadership and just the right number of members, capacity, diversity, and skills to meet the challenges they face, green teams are a place of growth and development. With a strong and shared sense of purpose underpinned by Christian values and practices, and high levels of commitment and support, green teams are exciting places to be. These teams self-regulate with emerging signs of pressure, conflict, relationship difficulty or stress spotted early and diffused quickly.

The team leader and members are emotionally intelligent, resilient, flexible, and give of their best. They take personal responsibility and typically operate as 'adults', collaborating effectively with a wide range of people. Green teams are places where a person is fully accepted and valued, irrespective of whether they are fit, unwell or in crisis. These are places where feedback flows and there are high levels of trust, honesty, and transparency. Above everything else, green teams are healthy places.

From this description we offer a short definition of a successful Christian team;

> *'A successful team is a healthy place, a place where people willingly, supportively, and joyfully collaborate to achieve their shared purpose, and become the best possible version of their individual and collective selves'*

Section 6 presents a summary of the characteristics and qualities that we believe contribute to making successful, or green, teams.

Green teams are part of a bigger framework which includes 'red teams' that are in poor health and barely function, and 'amber teams', which in some respects look like a 'red team', and others more like *a 'green' team.* The Team Traffic Lights, included in Section 6, can be used to stimulate and support review conversations within teams, such that any 'green characteristics may be maintained, and red characteristics addressed, in both cases helping teams to become increasingly healthy and successful.

At this point, we expect readers will be unable to resist comparing this green team description with their own team, or a team with which they are familiar, which is great. In doing so, however, it should be noted that team health constantly shifts, either within green, amber, or red states and sometimes between them. A green team with an excellent leader, who leaves and is not replaced quickly, may quickly move to poor health, particularly if they were leader-dependant. If, however, the green state was less leader-dependant, but rather embedded in team member practices and behaviours, health may continue for a while, but slowly deteriorate. In any situation, if a newly-appointed leader lacks competence and/or confidence, they may very quickly harm the health of a team.

1. This Guidance

This section explains why we think this guidance is important, our beliefs as writers and our approach to tackling this topic.

1.1 Why this guidance and why now?

This guidance has been produced for two reasons;

Firstly, personal experience suggests it is time. We have worked in and with many teams that fail to deliver their full potential. Some achieve virtually nothing of value, others deliver outcomes in the short term but are unpleasant places to be, and a few, whose only value appears to be providing ineffectual respite care for stressed leaders. Happily, however, we have also seen teams that are effective in the long term and pleasant spaces in which to be.
When leading or working developmentally with teams, we see first-hand how difficult team leadership can be. Even teams that appear effective and pleasant , often have unhelpful undercurrents and weaknesses that suggest the team is far from being robust in health and may be vulnerable.

Secondly, whilst collaborating on an earlier publication, 'Guidance on preventing stress and burnout in churches and Christian faith-based organisations' (Brown, K, Edmunds, B, Field, R, 2020) the authors identified relationships as a key source of stress. It is no surprise then, that given much leadership work is completed within teams, this is where difficulty and stress is often found.

We fear that team leaders and members often pay an unnecessary personal price for working together which, combined with a belief that many Christian teams may be under-achieving, drives two high level aims, which is to;

- Help teams to become the best they can be; achieving outcomes and maintaining healthy relationships with a good chance of being sustainable.
- Reduce the level of stress experienced when leading teams and more generally, when being part of a team.

Much has been written generally about team leadership, less so focussed on teams in the context of Churches and Christian faith-based organisations. While many general ideas about team leadership are transferable to Christian contexts, there are unique factors that also need to be considered, such as those involved having a shared faith, there being a need to observe the requirements of legislation and Biblical teaching, often there is a high proportion of informal volunteers, and a variety of views about everything. This is compounded by high and sometimes unrealistic expectations about how people of faith 'should' behave, especially when these expectations are dashed.

Application of these ideas needs to take into consideration the diversity of structures, practices and arrangements found across non-denominational and denominational churches. We believe that there is much the corporate world could learn from successful Christian teams, with some adjustment for context.

We think this text is very timely as organisations deal with the fallout from Covid 19. Reductions in traditional Church attendance, the impact of digital worship, lost income from giving, reduced hiring of facilities, and cancelled events such as Flower Festivals are all impacting. Members of teams and those they minister to, are experiencing higher levels of mental health difficulties including compassion fatigue, social anxiety and (PTSD) Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Prior to Covid 19, many Church leaders were struggling with reducing and ageing congregations, Ministers were increasingly being made responsible for two or more Churches or Parishes and demands made of laity were similarly rising. These factors, and others, challenge traditional ways in which leadership has been exercised and how teams, often comprising ministers and laity, operate. We believe that the overall level of pressure felt by leaders is about to increase further, due to shifts in the external environment, possibly compounded by a delay or failure to recognise these and respond appropriately. It is likely that this pressure may feel worse in organisations that are part of a wider regional or national body.

It has been no easier for many other Christian organisations, such as charities, that have seen significant loss of income over the last two years due to cancelled sponsorship events, shop closures and grant funding being diverted to support covid-related activity. In addition, many charities have had to modify traditional activity to on-line delivery and deal with greater competition for volunteers.

Organisations comprise people who, in addition to organisation pressure, will from time to time experience personal pressure. A combination of organisational and personal pressure is likely to increase the number of members who are struggling and stressed at any one time. Often these members use a range of coping and bridging behaviours when working with others but, under stress this ability tends to diminish, causing more disagreement, more stress, less bridging behaviour and so on - a vicious circle, or more likely a vicious spiral. Rather like a car engine with insufficient oil, it is only a matter of time before seizure, or some other critical event occurs.

1.2 Our beliefs as writers

We believe that healthy teams are a great gift; they bring joy, satisfaction, unity and significance to their members and the organisation. We have a certain belief that Christian teams can, and should, be healthy. If that is not fully your experience, we invite you to read this text, engage with theory, reflect and act prayerfully on the ideas we offer, as distilled from over 100 years of collective experience of team membership and leadership.

Alongside this overall belief about healthy teams, it might be helpful to know some of the other beliefs we hold, which inevitably affect how we see and write about this topic.
In addition to a shared Christian faith, we believe that;

- Healthy teams are greatly shaped and influenced by leaders who believe in teamwork and are fully committed to God.
- The ability to create and maintain effective teams is essential to fulfilling the 'Great Commission'.
- Teams are crucial to an effective Church and Christian faith-based charities yet often fall short of their full potential.
- Diversity within teams is essential and should be sufficient for the environment within which the team operates, and the challenges faced.
- Healthy teams are a place of personal and collective growth.
- Realising full value from diversity is not automatic nor is managing diversity a natural skill for all leaders – it can however be learnt.
- For the most part, leaders inherit ready-formed teams and are required to work with whom they are given – at least in the short term.
- Team members and leaders bring personality preferences, skills, previous experiences, etc. which can be a rich resource and/or a partial or total block to success.
- Everyone has the potential to informally lead and there is much to commend the idea that leadership is not restricted to those with certain titles or roles. However, over-reliance on wider team members can undermine the authority of designated leaders and may mask the possibility that they lack competence. This may also weaken authority and accountability.
- While effective teams may result from prayer alone; knowledge, tools and the capacity to lead are God-given gifts, available to help leaders build healthy teams. In most situations, it is not a case of using either prayer or tools but both, in combination.

1.3 Our approach

The structure of this guidance reflects our belief that team leadership requires an understanding of good leadership practice, an awareness of self and others, an embracement of the value of diversity, together with the ability to create and maintain productive and healthy relationships.

We aim to help leaders and team members develop an individual and collective understanding of how to create and maintain successful teams. This requires constant attention as teams are dynamic; constantly flexing and evolving in response to the wider environment, recent experience, the current mental state of each team member and relationships within and beyond the team. Whether the environment evolves gradually or suddenly, due to major events such as Covid 19, changes in what team members do, where they work, their required and actual behaviour and how they relate to each other, is inevitable. Continued effectiveness requires

each person individually and the team collectively, to react appropriately.

In normal times, challenges facing teams are typically relatively small in scale and less complex than say dealing with Covid-19. The implications for team members are relatively predictable, and for the most part, of low significance. Typically, challenges relate to one of three areas of life; to tasks in hand, to team relationships and to personal circumstances, each of which has a potential to disrupt 'normal life' and impact on team performance.

Examples of challenges include:

- Tasks in hand - such as the launch of a new IT system in a charity, a change in the pattern of worship, a shift in policy, an isolated safeguarding incident.
- Team relationships – where there are often strong emotional bonds such as trust, respect, honesty, and commitment yet significant scope for disagreement between two or more members, for operating cliques to form poor individual behaviour, ideological or values-based differences, etc.,
- Personal pressure experienced by an individual team member due to ill-health, a failing personal relationship, coping with parental ill-health, etc.

Sometimes problems within a team grow slowly and are not obvious to others for some time; other times they appear from nowhere and suddenly plunge a team into difficulty. Irrespective of origin and the speed with which problems appear, there are typically four resources available to help understand what the problem may be, to generate insights and options for action and to make or inform decision making, etc.

- The formal team leader, who should understand team health, and what constitutes normal for their team and for individual team members. The leader should quickly become aware of factors that might adversely affect their team, be able to suggest reasons and possible responses and to act.
- A leadership development specialist who from their detached perspective should be able to suggest specific actions for the team or key individuals. It can be expected that such specialists will understand and value diversity and emotional intelligence and be able to integrate this in their work, for example through coaching and the use of psychometric instruments such as Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Kirton's Adaptor/Innovator (KAI) together with other models such as Transactional Analysis (TA). However, possible reasons for certain behaviours can be deep and complex, requiring skills and knowledge unlikely to be possessed by most leadership development specialists. As with team leaders, it is important that leadership development specialists recognise the boundaries of their work and are willing to recommend the use of a counsellor or psychotherapist.
- Counsellors or psychotherapists, who understand at a much deeper level why people think, behave the way they do and how to help people develop healthy strategies for life.
- A human resource professional who should understand how to act in a way that is compliant with the law and consistent with best practice employment and volunteer policies. It is unreasonable to expect team managers to have a deep knowledge of the law or how human resource processes work in their organisation.

The following five questions are often asked by team leaders;

As a leader what should I know?

Effectiveness in leading teams requires two broad areas of understanding; external and internal. External understanding concerns the context, or the world in which a team exists and the practical things a leader can do to sort problems, maintain, or improve team health, for example changing team membership, altering team processes and practices and to an extent, behaviour. External knowledge includes a basic understanding of the rules, frameworks and processes used in the organisation to manage human resources; whether these are staff, who are paid or volunteers, who are not.

In addition to knowledge of the external world the leader is likely, through experience and/or teaching to have a rudimentary understanding of the internal world in terms of what might be happening and why, including possible reasons why people are behaving as they are and what action might be considered.

In many situations, the leader's prior experience and training will be sufficient to enable them to intervene successfully. However, the leader could be 'part of the problem' which makes it difficult for them to be objective, self-critical, and impartial. So, for example, the leader of a team with members who are moaning about the length of meetings, the rambling nature of contributions and poor member behaviour should be able to remedy this through their knowledge of how to run a meeting, how to shape and focus a conversation and their ability to manage poor behaviour.

The more a leader understands each team member the better chance they have of building a set of productive relationships with, and between, team members. Therefore, we encourage leaders to develop sufficient emotional intelligence that they might start to understand what might lie behind individual behaviours they see, team interactions and their own personal preferences and reactions. Furthermore, we encourage development of sensitive and appropriate responses and an acceptance that there may be a time when a planned response does not work, perhaps due to misunderstanding, the leader being 'part of the problem' or something deeper going on that would benefit from professional support in the form of a leadership development specialist, a human resource specialist, counsellor or psychotherapist.

When should I consider using a leadership development specialist?

A relatively inexperienced leader, one facing a novel complex problem, one lacking in confidence or one who is too much part of what needs to change, may benefit from engaging a leadership development expert. This specialist is likely to have access to a wide range of tools, techniques, processes and experiences to apply. Many possess reasonable awareness of the potential internal world of team members, through familiarity with models of personality and psychometrics such as MBTI and KAI. The combination of some understanding of behaviour, wider knowledge of tools, processes and what works may be all that the situation demands.

When should I consider using a Human Resource Professional?

With some challenges what the leader really needs is to know how a planned action can be taken in a way that is compliant with legislation, organisational policy and best practice in a way that is efficient and effective. Other times, Human Resource professionals can provide technical advice and support a leader through a process, such as termination of employment and offer more general team advice, based on their knowledge, training and experience.

When should I consider using a Counsellor or Psychotherapist?

Less frequently perhaps, a desired change in how a team or one or two individual members work requires a much greater understanding of human behaviour and what might lie behind how people are, how they behave and interact.

Are in-house or bought in specialists best?

Yes. Not a helpful response perhaps but the answer depends on context, quality of available support and cost. Internal leadership development specialists and human resource professionals can be expected to bring benefits that flow from their understanding of organisational history, culture, policies, and personalities, etc. Internal specialists might be less expensive and have a vested interest in giving sound advice as they will probably be around to see how this turns out in practice. However, internal specialists can be so familiar with the context that they may not be as impartial as an external specialist, accept assumptions and fail to challenge what could be. An external specialist should have wider experience of seeing team leaders in other organisations, is more likely to be objective, and at liberty to ask difficult questions. With internal and external specialists, it is important to understand whether they have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to fulfil what is required of them. Before engaging either, it is worth asking for the CVs/profiles of the people who will be specifically working on this project. Do not be afraid to ask for testimonials and/or evidence of similar work they have undertaken. Look for evidence of breadth and depth of those involved, to ensure that with longer projects there are sufficiently capable staff to complete the project.

Relatively few organisations employ their own counsellors or psychotherapists, but many have coaches, mentors, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioners, etc., all of which can be helpful. Irrespective of type of expertise or whether they are in-house staff or bought in specialists, it is important to establish the extent to which they operate in the external or internal worlds, whether this matches what is needed, and if they have the required depth of knowledge and ability. One potential benefit of using external specialists when engaging primarily in the internal world is that staff and volunteers are more likely to open-up to them regarding their experiences, feelings, etc.

Minding professional boundaries

Team leaders are typically generalists when it comes to leadership, in this position usually because they are good in another area such as youth work, worship, finance, etc. Team leaders are encouraged to explore, research, and learn about themselves, team members, and their team as an entity. Whilst there may be some concern about encouraging leaders to become amateur therapists, there is a difference between 'responsible dabbling' where a person develops ideas and insights based on experience and what they may have read, and someone who unjustifiably claims expertise, clarity, and certainty about what should happen in any given situation. It is unwise, for example, to guess legal employment obligations based on what seems 'just' or 'common sense', rather than the advice of a suitably qualified individual. Similarly, it is far better to wonder if a team member may have a preference for introversion, based on what you know and have observed, than label them an introvert.

Not all leadership development specialists are the same, nor human resource professionals,

counsellors, or psychotherapists, but the one thing they should all observe are professional and ethical boundaries, each being clear about the matters upon which they can and should offer expert advice, and those falling outside their expertise. This is particularly the case involving the internal world.

Leadership development experts and human resource specialists justifiably talk with authority about many matters whilst finding themselves at the edge of their expertise in other areas. Counsellors and therapists may draw on an understanding of personality types, but are more likely to work in a tailored, holistic way with the person in front of them.

For every leader, leadership development, or human resource specialist there comes a point when they reach the boundary of their expertise, and should seek help from someone more expert, before going further or deeper. It should be noted that coaches and psychotherapists are required to have regular supervision, during which they are challenged and supported by others in the field. This process improves personal effectiveness and develops professional practice for all involved.

Why this guidance is as it is.

Our experience as authors has led us to design this guidance with the following features:

- Contributions from a mix of experienced writers drawn from a range of denominations and non-denominational churches and professional disciplines, to give balance and depth to the content.
- Practical tips for team leaders underpinned by theory to help stimulate thinking about self, other people, and the action they might take in a variety of situations.
- Signposts to resources for those wishing to engage more deeply.
- Examples and case studies to explore ideas and anchor theory in practice.
- Encouragement of readers to question whether the content resonates with their experience and to join us in conversation.

1.4 Guidance Structure

The rest of this guidance has five main sections; the first is a general introduction to teams, their purpose, why they need to be healthy and the potential consequences if they are not.
The next three sections of the text are presented as a jigsaw, a fitting metaphor for the 'puzzle that is a team'.

A competent leader brings all these pieces together into an integrated understanding of team leadership, ensuring all the pieces are present and that they fit, rather than being forced together.

As with any jigsaw, we start with the straight edge outer pieces which represent external knowledge regarding practical aspects of how teams are created, developed, and lead. Included in Section 3 are processes, systems and tools that can be applied to how a team functions, together with a basic level understanding of self and others. For much of the time, external knowledge is all that is needed to lead a team, as possessed to different degrees by team leaders and human resource, or leadership development specialists.

The inner pieces of the jigsaw contained in Section 4 represent the internal world, that knowledge that enables a deeper understanding of what can underlie the behaviour of an individual and explain how they relate to others. Some team situations are so thorny or

complex that a deeper understanding is needed, as routinely possessed by counsellors and psychotherapists. From an external perspective a leader can learn, and a human resource or leadership specialist may be able to predict that when person A says something to person B in a particular way that is likely to be received badly - they can help identify alternative framing and wording, advise on giving feedback, etc. Where leaders and human resource and leadership development specialists may fall short is understanding why someone might say something in a particular way or react as they do.

The reader of this text will acquire a basic and useful understanding of the internal world, be better informed to act in the external world and alert to when the support of a leadership development or human resource specialist, counsellor or psychotherapist might be helpful. The reader will also be equipped with language that will enable them to better communicate an awareness of themself and help members of the team relate to each other.

Section 5 looks at the importance of team leaders exercising self-care. This is represented by a person in the centre of the jigsaw, a special piece which harks back to the Edwardian practice of including whimsies in jigsaws.

The text concludes with a Team Framework that sets out the characteristics of successful, failing, and transitional teams that can be used for evaluation and development planning

Figure 1 Team Jigsaw

2. Introduction to Teams   **2.**

In this section we define the term team, introduce the notion of healthy teams, and explore some reasons why some teams appear doomed to fail.

2.1   What is a team?

When we started writing this text, we defined a team as being where 'Two or more people share a commitment to act together to achieve a common goal'. Even then we recognised that it was much more than simply working with others, in a Church or other Christian organisation where you broadly agree with what that organisation stands for or does. This initial definition suggests something much more, a shared commitment to achieve a common goal, together. This begs four questions of any team:

1. **Does this team have a goal?** If a team has no goal or members are unaware of a goal, the default is likely to be the maintenance of a steady state, which begs the questions 'Is this the extent of our ambition?', 'Is this all that we are called to achieve?'

2. **Do all members share this goal?** If different team members have different goals or different understandings of a single goal, collective effort is likely to be diffused and periodic disagreements occur over what is being done and why.

3. **Do members simply talk about their goal or act?** Talking about doing something rarely brings about a desired goal. Whilst researching, planning, risk assessing and similar are important action is usually vital to goal delivery.
   Members of a team need to coordinate their efforts in pursuit of common goals, which together with the actions should be clear and agreed. There should be regular monitoring of goal achievement.

4. **Is each member committed to achieving the goal?** Having sufficient individual and collective commitment to act, is crucial. When decisions are made each person must be clear about what they are agreeing to, which may be limited to just agreeing in principle, agreeing subject to a more detailed consideration, up to committing time, energy , reputation and maybe money to support a proposed action.

If the answer to just one of these four questions is 'no' then it is highly likely that the team is not achieving what it might.

In Section 3 the term 'team', is explored, different types identified, and teams are distinguished from groups.

2.2   Why is team health important?

If we really want success in delivering team goals and, together with other teams, help deliver the goals of the organisation, each team should be healthy. A worship team, refreshment team, youth team, or a pastoral care team that is in ill health is likely to impact negatively on what the whole organisation achieves.

Healthy teams are aware of the near and farther environment in which they operate, are places of feedback, support, and challenge, with a capacity to adapt and to innovate as circumstances require. Members constantly question what they do and how they do it and create opportunities to reflect, learn and invest in themselves. Consequently, they tend to be resilient and find it easy to attract people, which helps with sustainability.

Unhealthy teams, on the other hand are likely to struggle to do the day job, may be myopic, insular, reactive, and may bring out the worst in people, making them 'places of difficulty' for individuals. It is unlikely that common goals, if there are any, inspire members to greater collaborative effort. Other parts of an organisation may hold unhealthy teams in low regard, try to work around them, or not use them at all. Often these teams suffer with poor morale and weak relationships and members leave because they want to be part of a performing team. Alternatively, a member may stay because little is demanded of them. Both of which outcomes are regrettable.

As authors, we have yet to come across a perfect team. They may exist, but typically we work with teams that have already failed, at risk of doing so or could certainly be healthier. For some teams it is simply their time to disband, a process which handled well, can lead to better future individual or collaborative performance. Disbanding, however, can be difficult, costly and may not be feasible. We believe that all teams have the capacity to improve, they just differ in terms of the scale of improvement needed and what deserves attention. The improvements that can be gained from sufficient investment of time and energy are indicated in Table 1. If for any reason the desired level of improvement does not occur, then and only then should disbanding be considered.

Common improvements flowing from developing team health	
More or better	**Less**
Opportunities for organisational and individual development and growth are taken	Wasted time and energy
Communication with the rest of the organisation	Powerful and fewer cliques and factions
Enthusiasm about being part of the team	Conflict and competition
Collaboration between members	Or hopefully no back-channelling and power grabs
Performance	Unproductive and hurtful behaviour
Accountability and collective responsibility	Stress for team members
Self-confidence in individuals and the team	Stress for the leader

Table 1 Common improvements flowing from developing team health

2.3   Being Realistic

Leading teams in any organisation requires people that can hold the tension caused by dreaming of what might be whilst being realistic. Time, energy, and prayer need to be given to both aspects. Forgetting to dream will normally result in an underachieving team, while failing to be realistic can lead to a broken one.

There might be a grand vision, totally desirable goals and everyone might have the best of intentions, and we encourage leaders to dream big, but this is not enough; a team needs the capacity and ability to deliver.

Being realistic is important; all teams have a maximum potential level of performance taking account of the talents of each member and the extra performance that can result from working as an effective team. A gifted football captain can expect a team of players of similar or higher calibre to achieve a certain league position, or perhaps win a cup. If, however, team members are not sufficiently gifted, barring luck, performance will fall short of this expectation. A wise leader sets a target level of performance that might stretch team members but is ultimately achievable. Anything more than this is doomed to failure unless more team members can be acquired, existing members can be replaced with more able ones, developmental investment pays off, or teamwork efficiency improves.

Setting realistic goals for the team is essential. To do otherwise is demotivating and you risk placing team members and the team leader under unacceptable pressure. Serious damage can be caused to the individual as well as to the overall performance and reputation of the organisation. This is true of Church and other Christian organisations, with the added factor of significant dependence on volunteers. Many Churches are forced to rely on who they have and may not be able to afford to buy capacity or invest in training and development. The volunteers may be well intentioned, energetic and give freely, yet may be poorly equipped and badly prepared for the tasks for which they are 'called'. Leaders should think very carefully about how volunteers are invited, encouraged and approved for roles – just because someone feels they could or should 'do the accounts', does not make them a 'shoe-in for Treasurers'. Leaders would do well to remember that when they appoint to a role this often results int hat individual becoming part of a team. If this proves to be a poor appointment it is not just the role that may suffer but also the team and more importantly the individual. Guidance regarding selecting and appointing staff and volunteers is offered in Section 3.3.

2.4   Success is not solely within the gift of the leader

As we explore later in this guidance, many reasons why teams succeed or fail are down to team leaders and members. However, there are other factors outside the control of a team that affect success, in particular ones that make this unlikely, or impossible - for example:

- Being part of a larger organisation, which is itself in poor health. All teams are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the wider organisation within which they operate. If any other part of the wider system fails to operate effectively, particularly top teams or senior individuals, this may adversely affect the functioning and health of other teams.
- Significant unexpected events, such as Covid 19, which occur in the wider environment can place significant, and unprepared for, demands on teams, at short notice. These demands can be so great as to overwhelm members and negate earlier contingency planning and resilience building. As we explore later in this text, there are team processes and behaviours that can be built to make success in a crisis more likely, but not guaranteed.

As Christians we believe that all things are possible and therefore do not fully accept conventional notions of capability, ability, and potential. One only needs to look at the Disciples to see how God equips his people to achieve things that are far beyond what might be considered possible. So, in addition to considering the ideas and tips for success included in this book, a successful Christian leader integrates their faith, hope and ability to discern God's will in their leadership. However impossible a situation may seem, success is possible – we can perhaps make it more likely and easier through our own actions.

The performance and health of a team should not depend entirely on the leader; however, we acknowledge that leaders are critical to success. What team leadership looks like in practice varies hugely from those that lead noisily from the front to those who quietly create conditions within which a team can perform.

It is difficult to assess the performance of team leaders separate from team performance, the latter depending on several interlinked factors. People at one point in their lives may be proclaimed excellent in a role or organisation, or under certain operating circumstances, yet when the context changes, performance may drop, and they are viewed quite differently. The variable success of team leaders can be due to factors, such as the leader:

- naturally working well in certain conditions, perhaps when the economy is booming, grant income is reasonably easy to secure, and the organisation can really grow.
- who inherits an excellent team that, for a while at least, perform wells, without or even despite, their leadership.
- Being lucky or unlucky, perhaps regarding a single significant decision.

Similarly, a leader may appear to perform badly because the operating environment is tough, they wrongly call a key decision or have inherited a poor performing team. Context and circumstance may significantly impact on both leader and team performance. Sometimes a new leader pays the price for the failings of previous leaders who have failed to act or have made poor decisions over many years. A minister, appointed to a Church with a congregation that is small, ageing, and has been slowly failing for 20 years due to poor leadership, starts their ministry at a distinct disadvantage.

When considering the performance of a team leader, allowance should be made for circumstances and factors that are entirely or largely out of their control.

One factor that a Christian leader can influence is the extent to which they invest time, energy, and money in self-development. We recommend that leaders complete a Personal Development Plan each year, auditing their competence against the requirements of their current and possible future posts. Many organisations have a framework of competencies that are linked to courses and other development options which can be used as the basis for a Personal Development Plan. Some use generic or tailored 360 degree feedback instruments that enable a leader to receive structured quantitative and qualitative feedback from those they lead, their manager and colleagues with whom they work.

2.5   Team Difficulties

Many people belong to more than one team within an organisation, or indeed across different organisations. The purpose of these teams may vary hugely, as might the length of time they are needed, and what they require of their members. In almost all cases, team health could be better than it is, as might the satisfaction their members derive from being involved. Sadly, on a regular basis, we see, to different extents and in different combinations, the difficulties identified in Table 2, some of which are predictable, others less so. Some of these difficulties emerge over time while others can catch a leader unaware.

Classic Team Difficulties
Failure to understand/agree with/communicate vision effectively/ be motivated by a vision
Inefficient use of precious resources; time, money, energy, etc.
Tolerance of poor behaviour
Stuck in a stage of development
Poor team processes
Exclusion or marginalisation of individuals due to poor processes, poor behaviour, or difficulty communicating
Relationship problems between members, between leaders and members, between cliques, with other teams, etc.
A widely held, limited way of looking at the world
A seeming inability to respond to changes in the operating climate, due to a wish to hold on to the past, an intolerance of uncertainty, lack of innovative capacity, etc.

Table 2: Classic Team Difficulties

3. External World

Over the years, much has been written about groups and teams in general, less so in the context of Church and Christian faith-based organisations.

In practice most people in their work and, or Church lives, work with others, for example;

- On a day-to-day basis, fundraising, managing finance, providing a service to members of an organisation or the public, leading worship
- Delivering a project or event
- Representing, protecting, or advancing the views of different stakeholders
- Providing vision, making significant decisions, and ensuring the organisation runs well

Those leading others need to be able to manage groups and lead teams, some inherited, others they create, all of which need to be healthy. The leader, as well as the team, will benefit if they are able to work with diversity and resolve issues as they arise.

Part 3, the external world, contains 7 sections, each of which aimed at helping team leaders understand key processes, tools, and ideas that they may use to bring about successful, healthy teams.

Figure 2 Team Jigsaw - External World

3.1 Organising, managing, and leading people who work together

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

It is common for people to assume that the words 'group' and 'team' mean the same thing, whereas in organisational life there is a significant difference. In well-run Churches and other Christian organizations, both groups and teams exist, operating in different ways that are appropriate to what they are called to do. Understanding the difference and then recognizing this in how these entities are managed or led is foundational to helping people perform and relate well.

This section helps team leaders answer the question 'Should we be a group or a team? For those answering 'team' this guidance poses a second question 'What sort of team does this one need to be?' Answering these questions correctly is a starting point to becoming successful and healthy as an organisation.

Group or Team?

In recent years, there has been a tendency to assume that whenever three or more people work together they constitute a team and should be treated as such.

In practice, however, not all collections of people act as teams or indeed should be considered as such. It is not uncommon for individuals to be brought together for reasons such as availability of accommodation, line manager availability, in which case these might be best treated as a group of individuals.

At the outset of writing this text, we defined a group as being where:
'Two or more people are located, gathered, or classed together' and a team as being where
'Two or more people who share a commitment to act together to achieve a common goal'.

It is important to correctly identify whether people should be treated as a group or a team as getting this wrong can be wasteful, frustrating, affect performance and ultimately impact on health.

The main factors that should determine whether a group or team approach is likely to be more appropriate are summarised in Table 3, below;

Groups, where;	Teams, where;
Individuals have clear duties, the completion of which does not depend on other group members	Individuals depend on each other to complete their work – e.g., Person A works on a product or service before passing it to Person B to add their contribution and then pass to Person C
Individual performance is relatively easy to measure	Team performance is the primary focus
Members simply 'coexist'	Members need to 'collaborate'

Table 3 - Factors determining whether a group or team approach is likely to be more appropriate

Williams (1996) suggests that groups are characterised by co-existence and teams by integration. While groups of people simply coexist, teams exist on a continuum that reflects various degrees of collaboration, ranging from low to high.

When faced with how to manage a collection of individuals, leaders should follow the questioning contained in Figure 3.
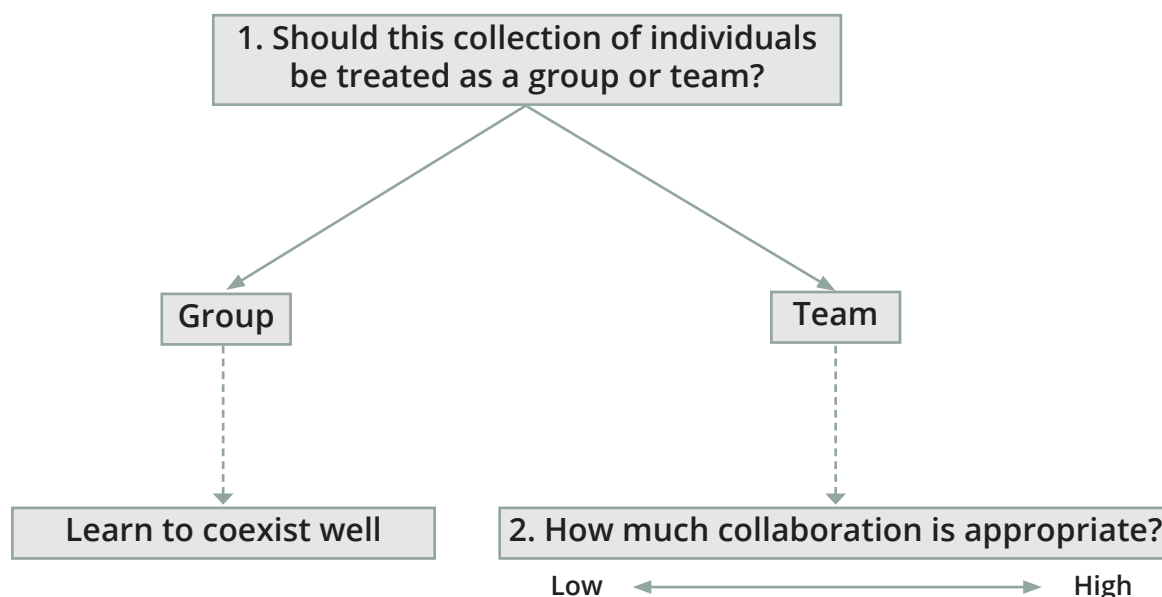
Figure 3 Group or team decision tree

Correctly selecting the most appropriate approach for the situation normally results in groups and teams having the characteristics shown in Table 4:

Groups	Teams
Communication tends to be largely vertical – Line manager and subordinate	Communication is more horizontal between team members than vertical
Little cost involved in helping members work together (very few meetings, awaydays, etc)	More time, energy and cost involved in helping team members relate to each other and perform
Less likely to act as representatives at meetings, less cascaded information sharing etc.	A stronger sense of belonging to something – a sense of purpose and understanding of how the team 'works'
Less conflict than typically experienced in teams	A sense of camaraderie – often closer relationships
Less flexibility, e.g., covering staff absences	Greater trust and collective power
Require individual management, less so, leadership	Requires less individual management and more leadership

Table 4   Characteristics of groups and teams

Inappropriately treating group as a team or vice versa is likely to lead to poor performance, waste, and other problems. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) suggest that managing what should be a group of individuals as a team runs the risk of creating a 'pseudo-team' where collective performance is lower than it would be as a group. Regular 'team briefings', other team meetings, team development, awaydays etc, intended to ensure good member relationships, improve coordination, cooperation and commitment are not needed. It would be a foolish person who tries to force three or more people who do not need to collaborate to be a team. Lost time and unnecessary cost, together with the likely detrimental impact on morale of forcing people to attend team meetings, joint training, awaydays, produce plans, etc, can be very counterproductive.

Treating what should be a team as individuals is foolish. Imagine a football manager intentionally treating players as a group of individuals, rather than a team. Even if every footballing position is filled by a world-class player, they will not reach their full collective potential without coordination, collaboration, a commitment to play for each other, and to an agreed strategy. The only way to improve group performance is via improvement in the performance of one or more individual members, not by changing the way they work together.

Improved team performance can result from one or more members playing better and, or, changing the way they work together. The replacement of one football player may improve overall team results, as might a change in formation or indeed the manager.

Whether staff and/or volunteers are treated as a group or team should depend on what is needed, not fashion or personal preference. Sometimes either approach will work, in which case a choice should be made and then embedded in systems, processes, and behaviours.

The following example illustrates a situation where either a group or team approach might apply, comparing how this might impact on processes, communication, etc. The situation concerns a denominational Church with five people responsible for leading all the services, two of who are ministers and the rest, lay preachers. Currently these five people operate as a group, as follows.
These worship leaders could equally operate as a team, as follows;

As a worship 'group'
Four times a year, the lead minister creates a rota of who is leading and preaching for the next quarter. The lead minister decides themes and, every now and then, issues, 'orders of service', these reflecting national directives. Those leading services deliver as agreed and make the most of any freedom afforded them. The lead minister offers developmental feedback and acts as mentor to the rest of the group. Communication is largely between the lead minister and individual service leaders.

The lead minister enjoys retaining control of this important part of their ministry. The rest of the team are accustomed to working within guidelines but occasionally bemoan the lack of opportunity to try different approaches to worship. The lead minister and other group members enjoy not having to hold frequent team meetings.

As a worship 'team'
All team members meet four times a year to review how worship is going, discuss short and longer term thinking about capacity, developments, possible special services, and festivals. They also prepare a rota, identify possible seasonal themes and decide which services are to run and when.

The extent of collaboration could be greater, perhaps through
Team members sharing resources and ideas, represent the rest of the team at events, such as at the annual Preaching Conference from which whoever attends, cascades learning. As appropriate and, if wished, team members can shadow each other, co-lead services and exchange developmental feedback within a culture of support and cover.

There is considerable communication between individuals as well as within the whole team..

While both group and team approaches could work in this context, the better case can be made for a Worship Team. The extent of collaboration that should feature is, however, more difficult to discern, with possibilities ranging from a team led by a more senior person with formal authority and positional power, to a self-managing team, which operates with considerable freedom, within a set of red-lines established by someone in a leadership role. Whilst this level of delegation may be uncomfortable for some people, it is highly likely to be increasingly necessary in multi-Church Parishes, or clusters of Parishes.

Whether a team approach is more appropriate than a group and, if it is, how much collaboration should feature, will be affected by whether;

- The lead minister is prepared to relinquish a degree of power, and control, and possesses the ability to lead a team.
- Team members are willing and prepared to devote time and energy to work with each other.
- Any framework of rules and guidance set by higher organisational levels allow for effective team operation at Worship Team level. It is difficult, for example, to run effective teams within a wider organisation that operates on a command and control basis.

The question of whether a body of people should be treated as a group or team is even more critical with established, senior bodies that carry titles such as Council, Committee, Board, PCC, etc. These bodies may be focussed on governance alone or have a wider remit, including operational 'hands on', involvement. The latter is often the case with smaller Churches and charities. If these bodies are not leadership teams, who or how is leadership exercised? Perhaps leadership rests with an individual or a different body, such as a Corporate Leadership Team. Organisations vary hugely in terms of structure and governance, but it is universally important that, irrespective of the title of the body, members should know whether they are part of a team or a group, for this can affect their suitability, their willingness to be involved and behaviour between team members. If, as we suspect, many organisations comprise bodies that are treated as groups which should instead be treated as teams, there is considerable scope to improve performance and team health.

What sort of team does this one need to be?

The second question posed in Figure 3 is 'How much collaboration is appropriate?' If the degree of collaboration is too low, there may be repetition of work, work may not get done because everyone assumes it is being done by someone else, there is poor integration, waste, and frustration. On the other hand, if the degree of collaboration is higher than necessary, there may be forced 'teamness', leading to a waste of time and energy on activities that could be completed by one person. There is a 'sweet spot' where the degree of collaboration achieved matches that which is required, which should provide the conditions for a good level of performance and the benefits of a healthy team, as summarised in Table 5.

Benefits of a team that is healthy
Total performance of the team is greater than the sum of the parts
A greater range of insights and skills are available, and utilised
More difficult, complex, and novel problems can be tackled
Cover in the event of a vacancy, illness
Potentially greater consistency
May make an important contribution to governance

Table 5 Effective Teams – Benefits

The last of these benefits is easy to underestimate but teams, in particular top teams, play a crucial part in ensuring strong governance. Sadly, Churches and Christian faith-based organisations are not immune from the risk that people in leadership positions are tempted to act in ways that are contrary to the best interests of that organisation. Unchecked, a Minister, Treasurer, Chair of Trustees, and others can 'go rogue'; failing to follow the purpose of the organisation, neglecting key legal responsibilities, misappropriating funds, following their own interests, and engaging in practices and behaviour that brings the organisation into disrepute including moral failures. In more extreme cases, a failure to ensure appropriate checks and balances are in place can result in child abuse, coercive control and even the creation of what is in effect a personal cult, run for the benefit of the leader. Effective, transparent systems for financial management, performance reporting, safeguarding, upholding Christian teaching, whistle blowing, etc., are important, overseen by strong individuals and an appropriately constituted, empowered and skilled top team. This will reduce the opportunity for an individual to stray and, if this happens, for this to quickly come to the attention of the team who will act appropriately.

Exercising good governance through teams should be easier and more effective than relying on key individuals who need to be personally strong to challenge any potential wrong-doing. Whilst teams that operate further down an organisation may not have the same governance role, what responsibilities they do have should be clear, as should their role and how they raise or process any concerns.

It is important to note that very few teams exist only when members meet together. The reality is normally very different with ongoing 'teamwork' undertaken by individuals of the team

working alone or in sub-teams to achieve the team purpose.

It should be noted that those responsible for groups tend to draw more on management than leadership skills. The primary relationship is between a person (Person A) who has control over and responsibility for, another person (Person B). There tends to be an emphasis on tasks such as planning, directing, controlling, supervising, problem-solving, etc., all backed by positional, reward and coercive power. With teams, however, much greater reliance is placed on leadership; aligning, motivating, inspiring, empowering, stimulating, and treating people as individuals, etc.

Tips for Success

- When creating a new group or team consider carefully which form appears most appropriate
- Where a team is considered appropriate, determine the desirable level of collaboration
- Discuss ideas about groups and teams with staff and volunteers
- Deploy a style of management or leadership that matches the context and is appropriate
- Identify and make changes as necessary to how activity and people are managed or led
- Be prepared to develop management and leadership skills

3.2 Team size, diversity, and selection

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

A common cause of underperformance and stress within a team is a mismatch between what team members are expected to achieve and what is possible, considering the number of members, skill mix and diversity.

In this section we help readers understand the difference between the size and capacity of a team, the real value of diversity and the importance of having a robust selection process.

Introduction

Team size and capacity, diversity and the selection process are central to an effective team and often at the root of any problems experienced. If a team is too small or large, lacking in diversity or the selection process was poor, many problems may result, including;

- Poor performance.
- A lack of capacity to tackle what is required of them.
- A lack of ability to handle a full range of problems.
- Poor levels of engagement and low enthusiasm for 'the team'.
- Relatively low levels of innovation.
- Blindness to developments in the wider environment and late identification of problems and opportunities.
- Disputes and unproductive relationships.

Size and capacity

There is no golden rule as to how large a team should be, but each one needs to be large enough to fulfil its purpose, yet not so large as to hamper operations. In small organisations, team members at the higher levels often have both strategic and operational responsibilities, something which can be difficult to accommodate. Churches and small charities often rely on volunteers who have to discharge their role alongside their day job. These teams may need to be larger, so work can be shared more widely and thinly and ensure that the strategic, governance aspects of their role can be discharged.

Three capacity-related problems are commonly found with teams:

1. Too many members, potentially leading to boredom, meddling and unnecessary activity.
2. The number of members looks appropriate but the time they can collectively devote to the team is insufficient.
3. There is an inadequate range of skills/time to meet key responsibilities and solve problems.

A key challenge common to all teams is balancing the time required to deliver a set of outcomes with what is available and/or can be secured. At first glance, a team may appear large enough to fulfil their purpose, but allowance should be made for how much time individuals can realistically devote to the team and how long different members may take to do the same task, due to variations in competence, confidence, attention to detail, drive for perfection, etc. It is

one thing to have a good number of team members; what is really important to know is the total time available, or capacity as well as their inclination to 'roll up their sleeves'.

As Figure 4 shows, the time required is a function of why this team exists, what it is intended they should achieve, and the specific activities planned for a period. All activities involve the use of resources, including the time of team members. Each team member, especially with volunteers, potentially offers different amounts of available time.
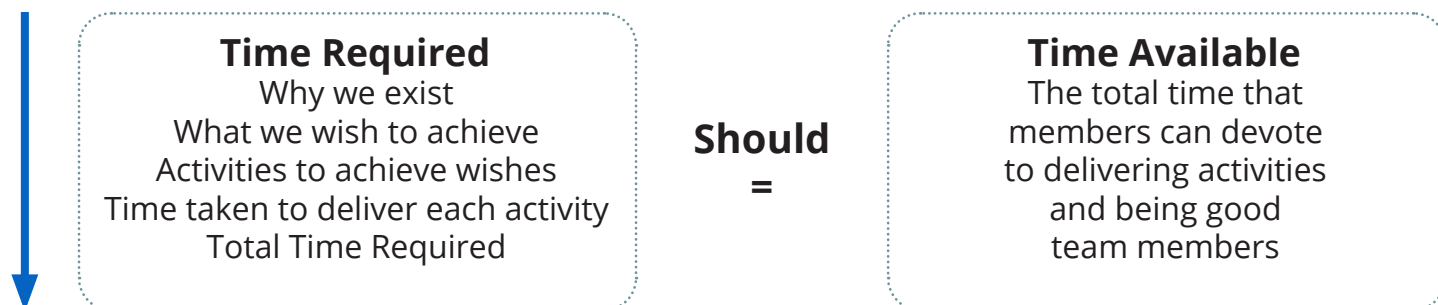
Figure 4 Team capacity

A further complicating factor is that different activities demand different types of resource, such as management, administration, and delivery. It follows that there needs to be sufficient capacity available in each category, for a deficit anywhere will inevitably lead to problems and heightened levels of stress for team leaders and/or team members.

Another factor to consider is whether the available human resource is sufficiently knowledgeable, skilled, and supported in terms of supervision and access to physical resources such as laptops, phones, etc.

It is not enough to simply match total hours of work needed with total hours available. There needs to be an appropriate mix of different skills of appropriate quality; anything else will lead to some activities not being completed or being done poorly, with the very real risk of over-deployed and stressed team members.

Diversity

The diversity of team members is an important factor. The more diverse team members are, for example regarding background, education, previous employment, and personality, the greater the range of problems they are likely to be able to solve with ease. Diverse teams are also more likely to be able to tackle novel challenges by bringing to bear a multitude of perspectives resulting in some productive conflict that will lead to new approaches or solutions.

A diverse team should be less likely to fall into group or team-think where members develop a shared way of seeing the past and the world around them, such that they are blinded to different perspectives or possibilities. Additionally, diversity might be further encouraged to ensure representation of different stakeholder groups, and a more conscious concern for equality and inclusion.

As a minimum, Christian organisations should ensure their policies and procedures follow the provisions of the Equality Act 2020, this resulting in a certain level of diversity. Arguably, if

a team operates in a stable, predictable environment and the challenges faced are relatively familiar, the level of desired performance may be achieved by recognising these aspects of diversity alone.

However, where the operating environment is more complex and fast changing and the challenges faced are novel, a team will benefit from greater diversity, arising from factors such as life experience, professional experience, skills, attitudes to risk, personality, cognitive processes, etc.

It should be noted that it is possible to pursue too much diversity for a context, perhaps resulting in a team that is too large, difficult to lead and/or, one that experiences unproductive conflict. The former may be overcome by picking members who can represent more than one dimension of diversity, for example a person acting in a financial role may be able to handle detail, spot errors, be risk averse, represent a stakeholder group, and have years of experience of working in this environment, thereby meeting several aspects of diversity.

It should be noted that there may be a difference between the level of team diversity that exists on paper, and which should benefit the organisation and what happens in practice. For example, someone who is averse to risk taking should bring this to a team discussion but if they lack the ability to assert their view they may fail to make a vital contribution to team decision making.

Selection

In addition to ensuring the right capacity and appropriate level of diversity in a team, it is crucially important to ensure a robust selection process, which hopefully will avoid:

- Recruits with unhelpful motives, including being attracted to teams or roles for status reasons, personal gain, a need to influence or control somehow.
- Leaders recruiting in their own image or excluding applications for the wrong reasons.
- Teams and roles having long-term 'sitting tenants'.
- Representation being viewed as more important than ability.
- Out of desperation to fill vacant places, accepting volunteers irrespective of ability and/or pressing suitable yet un-enthusiastic recruits.
- Misunderstandings regarding the time commitment required to fully discharge responsibility.
- 'Busman' holidays where a person possessing skills they use five days a week feel pressured to use the same on behalf of the Church. How many school teachers and accountants have been barred from developing their ministry as they have been 'called' to be Sunday School Teachers or the Treasurer.
- Appointing people based on outdated skill and knowledge requirements. Shifts in the operating environment may bring a requirement for different blend of skills.

Further detail concerning recruiting the right people is contained in Section 3.3, where a human resource professional offers their reflections, thoughts and advice.

Tips for success

- Before appointing a member of staff or volunteer to a team identify how much time is needed for the team to fulfil its purpose.
- Check to ensure the time required includes time for learning and development, reflection, supervision, etc., and is broken down to reflect different types of activity.
- Identify the capacity of existing team members based on how many hours each are contracted (if employees), prepared to commit to (for volunteers), speed with which they work and quality.
- Identify the gap between time needed and existing capacity to give a rough estimate of how much additional time needs to be acquired
- Consider the extent to which there is an appropriate level of diversity.
- Plan how you are going to recruit the staff/volunteers needed.

3.3   Recruiting and retaining the right people in the right role

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

Establishing a robust recruitment and selection process to ensure the right person with the right skills is recruited into the right role can often help avoid (but not guarantee) situations of underperformance. In this section we help readers understand the factors to consider when recruiting new team members, and what to do when underperformance still occurs, to ensure overall team health can be successful.

Introduction

This section is intended to help the reader understand the importance of recruiting, and retaining, the right people in a 'team' according to the vision and strategy of a church or other Christian organisation, from the perspective of an experienced Human Resource professional. Whilst the focus will be on best practice guidance around staff and volunteer recruitment, retention and performance, the writer's underlying motivation for this section is to inspire a passion for church leaders and leaders of Christian organisations to take the information even further. Specifically, the hope is that churches and Christian organisations will instead lead the way that teaches the business/corporate world how best to recruit and retain excellent people in roles whether they are paid or voluntary and, whilst less popular, to set the example of how individuals can leave positions well, in cases where the individual may not be the right one for the role, thereby retaining dignity, respect and positive relationships for all.

Overview

In order to perform and be healthy, teams depend on several factors, including having the right people in the right role, and an ability to manage situations when individuals may not be performing to the required standards, both of which require effective team leadership. This section provides best practice on:

1. How to get the right people in the right role when recruiting, including factors to consider as part of the decision-making process
2. What to do if you have the wrong person in the role
3. What to do if you have the right person but no role, and
4. Tips for Success

As a Human Resource professional, I have been amazed at how little attention is paid to basic good practice when churches and Christian organisations recruit and manage staff and volunteers. Having the wrong person in the wrong role is a common reason for teams that are dysfunctional, or indeed fail. Such a situation is typically caused by either a poor appointment or at a later point, something changing in the job and, or for the person appointed. Either way, along with the many problems that can arise for the employing organisation there is often significant collateral damage to relationships and individuals.

The reasons for poor recruitment practice can be many but largely stem from a lack of awareness among those recruiting, a lack of advice regarding good practice and a lack of access to professional support and advice. However well-intentioned those running churches and other Christian organisations are, it is unfair and risky to expect them to 'just know' what to do. Sadly, even if the recruitment process works well, and a sound decision appears to have been made, it doesn't mean the individual will be the right person, for all time.

Christian organisations are not immune from recruiting individuals who do not fit the role in which they are employed. This may emerge quite quickly through poor performance - i.e., not meeting the required standards of the role, or doing an 'ok/satisfactory job'. Arguably, this might be attributed to a recruitment failure, which should be reviewed. It may also be due to later awareness of a person who may now be in the wrong role, which is probably less to do with poor recruitment and more to do with changes in the wider environment or the circumstances of the individual, the former perhaps, necessitating a change in what needs to be done and a shift in what is required of staff or volunteers. Individuals in this situation may struggle to adapt to meet the new or changing requirements of the role or vision for the organisation, irrespective of efforts to train and support them.

You may ask yourself, 'Does it matter if I have the wrong person in the role?', and as an experienced HR practitioner, I will always answer with a resounding 'Yes'. As the corporate world teaches us, high-performing and flexible employees can lead to organisations achieving great success and meeting the strategic goals they determine are important for their business. Conversely, having the wrong person in a role for whatever reason, can impact the success of the organisation in meeting their strategic goals, as well as causing significant stress or strain on other team members (including the leaders) which often presents an organisation with additional problems.

Whilst the strategic goals of a corporate company may be different from those of churches and other Christian organisations, the importance of having the right people in the right roles transcends all organisations and employment sectors. Of course, the need for advice and support extends across all aspects of employee and volunteer management and worthy of a separate text. This section focusses on:

- the importance of getting the right people in the right role at the very beginning, and how to do this, namely the recruitment process itself.
- how, even if the original recruitment/allocation decision was sound, it is possible that a person is not best suited to the current role and what to do in response.

How to get the right people in the right role when recruiting, including what factors would be helpful to consider as part of the decision-making process

Most experienced HR professionals will recommend that in order to have the 'right person in the right role at the right time with the right skills', much thought should be given to the recruitment and selection process itself. Typical lines of enquiry include:

- What is the role? Do we have a job description that describes the main areas of responsibility? Do we have a person specification that describes the key skills, attributes, previous experience, and qualifications necessary for the role? What are the terms and conditions of the role? Is there a salary or is the role voluntary? Is the salary already determined or is it subject to negotiation? If there is a salary, is it comparable to the same or similar role already within the organisation to ensure equity? What are the hours and time commitment? (Be as accurate as possible so as to set realistic expectations...and helpful boundaries!) Where is/are the location(s)?

- How wide should we cast the recruitment net and therefore advertise the role? Do we limit ourselves to recruiting internally from within our organisation/congregation, or should we cast the net further afield and advertise outside of the organisation?

- How will we select the right person? Do we need to assess their skills and ensure they are what we need for the role? Will we 'test' these skills through a practical exercise, or simply take the candidates' word on paper or during a formal interview, where we ask them a series of questions?

- Who will be involved in the recruitment process? Are they competent and trained to be involved? Are they aware of the pitfalls of certain questions which may fall short of complying with the Equality Act 2010? (e.g., Asking female candidates only whether they plan to have a family soon can be discriminatory. It's better to ask all candidates something along the lines of 'where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?'). Are they aware of their own biases, noting some may be unconscious? Research, reported by Workopolis (2021), shows us that 'roughly 5% of decisions [at interview] are made within the first minute of the interview, and nearly 30% within five minutes.'

- How do we wish individuals to apply for the role? Do they need to submit an application form or CV, or simply indicate that they are interested? Do they even have to apply, or would we put them straight into the role without any probation period?

- What pre-employment checks will we do once we have made a conditional offer of employment? How many references will we seek and what period of time will they cover (e.g. the last 5 years)? Is a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check legally required for the role, and if so, to what level (basic, standard or enhanced)? Do we wish to ask successful applicants (as part of the conditional offer) about their health, particularly if there is a disability and reasonable adjustments are expected to be made? (Please note that this is an area that requires knowledge to ensure no disability discrimination occurs). Are we checking eligibility to work in the UK if applicable (e.g. requesting copy of passport and where necessary, visa/settlement status)?

- What is our plan on how to induct the individual into the role, whether they are an employee or a volunteer? (Remember that some aspects of induction are a legal

requirement, e.g. Health & Safety aspects such as fire alarms and assembly points, and how to manage information safely and in line with GDPR). How will we share what the expectations / objectives are for the role?

Whilst these are common questions to be considered by line managers, hopefully with HR practitioner support at the time of recruitment, these may be difficult to answer when it comes to Christian organisations, and perhaps they are not always thought about at the very beginning, especially if the key requirement for the role seems to be, 'Are they a Christian? Yes. Great, they're hired'.

These lines of enquiry prompt the leader to consider the duties they want an employee/volunteer to undertake, the terms and conditions of employment and the recruitment process to be used. At first glance, leaders of small Churches and other Christian organisations, run by one or two staff, can find this process time consuming and daunting. However, for many posts the writing of adverts, job descriptions, person specifications, etc., is relatively simple, and this investment certainly pays off when a suitable member of staff is recruited or a current staff member attends a training course on the basics of recruitment (see ACAS courses for more information). Of course, many posts are not unique to a particular Church and a good starting point for recruitment is to look for examples of key documentation on-line, talk to leaders in similar organisations, and of course engage with HR professionals as appropriate. In larger Churches there may be HR expertise in the congregation that can be tapped into.

Complicating the matter further is the fact that many Christian organisations/churches use volunteers who are not paid at all, and 'work' in their own time. This is not necessarily limited to front line workers such as a Youth Worker but can include leading teams or departments within those organisations and being responsible for others, all on a voluntary basis. Sadly, it is quite common when seeking volunteers to not consider adopting any kind of recruitment process as by definition these are unpaid roles; the individual may simply be asked to fulfil the role. Where an employee or volunteer already working within an organisation is being considered for a different post and/or membership of a team, similar processes and issues should be considered. It is all too easy to 'slot' an existing employee or volunteer into a different post because they are already present and available. Similarly, if a role carries with it automatic membership of a team, consideration needs to be given to whether they are suitable for both the role and team membership. For instance, with small churches there can be very limited pool of people and some posts are very difficult to fill. As an example, the role of Treasurer is quite technical and carries significant financial responsibility and can be quite lonely, particularly if Trustees are not really interested or competent in this matter. In a congregation of 30 people, you might be fortunate to have a qualified accountant, accounting technician or bookkeeper who is prepared to serve in this capacity (but not forever). Theoretically, financial responsibilities could be completed by a volunteer who is not part of the Church or by a professional bookkeeper, at a cost to the Church. Neither of these options is attractive however, perhaps due to cost, not being a member of this Church, possibly not even a believer. A Treasurer would normally be part of the senior leadership team so should be able to perform as a team player but how many Church leaders would turn down a competent Treasurer who might not be a team player?

Overall, it just goes to show that the decision-making process around ensuring the right person is recruited for the role can be challenging and something that all organisations must navigate.

Character and Skill

From my experience in the private, public and voluntary sectors, consideration should be given to character as well as skills when recruiting and ensuring that the selection process includes some kind of assessment for this, e.g. scenario-based and self-reflection questions, questions relating to thinking about how others would describe the interviewee, and questions that are more value-based and cultural according to what is important to the organisation. Character often trumps skill, because if you employ a person who has the character to be flexible, a willingness to change/adapt, a willingness to learn and is teachable, someone who is an excellent team player, can share examples of how they have been resilient, and someone who is honest and hard-working, more often than not, you can teach them new skills and they can adapt to the growing needs of the organisation over time. Yet, I would always apply a sense of caution here, as skill is also very important in many roles. Simply put, one would not wish to place someone in a financial role with responsibility for all the church finances who did not have any skills in financial matters, whether it is experience or demonstrable knowledge or a willingness to get qualified. Doing so could lead to the organisation/church not being compliant with the financial regulations set by the relevant governing bodies which, in turn, could lead to fines (or more!), frustrations from the leader/manager towards the employee/volunteer who may be 'underperforming', a dissatisfaction from the employee/volunteer themselves in not being able to fulfil the requirements or feelings of stress/anxiety because they feel they are 'out of their depth'. Any of these kinds of issues can have a negative impact on the organisation in terms of performance and reputation, and on the relationships between the individuals, team members and those around them.

Depending on the skills sought, the recruitment process might look for qualifications, prior experience, examples of when an applicant has had to deal with a challenging situation or pose scenario-based questions designed to ascertain creative thinking, patience, flexibility, and resilience (have you ever wondered what Christian resilience looks like?!).
You may also wish to consider something like auditions into some teams. Take, for example, the Worship Team. Different churches have different styles of worshipping through music and singing depending on what the overall church vision is, or the vision of the worship team itself. Likewise, you may find that there are differences of opinion from the congregation over what worship is and the quality of musicianship, with some congregants not noticing how well the musicians played or if any notes sounded flat or out of key, while others, perhaps who appreciate music more, noticing everything.

Charlie is a committed Christian, and an excellent musician. Having served in the worship team of an established church for a number of years whilst he was a student and in his early 20s, he has since moved cities and looking to join a new church. He recognises that an important feature of church for him is the quality of the music, as well as the overall church vision. He has also received teaching from his previous church about the importance of having a heart to worship, something that is taken seriously, to be enjoyed, but not a performance show. It is a role to facilitate others into connecting with God.

Upon visiting a number of churches in his new city, he finds that the churches where the quality of musicianship is not high can regrettably be a distraction for him, rather than drawing him into the presence of God. In some of the teams, whilst the musicianship may not be at the level that Charlie would like, he recognizes that the person singing or playing the instrument appears to be adoring God as they worship - a lead worshipper in effect, and this is something that encourages Charlie. However, in some of the teams, he also notices that those who are in the worship team look like they are bored or don't even want to be there, hiding any signs of smiling and adoration for God, with very solemn faces.

Although Charlie has not yet joined a church in his new city, and his remarks may feel a bit unfair, he may not be alone in his view. Yet the example does illustrate how having some kind of recruitment process could be helpful into a team, such as the worship team.

As Charlie indicated, he is aware that character is very important for anyone wanting to join the worship team, and the recruitment process itself may wish to draw this out further when selecting musicians, e.g., what is the person's daily walk with Christ like? What does having a heart for worship look like? What does the Bible say about worship?

Charlie, however, has also highlighted the point of having a certain level of skill in the worship team – musical ability – something else that may want to be considered before providing the opportunity for someone to join the team. This could potentially be shown via some kind of audition process, or something less formal if preferred, although noting that overall, the worship team is very much in the 'public eye' (or 'ear'!) so is still helpful to 'test' beforehand. The person doesn't need to be a Grade 8 musician, but it is important that they are someone who regularly practices their instrument (or vocals, e.g. harmonies) and wants to get better at what they do and continually does. As the saying goes, 'if you want to get good at something, hang out with someone who is better at it than you!'. It is also important for team leaders of worship teams to encourage the journey of developing others who may have the character of a lead worshipper (note that this is different from a 'worship leader'), but not necessarily the required skill level or confidence to play in a team with others. In these kinds of cases, the team leaders may wish to invite individuals to come to all the rehearsals, so they get used to knowing the songs, knowing the culture of the worship team, the expectations of the team members, and learning how to play their instruments alongside others, given that playing solo and playing your instrument alongside other instruments in a team, are two very different sets of skills. You may also wish to consider having the person play during a Sunday service, but without being microphoned, (or plugged into the PA system) to help them grow in confidence on their instrument (including voice).

This illustration also raises the importance of the person assessing whether 'this is the sort of Church in which I can serve musically in the way God wants from me'. There are Churches with an approach to music that would fit Charlie well, others less well – at the heart of this relationship is a psychological contract about style of worship, practice commitments, resources, etc.

Small Churches might not be able to employ paid musicians or even attract volunteer musicians and face a stark choice of taped 'singalong' music or to work with the musicians they do have, assuming they meet some sort of minimum criteria. In this situation, there should still be a process used for joining a team of musicians, there should be a fit between the espoused vision and musical resource and attention still needs to be paid to the psychological contract. At some point, leaders of a small and maybe failing Church may seek a replant at which point the vision and strategy is likely to shift and more technically competent musicians introduced to stimulate development.

Recruitment of Volunteers

A significant number of roles are occupied by (or even, rely upon) volunteers, a good number of who are part of, or lead, teams. Irrespective of whether they are paid or not, I recommend that when it comes taking a person on, an appropriate proportional recruitment process should be adopted. For example, this could be a short 1-2 page form asking for experience and/or qualifications in the relevant team area that the volunteer is looking to join, rather than a full application form describing all previous and current employment history, and supporting information. It could also include two or three key questions of why the individual wants to join the team (to understand motive), what they can bring to the team (character and skill) and how they will seek to fulfil the values and vision of the team (team player and commitment). Similarly, the suitability of someone who is currently part of the organisation, to become part of a team should be considered (possibly using the same method above) rather than simply slotting them in. This applies to any form of transfer including internal promotions. Getting the right person with the right skills and character in the right role at the start can often - although not always - help negate future problems.

God and Gut

Going further, churches and Christian organisations have the additional factor of ensuring the person 'fits' the Christian culture, and not focusing solely on the competence of the person (even though that is important too). Therefore, what the recruiter feels God is saying and what is gut reaction can be an important part of the decision-making process. As recruiters, I am not against incorporating an 'emotional gut feel/reaction' when deciding on who is suitable for the role, but I do think this comes with experience of doing recruitment and (seeking) sound wisdom/discernment, and it is always helpful to check your own motives as to whether you are allowing any cultural bias to shape your view. You may find yourself in a situation during the recruitment process where how you were left to feel after being around the person/applicant was stronger than how good the person is on paper. As Maya Angelou has been quoted,

> "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."
>
> *Maya Angelou (Angelou 2021)*

This can sometimes cause a dilemma when the person may appear to be theoretically the right person, based on their competence, skill level, qualifications, experience etc...but your 'felt experience' after interviewing them left you questioning whether they are indeed the right person for the culture you have in your church/organisation. To help combat some of these issues and provide a more definitive rationale if your decision was ever challenged, you may wish to consider having some questions/exercises within your recruitment process that focuses on the 'cultural fit' of the person and be prepared with the kind of responses you are looking for that match the current or future culture of your church/organisation to ensure there is a 'fit'. (You can find some examples in the following link: https://risepeople.com/blog/interview-questions-to-assess-culture-fit/).

You may also find that there is a dilemma if you feel God/Holy Spirit is leading you to recruit a person although on paper they don't have all the relevant requirements for the role. In this situation (as well as the scenario above), you can still choose to test the person out. Consider having an additional stage of the recruitment process in which the person comes and tries the role/position before any commitment is given to them, making it clear that it is still part of the

recruitment process (Stage 2 if you like), and no final decision has yet to be made. In this way, it gives the individual a practical way of demonstrating whether they can perform the role or not, thus providing an opportunity to reaffirm (or not) how you felt about the person. Adopting probationary periods can also help with this situation once an offer of the role has been made.

What to do if you have the wrong person in the role

In this section I assume that leaders are performing and communicating effectively and the support they give members of the team is fair, measured, and effective. I would always encourage the leaders to reflect on what they could have done better before setting off on a path which could impact the individual's long-term future in the role.

However careful an organisation is when recruiting, there will be times when a lack of suitability for a role emerges later. Sometimes this lack of suitability is due to poor information on which a recruitment decision was based, other times it is poor judgement regarding an appointment, other times still to changes in the environment which can affect the role in ways with which the individual cannot cope. This last cause is particularly important and itself is affected by the extent to which someone wishes to change, perhaps personally fears the potential impact on friends and peers, disrupted relationships, or sees change as necessary/desirable.
Arguably, an organisation that is thriving is often one that is growing and/or able to adapt to its external environment, whether those influencing factors are political, economic, social, technological, legal, or environmental, commonly known as PESTLE (CIPD). To adapt, the organisation may have to review its strategic objectives and goals, revisit its mission statement, review its workforce plans to ensure the current workforce of employees and volunteers can meet the changing needs of the organisation and, where needed, make some changes. This includes reviewing the current roles within a team, and sometimes the individuals who perform those roles.

I would argue that this is, or should be, no different in churches/Christian organisations.

For example, a fictitious Church which has a traditional and rather dated approach to youth work runs a Coffee Bar once a week that is open to the local community. This bar is run by volunteers, most of who are extremely well-meaning older people who, having had children, originally felt this ministry was something they could do. The Coffee Bar is a well-regulated, safe space that worked well twenty years ago, when membership was high. The leaders, some of whom have been involved for 15 years or more have tried to step down several times, but no one has ever come forward.

Over the last 10 years, attendance has dwindled, the volunteers have got older and the gap between the average age of volunteers and youngster exceeds 33 years. There have been recent instances of what those running the bar consider to be poor behaviour, and a recent survey of the few youngsters attending has indicated dissatisfaction with a lack of WiFi, 'childish' activities and talks which avoid sensitive issues that are important to young people. While 'all are welcome', the Coffee Bar is not advertised for fear of attracting 'troubled youngsters'. Church leaders are reluctant to be exposed to the risks they fear these youngsters would bring and members of the congregation are not tolerant of any changes to what 'their Church' does, or how it operates. One view of this situation is that current problems with the Coffee Bar are due to having the wrong people running it. Perhaps when it started the original design and volunteers were a good, even ideal match.

Over time the 'typical' youngster has changed beyond recognition, including what they need. The skills needed by volunteers today has shifted also, for example how to market the activity, how to run age-appropriate activities and the knowledge and expertise to tackle the issues of the day. All this demands volunteers with different knowledge, skill, and levels of courage.

However, wrong people in wrong roles may not be the main problem here, for churches sometimes fall foul of not wanting to change, not being able to change depending on the church structure, the preferences of the congregation, leaders who lack courage or fear offending people where changes may be required, etc. Perhaps, the motivations of not wanting to/ being able to change or challenge the norm, are all valid, possibly including: we are "nice and kind people so don't want to upset anyone in the congregation or our wonderful volunteers", "we don't know what changes we need to make", "we don't know how to implement change effectively", "we have had some negative experiences of trying to change things and don't want to go through that again". Does any of this sound familiar?

An alternative reading of the Coffee Bar example is that it is doomed to failure. There is a need to look afresh at the purpose of the Coffee Bar, the 'rules', the activities and the resources needed. If the congregation is not willing to respond to the external environment, and to the needs of these youngsters, accept risks, and encourage those who will deliver this ministry, etc., changing the volunteers alone will not make any difference, assuming that anyone is willing to step up.

I believe it is good to implement some changes when there is a need to do so, although implementing change can often be uncomfortable and there is no single solution to managing it. It is, however, helpful to keep in mind the benefits that change can bring, e.g., it can help bring growth and innovation; challenge the norm; provide new opportunities; and prevent monotony (People Development Magazine, 2021). It is, therefore, important to weigh up the benefits of implementing the necessary change, against the cost of not doing so.

Nevertheless, even with a list of benefits for change, leaders/managers may still wish to avoid having difficult conversations with individuals or team members who are not flourishing and where change is needed, for fear of conflict. This may well come down to the fact that the wrong person is in the role, despite efforts put in place to bring about positive change.
A person I greatly respect (who is a Christian, and by profession, a director of a successful organisation) once advised me, 'If you can't change the people, change the people'. In other words, perhaps the person fulfilling the role is not the right person to move the role forward and therefore must leave. This action usually leads to a situation of conflict, but one that may be necessary. Sometimes you must actually and physically change the person and navigate through the uncomfortableness of that action, for the greater good of the team, the vision, and the community. Don't get me wrong, churches and Christian organisations, like all other companies, still must follow a proper process to avoid any future employment tribunal claims when it comes to letting an employee go (see ACAS's Codes of Practice), but churches and Christian organisations have the added pressure of the wider impact on congregation members or friends, from having to make the difficult decision of letting someone go. It can often cause offence amongst the team/congregation and produce stress and anxiety for all parties. There can also be a ripple effect where members of the congregation and staff may leave, and not always quietly. It can cause rifts between people with many needless casualties of "war".

Yet, it is important to make these decisions where it is necessary to do so even if one must weigh up the unintended consequences versus the consequences of not doing so. From a practical perspective of how best to do this, the following provides some 'general principles' of

what to do if you think someone may not be fulfilling the requirements that the role and your organisation or church need.

What to do if you think someone is in the wrong role: General Principles

1) Don't ignore the situation, or avoid having a difficult conversation

"Conflict avoidance is not the hallmark of a good relationship. On the contrary, it is a symptom of serious problems and poor communication." (Braiker, Psychologist and author, 2021)
As Christian leaders, we may effectively be 'line managers' and therefore responsible both legally and ethically to care for staff, volunteers and the role that is under consideration. Avoiding difficult conversations can regrettably make situations worse and damage relationships more, overall. It is also important to handle difficult conversations well and learn how to communicate effectively and supportively. An open and honest conversation, particularly in an atmosphere of trust and safety for the individual, can turn a situation around.

When deciding whether to have the difficult conversation or not, points worth considering include:

- Are they one-off issues? OR
- Is there a pattern of behaviour that needs addressing?

If something is a one-off issue, use wisdom and discernment as to whether the matter needs to be addressed further, depending on what the issue was and what the consequences were. Not all battles need to be fought! Yet, wisdom can show whether an issue needs to be nipped in the bud sooner rather than later, which can avoid escalation. If, however, you spot more of a pattern of behaviour, then this may need addressing by having a conversation. At the very least, you will want to rule out that there is nothing else going on behind the scenes that may be affecting the individual's performance (e.g., any underlying health conditions, personal family challenges etc.). Please do not resort to having this conversation via email or text message or any other form of media that means you and the person cannot see each other. I have seen this happen too frequently, in both the corporate world and church settings, and in my opinion, the situation often escalates where tone and facial expressions are not seen physically, or worse, someone reads something into a message that wasn't intended. I have also heard the 'excuse' from the 'sender' about how important it is to keep a record, which I would argue is still a form of conflict avoidance! Whilst I agree that having matters documented is important and should be done, I believe the conversation must happen first with the details – from both parties - documented in a follow-up email/letter to verify that what was discussed was an accurate account.

2) Get trained up!

"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young." – Henry Ford (Everdaypower, 2021)

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." – John F. Kennedy (Everdaypower, 2021)

"If it is important to you, you will find a way. If not, you'll find an excuse." – Ryan Blair (Everdaypower, 2021)

However experienced you are at having difficult conversations, I would argue there is always more to learn. As John Wooden, a former American Basketball coach was acclaimed for saying (cited in https://www.johnmaxwell.com/blog/tag/learning/), "it's what we learn after we know it all that counts"!

Every person and situation are different and what may have worked with one individual may not be the most helpful approach with another. Some individuals are more content with a direct approach and prefer 'straight talking', while others need a gentler approach that is surrounded by comments of encouragement, yet still getting the main point across. This is where relationship is important, i.e., knowing what the best approach is for the individual concerned because you have a relationship with them.

Practically speaking, I encourage all leaders to get trained up in handling these kinds of conversations. There are external courses available, which can be inexpensive (e.g., ACAS), as well as a lot of guidance documents of the dos and don'ts. Talk to someone who is more experienced in this area than you to get their advice of what can work, and what may not work. You may choose to practice having difficult conversations with friends/family/colleagues that you know and trust – this could include active listening skills that are often practised in pre-marriage courses that churches run.

As part of your development try to become aware of your own biases and drivers. Despite being Christians, it is very easy to still have our own biases, many of which can be unconscious. As ACAS (2021) defines, 'how a person thinks can depend on their life experiences and sometimes they have beliefs and views about other people that might not be right or reasonable. This is known as 'unconscious bias' and includes when a person thinks:

- better of someone because they believe they're alike
- less of someone because that person is different to them, for example, they might be of a different race, religion or age'.

Further helpful content regarding these and similar conversations can be found in Sections 3.6, 4.5 and 5 which address Giving and Receiving Feedback, Reviewing Process, Transactional Analysis and Driver Behaviours.

3) Get an 'underperforming' person 'on board' and show you care

"A person who feels appreciated will always do more than what is expected" (Quotespedia)

Too often in the corporate world, people who may not be fulfilling the required standards of the role and subsequently have their performance managed more closely, can feel 'attacked' by their line manager with thoughts that the manager is trying to get rid of them. This immediately puts the person on the defence and sadly can create the scenario of 'attack and defend' where not much good can come out of the process. Similarly, line manager/team lead, and employee/volunteer can also slip into becoming the parent and the other playing out the role of the child. Again, this does not resolve the matter and can, in fact, escalate the problem.

The person who is struggling to achieve their objectives must firstly receive reassurance that you care for them, that you want the best for them, and this may sometimes include sharing that you are not trying to get rid of them, but rather want to support them to be the best they can be. Remember, any person in line management (including Christian leaders) should want the best for the individual and want to help them grow and mature. This can sometimes be a painful process that no one wants to be involved in, but one that should, if managed well, present the problem as an opportunity to grow and develop further, becoming more of the person God

created them to be.

It is also helpful for the manager to reflect on anything they could do differently and humbly admit where they could have done better in their own responsibilities towards the individual, for example:

- Was the person properly inducted, and/or, subsequently provided with training for their role?
- Does the person know, understand, and share the same expectations/objectives of the role?
- Has the person received regular feedback / follow-up from the leader to help them in their role? (Relying solely on an annual appraisal does not cut it in my opinion...and should not be used as the only time to discuss any issues that arise).

Where leaders can humble themselves and admit where they got things wrong or could have done better, I have seen individuals respond more positively to making changes in themselves and want to work together to achieve the desired outcome.

4) Follow a fair process

I encourage leaders to follow a fair process when it comes to managing underperformance, which can be as simple as:

- Sharing with the person the specific areas that you have identified where they are not hitting the expected standards. Give specific and recent examples. Be prepared that they may feel that they are achieving the standards and actively listen to their reasons. Ensure you also share with them the areas in which they are doing well in as everyone needs encouragement.
- Explaining clearly or reiterating what the expectations are for the role. Check their understanding. Put it in writing.
- Setting some objectives within a realistic timeframe to see improvement and review again.
- Checking what additional support or training they need to achieve the objectives and ensure it is put in place in a timely manner.
- Reassuring them that you care and want to help and support them. You could even ask them whether there is anything that you are currently doing that is not helpful for them (showing humility often helps get people on board).
- Setting a review date and check progress.

5) If you can't change the person, change the person

I may be naïve, but I find it hard to believe that individuals choose to do a bad job. I think some people put more effort into work than others which is where we start to see differences in performance levels and outcomes, and some find that the role is not right for them and choose to leave.

However, in the former scenario, if despite all efforts to help a person change and improve, there is insufficient improvement in the person's performance, a decision needs to be made as to whether they are right for the role.

Part of the decision-making process around this is thinking more about the question, 'what is the impact if I do not make any changes to the situation?' Think about the wider context – What does it affect? Who does it affect? What are the short- and long-term consequences? If you conclude that the current postholder (whether they are being paid or in a voluntary capacity) is

not going to be able to perform to the standards or expectations needed in the role, then it is likely you will need to change the person.

Doing so is not an easy decision to make and can be, or is perceived to be, a painful process; but this is where you need to not avoid the difficult conversation and recognize that this decision is in the best interest for the organisation, those in the team around the individual, and for the individual themselves (whether they accept this or not).

It is important to note that if the person is formally employed by your organisation/church, you are legally obliged to follow a formal and fair process because removing the person from post is classed as a 'dismissal'. To do this, you must follow the ACAS Codes of Practice, (ACAS), ensuring the reason for dismissal is legally classed as a fair one.

Where you decide to let go of a volunteer, whilst you do not need to follow a legal process, it is still important to handle the matter sensitively and confidentially, as there can still be a knock-on effect for other team members and congregational members around the person.

Of course, if there is an opportunity to 'redeploy' the person to a different role instead, this may be more desirable than letting them go altogether (on the assumption they are willing to change roles), such a role exists and they are a good match. However, some organisations may not have the luxury of having another vacant role.

Finally, think about the end goal that you have in mind for the person that needs to leave their role – ultimately, you want them to be able to 'leave well'. Think about what this looks like, e.g., will you give them a good reference if applicable? Will they want to leave your church, and if so, how can that be done in a constructive way? How will their departure (from the role and/or Church) be communicated to preserve dignity? How will you maintain confidentiality? What will you learn from the situation if you are faced with something similar in the future?

What to do if you have the right person but no role

May I start with the comment, what a great problem to have! Perhaps we focus too much on having the wrong person, so it can be a breath of fresh air to know you have to find a solution to a good problem! Leaders of Churches and Christian organisations may occasionally find themselves in situations where they know of someone who has the character that they want in their team, but there may not be a specific role for them. My advice, on the basis that you have, or know you will have (whether in faith!), the funding (if it is an employed role), don't let them go! You may wish to take them on as an intern or on a volunteering basis and start mentoring / coaching them even if you can't employ them to begin with. Coming back to Maya Angelou's (Angelou 2021), quote:

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

If you feel a person is right for a role in your team based on your felt experience after talking to them, keep them in mind and get to know them more, including what motivates them, what their Godly character is like, what they feel God is calling them to. God can, and does, open doors at the opportune time.

Tips for Success

When recruiting a new person or assigning an existing person to another post or role:

- Work out what the role entails, what you want from a post holder, the sort of post holder and your offer.
- Decide where to cast the recruitment net and therefore advertise the role.
- Design the process for recruiting a person.
- Decide who should be involved in the recruitment process and ensure the process, questions to be asked, etc., comply with the Equality Act 2010 and are relevant to the role and the culture.
- Decide how you wish individuals to apply for the role and what pre-employment checks are necessary to undertake.
- Ensure the individual is fully inducted into the role, including knowing and understanding what is expected of them.

When dealing with a wrong person in a role situation:

- Don't ignore a difficult situation.
- Think about how you will discuss the matter – avoid electronic means in the first instance.
- If necessary, seek additional training / advice for having difficult conversations and establish the possibility of unconscious bias.
- Be prepared to show you care – avoid 'attack and defend' and 'parent-child' conversations.
- Reflect on your own management/leadership of the situation and show humility.
- Establish and follow a fair process, checking HR policy, guidance, and best practice.
- Identify the outcomes you want from the first stage e.g., objectives/expectations.
- Hold the conversation and reflect on the outcome.
- If at any stage, termination of appointment (whether it is an employee or volunteer) looks likely, answer the question: 'How do I have the conversation that I need to have, in a way that reflects the law or best practice and our beliefs as a Church or Christian organisation?'
- Think about how to preserve dignity and how decisions will be communicated whilst maintaining confidentiality.

Right person – no role:

- Recognise and seek to retain this person somehow, understanding more about their motivations and character.

3.4   Creating and inheriting teams

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

This section helps the reader understand some of the different reasons why staff and volunteers find themselves invited or allocated to teams, particularly leadership teams. This section describes a five-stage life-cycle for teams, which research suggests many teams experience, and team leaders should consider as knowledge of this can help accelerate and improve team development.

The idea of process reviews as a means of helping new teams develop is introduced before being developed further in Section 3.6. Also explored is what the leader should consider when inheriting a team.

Selecting members of a new team

When creating new teams, the aim is to get 'the right number of people, with the right skills, knowledge, and experience, in the right place at the right time, and working well together'. In our experience, many teams are formed simply by drawing in existing employees and volunteers. However, this is not always the case, and should it be necessary to recruit new members for existing or new teams, a thorough process is needed, based as far as possible on objective criteria. (See Section 3.3 for further information on the recruitment process)

However, in practice there are other reasons that account for membership, such as those included in Table 6.

It should be noted that often a person is appointed to a specific role such as Treasurer with little consideration given to the fact that with this may come automatic membership of the Senior Leadership team. When recruiting to such posts, consideration should therefore be given to the contribution they might be called to make to teams.

In practice, creating a new team may not be as simple as it first looks; the leader may have to satisfy a mixture of reasons for people being members, and be prepared to compromise. However, being pragmatic is one thing, being set up to fail is something else and team leaders must challenge decisions about who is allocated to their team.

One risk a leader must avoid is appointing or accepting 'anyone' to fill a vacancy in ignorance of, or despite their level of ability. Sometimes a team that is smaller works better than one that is larger if the latter includes one or more members that are not quite up to it. In addition, a complete yet poorly filled team may give the impression that all is well and mask an emerging, growing resource problem in the organisation

Basis for team membership	Attendant risks and consequences
Representation of a part of an organisation	In many teams, members represent parts of the organisation or even other organisations, which while appropriate, carries a risk that they may advance the interests of who they represent, rather than the team of which they are a part. Additionally, if the team is not considered important it may be tempting for those sending to select the person who will be missed the least!
Voted for by the membership	The attendant risk here is that rather than voting for the best person voters favour friends, people that hold certain views, or are just popular.
'Slotting in' due to a title or role a person holds	In the Church of England, for example, all Clergy, Deanery Synod Representatives, Churchwardens... are automatically members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) .
Taking membership in turn	Membership of teams is sometimes an additional duty, perhaps seen as boring, maybe irrelevant, a waste of time and even occasionally, unpleasant. Taking turns is a pragmatic way of spreading the pain of attendance amongst potential participants although the lack of consistency this can bring is unhelpful.
Willing volunteers	In many cases volunteers do so because they consider they have something to offer a team, but there is a risk that this is overestimated, or that they did not understand what is required of a team member or were 'inappropriately encouraged'. A willingness to volunteer is no guarantee of ability and there is a chance that a volunteer is driven by personal motives, status, etc.
Less than willing volunteers	Small organisations can be so desperate for team members that employees or volunteers are pressed or 'guilted' into volunteering.

Table 6: Other reasons for team membership

Inheriting a team

As with creating new teams, the aim of a leader taking over an existing team is to establish if the team already has 'the right number of people, with the right skills, knowledge, and experience, in the right place at the right time, and works well together'. If this is not the case then change becomes a priority for the new leader, but not before they have allowed sufficient time to assess how individuals and the team operate, what works well, what could be better, etc.

Inheriting a team can be challenging, often more so than creating a new one from scratch. The team will have its own culture, including 'traditional' ways of doing things, processes, rituals, and behaviours that have evolved over the years. There will be stories of when things went well and not so well, leaders and members who were great, those who did not fit and what happened to them. The team will have a reputation, good or otherwise and certain members may wield disproportionate power. Prior to a new leader arriving there will have been conversations amongst team members about the sort of person they hope will be appointed. Maybe one or two team members had hoped to become the new leader. Inheriting a team can be a bit of a nightmare and care needs to be taken, especially during the first few meetings. A period of adjustment can be expected, the length and depth of which will be influenced by what the leader says and how they behave. This process may be eased and accelerated by holding one-to-one conversations, conducting early process reviews as detailed in Section 3.6. Similarly, it can be helpful for a new leader to make a statement about their personal leadership style. Various elements can be included in such a statement, as detailed in Effective Leadership, Management and Supervision in Health and Social Care (Brown and Field 2020), such as values or beliefs that are important to them, what they seek from staff and volunteers and in return what team members can expect from them, the 'buttons' member should avoid pushing, etc. This can also be a good opportunity to hear from team members how they like to operate and what helps them flourish. If the organisation offers supervision to staff and volunteers, this is another good opportunity for team members to discuss expectations and for relationships to be built.

A starting point for a leader inheriting an established team is to ask the following questions:

- What is the purpose of this team and does this need to be refreshed?
- What capacity is needed to fulfil the team purpose?
- What level of diversity and skill mix is required and how does this match current team composition?
- To what extent does current capacity and diversity match what is needed?
- On what basis are current team members in the team?
- Is there, or should there be, a limit on how long team members can serve?
- What is the best way of moving towards the ideal capacity and diversity?

Regarding any maximum period that team members may serve, practice varies widely. With project teams it may be for the duration of that project, for teams that are relatively permanent such as a choir, membership may be indefinite, while for Trustees, Governors, etc, it may be a fixed period such as three years, often with a stipulation that members cannot re-join for a set period. Long serving members can be very helpful to a new leader as custodians of the collective memory, however aspects of this memory may be selective, inaccurate or irrelevant to today. Long standing members often wield disproportionate power and may hold back development and necessary change.

It might be tempting to play the leadership team equivalent of Fantasy Football when taking over an existing team; dropping some members, recruiting replacements that match a game

plan and preferences, etc. However, this may cause tension between remaining team members and new recruits, as well as between the new team and 'dropped' members. In practice, a leader may have to deal with one or more difficulties on arrival, for example limited capacity, a low level of diversity and a basis for membership that is far from idea, etc. Table 7 suggests actions to consider for each difficulty.

Difficulty with size	Difficulty with diversity	Difficulty with selection
Carefully identify gaps between required and current capacity	Bring in new team members or guests that are likely to bring different insights	Review selection process and make changes as necessary
Recruit if possible – paid and/or voluntary	Use tools that encourage divergent thinking	Review the basis for each member being part of the team.
If necessary, cut plans to fit capacity	Use inventories to develop self and team awareness to gain maximum benefit from existing levels of diversity'	Remove team members who can no longer make a helpful contribution
Look to see if more realisable capacity can be gleaned from existing members	Develop team leaders to encourage and utilise diverse contributions	As opportunities arise replace outgoing members with ones that are a better fit
	Develop team process skills	

Table 7 Options for handling problems with team size, diversity and membership

Whilst these and other actions might be taken, ultimately it might prove necessary to run with a team that is not ideal, particularly where the 'pool' of potential recruits is limited.

The principal challenge facing a team leader is to achieve, with the best team they can assemble, good levels of performance whilst maintaining a healthy team-state and minimising potential problems.

Helping a new team work well together

Recruiting new team members is a vital first step in creating a performing, healthy team but it is just that – a first step. As Henry Ford once said 'Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success' (Ford, 2021).

Our experience is that there are two important ways in which a leader can help a team form in a healthy way. These are to:

- Recognise that teams tend to go through common predictable stages of development each of which demands the attention of the team leader who should tailor what they do, and how they do it, to the stage of development and the specific team
- Develop healthy ways of team working and relating to each other, including, for example, regular reviews of how members feel the team is operating

Stages in Team Development

Tuckman (1965) considered that there were four stages of team development: forming, storming, norming and performing which can be seen in pretty much all teams. Later, Tuckman and Jensen (2010), following a review of published research, concluded that a fifth stage, adjourning, should be added, thus creating a complete team life-cycle.

Forming
The first stage in the life of a new team concerns the initial coming together. Typically, team members enter a real or sometimes virtual space, unclear about, or with different understandings of the purpose of the team, what the team is tasked to achieve, their part in this, the level of commitment expected from them and how they 'stack up' against fellow team members. Typically, some or perhaps all members are new to each other, with potentially different levels of expertise, knowledge, and confidence. Individuals may not know what to expect in terms of how to dress and behave (team culture) and the first meeting might be quiet as team members are cautious about what they say, the impression they make and fearful of being judged. Forming may take one or several meetings depending, to an extent, on the team leader and how they progress the agenda and build relationships. Over time, the team will form, members will relax, learn what is expected of them in terms of task, dress code, language, and behaviour, while processes become familiar and predictable, etc. During this period, leaders do well to provide the space for members to get to know each other, provide helpful direction and structure whilst calling out unhelpful behaviours such as sarcasm.

Storming
As people settle into the team they typically start to explore its purpose and what they are called to achieve together. The scope of the task facing the team and what may be required of them as individuals becomes clear and members feel more confident to state their case, test boundaries and risk being outspoken. Early decisions about how the team will run will suit some members more than others, key roles will be allocated and individual and comparative burdens will become clearer. There may be some competition for specific roles, jostling for position, displays of power and influence, etc. Decision-making processes will be decided and possible differences in value systems may emerge. This stage can be challenging for leaders who may face conflict, members withdrawing from or within the group, etc. It may be necessary to teach or coach team members skills, such as negotiation, conflict resolution, how to be thankful and give praise. Handled well, team members should start to take on responsibility, seek less direct leader support and rely more on each other.

Norming

Assuming that storming passes, disputes are resolved, agreements reached, and accommodations made; the team starts to settle down. Individuals come to accept their role and place in the team and relationships deepen between team members. Routines, such as how meetings are managed and decisions made, become familiar and those involved tend to relax. The leader's role usually shifts, with this stage involving less direction, but more encouragement of members. The leader is likely to give more feedback and support, laced with challenges designed to help individuals and the team to grow.

Performing

Achieving the task of the team becomes the focus of this stage. The team is productive and whilst there may be disagreements, these are managed through established processes, helped by good relationships between team members, including the team leader. At this point, the team is performing in a way that resembles a 'real team', defined as being 'Where members are equally committed to a common purpose, goals and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable' (Katzenback and Smith, 1992). Leadership of a performing team tends to be relatively easy but should not be neglected. Team leaders should be monitoring performance and relationships, seeking ways to fulfil team members needs and reinforce what is going well. This is a good time to conduct a team health check using, for example, the Team Framework as outlined in Section 6.

These four stages help a leader understand how a newly formed or recently disturbed team is developing and what they might do that would be helpful. A wise team leader allows the optimum amount of time for their team to pass through each stage. This, combined with well-considered and implemented action, should result in the journey to performing happening more quickly, and with little pain.

Adjourning

The fifth stage in the team life-cycle is adjourning, where a team ceases operating, as in the case of completing a building project or a youth camp ending. The adjourning stage is sometimes referred to as mourning, this recognising that leaders and team members often experience a sense of loss associated with letting go of what has become familiar and secure and the ending of quite close relationships. Rather than just ceasing activity and walking away, whenever a team is about to come to the end of its useful life, space should be given, and processes adopted that help this ending to be a good experience. Success should be celebrated, evaluation take place, and learning gathered and shared. Individuals should be reminded of what they contributed, and how this has been valued, in order that they can take this into their next role or team. As appropriate, arrangements made by team members to continue to meet should be supported. On a very practical point the end of the team should be clearly announced, and the team disbanded, team members prepared for the end, goodbyes said, and closure reached.
It should be appreciated that often, usually on a more modest scale, a leader inheriting an existing team may cause that team to form, storm, norm and perform, again.

Understanding where a team might be on their developmental journey can really help a leader ensure that their contributions and actions are helpful to the stage being experienced. It is encouraging to know that trickier stages such as 'storming' are a normal stage in the developmental life-cycle of a team, and something that all teams go through every time something changes. Further guidance on how a team leader, acting as a coach, can support and challenge their team can be found in our text Performance Coaching Skills for Social Work (Holroyd and Field, 2012).

Process Reviews

One important way in which teams can be helped to realise their full potential is to regularly review how they are working. When starting out as a team, the focus of collective effort is typically directed at tasks that fulfil the purpose of the team and what members are expected to achieve. Of equal, if not greater importance, is how team members work together, the structures, rules, processes, and relationships between them, as well as with the leader. One way of focussing attention on how a team works rather than what a team does or achieves, is to regularly and, if required, frequently review team processes and relationships, something which is covered in detail in Section 3.6.

Tips for Success

- When creating or inheriting a team, the basis for membership should be clarified and the risks to which this exposes the team assessed.
- Be prepared to challenge the basis of membership if this is inappropriate.
- Plan any additional support for the leader, individual members and the collective team as they approach and go through stages of the team life-cycle.
- Be prepared to flex your leadership style to each stage and develop an understanding of what works for individual team members.
- Undertake process reviews from the start of creating or inheriting a team so this becomes part of 'how things are done round here'.
- Be vigilant for early signs of difficulty, take care not to over-react but unafraid to have 'difficult conversations'.
- Use the Team Traffic Lights provided as Section 6 to help assess the health of the team, even when the team appears to be performing.

3.5   Successful Teams

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

Creating or inheriting an existing team is the starting point for team leadership and the beginning or at least the continuation of a journey to collective success, a success which involves more, much more than simply performing. In all but the most unusual circumstances, short and long-term performance or success are both desired, for which teams need to become and remain healthy. Tending to the way in which teams operate and the relationships between members is fundamental to becoming and remaining healthy. This is a constant process, for shifts in the operating environment, changed roles and tasks, members coming and going, constantly disturb the status quo, including tasks that need to be completed, the skills needed to discharge roles and responsibilities, team dynamics, etc.

This section offers different ways of looking at success and offers areas for team development.

Successful teams - Team Health

It is common for owners, Trustees, Board of Directors, etc. to want to know how successful their organisation is and, within this, which departments, sections and teams are performing well and not so well. We use the term 'success' deliberately, as it is helpfully vague and helps us avoid the common mistake of focussing just on performance. Yes, it is natural to want Churches and other Christian organisation to work well, to deliver against targets and ambitions, to be efficient, and economic. However, performing well is only one measure of a 'good' team, and equally important is being 'healthy'. It is dangerous to focus solely on performance without regard to the health of individuals and the collective team, as this risks over-extending staff and volunteers, weakening relationships and causing individual and collectively unwellness. There is also a risk that target performance levels might be set unrealistically high and lead to lower actual performance. Team leaders should avoid setting or simply accepting, unrealistic performance targets and constantly listen and look for early warning signs of impending problems for individuals or the team overall. Rarely, if ever, should short-term high performance be bought at the expense of long-term survival of a team and its individuals. In most cases, accepting slightly lower performance is much better than thrashing a team to the point it and its members break.

Curiously, whilst we often look at performance in terms of service or project delivery, we rarely focus on the team that delivers it, unless of course performance is poor. This is a strange oversight as teams are critical to organisational performance and while high levels of performance may appear to indicate a healthy team with good prospects, the actual position might be quite different. Momentum, lags in performance reporting and a lack of scrutiny may delay spotting of emerging problems in a team. Any team, however effective in the past, can quite quickly start to experience collective and individual 'health' problems due to changes in the environment, loss of a key member, unrealistically tough short-term targets, etc. For a while, the problem may be hidden with high performance levels maintained through, for example, team members working longer than contracted, missing holidays, neglecting their health, etc. Ideally, potential team health problems can be anticipated and avoided before they emerge, as, for example, with a team that due to a constitutional measure requiring a percentage of members step down each year, will lose key members. Similarly, team members age and the team may be faced with losing members through relocation, retirement, serious illness, and death.

We believe that any assessment of how good a team is should take into consideration both the health of the team and how well they perform.

A vigilant, effective leader intervenes quickly if team health or performance appears to start decline so that both can be maintained or improved. Left too long and the action needed will usually be more significant, difficult, and expensive than would have been the case with prompt action.

It is important to understand, monitor and intervene as necessary in both performance and health, and several ideas follow that can be of assistance: Performance Measures, Problems A and B, Overall Team Assessment, and Team Types. In Section 6, we offer a Team Health Framework that can be used by a leader and/or team members to assess and monitor how things are in their team.

Performance measures

The primary concern of leaders of commercial organisations is performance, often reduced to profit as a single measure. While profit may not be the focus of public sector and voluntary organisations, there is instead a concern that money is spent doing the right thing, that activities are efficient and that taxpayers, donors, and grant givers receive value for money. Public, private, and voluntary organisation normally have a stated purpose, a set of outcomes or objectives, a set of actions, and a plan. Each part of these organisations is set objectives and targets which, if met, will realise the overall purpose. To ensure this happens and prompt any necessary corrective action, progress against targets is periodically measured. The emphasis here is primarily whether the team is hitting required output, the quality is up to standard and within budget. Focussing only on performance, in particular financial performance, is risky as this may be achieved in the short term, while the whole organisation is about to come crashing down with teams running on fumes, members leaving or approaching burnout, corners being cut on health and safety, non-measured aspects of quality being sacrificed, etc.

Setting and managing performance in Churches is challenging, which is one reason why it is often neglected. Identifying a single overall measure of performance is difficult, misleading and may result in poor decision making and even worse, poor behaviour. For example, we frequently come across Church members who focus on Sunday attendance figures as a key performance measure, particularly that of their minister. Being a successful Church is much more than simply how many people turn up on a Sunday – for we know that some people turn up out of habit or for somewhere to go on a Sunday morning, others because they are on a rota, still others with the intention of being passive participants and the rest to fully engage. The Sunday attendance measure also ignores the other six days a week, non-service activity, community outreach, missionary support, etc.

Financial measures are not helpful either. Profit is not an acceptable performance measure for many Churches, even if the word 'surplus' is used to describe having more income than expenditure. Value for money may be helpful in terms of how cheaply energy, cleaning, communications, etc. are purchased. Likewise, unit costs can be informative, for example, a children's event that costs £500 where 100 children attend might be considered a good use of money, but if only 10 had attended, less so. However, this judgement will be influenced by our understanding of value which is related to what we are trying to achieve through the event – if it is just something for the children of Church members on a Saturday afternoon we might view this less favourably than if this was an outreach activity.

Although a single overarching measure of Church performance might not be helpful or even feasible, it is often possible to set measures at team level, for example;

- A Finance Committee that is required to report the financial position of a Church within two weeks of the quarter end, and offer advice and support.
- A Pastoral Support Team that is expected to respond quickly to requests for help, provide support, refer on appropriately, etc.
- A Worship Team that is charged with designing and delivering a pattern of services throughout the year, which includes two services each Sunday, one each Wednesday and an online 15 minute worship on weekdays, and at least 6 'special ad hoc services'.

Each of these examples includes elements of performance, some easily measurable such as delivering finance reports within two weeks, or a certain number of services per annum. Response times can be measured but to do so 'quickly' is not a helpful target. All these examples involve a quality judgement which is difficult to measure but should nonetheless be considered. Delivering a programme of services is one thing, but how good the services are and who makes this judgement, is interesting.

Given the challenges involved, it is easy to see why Church teams struggle with performance management, but the risks of not doing so are very significant. Failing to be clear about purpose and the means of fulfilling this, coupled with not knowing how well individuals and teams are doing and failing to hold them to account is a recipe for drifting, for achieving less than is possible, and poor use of the gifts given to us. Leaders have a responsibility to be good stewards, yet often fail to be so when leading teams.

One of the fears that people often express about performance is that it will be based on a set of incomplete measures, used in isolation by people who do not understand the context. A balance is needed here – any measures used should be interpreted and discussed, with the intent of jointly understanding what is happening or had happened, why and what can be learnt. Performance conversations should feature a mix of support and challenge, the former to recognise that the work undertaken by teams is frequently challenging, that people are normally trying to give of their best, that those involved have personal lives and, often, work lives. However, overly supportive conversations accompanied by 'premature forgiveness and compassion', can lead to opportunities to do better being missed. Those involved need to be prepared to 'go there' to explore common reasons offered for non-performance such as:

- 'Maybe we got the original purpose wrong – perhaps we failed to discern what God wants'
- 'Drifting from targets is OK, because we are being responsive to what we believe God now wants'
- 'We must not be too tough on staff and volunteers, some of whom may be experiencing personal challenges at present'

Being responsive to God and compassionate to staff and volunteers are of course justifiable reasons for not achieving planned goals and a good conversation will help ensure these are reasons rather than vague excuses. There are other reasons for non-achievement, that should be explored as necessary, such as a poor focus, lack of agreement, low drive, inadequate skills and even disobedience. Among many other qualities, Church leaders need to be strong, and all too often there is an unwillingness to have conversations, labelled variously as difficult, challenging, or courageous. This failure can result in issues not being dealt with or hidden, ignored, or 'tolerated'. A healthy team has an environment that feels safe, where 'proper conversations' are held when needed, ones that feature challenge and support. The leader, supported by team members is willing to make and implement decisions that may be difficult and potentially unpopular, recognising that one poor decision or one underperforming person can derail or delay progress for a Church.

This is not to argue for an inherently 'harder' form of leadership, but for leaders that are willing to make difficult decisions when called. Compassion is not exercised by ignoring a problem, after all poor performance can stem from too great a workload, a lack of developed competence, a lack of confidence, poor leadership of a person, etc. Compassion is exercised through productive conversation, investigation, maybe helping one or more team members with appropriate skills development, supervision, etc. Yes, sometimes a person needs to be relieved of their responsibilities and that should be done and with compassion. There may need to be a severance package for paid staff and the equivalent for volunteers. Every attempt should be made to create decent endings for all individuals, team, and wider church family, recognising the possibility that the person may wish to remain in the congregation.

Indeed, in our experience the single biggest mistake that Christian leaders make is failing to act soon enough. Compassionate faithful leadership in a Christian context demands that difficulties and problems are addressed and not ignored for another day, hoping they will go away. The damage caused to individuals , teams and congregations by not dealing with issues earlier always means that the consequences, difficulties and problems become more severe. We cannot say it strongly enough but good Christian leadership exercised in a Godly manner involves facing up to problems and managing them. Ignoring the issues simply leads to more pain and hurt in the long term.

Just because a collection of well-motivated, faith-sharing people come together, with a sense of purpose and appear to work hard does not guarantee high performance in the short or indeed long term.

Acid Test – Problems A and B

A quick and simple 'acid' test that can be applied to any team is to look at where collective energy is spent. Dr Kirton, originator of adaptor/innovator theory (KAI Centre, 2021), identified two main challenges that face teams, which he labelled Problem A and Problem B. The former concerns fulfilling the purpose of the team, and the latter, Problem B, how to work with each other. Dr Kirton recognised that when people work in teams there will be a level of diversity which can be invaluable when solving Problem A. The price for this diversity and potentially better solving may be paid in difficulties team members have in working well together (Problem B). When we choose to work with others to achieve something, we accept both problems A and B. If, other than very occasionally, a team spends more time and energy on Problem B, something is wrong and the team may be ineffective, if not dysfunctional.

In Churches and other Christian organisations, performance and particularly financial performance is often of relatively little interest to stakeholders, at least until the existence of an organisation is threatened. However, we believe more considered interest should be paid to performance within Churches, not so much so that it dominates, but that along with team health, is part of how the success of a team is assessed.

One approach to looking at success is a Performance and Working Well Together Assessment. This holistic approach results in a four box model as shown at Figure 5.

Box A – Turf Warfare
Tension
Conflicting priorities
Lack of ownership
"Turf warfare"
Broken promises

Box D – Ideal Balance
Shared vision
Negotiated objectives
Clear rules of engagement
Agreed ways of working
'Contractual' relationships
Mutual accountability

Performance

Working Well Together

Box B – Theatre
Glossy documents
Meetings

Box C – Respite
Networking
Shared learning
Shared culture
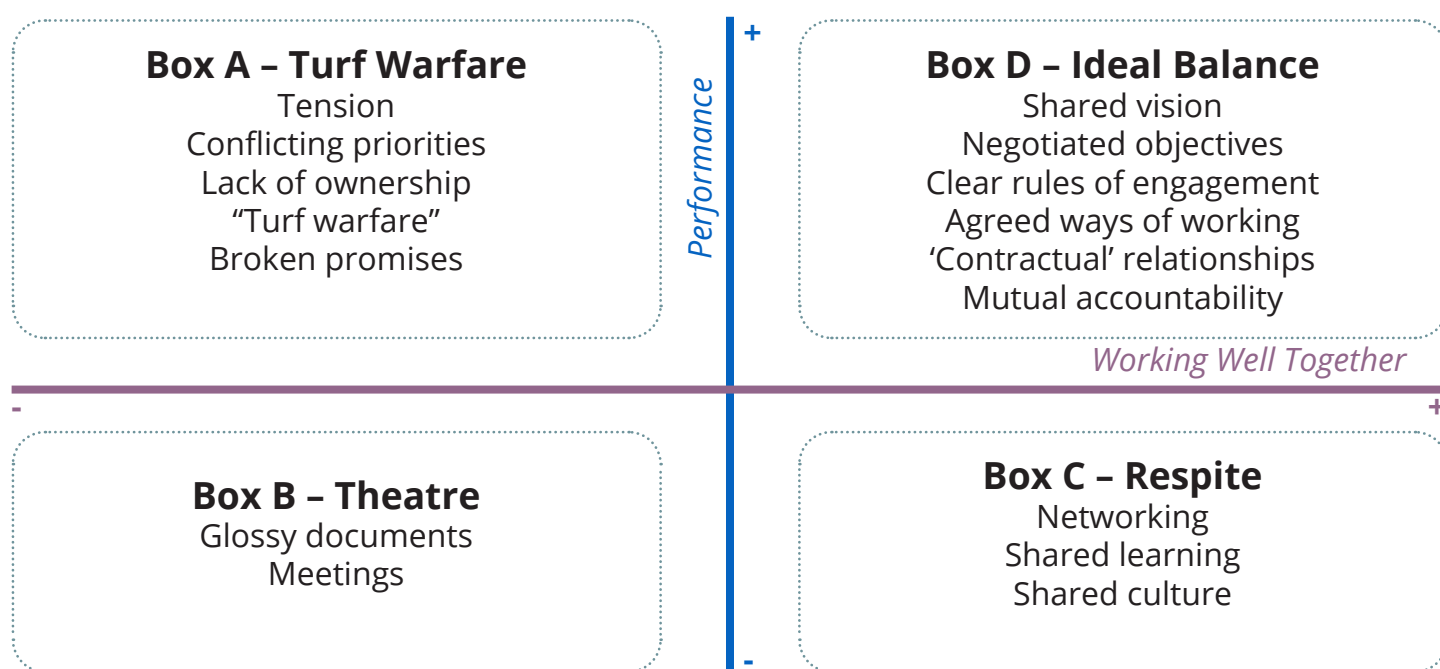
Figure 5 Performance and Working Well Together Grid

On the vertical axis is performance in terms of meeting targets and completing tasks, the judgement about which is easier where tasks are discrete and time-limited, such as a building refurbishment project, for which there is a brief, a timescale and budget. For permanent teams, such as a leadership team, establishing task success can be more difficult; necessitating targets, outputs, or objectives so that achievement can be ascertained.

The horizontal axis, which concerns how well team members work together, comprises two sub-dimensions; processes and relationships. For a team to work well, at least in anything other than the very short term, a framework of rules and processes is needed, governing and providing sufficient structure for the team to operate, such as frequency and conduct of meetings, how decisions are made and what happens in the event of a disagreement. Such a framework works best when team members get along, where there is transparency and honesty, where conflict is viewed as potentially productive, etc.

Box A describes a team that is, for now, performing but the team is not working particularly well. Occupation of this box is not unusual in the early days of a project when conversations tend to be divergent and tentative, the level of commitment needed is unclear, as are the personal costs and benefits for each team member. It is possible for members to hold different understandings about what is involved, what will happen, etc. At some point, however, clarity about what this project will achieve, total cost, how much effort is required from, and benefit will accrue to, each person emerges, which may lead to envy, disappointment, and disagreement. Without an effective framework to deal with problems or well developed relationships, early task progress

may give way to 'turf wars', which are difficult to resolve. In terms of a team life-cycle, this often coincides with the stages of forming and storming as described in Section 3.4.

Teams in Box B do not perform well and are unhealthy, with few established helpful processes and underdeveloped, or poor, relationships. Being in this box is usually a waste of time, unless it is a necessary phase the team is going through. This can arise when forming and storming phases of team development continue for too long or when someone in higher authority insists a team should be in place, despite team members not understanding why. In this case, members may do the minimum required to keep a more senior manager happy such as holding occasional meetings, producing required plans and reports and, if inspected, put in a persuasive performance - a little bit of theatre!

Teams in Box C achieve little in respect of their task, but members find it easy to be together and relationships are good. Sometimes these teams are a remnant of a defunct project team, action learning set etc, whose members choose to continue to meet for mutual support and respite from day-to-day work.

Box D is considered the ideal box for a team to occupy, performance is good and the team works well, using following established rules and processes, all of which is underpinned by good working relationships. Table 8 elaborates on the characteristics of effective arrangements and relationships.

Characteristics of effective arrangements	Characteristics of effective relationships
A clear purpose with stated outcomes and outputs	High levels of trust
Team members know what to do	Honest and constructive feedback
The decision-making process is clear as is conflict resolution	Offers to help each other borne out of care not expectation of reciprocity
Communication processes are clear and effective	Good humour
There is a project or workplan with milestones	Presence of support and challenge
Norms of language, behaviour and dress are understood	Clear sense of shared responsibility
Process reviews are embedded	If something does not go as hoped the first instinct is to seek to learn not to blame

Table 8 Characteristics of a team where members work well together

If a team occupying Box D hits a problem which is not covered by existing organisational rules or processes, the strength of its relationships should enable resolution. Similarly, if relationships are rather weak, such as can happen temporarily when a key team member is replaced, existing rules or process should provide a route map to resolution. If neither is sufficiently strong, there is a risk the team may move to Box A and, unless action is taken, then to Box B.

Established teams should, as a matter of course, regularly review how they work together, and newly-formed teams should invest in looking at how they will work together before they start tackling tasks. If processes and relationships are not developed early either, or both, will eventually need sorting, but typically at a time and in a place determined by an incident.... and

this is rarely convenient, ideal, or easy. Far better for processes and team relationships to be developed without the conflict, tension and personal stakes that often develop when dealing with a task problem. Ideally, members 'kick off their shoes over a coffee', create effective processes and develop good relationships. This also applies if there is a subsequent problem with a process or a relationship.

Working Group, Potential, Real and High Performing Teams

Another way of looking at teams is offered by Katzenbach and Smith (1992) who, linking effectiveness and performance impact, suggest that when people work together they can be considered to be either a working group or one of four types of team, pseudo, potential, real and high performance.

Where team leadership, relationships and/or the operating framework are poor the performance of a team comprising five people could be lower than would result if they operated as individuals in a group. It is possible for a team to achieve less than the sum of its parts, which can also occur when leadership is practised in a situation where group management is more appropriate, something which Katzenbach refers to as a 'pseudo' team.

Assuming a team approach is appropriate and there is some investment in developing working processes and relationships, it should be relatively easy to achieve a level of performance somewhat greater than if people were organised as a group rather than a team. For many teams, the level of performance achieved is greater than the sum of the parts but with considerable 'potential' for this to be greater.

With investment, support and challenge, teams can realise their potential - something which Katzenbach and Smith (1992) label a real team, which they define as being
'Where members are equally committed to a common purpose, goals and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable'.

For many teams, achieving the status of real team is the goal, the pinnacle of success, but Katzenbach and Smith (1992) suggest there is another level of performance referred to as 'high performing'. This is not to be confused with how the term high performing is often used elsewhere to generally label teams that in normal times are working very well.

Katzenbach and Smith (1992) recognise that occasionally a team finds itself in a situation which is unexpected, unusual, and calls for extraordinary performance. Such a situation typically threatens an organisation or is such a significant opportunity that, if grasped, might change its destiny. Typically, the situation requires several people within an organisation to drop everything and tackle the matter in hand. These individuals may already operate as a team, perhaps one already operating at a 'real' level, or to be brought together to respond collectively to a critical event. Katzenbach and Smith (1992) define a high performing team as being
'A real team whose level of commitment to its purpose and goals exceed those of all other like groups and whose members are also committed to one another as individuals'.

High performing teams are not common and typically characterised by high levels of energy and trust between members, a willingness to work very long hours for each other and for the cause. Often there are high levels of care for each other, shared food, humour, a sense of camaraderie and 'us against them, or it'. The emergence of Covid-19 early in 2020 challenged teams in organisations across the land to respond quickly to a novel, complicated, serious event for which very few were prepared. Existing teams, crisis teams, teams in newly-formed community

organisations all faced the challenge of performing, many did so as a real team, and anecdotally at least, some were 'high performing'.

Covid 19 is probably the best example of an environmental event spawning high performing teams since World War 2. Not all such events, however, are so serious or widespread, as outlined below which occurred in a relatively small Church in 2017.

Example

It is Friday lunchtime, four weeks before Christmas in a Church complex which hosts a thriving preschool. The Church is running well, under the leadership of a recently appointed Priest, two new Churchwardens and a Deputy Warden. Thoughts were turning to planning Christmas services and activities and one of the Churchwardens was on holiday on the other side of the world. In a single conversation that Friday everything changed, as a visiting gas engineer broke the news that he had detected a gas leak and had no option other than to immediately terminate the gas supply with the consequent loss of all heating and hot water. There was no contingency plan to cover the loss of gas supply. The remaining Churchwarden immediately;

- *Talked to the manager of the pre-school regarding heating arrangements for the rest of the day and to discuss what might happen next week*
- *Notified the Priest so that she was aware and could consider arrangements for worship on Sunday and reach out to other Churches for portable heaters etc*
- *Notified members of the Parochial Church Council, which manages the Church and has legal responsibility*

At this stage, the incident was handled by three people: the Priest, Churchwarden and Pre-School Manager, tackling two main problems: how to keep the building warm and safe while finding an appropriately certified gas engineer to find and fix the leak.
However, on Monday the crisis worsened as emergency electric heaters overloaded the electrical system and blew the master fuse. While replacing the fuse, an electrician recommended that the electrical system be checked and a strict limit on the use of the existing system.
With no gas supply and limited electric, the Priest, Churchwarden, Deputy Warden, and the Manager of the Preschool in effect became a 'crisis team', facing a significant challenge for which there was no plan or prior relevant experience.

(Continued)

The challenge comprised several inter-related problems, all of which demanded attention at the same time, including:

- *Securing the use of a commercial space heater, fuelled by gas cannisters which were heavy and needed to be moved to different parts of the building depending on activities.*
- *Maintaining safe operation of space heaters when children were present which involved temporary minor building adaptions, training a small number of people to operate heaters prior to building hirers arriving, periodically boosting the heat, and moving this equipment about the building.*
- *Securing gas cannisters on a just-in-time basis as there was very limited safe storage.*
- *Finding at least 3 electricians to quote for completing an electrical survey, which later concluded a full re-wire was necessary.*
- *Securing a gas engineer who was sufficiently qualified to work on non-domestic installations.*
- *Gaining Diocesan approval for permission to re-wire the property.*

This work could not be done sequentially, nor was there time for lots of endless meetings. Team members did not wait to be asked to perform tasks but anticipated what was needed and simply got on with them. There was no checking of what each person was doing, no one interfered, but each person knew they could ask for help as needed. This was made easier because existing governance arrangements were clear and robust, the individuals involved were equally committed to the task and already had a good working relationship, which developed further while dealing with the crisis.

The Church survived, services went ahead, the Preschool and other hirers continued to use the premises uninterrupted. The gas leak was located and fixed over Christmas and the following year the building was rewired, emergency lighting was introduced along with a fire detection and alarm system.

Team Development and Support

Whichever model is used to look at team effectiveness, this should involve consideration of how those involved can be developed and supported. As a starting point we suggest using Figure 6, which builds on the Performance and Working Well Together Grid, which was introduced in Figure 5, to plan team and individual development and support. This generally falls into two main areas; team performance and team health.

Box A – Danger Zone
High performance – poor health
Maybe perform in short term BUT highly likely to run into significant problems, ultimately leading to poor performance, stress and burnout
Action: Improve health

Box D – Ideal Balance
High performance – good health
This is the ideal and likely to lead to sustained performance and health
Action: Continue health and performance monitoring

Performance

Working Well Together

Box B – Poor team
Low performance – poor health
This team achieves little and if called on in a crisis may not be able to respond effectively
Action: Improve health and performance.

Box C – Prepared
Low performance – good health
This team is ready to perform
Action: Improve performance

Figure 5 Performance and Working Well Together Grid

Improving performance

For teams identifying as being in Boxes B or C there is a need to develop the capacity of the team to perform. We suggest a skills audit be completed, the outcome of which is matched to the purpose and current/future activities of the team. The development needed might be common to all team members, such as how to participate productively in a brainstorming session or specific to one person such as how to manage a budget, or project manage.

Improving health

For teams identified as being in Boxes A and B, there is a need to work on aspects of operation concerning working well together. What is specifically needed can be determined by reviewing the framework of rules and processes the team uses to operate, such as vision, role clarity, decision-making rules, expected behaviours, etc., and looking at the nature and quality of relationships within the team. Depending on this analysis and other factors, it might be necessary for some of the development and support to be offered to individuals, perhaps training, more likely coaching or mentoring, possibly within the context of supervision. In a few situations it might be appropriate for an individual to see a psychotherapist, as for them a better understanding of their inner world would be invaluable.

Improving both performance and health

Teams located in Box B need to develop their ability to perform and work well together, and it is worth considering using a facilitator with expertise in working with performing organisations, who can also shape process, challenge, and influence behaviour. This integrated approach to development can be very powerful.

Maintaining performance and health

While teams in Box D might look as though they have no need for development, this is rarely the case. It is very easy to slip out of Box D due to shifts in the operating environment or changes in membership, for example. However, actions in response may be different, e.g., refreshing learning through reflection during/on meetings, deep dive reviews of a project, Lunch and Learn occasions, and supervision.

Forms of development

Our beliefs about development and support, together with exploration of the many forms this can take are included in our text 'Guidance in preventing Burnout and Stress in Churches and Christian–based Organisations, (Brown, K, Edmunds, B, Field, R 2020)

Our experience of working with teams is that face-to-face courses, online learning, mentoring and facilitated team projects, e.g. producing a business case, can be very effective forms of task focussed development.

When developing the capacity to work together, face-to-face, online learning and coaching can help develop general understanding. However, other forms of development are often more effective, such as coaching or where a skilled learning development facilitator works with a team on a real issue in a way that causes the team to also focus on team processes, relationships and behaviours. Individual and team coaching should also be considered, as outlined in our text Performance Coaching Skills for Social Work (Holyroyd and Field,2012)

Tips for Success

- Do not just assume a team is working, even if members appear focussed and get along
- Establish, agree, and communicate appropriate performance measures
- Regularly monitor and discuss performance against goals and targets
- Check each person knows why they are in the team and what is expected of them
- Look for evidence of a vision that is shared and that each person understands what they and the team is expected to achieve
- Check to ensure that there is clarity about key processes such as decision making, conflict management, grievance resolution
- Review behaviours and relationships within the team through observation, process reviews and one-to-one conversations
- Get to know your team as individuals – be alert to the presence of stress indicators
- Check the balance, and fitness of the team for the current and future role
- Be prepared to act early if there is a problem.

3.6   Resolving team difficulties

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

Teams, however successful in the past or now, will occasionally experience difficulties. Spotted early and dealt with appropriately, many of these can be resolved with relatively minor action, normally taken by their leader. A few difficulties might be more novel, challenging, or difficult and would benefit from the attention of a human resource or leadership development specialist. Occasionally, underpinning a difficulty, is something more complicated and deeper where those involved might benefit from the help of a counsellor or psychotherapist.

This section explores ways in which a leader might understand better what is going on in their team, so as to identify options for acting.

Introduction

If the size of a team, the extent of diversity and capacity match the challenge they face, its members are individually and collectively performing well and processes and relationships are good, the chance of serious difficulties will be low. However, a change in personnel, an act of poor leadership, a shift in the environment or similar can weaken the health of a team and sow the seeds of difficulty.

A team starting to experience difficulty can often be helped by a team leader acting early with relatively simple and sensitive action. Many problems can be expressed as a gap between what is happening and what needs to happen, bridgeable in many cases by an effective team leader. Other problems, due to the size of the gap, cause and associated complexity might benefit from the applied wisdom of someone experienced in human resource management, leadership or organisation development. In a small number of more serious and tricky situations the deeper knowledge and skills of a psychotherapist might be merited.

The rest of this section includes ideas or tools that can be of great help to team leaders who find themselves asking questions such as:

* Why do my team appear to be struggling to work together?
* Something appears to be going on beneath the surface of this meeting – what is it?
* Why are some team members less engaged than I would want?
* Why are one or two people reacting badly to a recent decision or event?

The following ideas and tools can be used by leaders to good effect, even with only a basic understanding. Leadership development specialists might use these rather more deeply, alongside other tools with which they are familiar. Occasionally, simple questions are more complex than first thought and need the much deeper knowledge of human behaviour that comes with training as a psychotherapist.

Task, Process and Self Directed Contributions
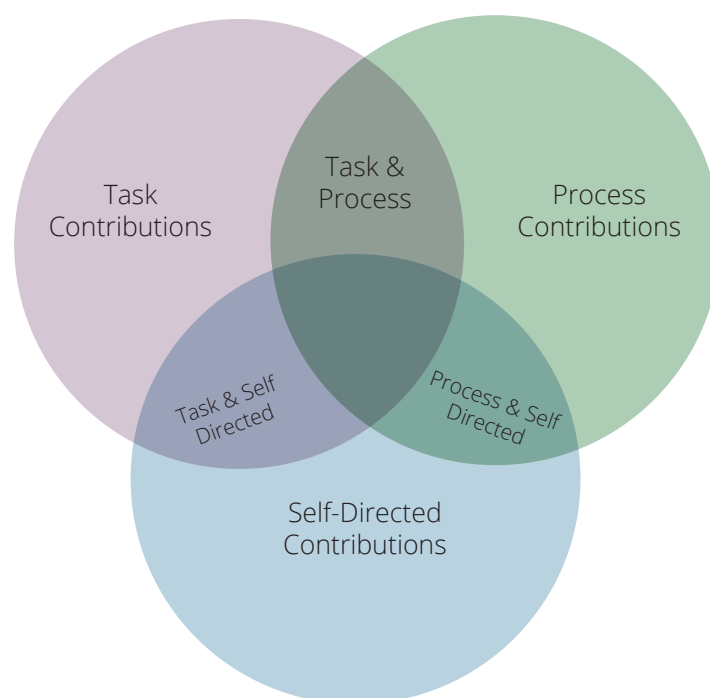
Figure 7 Task, Process and Self Directed Contributions

In our experience, looking at the types of contribution made by individual team members and the pattern of contributions across a team can bring many insights. There are a number of models available, of which we routinely use Task, Process and Self-Directed Behaviour, adapted from the work of Benne and Sheats, back in the 1940s (Benne and Sheats). Over the years this work has been amended and extended by various writers. The original theory identified three clusters of roles that can be observed in teams, – task, personal (or social) roles and dysfunctional (and/or individualistic) roles. We prefer to use the term contribution rather than role and to label the clusters as task, process, and self-directed.

Task contributions directly address the task in hand; for example, questions that seek information such as 'Does anyone know what happened last evening……? or summarise the current position, for example, 'So we know that the side door was not locked, and a member of the public was found in the building after closing time'. Table 9 includes nine task behaviours which can routinely be observed.

Process contributions help the team function, such as 'Tony, what do you think we might do?' which is an example of gatekeeping, where one person tries to bring another into the conversation. Another example, this time of seeking agreement, is 'Do we think we are at a point where we can make a decision?' Table 9 includes seven process behaviours which we routinely look for in a healthy team.

Observed Behaviour	Person A	Person B	Person C	etc.
Task				
Initiating				
Information Seeking				
Information Giving				
Opinion Seeking				
Opinion Giving				
Elaborating				
Evaluating				
Energising				
Recording				
Process				
Encouraging				
Harmonizing				
Compromising				
Gatekeeping				
Expediter				
Observer				
Follower				

Table 9. Task and Process Contribution Map

A third type of contribution is self-directed, one which rarely helps other individuals or the team. Such contributions can be intentional and made for a specific reason or simply be how a person normally operates. Self-directed behaviour can arise for reasons such as a special interest in the matter to be discussed or a wish to disrupt team progress on this and/or other issues. Self-directed contributions may need to be tackled if a team is to be effective, for example where someone:

- Draws attention to themself, by making humorous asides, story-telling, etc.
- Builds themselves up, for example through inappropriately sharing achievements, stories, name-dropping, etc.
- Diverts attention from the task in hand through making overly long contributions, sharing anecdotes, and wandering off the topic in hand to 'sniff the flowers'.

- Builds power and influence through consequence stating, expressing strong views, picking apart contributions made by others, sarcasm, aggressive and passive-aggressive contributions, etc.

As Figure 7 shows, a single contribution may combine two or more types of contribution, such as of task and process, which is fine. Often, contributions are made without deliberate intention, a team member simply says what occurs to them, this typically reflecting a natural preference for tackling tasks or caring for others and relationships. Depending on team composition, if everyone behaves naturally, there could be an undue focus on, or neglect of, task or process. Whilst a lack of balance may be avoided during team selection, this can also be remedied by a team leader or team members choosing to make 'missing' contributions associated with tackling a task or maintaining process.

Depending on how a meeting or conversation is going and the nature of contributions, the leader may need to act, perhaps by offering feedback after a meeting, prompting a process review or calling out unhelpful behaviour as it happens.

In our experience, evident self-directed behaviour that adversely affects team function to a significant extent, is relatively rare. Managing this behaviour requires care due to its personal nature; it is not something a leader should be looking for, but something to which they should be alert and respond if this proves problematic.

It is helpful for team leaders to understand task and process contributions, so that they may flex their own behaviour and/or adopt processes to improve team functioning. Alternatively, especially when the task focus of a meeting requires the full attention of the leader, they should consider:

- Engaging a facilitator to observe how the team is working and intervene to stimulate task or process contributions, as appropriate. Whilst this person could be engaged to facilitate all meetings, it would be better to employ them to lead a meeting where knowledge of these behaviours is discussed, or where a difficult topic is to be discussed.
- Engaging an observer to prepare a Contribution Map, such as that shown in Table 9, in which a column is reserved for each team member and a row for each type of contribution. As the meeting progresses, a tick is given for each contribution, who made it and the type of contribution. This completed grid shows how much attention is paid to task and process across a team and who typically contributes more of one type than another. In our experience, many teams are 'high task and low process', particularly when under pressure, with relatively few people doing most of the heavy lifting regarding process.

Ideally, all team members should have some understanding of task and process, partly to cover for the absence of a person who typically makes a particular type of contribution, to share the facilitation load and minimise the risk of unhelpful contributions.

It should be noted that contributions are not limited to what someone says or how they say it. Facial expressions and body language, more widely, can be a significant factor, particularly with self-directed behaviour. Many a meeting has been affected by something as simple as a quizzical look or rolled eyeballs.

Psychological Contract

When appointed to a job, employees are normally given a written contract that sets out the basis of their employment such as job title, pay, annual leave, pension, etc. Likewise, volunteers may receive a Volunteer Agreement that details what the role entails, supervision arrangement, training and support, health and safety, insurance, and expenses.

In a Church context, whilst many people undertake tasks and roles without pay, they don't seem to be regarded or treated, as traditional volunteers. Members of a choir, Sunday School/children's team leaders, the Treasurer, brass cleaners, those who set up and clear after services, etc. usually do so without any written agreement; at best they may be given a list of tasks and instructions.

Irrespective of written contracts of employment, volunteer agreements and the like, people within an organisation are significantly influenced and affected by what is in effect a 'psychological contract'. The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development suggests that this 'refers to individual's expectations, beliefs, ambitions and obligations, as perceived by the employer and the worker' (CIPD, 2021)

Within all organisations, there are unwritten rules, expectations, practices, habits, benefits, stories, symbols etc., that guide, reassure, and give sense to what those involved may experience. These might include:

- Being allowed to have as many cups of coffee as desired when on duty
- Holding keys for easy access to the building
- Being allowed to park anywhere in the car park
- Dress code which might range from a uniform through to whatever you like
- Being able to work the same shift as a friend
- Being able to carry over unused holiday at the end of the year

Psychological contracts are unwritten, may vary to an extent person to person, and be held unconsciously – they are part of 'how we do things round here'.

However, a team leader, making a seemingly innocuous change to future operations can seriously and suddenly affect how one or more individuals feel within a team. Changing the start time of a Church service by as little as 30 minutes, deciding to reduce the number of services every Sunday, introducing a new order of service, ceasing after-service coffee, can cause staff, volunteers and congregation members, to react disproportionately, as it seems to others – the root cause being a change in the psychological contract.

The idea of a psychological contract applies at team level as well as corporately. If a team member is asked 'what is it like to be in your team and why do you stay?', they might give a response such as 'I stay within the team because there are not too many meetings, we only organise 3 events a year and we have a lot of fun. Meetings are short, someone always brings cake and at Christmas we all go out for a meal. The rest of the organisation leaves us alone and listens to our views. We make a little money which previous Priests have allowed us to spend, providing it benefits the Church'.

If a leader does not understand the psychological contract of their team, they soon will, if they start making changes, for example, increasing events to five a year without consultation or decreeing all income collected must go into general funds. The leader may experience resistance to proposed changes, by individuals or possibly an orchestrated collective response. This is not

to say that change should not be considered, just that it is important to recognise the potential impact on the psychological contract. Volunteering can be quite fragile, after all with no financial incentive why do people volunteer? What motivates them to join, to continue? For some people it is because they feel called, but often it will be down to aspects of the psychological contract, consideration of which should feed into change planning and communication.

Process Reviews

One excellent way of assisting the development of effective team processes and building relationships is to review how 'things are going'. The temptation for many teams is to focus on the task as in for example, 'planning services and other activities over the Christmas period' – yes we have dates and times, yes we know who is leading, yes we have decided how to communicate these to the congregation and beyond, etc. However, are people happy with the outcome? Do they feel they have been able to participate? Have they been offended by something someone has said? Was anyone bored or wished they had not attended? Is anyone crying internally, etc. All of this is possible; even in a Christian team, irrespective of the task outcome.

A process review is a created opportunity to explore how a meeting, activity or other event has gone in terms of task (e.g., problem definition and exploration, data and view gathering, generation and evaluation of options, decision making and action planning), and how the team worked (e.g., level of engagement, quality of interaction, behaviours, etc.) Typically, a review will include simple questions such as:

- Did you feel that you were able to contribute to the discussion tonight?
- Did you feel that you were heard, and your contribution valued?
- Was sufficient opportunity given to be creative, to look at other opportunities?

The answers to questions such as these often prompt further questions. For example, a person who says they felt unable to contribute might be asked 'Is there anything we can do to help you contribute more freely in future'? Assuming there is action to help this person, it follows that during the next review they should be asked whether they found it easier to contribute, if not, what else could be done, and so on.

Asking a reasonably open question often triggers people to share other thoughts such as 'I am not sure why we met tonight, because I felt decisions had already been made about the Christmas programme'. While reviews can be uncomfortable events, they can be highly valuable and a great source of learning. A leader who presents a 'draft' Christmas plan at the beginning of the meeting to 'help proceedings' may do so with the best of intentions, yet team members might view this as a done deal. With this knowledge, the leader might be more careful in future about how they present a 'draft' and how they 'deal with' suggestions or challenges. Unfortunately, in our experience most teams seemingly prefer to crack on with the task in hand and deal with process and relationship problems as they arise. The lack of process reviews appears to be due to a natural pull to get the job in hand done, time pressure, reluctance to be open, and a fear of criticism, conflict and difficult conversations. Failing to review processes may cause teams to experience recurring problems with how they work, contributions from team members being weaker, poor morale, etc.

We advocate the use of process reviews, when
- New teams are going through the early stages of development, as outlined earlier in Section 3.4. As 'problems' emerge they can often be rectified quickly which is far better than letting them fester and become part of 'how we do things (poorly) round here.'

- A particular incident is experienced, perhaps something going well or when there has been, or is, a problem.
- A team is about to cease or the composition is about to change significantly, so that learning from how individuals work together is carried into future roles and collaborations. This is also an invaluable way of helping people acknowledge what has been achieved and move on.

Depending on circumstances, process reviews can be conducted:

- Some time after an event, with sufficient time given for individual reflection before a whole team discussion.
- At the end of an event, meeting, or activity, when details are fresh in the mind and participants have not had much of a chance to edit what they want to say. Emotions can run high during meetings and, given time, team members may filter these out from contributions they make. So, for example, an immediate response might be 'As usual everyone talked at once, I couldn't make the point I wanted to, and what I did say was not listened to – I really cannot see the point of giving up my time to attend this meeting when my contribution is clearly not valued'. Later this becomes 'It would be really good if we all had a chance to speak and that people listened to each other'. Both versions might lead to leadership action, but the first response is more impactful as it indicates that this problem is serious, not an isolated example, and causes frustration and negative feelings for the person concerned.
- During a meeting or an event, either at a predetermined point in proceedings or whenever anyone feels that this might be helpful. Ideally a process review can be initiated by anyone in a team, not just the team leader.

Process reviews can be done in many ways. However and whenever this takes place and whoever does it, it should fit the context and be authentic. For some teams it is better to keep the review very simple, for example asking the team at the end of a meeting – How do you think this meeting has gone? What might I/we have done to make this meeting more effective? Simple questions to which anyone can respond, are less challenging for individuals and normally work with any team. A more challenging approach is to ask individuals in turn to share their perceptions of how things are going, what might help them personally to contribute well, and how they think the wider team might become even more effective. Providing this fits the climate of the team and is managed well, this should yield better outcomes.

Once a team becomes comfortable with this approach, the next step might be to consider starting each meeting with a time-limited 'check in', where members share as much as they wish, about how they feel at this point, their thoughts about the imminent meeting and whether there is anything they would like others to know before the meeting starts. This can be productive but only if team members feel comfortable with this approach, if not some may refuse to engage with this process, others might be very guarded and a few might treat this as an opportunity for comedy. A natural extension to this approach is to add a short period of 'checking out' at the end of meetings, again giving people a chance to share how they are feeling at this point. There is a risk though that a problem emerges that demands deeper attention and time to complete, which can be difficult if it lengthens the meeting and team members are keen to escape the room. There is also a risk that team members engage with this process at a very superficial level in which case it is unlikely to serve a purpose. A possible way forward is to consider, when next using a facilitator or trainer to ask them to incorporate checking in and out as an experiment or the first stage of introducing this as a standard way you run meetings.

Giving and receiving feedback

One of the main means by which individuals develop, and relationships blossom, is through the giving and receiving of feedback. Feedback is information that one person gives to another about the impact of their actions or behaviour. This feedback may be intended to recognise and reinforce positive behaviour or to surface unhelpful actions and behaviours in the hope this will cease or improve. Feedback may also be given as a developmental 'gift', to help someone become aware of and value a part of themselves.

In our experience, many people shy away from feedback conversations, concerned about how the intended recipient will react, what they may say in response and where the conversation may go from there. Often those choosing to say nothing, nonetheless, give feedback through tone, facial expression, and body language. Many give incongruent and confusing messages to recipients who may hear something which is contradicted or at odds with how the giver seems to be. No more helpful is the person who deploys a 'poker face' or a potential feedback giver who just presents as distant, distracted, or unhappy.

In a healthy team, there is a willingness to both give and receive feedback between members including the leader. Feedback, which is a means of development and personal growth, should come from a genuine concern to help the other person realise their full potential. This feedback can be quite personal, sensitive and based on a personal view more than fact. It is helpful to think of this as an 'offer' or 'gift', not something which you have the right to impose, or the recipient must accept. As a gift, the intended recipient can decline to accept your offer, fail to unwrap it, or have a quick look at it and then disregard it. It is also possible to return the gift of feedback to the sender or to offer a gift in return, although this rarely goes well.

There are, of course, risks when giving feedback, including that the recipient reacts in a way that you did not expect nor want. This can occur, for example, because this is the first time anyone has given them this specific feedback, for example that they are presenting as someone who is overly assertive or aggressive when they believe that they always listen, compromise and are gentle – this can be quite a shock to the system. Alternatively, maybe this is the umpteenth time the person is receiving this feedback, which may be dispiriting, especially if they have been working on this aspect of themselves. While we cannot be responsible for how a person reacts, we should take responsibility for what we say and how we give feedback. It is a wise person that stops for a second before generously offering feedback, to ask the question, 'To what extent is my feedback a reflection of my own preferences and am I am being fair?' This is not to dissuade anyone from giving feedback, but a person who is overly concerned about punctuality may be unduly critical of someone who they experience as late, even when there might be good reason and the 'offence' is minor in duration.

The way in which feedback should be given varies with context, culture, and personal preference. In our experience, feedback tends to be more effective when it is simple and the initial part of the conversation is planned, so that the full message is 'out there'. One popular model, which is quite well known but the origins of which are unclear, is AID, where each letter indicates a stage in a feedback conversation. Sometimes, AID constitutes the whole conversation: more often it is just the opening phase of a longer one.
AID, comprises the following three stages - :

A – Action.
The first stage is to describe the action about which you wish to give feedback, for example, 'I notice that you arrived to lead Book Club with little time to spare and then demanded that other people in the hall drop what they were doing to set out tables and make coffee'.

I – Impact.
This is a statement of who was affected by the 'Action' and how, such as 'Your late arrival caused several Book Club members to wonder if the meeting was still going ahead and the way in which you made demands of other people in the hall, upset two people' .

D – Desired future behaviour.
This is a statement of how you wish things to be going forward such as 'In future it would be helpful if you were to arrive in sufficient time for you to set up the hall, prepare coffee, and be ready for when people arrive'.

In practice, AID often leads to an exploratory and wider conversation. In this example, the person receiving the feedback may:

- Offer reasons for their behaviour - 'The cat was ill this morning and I had to clear up the kitchen',
- Set this instance in a wider historical context – "This is the first time I have ever been late'
- Offer solutions to avoid repeat occurrence or generally reassure the person giving feedback – 'If I ever run late again I will ring ahead to let someone know'

AID Feedback Models - Examples

Action

Impact

Desired

Action / Outcome

A: The way you spoke to the choir after they struggled to sing the new hymn
I: left me feeling embarrassed and sad that this could happen in our Church
D: and I'd prefer that you raised issues such as this more positively, recognising their effort and willingness to try new material

A: The structure of your budget report to Trustees was very clear
I: and helped them to discuss a difficult issue and reach a prompt decision
D: and it would be great if you continued with this format and approach in future

Figure 8 AID Feedback Process

A fourth stage may be added; a further 'A', which stands for 'Anything we can do to help you achieve this outcome', which we suggest should not normally be asked until the person receiving the feedback has had a chance to respond.

Classic problems often experienced by those giving and receiving feedback can be avoided if both 'giver' and 'receiver' observe certain principles and habits when preparing and giving or receiving feedback, as outlined in Table 10.

Giving Feedback	Receiving Feedback
Prepare carefully – what, why, when and where and how.	Prepare yourself to receive feedback
Check your motive	Remember - someone is taking the time to give this feedback and for now, accept this is given with the best of intentions
Be helpful rather than critical	Recognise this feedback might be helpful
Be specific and describe actual behaviour	Listen and let the person finish
Do not store up feedback for later, give it close to the prompting incident	Look at all the feedback – not just that which you initially react to negatively
Concentrate on areas the recipient can do something about	Prompt for examples (where appropriate)
Be selective and do not sugar coat difficult feedback by sandwiching it between positive feedback.	Suspend judgement and initial reaction
Be forward looking	Reflect on any other sources of information, experience, self knowledge, specific instances
Make it a conversation	Reflect and decide what to do next
Anticipate possible reactions	

Table 10. Advice on giving and receiving feedback

Tips for Success

- Constantly be aware of the importance of processes and relationships to the long-term health of teams
- Occasionally map task and process contributions and share this with your team
- Develop skills in making task and process contributions, as needed
- Appropriately challenge self-directed contributions
- Invest time in understanding, from employee and volunteer perspectives, the psychological contract
- Establish ground rules for team operation and recognise these will become part of the psychological contract
- Become aware of decisions or actions that might break the psychological contract and handle these sensitively
- Develop appropriate approaches to reviewing process
- Encourage team members to offer feedback to each other and the group as a whole
- Be prepared to seek and appropriately consider feedback from others

3.7   Awareness of self and others

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

Effective leaders understand themselves and have an ability to work with a wide range of people, including those they may experience as different, or even difficult. The more diverse a team, the more a leader needs this knowledge and ability, which can be acquired in a several different ways, including from feedback, reading text books, completing inventories and personal reflection. Included in this section is an introduction to adaptor/innovatory theory, which sits behind the KAI inventory which we have used with many teams over many years.

Introduction

It is difficult, if not impossible, to function in relationships if you don't have some sense of self, together with some sense of how others might be. Along with words and deeds, interactions with other people are accompanied by clues as to how things are going; a set of signals, which if skilfully read and responded to, vastly improve the likelihood of productive conversations and maintained or improved relationships.

To an extent, most people do know themselves and have some ability to read others, although, we can never be sure that our 'reading' is accurate. However, awareness of self and others is of little value unless coupled with an ability and willingness to flex our behaviour or how we work.

Thankfully, for most people the ability to read and act develops to an extent over time. Even better, this ability can be refined, developed, and made conscious, which is important if we are to avoid falling short in one of the following ways, by being aware:

- Of self and others but only after an event, e.g. 'She did look out of sorts, and now I think I understand why - I think she may have been concerned about what I was saying – I was a bit blunt'. It is hardly helpful to have this thought after someone storms out of a meeting.
- Real-time, but assuming the other person should adjust their behaviour to make a relationship work. If there is a gap between two people with an expectation that one person is solely responsible for bridging the gap, this is twice as hard than if two people make adjustment.
- Real-time, accepting some responsibility but with little idea of what to do, with this knowledge.
- Of what we could do yet, cannot be bothered. This person may on occasions be heard to utter phrases such as – 'I call a spade a spade and if you don't like it...'

Field and Brown (2016) use the acronym FOAM to capture four capabilities an individual needs:

F   Flexibility – an ability to select and deploy a range of approaches in a situation
O   Outcomes – an ability to develop well-formed outcomes in advance of a situation or as it starts
A   Awareness - of self and others
M   Motivation – to achieve the desired outcomes

In most situations, there are multiple desired outcomes. A leader, about to raise a behavioural concern with a team member, will want the person hearing this to change their behaviour, to understand why, to not feel attacked, etc. They will want the best prospects of a long-term

productive relationship with the team member. They may also be concerned about how other team members will feel if they get to hear about the conversation. Many of these outcomes align comfortably but sometimes they may not and ultimately some may have to be sacrificed or risked.

The starting point for effective interactions is an ability to understand self and, potentially, others. This can be developed in various ways including reflecting on feedback received, outcomes of appraisals, and perhaps the use of one or more conceptual frameworks. These frameworks can be quite simple, such as whether a person needs other people to tell them they are doing a good job or they rely on their own standards. This example is a meta programme or filter, drawn from Neuro-Linguistic Programming. (O'Connor and Seymour, 2003). There are many such filters and understanding some of these, at least, can be invaluable in understanding difference as with, for example, a leader who typically does not give feedback and becomes responsible for a volunteer who needs this information. Failing to offer feedback to a volunteer with this preference may cause anxiety about the quality of what they do and maybe cause them to feel under-valued. Likewise, giving feedback to someone who trusts their own standards may be difficult if there is a difference of view about what constitutes good performance.

There are many frameworks such as Belbin's Team Roles (Belbin 2021) and Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI 2021) that can be a great help to those seeking to develop self-awareness. Many frameworks include a questionnaire that can be used to great effect. Some of these can be completed, scored, and interpreted without prior knowledge, others require the user to be licenced. Still, other frameworks, such as those used by counsellors, psychotherapists, require years of training and much more expertise. For leaders, awareness of one or more of these frameworks can be invaluable, accepting that it is unlikely they will have the time to develop deep understanding. Development specialists are often qualified in the use of these instruments and have a much higher level of understanding than leaders but without the breath and depth that a psychotherapist will have. In our experience, it is better for a leader to have a reasonable understanding of one or two frameworks rather than a passing understanding of several.

Example Framework – Adaption-Innovation Theory

In our experience, a very helpful framework is Adaptor/Innovator theory as developed by Dr M Kirton (KAI 2, 2021). We have used this theory and the associated psychometric (KAI) for over 20 years to help individuals understand themselves and develop ways of working effectively with a wide range of people, including those they experience as different, if not challenging. Knowledge of Adaptor/Innovator theory can greatly assist when choosing people to join a project team and help members settle in and work effectively. The theory is relatively easy to understand and in the hands of a licensed person quite powerful. It should be noted that KAI does not capture all the ways in which we differ as individuals, but then no theory or framework does.

KAI offers valuable insights regarding creativity, specifically different styles of thinking which are represented as a continuum, the two ends of which are labelled as adaptor and innovator, as shown in Figure 9.
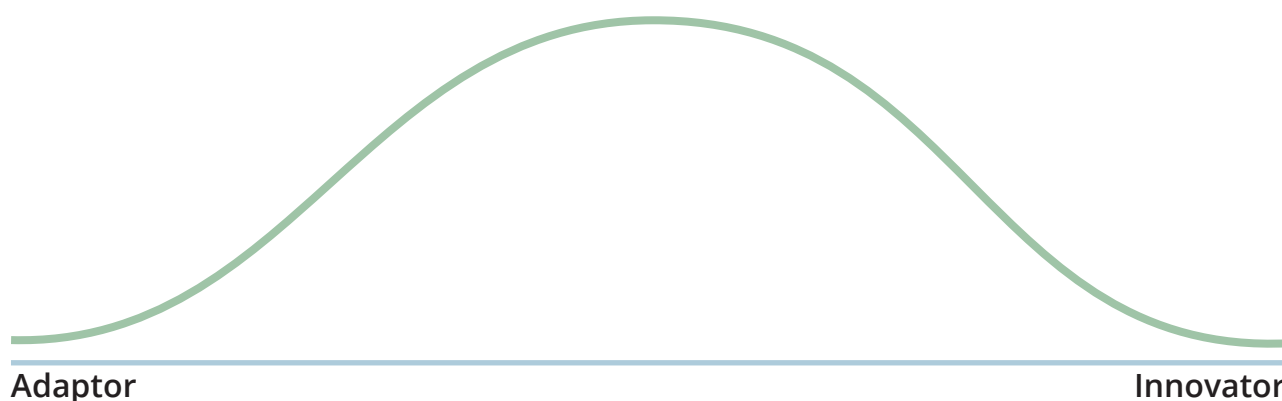
Adaptor   **Innovator**

Figure 9 Adaptor/Innovator continuum

This theory does not address the volume or value of ideas, just how people tend to think and act. Neither adaptor nor innovator thinking is inherently better, but in certain circumstances, at least for a while, one might be more helpful than another.

Those of us with a clear preference for adaptive thinking will normally generate ideas that fit the current rules, regulations, and other frameworks within which we operate.

Adaptors tend to know the system, rules, and frameworks they operate within and use these to tackle problems. Adaptive thinking normally results in ideas that are legal, within the rules and based on variations of previous actions. In relatively stable environments, adaptors make a significant contribution to improving performance; taking an existing paradigm and making it work more efficiently. Equally, after a major step change such as the introduction of a radically new style of worship, adaptors often find that they have a significant role to play. If the change in worship is innovative, at least to this group of worshippers, it is unlikely to work perfectly in the early days when there will often be significant scope for adaptive improvement. Adaptors like to be clear about work they are asked to undertake and use rules, regulations, and precedent to guide them. With this clarity, adaptors tend to solve problems quickly and solutions, being developed within the existing paradigm, are likely to work. However, their solution may not be the best option, which maybe sits outside the paradigm.

Change initiated by adaptors tends to be incremental in nature and often results in continuous improvement which, in relatively stable times, adaptors help their organisations carefully respond to shifts in the environment. However, this style of thinking is less helpful when there are significant and unpredicted shifts in the environment, for example Covid 19. Established and more adaptive organisations seemed to struggle to respond, at least quickly. In the case of the Church of England, local churches could not act on Government Guidance but had to wait for national and local interpretations to set the framework for (adaptive) action. Once clear, Parishes were able to produce infection risk assessments, acquire PPE, change cleaning duties and protocols etc., in accordance with rules, regulations, and guidance.

Those of us with a preference for innovative thinking tend to generate many ideas, some of which are likely to challenge assumptions, fly in the face of current practice and convention and may involve 'rule breaking'. As it is likely that many innovative ideas will ultimately not be adopted, innovators tend to proliferate ideas in the hope that one, or several in combination, might lead to a breakthrough. Innovative thinking tends to involve restructuring problems and

is particularly helpful when a breakthrough is needed, such as developing a novel and attractive way of being a Church, achieving a step improvement in income or the number of people attending a service.

> *Innovators tend to have less interest in, and commitment to, organisational status quo. Being less familiar with rules, regulations and structure, innovators are more likely to view situations in new ways and to generate a good number of ideas, some of which may be quite radical. It is likely that a good percentage of the ideas offered by innovators will ultimately be ruled out as not being legal, feasible or acceptable. It is therefore important that innovators generate a good number of ideas and their natural tendency to do so serves them well when faced with what appears to be an 'impossible problem' or where a new paradigm is required due to the scope for improvement within the existing one being largely exhausted.*

The preference for adaption or innovation is stable over time and generally people are drawn to roles where their preferred style of thinking is called for on a regular basis. As might be expected, adaptors with their preference for, and ability to work with, rules and regulations are likely to be found in careers, where this is required, for example accountancy. Innovators, however, are more likely to be found in environments that depend on thinking differently, such the fashion industry. This is not to say that any career or profession is closed to adaptors or innovators but where personal preference differs from what is required generally, individuals will need coping skills or to find a niche where they can 'be themselves'. This is equally true of Churches and other Christian faith-based organisations; there are roles or tasks that are clearly best suited to adaptors while others would benefit from innovator thinking.

Occasionally, most of us need to behave in ways that do not play to our natural preference and a cognitive gap is the result. The innovator, if asked to write a Fire Procedures Manual in a 'house style' or the adaptor called to lead a fundamental review is likely to experience a cognitive gap between preference and requirement. (Figure 10).
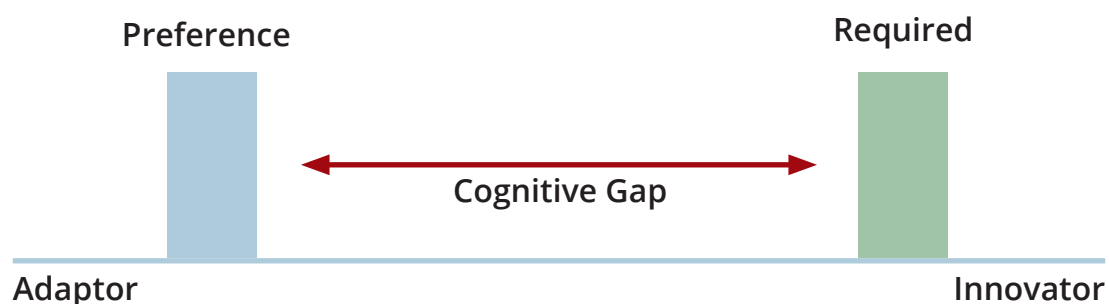
Preference **Required**

Cognitive Gap

Adaptor **Innovator**

Figure 10 Cognitive Gap

In the short term, coping strategies can be deployed to bridge cognitive gaps including:

- Engaging someone with a cognitive preference that matches the task in hand.
- Giving the task to a cognitively appropriately team.
- Using creativity tools or techniques that replicate patterns of thinking required for the task in hand.

Thinking in a non-preferred style requires a degree of coping behaviour, which often can be stressful. If the nature of a job role shifts permanently from requiring adaptive more than innovative thinking, or vice versa then the cost of the coping behaviour might prove unsustainable and stress-inducing.

Without awareness of KAI and the sensitive flexing of individual behaviour to each other and the situation, adaptors and innovators often fail to work well together.

General relevance of KAI to leaders in Churches and Christian faith-based organisations

Leaders of Churches and Christian faith-based organisations are under significant pressure at present. The challenges faced vary with organisation, to include factors such as shifts in the composition of local communities and congregations, patterns of employment and the impact on traditional Sunday attendance, competition from other faiths, sport hobbies, etc., many old, inflexible buildings, falling numbers of worshippers, etc. This is before the short, medium, and long term implications of Covid 19 are clear.

Leaders are faced with a seemingly impossible challenge; meet the needs and preferences of existing Church members while designing and bringing about Churches and Christian faith-based organisations that are fit for tomorrow. In many places, this is being attempted by a combination of Ministers with multi-Church responsibilities and reducing numbers of ageing laity. It is no easier in the charitable sector, much of which faces growing demand for existing services and opportunities to plug gaps left by a state, which is in effect retreating from traditional services. There is competition for grant funding, reluctance by some funders/givers to support faith-based organisations, significant loss of income during lockdown due to cancelled sponsored events, closure of shops, etc.

One approach to meeting the various challenges faced today is to change how Churches and Christian faith-based organisations operate. When times are stable and challenges are few, non-critical and relatively simple, adaptive development can work well, especially if the organization is basically sound. Many Christian organizations have mature structures, systems, and processes that have evolved over years of adapting to opportunities and threats.

However, as now, when the environment is novel, challenging, fast moving and complex, adaptive development is unlikely to be adequate. What is needed is a totally different way of doing Church or charity. Innovation is needed along with an ability to collaborate, as explored as Challenges 1 and 2 below.

Challenge 1: To innovate

The challenge for many churches and Christian organisations is how to be innovative, at least for a short while. Even if we could, it would be totally wrong to replace all adaptors with innovators, for we know that following innovative changes there will be activities, processes, structures, and operations running at far less than 100% efficiency. This is where adaptive improvement is vital and although Churches might be currently crying out for innovation, there remains a significant need for adaptive capacity. Figure 11 illustrates a common sequence of innovation and adaption where periodic innovation results in step improvement in performance followed by a period of continuous adaptive improvement. After a time, further improvement is only possible if the paradigm is again restructured, followed by another period of continuous adaptive improvement, etc. Adaptive improvements, for example in cost, are shown as a curve, and step improvements or innovations as a short vertical line.
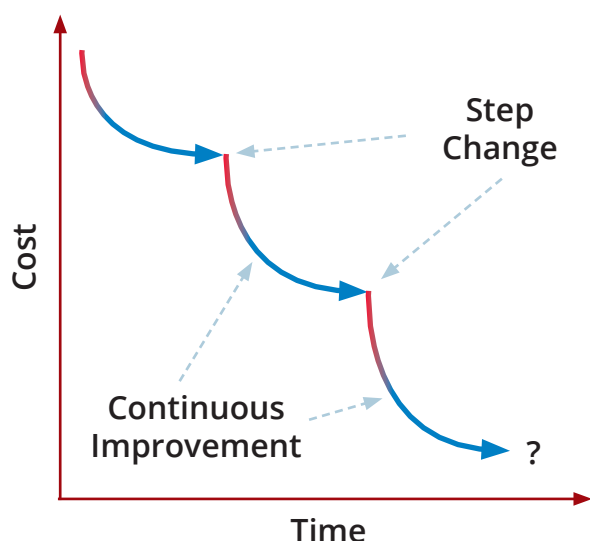
Figure 12: Comparing team profiles

The first major challenge for Church leaders at present is 'How to develop on a short-term basis more innovative thinking if this is not our natural collective preference.'

If a team generally lacks innovation or, for that matter, adaption it may be possible to bring in to the team someone with that style. Another option might be to ask those that do have the required cognitive style to work on an issue as a sub-group. Three adaptors working together might tackle an adaptive task better on their own rather than together with innovator colleagues. A third, common option is to use creativity techniques, routines and rituals that encourage a particular type of thinking. Brainstorming, for example, can help relative adaptors who tend to think more convergently, to be divergent leading to the generation of a number, range and type of ideas normally associated with innovation.

Challenge 2: Collaboration - Harnessing and Working with Diversity

A second challenge facing many churches is how to collaborate better, sharing Ministers and buildings and generally working more widely with other parts of the community. Part of this challenge includes learning how to harness the benefits that can come from working with a more diverse set of people.

Very few outcomes are delivered by one person acting in isolation; a Church works well when all the teams operating within it are healthy and can work with each other. When collaborating with other Churches and other organisations it is important that joint teams are also healthy. Dr M Kirton, (Kirton 2 2021) recognised the value of diversity, in tackling what he refers to as Problem A's; the problems we are called to solve collaboratively. Kirton argued that the more novel, complex, and dynamic a situation, the greater the level of diversity needed. Such diversity increases the range of problems that can be tackled by the group and increases the chances of innovation occurring.

However, high levels of diversity can prove difficult, resulting in Problem B. Individuals therefore have two problems when collaborating; 'to solve the problems requiring their collaboration (Problem A) and the management of each other (Problem B)'; successful groups spend much more of their energy on Problem A than Problem B' (Kirton 2: 2021).

Collaborating across the wider system requires leadership by everyone, not just by the appointed leader. Successful collaboration is more likely where those involved exercise leadership, where ideas are heard and encouraged; where those to whom ideas occur can exercise influence, build alliances, and cause others to follow. Successful collaboration requires an ability and willingness to work with people we may not yet understand and may struggle to get on with, at least initially.

The second leadership challenge then is how to work effectively with an increasingly diverse and ever changing mix of people. It is not enough to simply tolerate or be able to cope with another person's differences, as we experience them. Valuing difference is an essential starting point but more importantly we should be harnessing this to the point when we seek to work with people we anticipate or experience as being different, knowing the value that this difference may bring. The wider the collaboration, the greater the potential benefit to outcomes and greater the level of potential diversity.

Applications of KAI

KAI can help in many team situations; some of which are outlined below.

Understanding team profiles
It can be very helpful for a team leader to understand the profile of their team. As an example, Team A, the profile for which is shown in Figure 12, comprises 10 relative adaptors that have successfully squeezed all the increased performance possible within the current way of working. This team is less likely to develop ideas that will lead to different ways of doing things which yield significant benefits. Whilst economic and efficient within the existing paradigm, the services or activities undertaken by this team may not be as successful as they could be. Faced with a novel, complex and uncertain challenge, this team might find it more difficult to perform.
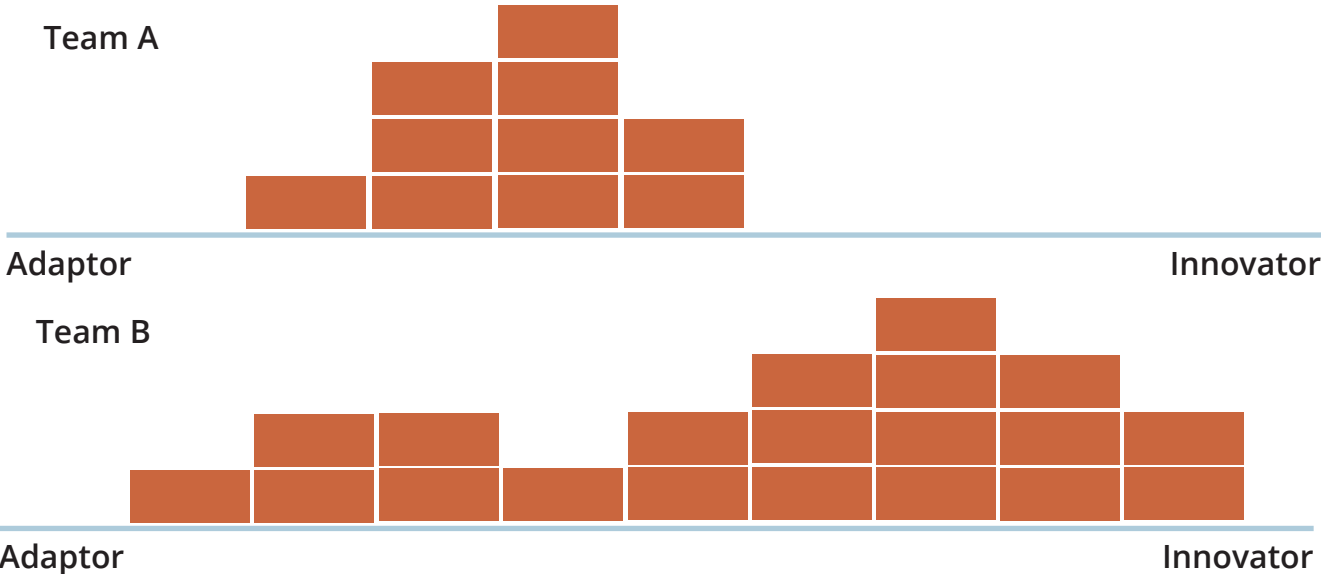

Figure 12: Comparing team profiles

If, however, the team comprised a high number of relative innovators, they are likely to generate ideas from which an innovative response to a challenge may be developed. With a potential to bust paradigms and idea generate, this team might find it more difficult to move to implementation and less likely to stick with an outcome that is not immediately working as well as it might. There is a risk that this team will be tempted to prematurely abandon their recent idea and try something different again. In value for money terms, this group may improve effectiveness but may fall short on economy and efficiency through failing to continuously improve. In theory, where a team is quite homogenous either having adaption or innovation in common they should be easier to lead and work within, although there are lots of factors other than cognitive preference that will determine whether this is true.

Team B, also shown in Figure 12, has a much greater degree of diversity and will be better placed to tackle a wide range of problems, including those requiring a 'breakthrough'. A team that comprises an appropriate mix of adaptors and innovators is likely to have sufficient diversity to achieve a breakthrough and then to continuously improve, leading to better outcomes achieved in an economic and efficient manner. Critical to the success of this team will be the way in which the diversity is handled in terms of process, contributions, and behaviours. Individuals towards the middle of the KAI distribution of this team are well placed to act as bridges between those with clearer adaption or innovation preferences. Whether they successfully bridge, however, will depend on skill, motivation, and opportunity.

Some distributions are more likely to pose a problem for leaders, including those where the team composition does not match what is required, where there is a lone adaptor or innovator, and where a team leader is cognitively different from their team.

Where team composition does not match what is required
As with individuals, it is possible for whole teams to be relatively adaptive or innovative in nature which might be fine if the operating environment is similar. In an old, traditional, stable Church it is likely the environment is largely adaptive and probably their leadership team will match. However, Covid 19, falling numbers, financial pressure and the rapid advancement in on-line worship demands a serious and radical rethink, perhaps Church needs to be 'redefined'. Maybe many beautiful, yet empty buildings should be sold or missionary support abroad cease, etc. These types of ideas are unlikely to be raised by an adaptor team, working in adaptive culture, not because these might be unpalatable but because adaptors are more likely to generate ideas that improve more than change the status quo. Similarly, an innovative team faced with an adaptive challenge such as designing, implementing, and faithfully operating an integrated Safeguarding and Risk Management Process is likely to struggle.

A lone type (adaptor or innovator)
It is not uncommon for group members to be mostly clustered in one place on the continuum, yet for one or perhaps two people to possess quite different cognitive scores as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 Lone presence - Adaptor

The risk with lone representatives is that they can feel isolated and may seek inclusion by behaving like those in the main group (in this case relative innovators). Alternatively, they may decide not to contribute or to leave the situation; all of which result in a potentially valuable contribution being lost to the group. A little coping behaviour by all concerned can enable a minority representative feel they belong and that their contribution is valued.

Lone type with potential bridge
Often the situation is more complex, as shown in Figure 14, where a team member occupies the space between a lone representative and the rest of the group. If skilled and motivated, this member is ideally placed to bridge the cognitive gap. Whilst others could bridge the gap, the adjustment required of them would be higher.
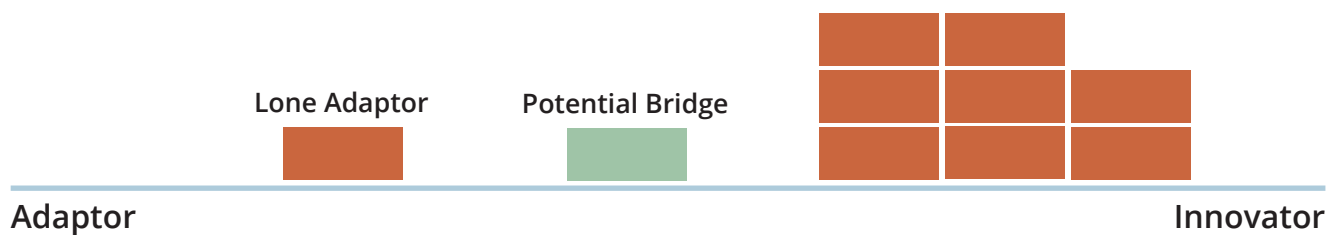
Figure 14: Bridgers

Leader – Team member cognitive gaps
It is not uncommon for a team leader to have a preference that is not shared by team members, such as a team leader with a relatively high preference for innovation and team members who are relative adaptors.
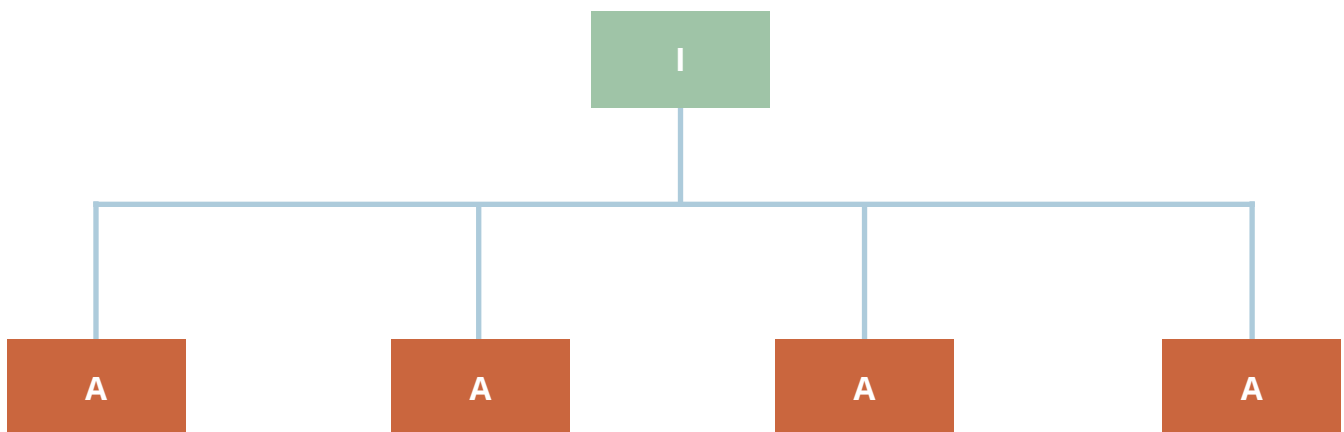
Figure 15: Relatively innovative leader – relatively adaptive team

In this situation we would advise:

The innovator leader to:	Adaptor members to:
Keep generating ideas but filter these a little before sharing them.	Suspend judgment and approach ideas with an open mind.
Present ideas in relatively neutral ways avoiding overstating their radical nature.	Remember the importance and value of innovators.
Handle typical adaptor responses to their ideas in a way that values the person and their contribution yet ensures a fair hearing for their ideas.	Avoid using the word 'but' as this tends to frustrate innovators. Try using 'and' instead.
Track ideas given to adaptors to make sure they have been considered properly.	

Table 11: Advice for relatively innovative leaders and relatively adaptive members

Taking the case of a relatively adaptive manager with relatively innovative reports, a different dynamic is often observed - there will be a tendency for direct reports to generate ideas, potentially feeding off each other.
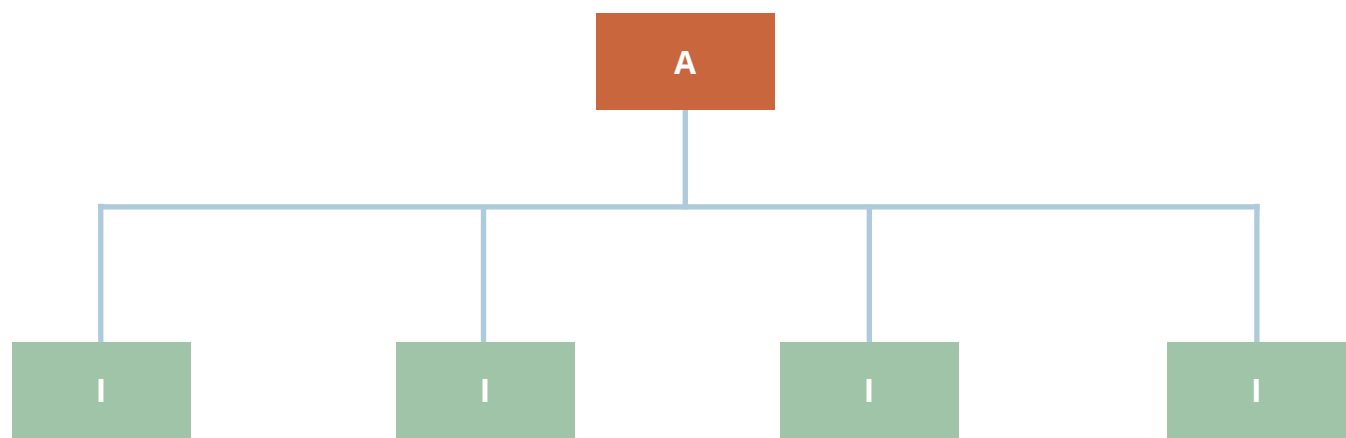
Figure 16 Relatively adaptive leader – relatively innovative team

In this situation we would advise:

Relatively adaptive leader to:	Relatively innovative members to:
Encourage ideas from their staff perhaps channelling these into nominated meetings or away days	Time and temper their contributions
Remember that the combination of adaptor preference and positional power can cause innovators to feel their ideas are not being considered properly.	Take care about how ideas are framed to avoid implicit criticism of their manager
Manage their initial reaction to ideas – suspending judgment.	Avoid giving the impression of 'ganging up' on the adaptor manager
Replace the 'but' word with 'and' when responding to an idea	Present ideas in relatively neutral ways avoiding overstating their radical nature

Table 12 Advice for relatively adaptive leaders and relatively innovative members

Tips for Success

- It is worth investing in getting to know yourself and how this affects your leadership.
- Take every opportunity to ask for feedback and consider it carefully.
- If you get a chance to complete a reputable inventory, take it and explore carefully.
- Invest time and energy in becoming familiar with one or two frameworks.
- Using what you know from models, theories, and inventories, consider what this might suggest about those with whom you work. Remember, no inventory or model can ever fully explain the wonder of an individual, and we can never know another person fully.
- Develop a broad range of strategies for working effectively with those you experience as different.
- Be prepared to share frameworks with team members in order to frame conversations.

4. Internal World

The purpose of this section is to focus on how the internal workings of humans (emotions, thoughts, behaviour, motivations, life history, childhood, significant events) can influence the way we relate to others, self, and God. Together, the interplay of these workings can impact team and individual health and performance.

As therapists, it is our belief that self-reflection, understanding, and awareness is significant in not only developing resilience but also the life skills that help us navigate through this broken world in victory and wholeness. Self-reflection also helps develop purpose, self-worth, significance, and a full sense of belonging to each other and in God's kingdom. The noted author and research professor Bréne Brown said:

"Belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us. Because this yearning is so primal, we often try to acquire it by fitting in and by seeking approval, which are not only hollow substitutes for belonging, but often barriers to it. Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance".

(Brown, 2012:144)

Part of bringing our authentic selves (the good, the bad, the ugly, the glorious!) involves getting to know what we believe, think, and feel, and therefore ultimately how we behave. As therapists, we have seen a connection between self-acceptance and compassion in deepening faith. Self-understanding without compassion can often lead to pride (person sees themself greater than God) or shame (hides away from God). Self-acceptance combined with compassion helps us see the fingerprints of God woven through our stories and this can bring joy, purpose, and comfort.

It is our belief and hope that even when we walk through 'fires, floods, droughts, pandemics', we are still able to flourish, which promotes wellbeing and health in others. Whilst we advocate creating safe environments in our workplaces through good processes, boundaries, governance, knowledge, and skills, we must be cognisant that there are times where we need to dig into our internal resources and take responsibility for our own emotions and actions for better health. The useful question is not 'why is this happening to me?' but rather, 'what is this trying to teach me?'. Often, these difficult situations are opportunities to learn both resilience and to strengthen our skills, experience, identity, and purpose. Together, they have the knock-on effect of creating healthy relationships in teams which means we can experience a sense of belonging.

While there are many models and strategies that therapists use to help people reach their goals in wellbeing and health, we have chosen 5 toolsets/approaches to gain a joined-up view – akin to our inner world jigsaw analogy introduced earlier – to develop an understanding of how we can remain stable, resilient, skilled, engaged, and enjoy working in teams in the Christian world, without unduly losing our sense of self. We have stayed faithful to the original language and concepts of theorists and models used but aim to present their material in more accessible and practical ways.
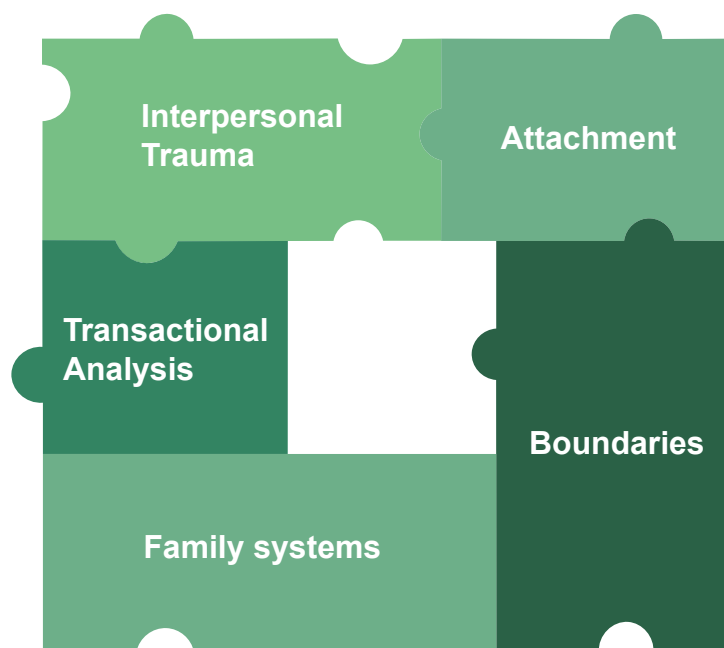
The five approaches we examine are:

- Interpersonal Trauma which highlights how Christian individuals and teams are not immune from suffering deep emotional and spiritual wounding that can cause trauma symptoms. In our earlier publication "Guidance in Preventing Stress and Burnout in Churches and Christian Organisations" (2020), we highlighted how toxic stress in Christian organisations can damage health while toxic stress in teams can significantly impact the individual and organisation's health.
- Attachment Style, which acknowledges that the way we relate to others today is mirrored from our key childhood relationships. Emotional bonds such as trust, safety, commitment, and honesty are affected by our childhood and impacts the effectiveness of teams and leadership styles. We provide a way of understanding this and what you might do about it.
- Boundaries which are foundational in establishing healthy relationships and teams.
- Family Systems which help us understand how we deal with the anxiety that stems from emotional dynamics in relationships. We can potentially feel calm and have a sense of wellbeing in the face of relationships or feel dysfunction, stress, and dysregulation (i.e., emotions are all over the place and feel out of control) that can impact individual (and team) functionality.
- Transactional Analysis which explores the way we communicate with one another and what motivates us to respond the way we do.

We are aware that by choosing these five approaches, we have also laid out a feast of sorts that need not be consumed immediately. It is not our intent that you feel the need to engage with all the issues that come up in each but rather that you engage with those that resonate with you in the season you find yourself.

4.1   Interpersonal Trauma

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

In this section we intend to help the reader understand how breakdown in teams can cause interpersonal trauma which can impact each participant's internal and external worlds. It gives voice to Christian leaders and the deep emotional pain and hurt they experience from working in dysfunctional teams, and the trauma symptoms that might result. This section also highlights ways to identify stress in teams and ways to move forward.

Definition of Interpersonal Trauma

Interpersonal trauma is the deep hurt we experience when we are wounded by others. Relationships matter. They have great potential to heal or harm. Christians are not immune from experiencing distressing events caused by interpersonal trauma, especially within their church community. Interpersonal trauma is more than just experiencing the emotions raised from an uncomfortable conversation or conflict. Rather, the impact here causes the body to be flooded with stress hormones and to react in ways that leave us feeling threatened and experience deep emotional distress. Its shadow can significantly impact a person's life and worldview.

Trauma changes a person. Whilst any fractured relationship can cause upset and distress, Christian leaders have the added pressure of trying to hold their emotional pain together to deal with the knock-on effects from relationship breakdown in their congregation. What can heighten the trauma and makes it worse is when reconciliation is not achieved and people leave a church post and place of worship. This can be devastating. Christian leaders may also need to rebalance their teams and fill job positions when a resignation or removal occurs, and often the need of the church is prioritised over emotional healing and health for the impacted individuals, until it becomes too unbearable to hold.

At times, their suffering becomes internalised. Without a safe place for it to be expressed, it will inevitably spill out in different ways, sometimes in the form of mental illness. Whilst we want to highlight that interpersonal trauma can cause deep suffering in a person to validate a Christian leader's strong emotions, we also believe that God can make something beautiful out of this wounding.

Case Study

The following case study is an amalgamation of several leaders' voices expressing their experience of interpersonal trauma, to highlight a familiar yet untold story.

Fred and June are a married couple who hold joint leadership roles in a church. They have been committed to working in Christian ministry whether employed or self-funded. Since becoming Christians over 10 years ago, Christian service often felt a hard slog and lacked rewarding relationships that were fun, committed, loving and mutual. However, in recent years they both thrived in their leadership team and felt that this was the best team they had worked in together. There was a strong sense of care, belonging, mission and stability. They loved their roles as church leaders and even better, had wonderful, trusted friends in the leadership team for a good length of time. A breakdown in relationships emerged when team members began to strongly disagree among

themselves. After many months of relationship tension in team meetings and unresolved conflicts, Fred and June were often blamed and attacked for their decisions in church life. Fred and June tried to restore team relationships, but resignations followed, and strong allegations of poor leadership ability and decisions were made.

This left Fred and June feeling shocked, confused, and questioning what had caused key relationships to breakdown when they loved, trusted, and valued their team, and believed they had laid a strong foundation. They did not expect to be attacked by letters containing insults leading them to question their own identity and purpose. Questions like "What did I do wrong?", "Why did they treat us like this?" and "How could Christian friends do this to us?" dominated their thoughts.

Strong emotions followed such as anger, hate, bitterness, sadness, guilt, and shame, and they felt guilty for feeling them. There was a felt sense of betrayal. They kept saying "we trusted them, and they stabbed us in our heart". They struggled feeling safe in their church community and felt people were against them. They were afraid to speak and felt they were put on public trial as their congregation questioned leadership changes.

Church became an unsafe place as every comment felt like an attack. "My Sundays are full of people telling me what I should do better", "they kick me when I am down and expect me to serve them joyfully when they call", "I wish they could see how dead I feel on the inside and yet I need to keep serving them to keep the church ticking over", "I am completely broken and keep saying to myself, if I was better, then this would not have happened". "I am utterly devastated that this happened as it reminds me of previous relationship breakdowns".

Fred and June lived in a state of fear and when the phone rang, they would get sweaty palms and heart palpitations in case they were told more bad news or reminded how 'bad' they were. They began to distrust people in their congregation and felt that they were all talking about them behind their backs. The hardest part to reconcile was the deep sense of betrayal they felt because they had deeply loved these team members and believed their love and respect was mutual. The expectation of forgiveness and reconciliation complicated their grief and pain.

Fred and June did seek independent professional support to process the interpersonal trauma, find ways to feel safe, and stop the mental, emotional, and spiritual suffering. Both Fred and June say this experience has changed them and that they are more cautious in certain situations. They both took time out from the church and leadership roles. June turned towards reading scripture and praying, whilst Fred was unable to engage in anything church or faith related. He wrestled with his faith and would panic when hearing any religious language.

Regulation Traffic Light

It is well documented that the effect of trauma can have widespread impact on our physical, mental, and emotional wellness. In our previous work (Brown, Field & Edmunds, 2020) we introduced the Triune Brain model to explain the physiological impact of experiencing overwhelming stress and how the body automatically responds to a perceived threat.

While there are several useful models and tools to help explain and normalise how trauma impacts our physiological states, we find the Trauma Traffic Light with its three stages of feeling safe, threatened, or overwhelmed, very helpful.

Table 13 is a tool we have created to help identify what state our internal emotional and physiological states might be at various points due to overwhelming stress, and called this the "Regulation Traffic Light: Identifying Internal states of being and strategies for relaxation and managing stress".

	Green	Amber	Red
Type of State	Safe	Dangerous	Life Threat
Physiological state	Homeostasis (maintain stability for survival)	Hyper-arousal Fight or Flight	Hypo-arousal Freeze
Description	Place where we thrive, feel safe, able to play, chat, feed, breed, and we can do life!	Perceived threat in the environment which causes our threat hormones to race, and energy is released. We can feel restless, being on edge and pacing back and forth.	Body perceives that it can't do anything active to survive and so shuts down to a freeze response and energy is low/fatigued.
Behavioural and Relational Symptoms	Socially engaged Friendly/happy Honest Able to ask for help and receive it Helpful Able to offer and receive contributions (i.e., ideas, plans, feedback) to and from others Supportive and supported	Run away if possible Demand/shout/ scream Fight to defend territory or integrity Avoid if possible Ramp up emotions Signal with emotions for help Blame others	Submit Be the bad one Lie low Be silent Hide/just take it Be helpless Numb emotions Don't retaliate or fight back Don't do anything Self-sacrifice/martyr Apologise for everything

	Green	Amber	Red
Strategies	Go: Relax, enjoy, dream, exercise creativity, make plans and execute if required.	Slow down: Take a breath and pause. Something is not right and begin to identify the cause of stress and make positive changes.	Stop: Skilled support is often required to regain a sense of control again and help with new patterns of behaviour and emotional regulation.

Table 13: Regulation Traffic Lights - Based on the works of Spring (2015, 2019) and Zones of Regulation Teaching Program (Kuypers, 2011)

In Trauma therapy, we often use the terms "emotional regulation" and "emotional dysregulation". Dysregulation describes the state of great stress in our bodies when our emotions feel 'all over the place' or out of control. Regulation is how we calm any stressed emotions causing our physiological changes and bring them back into a stable place. There is no shame associated with being in any of the three traffic light states. Being psychologically informed and aware of what state we are experiencing during stressful and painful situations helps us make informed decisions to return us to a relaxed and peaceful state of being. Each state needs a different strategy to help us.

If we go back to the Fred and June case study, we can identify the stages our couple went through when their relationship broke down. This is summarised in 14.

Green	Amber	Red
Created a team they loved and enjoyed going to work. They felt they belonged and had honest and open conversations as members and activities grew. They felt supported and were able to give the best of themselves to their team and church members. Had vision and zeal for the church.	The church environment became a threat to their sense of survival and had the option of either defending themselves during difficult conversations (fight) or working hard to distract from the problem and set up new church activities (flight). When conflict was not able to be resolved with team members, panic and fear set in and they would fear the phone ringing and see members of their congregation as a perceived threat. If conflict had been successfully resolved, Fred and June could have returned to the Green zone.	As the sense of threat in feeling the "bad ones" continued in relationship over a period of time, Fred and June then experienced fatigue and not wanting to function. They wanted to shut down and hide away and felt were not able to defend themselves amongst the congregation especially when questions were being asked due to changes of staff. They needed to take time away from the church to recover and regain a sense of feeling safe within themselves and with others.

Table 14: Stages of relationship breakdown

Tips for Success

- Take time to understand the Regulation Traffic Light system and become aware of your current state.
- Develop an understanding of your personal internal indicators of state. A way to help with this is to ask the following questions:
    - How does your body feel in each state?
    - What is your typical self talk in each state?
    - How do you feel (emotion) when you are in each state?
    - How is your relationship with God in each state?
    - What are your typical behaviours (individual and relational) in each state?
    - Learn which strategies work for you either to maintain state or shift down from red to amber and amber to green.
    - This can be going for a walk, talking to a friend, doing exercise, engaging with a hobby and so on.
- Get to know the signals that other team members give of the state they may be in.
- Identify which strategies seem to work with individuals in your team.
- Identify signals of when the whole team is experiencing trauma.
- Identify strategies for the whole team in terms of shifting state.
- Create an environment where people are confident to share how they are feeling (meeting check-ins and or check-outs).
- Monitor personal, individual and team state regularly - act timely.

4.2 Attachment

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

This section is intended to help the reader understand how attachment styles can contribute to a person's engagement with teams, influence team performance and health. Understanding team relationships from an attachment perspective highlights how team members view themselves and their team. We raise the idea that the wellness and performance of teams are in part driven by relationships and that healthy team relationships depend significantly on our early relationships. It is our early relationships that lay the mould for how each of us deal with interpersonal relationships as adults. It should be noted that the ideas presented below refer to groups in the sense of three or more people together, which includes teams as defined in this text.

What is Attachment Theory?

Attachment Theory is a psychodynamic theory originally developed by Bowlby in the 1960s, that has been reliably studied and has a strong support in organizational behaviour research. Attachment is probably a strange word for something that describes our habitual way of relating to people. This habitual pattern of relating begins in our first relationship with our primary caregiver/s and it is helpful to understand the role this plays in the development of our personalities. In attachment language, we develop an internal working model of how to stay safe in relationships and later in life we tend to relate to others using this internal model. Attachment does not refer to a sort of magnetic connection, in which we are attached to something or not, but rather attachment styles are habitual ways of relating to others and in particular adults (Shaver & Cassidy, 2008).

Attachment Theory suggests that we establish working models of how relationships work, and learn to associate feelings of security, anxiety or choose to entirely avoid people in the context of relationships (Neleson, 2016:3).

Attachment is the study of how childhood experiences with primary caregivers affects our relationships based around how the child's needs for connection and care were met. The child learns what to routinely expect and then adapts their behaviour accordingly and these behaviours endure into adulthood and form the blueprint for adult connections.

Four types of attachment

There are four types of attachment (Shaver & Cassidy, 2016):

Dismissive-Avoidant Attachment
Generally appear withdrawn;
Highly independent;
Emotionally Distant in relationships;
Overwhelmed when relied on heavily;
Will retreat physically and emotionally.

Fearful-Avoidant (disorganised) Attachment
Ambivalence in relationships – shift between vulnerability and being distant;
Tendency to overanalyse micro-expressions (good at body language), mines for signs of betrayal;
Feels as if betrayal is on the horizon;
Can be very angry if betrayal is felt;
Doesn't trust naturally – but sends mixed messages: can swing between sometimes your biggest fan and sometimes your worst enemy.

Secure Attachment
Generally secure in relationship;
Usually supportive, available, open with friends and partners;
Can shift those with other patterns into the 'secure' space.

Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment (preoccupied)
Will self-sacrifice to 'people please';
Fears being rejected;
Strong fear of being abandoned.

Figure 18 Four Types of Attachment

In Figure 19, we summarise how Attachment runs along a Spectrum – indicating that there are no fixed points, but rather styles, which can move and evolve in different relationships.

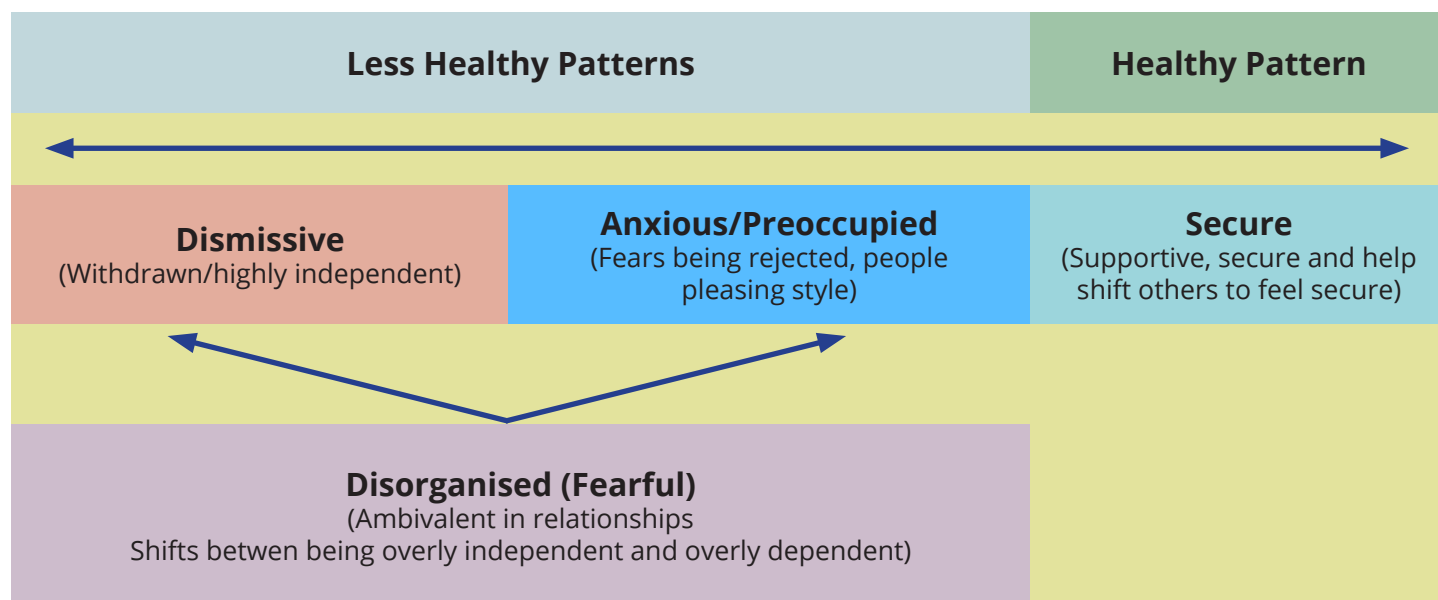| Less Healthy Patterns		Healthy Pattern
Dismissive (Withdrawn/highly independent)	**Anxious/Preoccupied** (Fears being rejected, people pleasing style)	**Secure** (Supportive, secure and help shift others to feel secure)
Disorganised (Fearful) (Ambivalent in relationships Shifts between being overly independent and overly dependent)		

Figure 19 Attachment Spectrum

As can be seen from the diagram, the disorganized/fearful style vacillates between dismissive and anxious/preoccupied. This makes it difficult to get to 'know' this person, as there doesn't seem to be a fixed person to relate to, or a typical style.

One can also have different attachment tendencies when around different people. It is possible to have a healthy attachment with a spouse, but a less than healthy one with a boss, for example. Some of this has to do with how we have learned to feel safe around certain kinds of people. It can also be influenced by a person 'reminding you' of someone from your past who might not have been such a safe attachment experience for you.

The good news is that attachment patterns can shift, especially if you are attached to a secure adult in your life. Attaching to a secure person can help the brain relearn its internal working model, to a healthier one. God also offers secure attachment via His unconditional love, and we can 'conduit' this felt security to others. A securely attached team leader, who is confident in their relationship to God and others, will be a safe, calm presence which allows others to be able to process or work through their own attachment difficulties. Attaching securely to God is a much wider topic and is not in the scope of this text.

It is important to understand that there is no shame involved in any one attachment style. It is rather a simple understanding of where our tendencies lie and thereby allows us to adjust accordingly. People with wildly different attachment styles can relate well together, providing there is a shared understanding of where their 'tendency' will lie, and how they can work together as a result.

We present an example of how attachment style can impact teams and how our behaviours might be adjusted is included in the following case study. This study is a blend based on clinical and pastoral work; all names and story lines have been amended.

Will James started work as a curate in a small country church. It was a fairly lively congregation, and Will felt excited by the challenge in this, his first church.

However, Will quickly discovered that all was not well in the larger team, and he was really puzzled by what were increasingly dysfunctional team meetings. What made it even more confusing was that Will tried to befriend the Vicar, who he assumed would support him in a kindly way.

It seemed that the more Will tried to engage with the Vicar, the more the Vicar seemed to disengage with him. He found this increasingly puzzling and spent a great deal of time trying to work out how to be more friendly and connect.

He tried all kinds of things: invited him to dinner, invited him to a training event he thought might be good, tried to be super-helpful and do the 'boring' jobs, tried to take over some of the more 'difficult' meetings and so on. All this was to no avail. It seemed that the Vicar was as cold as ever. In fact, things seemed to get worse the more that Will tried.

Will had grown up in a large but happy family, where his needs and those of his siblings were largely attended to, and whilst finances were always a bit short, there was always laughter and a quick repair after the usual family misunderstandings. They talked often to each other and were generally supportive of each other's various interests and careers. Will recalls when one of his particularly un-musical siblings had decided to learn an instrument. The family good-naturedly tolerated these decidedly tuneless attempts, until eventually the sibling themselves concluded that they probably had other talents. Will says this was the general tone in his home: mistakes were tolerated with humour and forgiveness, and he didn't remember having a hard time with relationships.

The Vicar on the other hand had grown up as an only sibling, with a decidedly pre-occupied Vicar-father and a mother who was sometimes emotionally attuned to his needs and sometimes in pieces as unable to cope with life's difficulties. He describes never knowing where one stood with her, although the love she did show was nice while it lasted. However, when his mother was down, she relied heavily on him – something he came to dread. Although he loved his mother, during these times he felt somewhat smothered by her, and his father was simply absent. He came into life with a belief that one could not really rely on other people, that it was safer to be self-contained. He did have a heart for helping people and was often puzzled that his attempts to work in teams or manage things were not always successful. He noticed that when people 'got too friendly' he withdrew and felt a physical panic but didn't really know why or what to do about it. As a result, when Will arrived as his curate, he had mixed feelings. He knew that he needed help to manage things, but each time Will tried to be what he thought of as 'overfriendly', he noticed that he panicked and withdrew. He knew that he was somehow hurting Will but he did not know what to do about it.

It was at this juncture that they sought some help. As soon as Will realised that his secure attachment style with his family had turned into an anxious style with his Vicar, and that the Vicar was in fact triggered by his increasing anxiety into retreat (avoidant), it all made sense. They both learned to understand their styles, that when they were tired or overwhelmed what the other could do about it, and how Will really was wanted, but could involve himself differently, things began to settle down. Will's anxiety decreased when he realised it wasn't about him, and the Vicar's withdrawal began to subside as he noticed his response and gave Will a signal to slow down.

We worked with the Vicar through his attachment style to different key members of the team, and slowly he began to understand how he could make his attachment style known and understood. Will reported team meetings being far more productive and less confusing for everyone. The Vicar worked really hard on his attachment with God, and developed an learned-secure attachment with his counsellor. This enabled him to improve his attachment style with others in his team. Will and his Vicar went on to be a great team and when Will eventually got his own parish, the Vicar found himself genuinely sad, but grateful for all he had learned from Will.

Why understand Attachment?

Adult attachment theory has progressed from only understanding our familial relationships to examining our behaviour in groups, especially in the regions of interpersonal conflict, trust of others and general daily interactions (Bresnahan, 2008).

Leadership theory shows that relationships are a key part of successful leadership, some hinting that it is the most important factor.

Studies have shown that attachment style can affect work performance, especially performance in a group, and that anxiously attached individuals functioned below average on group tasks, whilst avoidantly attached people showed lower group cohesion levels (Rom and Mikulincer, 2003).

In short, knowledge of attachment styles can help us predict and understand interpersonal feelings, thoughts, and behaviours (Lopez & Brennan, 2000) as well as leadership style. It helps to make difficult interactions feel less personal.

Kobak (1994) found that our attachment working models will be especially activated in one of three situations:

- Challenge
- Interpersonal conflict
- Fear-inducing situations

From the case study, even though Will had grown up with a secure style, the leadership style of the Vicar caused Will to become anxiously attached.

Leadership and Attachment

"The leadership relationship is another important relationship in which attachment models are activated"

(Berson et. al., 2006:178).

Whether they like it or not, or are aware of it or not, leaders take on the role of an attachment figure (Shaver & Cassidy, 2008), by fulfilling these three key attachment functions:
- maintaining proximity (consistent contact)
- the provision of a safe haven (hopefully)
- provision of a secure base (calm, consistent space which allows and encourages members to explore and be curious within their working environment).

(Neleson, 2016:37)

It has been shown that the team context elicits strong attachment patterns in team members. This means that like parents, leaders should be able to guide, direct and nurture in such a way that followers feel safe enough to explore and learn new skills (Popper and Mayseless, 2003), in other words, team leaders need to learn how to safely de-activate any negative attachment pattern that occurs. Leaders can thus play an important role in helping their followers towards healthier attachment patterns if they are aware and conscious of the role they can play.

In a study examining how attachment styles could affect group trust, group conflict, relationship repair capacity, group leadership style and group performance, Bresnahan (2008) found that:
- Fearfully attached leaders have the poorest group performance.
- The conflict levels in a group rise with the level of avoidant attachments.
- Post conflict relational repair is linked to both levels of trust and of conflict within the group.

In the case study, the Vicar's avoidant style caused group conflict levels to rise because members became fearful each time he withdrew from the team. He was not providing the secure base which helps a team flourish.

In teams, leaders often struggle with both team member anxiety and team member avoidance of tasks or interactions. These member styles can be linked to attachment patterns, as shown in Figure 20, based on the work of Neleson (2016:38).

High Anxiety

Preoccupied - Anxious	**Fearful - Avoidance**
Secure	**Dismissive**

Low Avoidance (left)   **High Avoidance** (right)

Low Anxiety
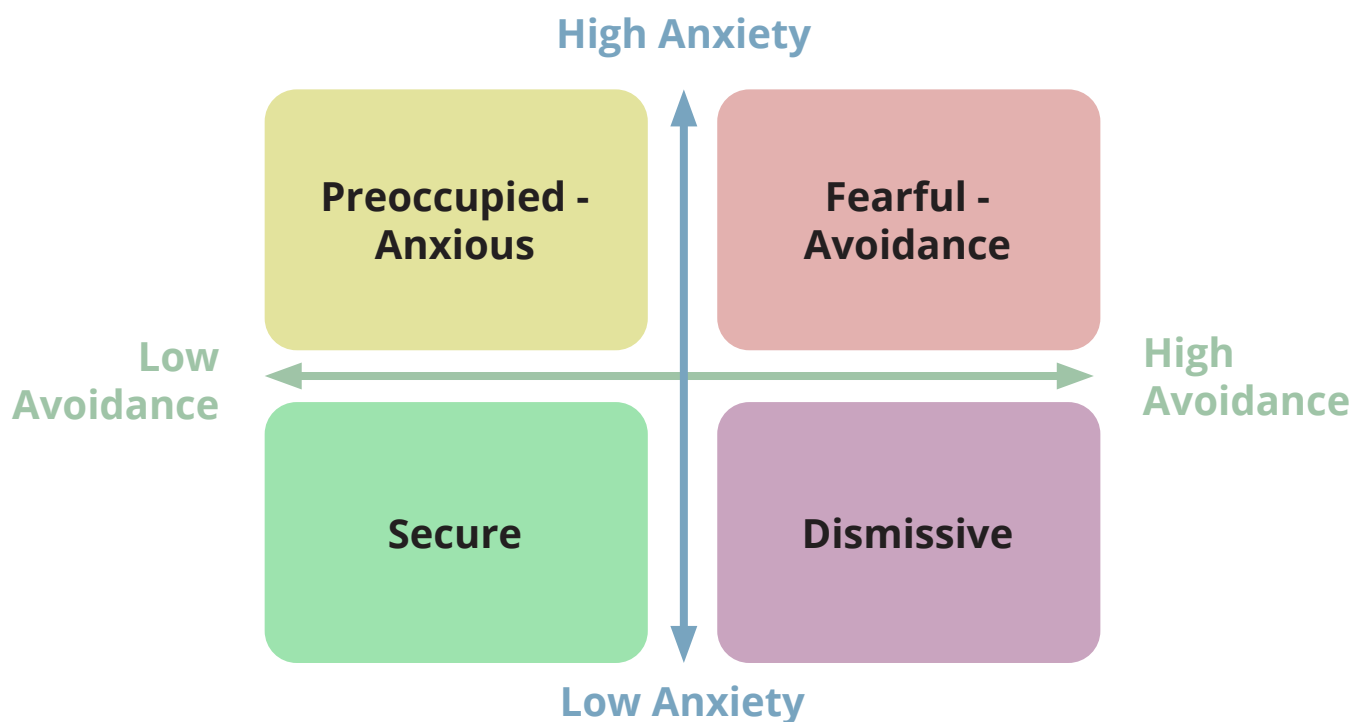
Figure 20 Attachment Patterns

The blue vertical axis of Anxiety means how much stress a person is experiencing. Anxiety is a natural human response when we feel under threat.

The green horizontal axis of Avoidance indicates the action of responsiveness to the situation.

'Those with **Preoccupied** attachment tend to score high on anxiety and low on avoidance (People-pleasing kinds of behaviour).

Those who are **Secure** tend to score low on anxiety and low on avoidance (Easiest to work with and can help calm other attachment styles).

Those who are **Fearful** tend to score high on anxiety and high on avoidance (Nervous, skittish, fragmented work style).

Those who are **Dismissive** tend to be low on anxiety and high on avoidance (Absent themselves, poor health and so on).

High avoidance and high anxiety are not a good combination in any team environment, and it is obvious that an increase in either will decrease team functioning. In Regulation Traffic Lights (see Section 4.1, Table 13), the team leaves the green zone which is the optimum functioning Zone for teams.

Leadership Styles

Many ideas regarding leadership have been advanced over the years, one of particular interest to us concerns full range leadership that comprise transactional and transformational leadership styles.

Transactional leadership is when 'Rewards and recognition were provided contingent on followers successfully carrying out their roles and assignments' (Bass et al., 2003:208).
A simple example would be paying an employee X in return for a particular volume and quality of work. If the employee fails to behave as required there would be consequences. Another example is more subtle: the team leader makes the team member feel particularly special or welcomed if they are offering their services freely. When they cannot offer their services for whatever reason, the warmth and attention from the leader is withdrawn.

With transformational leadership, there is a focus on relationships through four main components: Idealised Influence or charisma (trust plays a role), Inspirational Motivation (provide meaning and challenge), Intellectual Stimulation (novel ways of questioning assumptions, safe to make mistakes), and Individual Consideration (mentoring/coaching element). Team members describe the experience of being in these teams as 'being fully seen' for who they are, rather than being rewarded for what they do. They tend to want to be around the leader, who makes them feel inspired and inspires them to further their own learning and development (Bass et al., 2003:208).

Some studies have considered attachment behaviour with both transformational and transactional leadership styles (Berson et. al., 2006; Boatright et al. 2010). A 2019 study examined the link between Transformational leadership, God-attachment and Adult Attachment styles (Foulkes-Bert, et al., 2019).

Transformational leadership's relational style links to secure attachment, whilst a task-orientated (transactional leadership) style is correlated to avoidant attachment (Doverspike et al., 1997). Secure leaders are open to new experiences and notice others' relational needs better. Whilst leaders with avoidant attachment are too self-orientated which means that others' styles and needs are not noticed or attended to.

Transformational leaders have been identified as those who provide sensitive and responsive care in leading followers on paths of self-development – which is a key factor in healthy teams (Neleson, 2016:40).

It has also been shown that transformational leaders will motivate, encourage, support and be accessible even when there is high conflict and stress in the system. This leader will help their followers to rethink problems and find creative solutions when there are stresses and issues. The 'keep their heads when all around are losing theirs".

This is linked to secure attachment, in which you are more likely to see yourself and others in a positive way and are therefore able to respond effectively to others.

Team Functioning and Attachment

Good teams function best when there is generally low conflict, high group trust and good post conflict relationship repair. Any strain on these three can cause significant issues in teams.

1) Attachment style differences affect group conflict levels which means that:
   • Groups with high levels of secure attachment and with high levels of anxious attachment will both experience the same conflict levels.
   • Higher levels of avoidant attachment will have the highest levels of conflict within the group.

2) Attachment style predicts how individuals engage with relationship repair (issues discussed openly and no hard feelings post conflict) after conflict has occurred, in these ways: groups with -
   • High secure attachment styles have the highest levels of relationship repair post a period of conflict.
   • High level of anxious and avoidant attachments will have lower post relationship repair than secure groups.

3) Attachment style will affect the level of group trust in these ways: groups with -
   • High levels of avoidant attachment will have the lowest cognitive (thinking) and affective (emotions) trust levels.
   • High levels of anxious attachment will have low levels of affective trust.
   • High levels of secure attachment will have high levels of affective and cognitive trust.

For team functioning purposes, here is a brief look at what the different attachment styles will look like when relating to a securely attached leader or team member. These refer to how the Securely attached team member would feel about each of the following members:
when a Securely attached member encounters someone who is Dismissive Avoidant, they can feel frustrated about:

   • Perceived lack of commitment
   • Lack of openness, sharing or closeness

However, a secure person can nurture them in a way they had not yet experienced, which can allow them to feel safer around sharing and trusting.
When a securely attached member encounters someone who has an anxious style, they might feel frustrated by:

   • The initially very needy and insecure behaviour from the anxiously attached person, but if positive reinforcement and validation are given, this can begin to calm the anxiety, with stability over time.

However, if the secure leader takes a step back to regain space and sense of self, it might result in the anxious person 'doubling down' their efforts to attach again – which might make the secure person feel more need for space and distance. This sets up a downward cycle.

When a Securely attached member encounters someone who is Fearful-Avoidant, they might:
   • Find that person can easily 'morph' into what the leader or member needs – which includes being charming in early stages
   • Eventually find that they can participate in deep conversations, feeling heard and understood

- As the relationship develops, push the leader away. This can be puzzling to the leader, but as the fearful-avoidant person fears being rejected suddenly (which increased intimacy leads them to feel) they might reject the other before they are rejected.

It is important to understand these interactions in order not to read a particular attachment style as a behavioural issue, or to take it personally or at face value. A healthy conversation highlighting how the behaviour is perceived and what you the leader can help with, will go a long way toward soothing the reactive styles and creating a safer team.

In Regulation Traffic Light terms, a safe team is one in which people are not constantly triggered (attachment style activation) but feel generally safe and held and heard. The more secure the leader becomes, the more the team 'attaches' to the secure leader and begins to feel safer and thus operate from their best selves.

Tips for Success

- Take time to understand what attachment style resonates with you, especially in any leadership position.
- Develop an understanding of your personal relating style and which member in your team you feel most comfortable/uncomfortable with. Begin exploration on why that might be the case.
- Understand what emotional response comes from your dominant attachment pattern.
- Understand what emotional response might develop in certain relationships and team and explore strategies in knowing how to feel secure.
- Get to know other team members attachment style by creating an open and honest environment where people are confident to share how they might experience certain team behaviour.
- Develop team strategies for what to do when an attachment pattern is activated. For example, allow each team member to verbalise what helps, so that team members (with permission) can suggest making changes to alleviate distress.
- Consider further reading and research of anything that resonates from this section.

4.3   Boundaries

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

This section is intended to help the reader understand the significance of boundaries for themselves and for team health and stability. Boundaries are foundational factors that establish and solidify identity. They can bring order out of chaos, clarity out of confusion and freedom to be creative. Boundaries are not rules and walls to oppress us but will inherently bring safety and therefore greater freedom. Healthy boundaries are crucial for the overall health of individuals, teams, and organisations. Creating, developing, and maintaining boundaries can be hard work and might not come easily.

Whether we feel tied by rules or express boundary-less behaviour, neither are wholesome or healthy ways of living. Whether this is the first or hundredth time of reading about boundaries, it is important we create, develop, reset and/or maintain boundaries. Boundaries potentially bring freedom, clarity and security and can greatly assist when experiencing or recovering from traumatic events or when encountering fresh opportunities.

What are Boundaries?

A boundary can be described as a real or an imaginary line that creates a border between two or more things. Cloud and Townsend (1992) tell us that "boundaries are anything that helps to differentiate you from someone else or shows you where you begin and end" (Cloud and Townsend, 1992:35). In Genesis 1, we see God separating the sky from the sea and the sea from the land. Boundaries are foundational in creating and maintaining objects' original design and purpose.

Cloud and Townsend (1992) further noted that in the physical everyday world, boundaries are naturally seen in the form of signs, fences, walls, or hedges that indicate where one section ends, and another begins. Our personal boundaries are what we create for ourselves and are drawn from our culture, past experiences, beliefs, and expectations. Boundaries are expressed by our words, actions, and feelings. Different people have vastly differing boundaries ranging from very rigid (like "built up walls" where no one can get in or out) to others who have no boundaries (anything goes - they are all things to all people). The purpose of boundary setting is not just to help us express ourselves to others, but also points to how we also expect others to treat us.

While Cloud and Townsend (1992) make clear that we are responsible for our own feelings, choices, attitudes, behaviours, values, limits, talents, thoughts, desires, and the way we love, is it really that simple? For instance, if we ask ourselves "who/what controls our life" - what we would say? Or from another angle: why do I join in or say no or engage or disengage with others? It is not uncommon to hear "I'd feel guilty if I said no" or "They made me do it" or even "what type of Christian would that make me if I didn't do what they ask?" All these point to the idea that we are not taking responsibility for how we feel, but in fact attribute the power to someone else.

Boundaries are significant in developing our autonomous being (see later Transactional Action, Section 3.5). They are both a gift and a responsibility to live out what we believe in integral ways. Some terms associated with the language of boundaries are around "self-care" or "self-awareness", which can be uncomfortable especially for Christians with the spotlight on the word "self" as it can be seen as selfish and perhaps ungodly. Teaching in churches has often been

on topics of giving up self, sacrificing self, serving others and being humble which are true and good. Whilst this may seem a paradox in asking Christians to be more focused on self-care and self-awareness, this is not for the purpose of selfish ambition and gain, but rather to strengthen ourselves and not neglect our human responsibilities of caring for our bodies, emotions, and sense of safety.

There may be times when practicing boundaries or self-care can be seen as putting self first and others might indeed view it as selfish or self-seeking, but the purpose is not solely for individual gain, but to be more resourced for the sake of others. One could liken it to placing our own oxygen mask on before another's. Without oxygen, we will die and cannot help others! From our experience as therapists, the more clients can understand and practise their boundaries in terms of self-care and self-awareness, the greater and healthier their relationship will become with God, self, and others.

Case Study

Sandy is a well-loved and hard-working leader but a chronic people-pleaser. She adapts herself continually to others and their needs, and finds herself saying different things to different people, which at times seems contradicting. A familiar pattern for Sandy would be making quick decisions based on the needs of others that would have knock-on effects. For example, having a conversation with a team member in the morning, Sandy saw that she was feeling a little low, so just told her to take the afternoon off from work and said she would sort everything regarding the upcoming role and responsibilities. This team member did not need to take time off as they were happy to continue that day as it was a good distraction, but feeling unable to say no to Sandy, thanked her for her care. Due to the short notice, Sandy was unable to find a replacement to help with the activity that legally required a certain number of people. Sandy found herself saying that she would replace the other team member, and as a result let down her other pre-arranged meetings that caused a knock-on effect. The team began to feel unsafe and confused as they were not sure what decisions Sandy would make as they were inconsistent, yet they loved and valued her heart to help others. Eventually, Sandy started wearing herself out and began to feel dissatisfied in her job and angry, frustrated, and fearful of letting people down. Performance was hindered and Sandy frequently took time off work due to ill health as she was constantly living in stress.

On reflection, Sandy realised she had a boundary problem. She recognized that she was not owning her choices, wants, feelings, needs or actions. One of the comforting truths she experienced was that she did not have to live the way she had been living which felt so familiar but had permission to make changes without the need to please everybody. She had believed she existed for others and did not understand the term 'self-care' or how to implement healthy boundaries. Deep down, she expected others to fulfil her needs and rescue her when feeling overwhelmed and believed she should do the same for others. She realized she had lost her sense of self or had never really understood her internal boundaries - she did not know what she believed or valued. Pleasing others was her goal but really from fear of punishment rather than from love for the other person. She realised that she had spent her childhood keeping Mum safe and happy and had learned to automatically do this for others.

She began implementing healthy boundaries by writing down what she valued most, and how she wanted to be consistent with her words that helped differentiate her sense of identity and responsibility with that of others. She began to work out what she was responsible for and what was the responsibility of others.

Sandy found this a difficult journey as she would find herself going in and out of old patterns of people-pleasing and feeling stressed, but the more she found her voice and language, her sense of wellbeing improved. Holding her ground in the face of others disappointed was difficult but she had

great friends around to support her when she felt guilty about saying no. Her mandate was "no is a complete sentence" and practiced not giving a reason/excuse/lie about why she cannot fulfil what is being asked of her and stopped making rash decisions. As a result, Sandy has also been able to accept other's people's 'noes' and 'yeses', even when she might not agree with them. She understands the importance of respecting other people's choices and even asked questions such as "what would you like to do about that problem?" instead of rushing in and rescuing.

Using ideas covered in the Transactional Analysis Section (3.5), her leadership style became more consistent and more Adult than Nurturing Parent and her internal world shifted more towards the Green state than Amber. The team is also more relaxed and work engagement has increased.

As you can see from Sandy's journey, lack of consistent and informed boundary setting cannot only affect our emotional internal world but can have knock-on effects with others, especially in teams. Understanding, exploring, and implementing healthy boundaries are crucial for any leaders as the culture, emotional climate and productivity are often dictated by them whether consciously or not. Implementing healthy boundaries is hard work but they are a crucial aspect of team and self-care.

Signs of Healthy and Unhealthy Boundaries

In Table 15, we summarise some common signs of healthy and unhealthy boundaries, these boundaries being potentially helpful to team leaders when working with individual team members.

Healthy Boundaries		Unhealthy Boundaries	
Internal World (Emotional and mental signs)	**External World** (Behavioural signs expressed to others)	**Internal World** (Emotional and mental signs)	**External World** (Behavioural signs expressed to others)
• High self-esteem and self-worth • Highly self-aware • Feels peace, relaxed, energised • Able to handle difficult emotions • Takes responsibility for emotions, thoughts, and actions • Notices when something feels out of line • Values personal growth and development	• Appropriately communicate needs and desires • Makes informed decisions • Treats others respectfully and kindly • Able to say no and handle other peoples' no. • Not compromising values for others • Empowers others in decision making • Appreciates and values feedback	• Low self-worth and esteem • Poor self-awareness • Feels exhausted, sad, depressed, shame, afraid and often filled with guilt and anger • Happiness depends on others • Too afraid to share own mind	• Indecisive and goes with other people's opinion • Often taken advantage of • Difficulty saying no • Often self-neglects and highly adaptive to other people's needs • Oversharing/ too secretive of information • Allows others to create their sense of identity by changing appearance, speech, beliefs, etc,. to fit in.

Table 15 Signs of healthy and unhealthy boundaries

Tips for Success

- Be a conscious and self-aware leader that initiates exploring clear boundaries within teams, such as expectations, goal setting, motivation behind decisions, values and beliefs around culture and relating, job roles, and time/finances goals.
- Know what you are responsible for and what you are not.
- Be consistent, firm/brave and remind yourself of the purpose of holding and implementing clear boundaries with self and others but always in the tone of kindness and compassion.
- Boundaries might need changing and adapting at times, so be conscious and fully informed when this happens.
- Maintain healthy boundaries with effective communication, clarity and consistency.
- Boundaries can be unique to you and your teams, so enjoy creating and maintain guidelines regarding culture, emotional climate, beliefs and values, goals and visions and ways to implement them.
- Do regular check-ins with self and team.

4.4   Family Systems

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

This section is intended to give the reader a fuller appreciation of what happens when there is stress and conflict in teams and how "differences" in views, values or behaviour can be seen as a threat to a person's identity and purpose. This threat can create a great deal of anxiety in the individuals and the system. The premise of this work is based on Murray Bowen's Family Systems Therapy that, in short, believes that our emotional and physiological health is influenced by each other and is largely learned from our family of origin.

The emotional dynamics in relationships can potentially calm and bring stability to a person's emotional state and wellbeing, or bring dysfunction, stress and dysregulation that can impact a team's sense of identity and functionality. Simply, relationships can be a major cause of stress and anxiety.

We all have different strategies to help us relate to each other and understanding further the processes involved in dealing with intense emotions of relating and behaving can be conducive to health and wellbeing. This can help Christian leaders not only manage their own stress, but manage their teams and members more effectively. It has been invaluable, on a personal note, to understand the patterns of behaviour outlined below, in both my family and the teams that I work in. My family changed much in the way we understand and relate to each other, especially in relation to stress in our family system. Furthermore, church work has become less 'personal' (and therefore less hurtful) as the entire team grew in their understanding of these patterns.

Family Systems and Churches or teams

Many researchers have commented on how teams, churches, and organisations function like family. Friedman stated that "work systems that deal with the basic stresses of life ... are particularly susceptible to the rules of family process. Of all work systems, however, the one that functions most like a family is the church or synagogue" (2011: 197).

Families feature in churches and organisations in two ways: first, it is quite common to hear people talk about their organisation as 'one happy family' or to refer to the 'church family'. This is fine but, of course, families vary hugely in how they operate and feel. What constitutes happy and what brings this about can also vary.

Second, we find that individuals tend to replicate and carry forward the behaviours (both good and bad) learned in their childhood families. These different behaviours play out in how people are with each other, affect how the team 'does things round here', as well as processes and styles of leadership. Critically, this can also be seen in how particular issues are addressed and may be the root cause of one or more team problems. Understanding how and why this happens and what they can do about it can go a long way toward helping church leaders manage both their own their team's and their congregations' stress (Richardson, 2005; Son, 2019; Brown & Errington, 2019).

In the same way, this understanding can help leadership development specialists be more effective and alert to when the support of a psychotherapist might be warranted. Whilst this is true of teams operating in any context, the "emotional dynamics become especially important in religious organisations because the bonds between members often involve powerful feelings"

(Fuller, 2014:6). This is because whilst most faith communities hold difference and diversity as values, when they are encountered in the 'flesh' they produce strong emotional reactions – along with a resulting anxiety that is difficult to comfortably deal with.

When there is strong difference in views or opinions, approaches to a situation, a proposed decision and particularly, conflict around lived values, it feels like a threat to self, either from losing out regarding something you feel passionate about or from the experience of conflict itself. Understanding this can allow us to see conflict as "predictable ... (a) potentially useful ... consequence of relating to diverse others within the context of religious community" (Fuller, 2014:7).

Anxiety, at its basic, is a threat to self.

Strong felt responses to conflict need not necessarily be an issue, but a natural part of being human and can signal (like a warning light on a dashboard) what is difficult in any community or relationship (see Section 4.1 regarding Interpersonal Trauma).

Noticing and understanding difference (ideological/theoretical/personal) could become a way of understanding and forming a new vision for the body of Christ, that has at its core, healthy, deep relational connections instead of reactive responses for same-ness or emotional distancing.

(Fuller, 2014:7)

Schopenhauer (1851) referred to the Hedgehogs' dilemma: Hedgehogs need to group together to stay warm in the winter, but obviously the prickles can hurt. However, if they avoid the hurt, (and the prickles) they might die from the cold! This is not unlike our human dilemma – we need people, but people hurt. We believe Christ is calling us into intimacy with him and each other, despite the hurt others can bring. Being with people and around people will always hurt some, but that doesn't mean that we avoid them altogether. Emotional and physical distancing is not the answer to group issues - being more like Christ is. Christ led by example when he looks past the wounding (Peter's betrayal as one example) and chose to love anyway.

Managing the anxiety resulting from working in teams

Teamwork can cause hurt that in turn causes anxiety. Bowen originally developed Family Systems Theory in the 1950s to explain some of the dysfunction and difficulties encountered in families and this theory has since been applied to organisations and to the church (Gilbert, 2004; Brown and Errington, 2019; Kerr, 2019; Fuller, 2014; Friedman, 2011).

We will explore further three key ideas developed by Bowen to explain how we manage the anxiety that results from our relationships in teams or groups (in other words, how we manage the hedgehog prickles!)

A) Self-Differentiation

The antidote to chronic-felt anxiety in systems is differentiation. This, Bowen understood as our instinct toward individuality, driving us to become "an emotionally separate person, an individual with the ability to think, feel, and act for himself" (Kerr & Bowen, 1998: 95). Differentiation is how an individual goes about defining themselves to achieve their goals, led by their sense of who they are. It is best achieved through healthy boundaries (see section 4.3). However, too much individuality is not healthy (the hedgehogs die of cold).

The individuality force is ideally balanced by the togetherness force which "propels child and family to remain emotionally connected and to operate in reaction to one another" (Kerr and Bowen, 1998:95). The togetherness force is that which pulls us towards others. Emotional connection is like the warmth required by the hedgehogs. Togetherness is as much needed as individuality. The trick is to balance these two forces in a healthy way.
What this looks like:

Person A and **Person B**
are not well differentiated
The togetherness pull is strong - emotional fusion
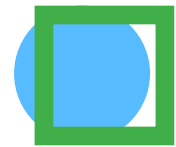
Person A and **Person B** are too distant.
This is not healthy in a family or group.
This is called 'cut-off' and can look like members
leaving a church or other social group.

Person A and **Person B** are well differentiated.
They have healthy individuation.
Locus of control is internal not external.
They join groups in a healthy way.

Figure 21 Differentiation between people.

A Differentiation Scale was developed by Murray Bowen in 1972 to classify levels of human emotional functioning and shows any individual's ability to think of themselves as an individual and as different from their family of origin, group, or team (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). This scale is simply a map reflecting how people are likely to behave the more self-differentiated they are and is not a tool for diagnosis.

Various diagnostic tools have since been developed to test the robustness of this scale, although the original design by Bowen was not diagnostic. Research has shown that greater differentiation of self is associated with higher levels of functioning (Chung & Gale, 2006; Jenkins, et al., 2005; Knauth & Skowron, 2004) and lower self-differentiation with anxiety, depression, stress, and the like. (Chung & Gale, 2006; Drake & Murdock, 2008; Murdock & Gore, 2004; Peleg, 2005, all cited in Drake, 2011: 5,6). So self-differentiation is an important life skill, with real impact on one's wellbeing.

- The self-differentiation scale has no correlation to intelligence or health but shows what the individual tends toward under stress.
- "The greater the degree of undifferentiation (no-self), the greater the emotional fusion into a common self with others" (Bowen, 1972 cited in Gilbert, 2004).

- The less self-differentiated the individual is, the more likely they are to blend into a common emotional fusion with others. This means that if there is anxiety in a group, the people in the group who are less well differentiated will also 'catch' the anxiety. The same is true for other emotions. Simply put, you will not have a strong idea of what your ideas are in a group setting if you do not have good differentiation. This means that if members of a well-functioning team are joined by a very anxious person, those in the team who are not well differentiated will likely 'catch' the anxiety of the new team member. A well-differentiated leader can help to calm the anxiety by pointing out what is the team's anxiety and what is the individual's.
- The work of self-differentiation is to differentiate the individual from their emotional systems or, put another way, not to be so emotionally led. This does not mean they do not feel their emotions, but rather that they are aware of them but do not allow them to be the only way they make decisions. The more they can think about how to respond to a given situation, using their thinking as well as their emotions, the more self-differentiated they become.

An example might be that someone gives you feedback of a rather personal nature, and you notice that your emotional temperature goes up. Instead of reacting to this unpleasant feeling, you take the time to stop and think. Did you interpret what was said correctly? Could you have misunderstood? Could this be reminding you of a horrible incident from your past? Could you be feeling more emotional than the comment warranted? All of these questions engage your thinking brain and allows your emotional brain to take its proper place. This does not mean that you cannot trust your emotions but rather that you take time to frame them or understand that the temperature or intensity might not warrant the actual situation. You can only understand this by taking the time to stop and think before you respond. 'Thinking' might also look like talking to a friend, asking the person who delivered the comment for clarification, talking to your vicar or a therapist.

- The work is not to disconnect from other people, but rather to be aware of what they think and feel (or their expression of this), but also to know what they as individuals think and feel. Once they can tell these two apart, the individual can choose to engage with them from a place of strong self-awareness. Self-awareness allows you to respond with congruence (i.e., in agreement/harmony with thoughts and behaviour) instead of fear that if you do not go along with what they think and feel they might become stressed, or that their own emotion will colour everything that ensues.
- In general, the less differentiated a person (i.e., poor sense of self/awareness), the higher the role emotionality and subjectivity play in decisions and choices, and the lower the role that thinking and reflection play.
- Ideally, individuals can balance these two forces in a healthy way, defining self, whilst staying in healthy connection to others.

For most people, the togetherness pull remains the driving and strongest force and is therefore the challenge that we each face. In other words, the emotional need to belong and fit means we give up more of our sense of self as we do not know how to belong and still retain a sense of self. This scale as Bowen created it has been roughly mapped out in Table 16, of which there are many iterations. This one is based on a scale of 1-100. The higher the score, the greater the level of differentiation:

(On following page)
Table 16 Differentiation Scale
Adapted from Kerr, M.: Bowen, M. (1988). Family evaluation:
An Approach Based on Bowen Theory. NY: Norton

100	Not clear this is achievable in humans!
85-95 (Very well)	Very well differentiated. Goal directed and principle orientated. Not emotionally reactive. Internal locus of control. Self-regulating. Can listen well and is non-adversarial. Functioning and self-image not affected by either criticism or praise. Not taking on responsibility for others feeling or discomfort. Understands self-limitations - has realistic expectations of self. Tolerance for and adept around intense feelings and has good emotional literacy. Good personal boundaries. Low or no anxiety
75 (Well)	Quite well differentiated Can move easily between emotional closeness and independent goals. Can remain calm if things are troubled. Quite real – does not need or seek others approval. Less emotionally reactive – will use good thinking to understand situations.
60 (Better)	Acts more from reason than from feelings. Able to think independently rather than seek opinions of others. Able to pause to consider actions, rather than react. Will say what they think in relationships, although might hide real feelings or needs. Better boundaries.
50	When triggered or stressed, will recover more easily.
40 (poor)	Continued search for an 'ideal' closeness. Low level of real self – operates from adapted child most often. Seeks approval and concerned with the impression they make Sense of self depends on others' opinions or behaviours. Are feelings led – little ability to choose rational thinking. Poor emotional skill and literacy. Inconsistent or poor boundaries. Uses distractions to escape self.
30 (poor)	Highly suggestible to others' opinions and views. Poor boundaries. Prone to joining extremist groups or cults. Prone to rigid religious or rebellious beliefs and thinking. Successful in the workplace if constantly praised. Spends a great deal of energy finding love and being loved.
0-25 (very poor)	Usually high levels of chronic anxiety – often uncomfortable in social or other settings. Long-term relationships are hard to maintain – easily gives up. Lives entirely in a feeling's world – but possibly desensitised to the point of emotional numbness. Co-dependent, no boundaries and emotionally highly needy. Very emotionally reactive to others. Limited energy for goal-directed endeavours, energy spent trying to achieve comfort. Functions largely on emotional reactions to their environmental cues. Responses range from oppositional to automatically compliant behaviour. Inability to distinguish between thoughts and feelings. Is not aware that there could be alternatives to their feelings.

A differentiation scale is inherently hopeful. The basic premise laid out in the table is that as individuals learn to engage thinking that results in less immediate reaction to emotions, they will move up the scale. The more a person is fused to others, the less ability they possess to be led by their own (or God's) healthy thinking.

"People on the lower end of the scale live in a feeling-controlled world in which feelings and subjectivity are dominant over the objective reasoning process most of the time" (Gilbert, 2004:28). This renders them more vulnerable to stress and thus more likely to fusion with others, which leaves little energy for goals and self-directed behaviours.

Conversely, for those at the higher ends of the scale, the less likely they are to give up self to fusion (or being drawn by the togetherness pull for the sake of peace or decreased anxiety) with others. This is not in the way one usually speaks of giving up self (i.e., unselfish) but in a way enables a clarity of choice that does not allow others' emotional lives to rule or impact yours unduly. A healthy person can effectively stand outside the system/church/organisation and choose to empathetically reach into the system to care for others. But in the caring, they are not blended or fused but have the clarity not to be drawn into the drama that is playing out. They become that calmer self that can soothe the whole system.

Families and teams of people on the lower end of the scale will exhibit higher levels of anxiety, will tolerate less individual expression among members and will demand a huge demonstrated emotional input from members – usually to the point that members have little left to contribute to their own or societal projects. The cost of family or team membership is too often loss of 'self'. Children or members who are 'different' either must distance, cut-off or fuse, thereby losing their difference or individuality in order to belong in the group. Similarly, in teams of people, the cost of belonging or acceptance is to give up self-expression or any unique qualities. An example of this could be consistently saying 'I will do what you want', and any expression of personal wants and desires can be a threat to belonging. The group tends to blend to behave the same and 'group-think' is high. Of course, the strength of a good team lies in its diversity, which lower differentiation groups tend to discourage.

In contrast, families, or team members on the higher end of the scale positively encourage autonomy, see their children, or team members as unique with their own expression of self, celebrate difference and the system carries less anxiety. As a result, the children or team members can step into life without the baggage of expectations and 'how it should be". In teams, if the conversation is had early on about individual dreams, hopes, and desires it enables the members to pursue their own life goals and have energy to deal with the challenges of life, (Gilbert, 2004; Titelman, 2014; Kerr, 2019). as well as become vibrant members of the team. (Also, see section 4.3 regarding Boundaries)

So, in teams and churches each member will join with a family history somewhere along the differentiation scale. They will bring these expectations and anxieties into the group and are likely, from the lower end of the scale, to form similar groups (which can look like cliques) where they feel most comfortable. If the person leading the team is not well differentiated, their job is really a lot harder.

They are not only more sensitive to the feelings and emotions being projected into the system, but they will also find it difficult to withstand being drawn into various emotional systems, depending on who they are with. It is no wonder that many are left feeling as if they have had the life sucked out of them – they have!

Self-Differentiation is a key characteristic for successful leadership.

Self-differentiation can be expressed through internal relationship with self and through your external relationship with others. Figure 22 shows how the internal relationship with self can be either more emotionally or more choice led, which then influences how we relate to others and our responses to external stimulus (the things/events that happen to us in life).

Figure 22 shows that the greater the distance between feelings and thoughts, the greater is the capacity to choose what to do about them (actions), the easier and less stressful life will be. "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom" (variously attributed to Viktor Frankl or Stephen Covey, used in the introduction to Pattakos, 2017).

Choice-led
Less Fusion
Other's opinions less impactful
Less anxious
Life issues less stressful
Good decisions
Healthier relationships

- 100 -

Feelings

Thinking

- 50 -

Solely Emotions-led
Relationships fured
Increased life issues
Worried about others' opinions
Increased anxiety
Relationship Difficulties

- 0 -
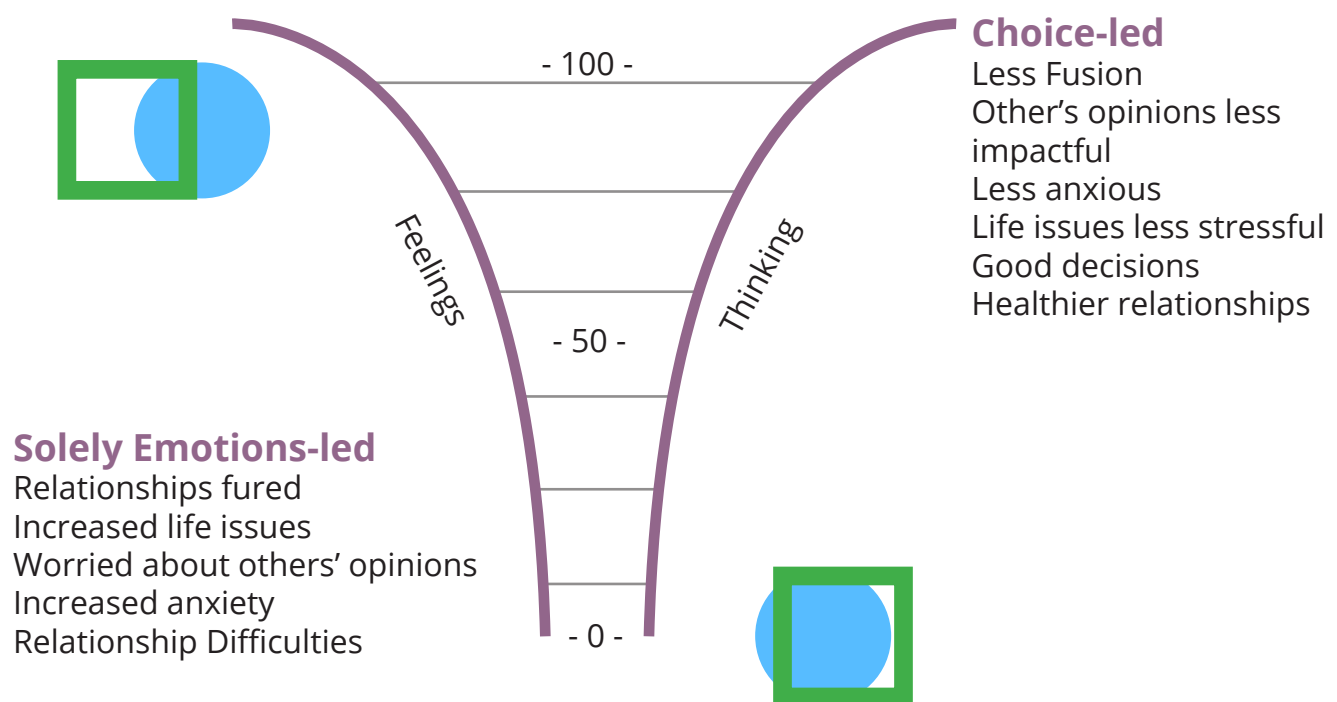
Figure 22 Self Differentiation

The greater the space created between the stimulus (i.e., everything that comes into our awareness such as airplanes flying past, phone calls, feelings and the like) and the individual's own thinking that enables the response, the greater is the possibility that they will have of making good life choices that serve them in the long term. This space is created by separating feelings from the thoughts that emerge from them. In the space there is a moment created to choose. How we respond is based on our character, knowledge, understanding and experiences or simply who we are.

When you, the reader, open the space between how you feel and what you do about those feelings (observer stance), the more self-differentiated or emotionally agile you become (David, 2017). Self-differentiated people are flexible, tolerate high levels of stress and remain open and receptive even when the environment is more stressful. Emotional agility is that ability to tolerate and appropriately express our emotions, but not to make decisions purely from emotions (which as we know change like the weather).

We have all worked with colleagues who are so emotionally led that we feel as if we are on a daily roller-coaster along with them. It's exhausting for us, and even more so for them. The good news is that this skill of opening the space can be developed.

Another important characteristic of leadership, within Family Systems Theory, is the ability to understand the preferred way of dealing with the anxiety that stems from being with others. This can change depending on the people or situation, but most of us have a usual way of behaving. Once this is clear, it enables anyone to take on the observer function – and see from a distance what is happening. You can observe yourself responding or become aware of your habitual responses – which good self-awareness will foster. Sometimes talking to a trusted colleague or a therapist can help determine what the characteristic way of dealing with anxiety is (fight, flight, freeze) and so help to notice habitual responses.

The observer stance (reflective, self-differentiated) can be contrasted with complete withdrawal stance (walking away and not seeing at all - a kind of denial), and the 'nose-pressed-to-the-glass-stance' (less differentiated) in which the proverbial wood for the trees cannot be seen. Individuals are so fused and blended with the situation that it is very difficult to sort out what the issues are. In this stance, one is often also in a very emotionally-charged state. Again, this highlights the importance of the space between feelings and thinking.

Once a more differentiated observer stance is adopted, it allows a calmer input into the system (calmer heads prevail!). In those circumstances, the real issues can be seen, and the actual anxiety dealt with. Apart from a trusted friend, therapist, or coach, prayer can be a great spiritual tool to enlarge the calm observer part of you and gain distance from the immediate feelings. It allows more of your thinking mind or pre-frontal cortex to operate and enables you to become more reflective. This can help someone to make choices from a more self-differentiated position or the green state of our Regulation Traffic Lights.

To process and illustrate some of these concepts, a case vignette might be useful (a composite of stories told to the author)

Grace Church began in 2002 as a vision from a couple (James and Eliza Jenkins) who felt that God had called them to service. The church began small, using a local school hall for Sunday worship and a container on a founding member's property for storage of equipment. As the church grew (250 members) it was apparent that some leadership structures were needed, and these were drawn from a few of the founding members (the Browns, Osbornes, Taylors, and Spicers). The founders and founding members had been through a lot together in the early days and had become very close, often sharing family picnics and holidays outside of church. Firm friendships formed between the women (childcare, creche, coffees) and the men (cycle rides, painting houses, helping each other). They had worked hard together, often involving long hours and family sacrifice to achieve a thriving church.

Mostly this leadership team got on well, and disagreements seemed to be sorted out quite quickly. However, there was a little rumble here and there around a few theological issues that appeared to be 'smoothed over', rather than dealt with. Some of the leaders were, at this point, showing signs of stress but were soldiering on.

In terms of self-differentiation, we might suggest that the 'togetherness' pull that coalesced the group - probably quite a useful tool in the formation stages - became unhealthy as the church grew. 'Togetherness' was predominant and the cost of dis-agreeing with the group was so high that most people chose to 'smooth things over' rather than self-differentiate and express their honest thoughts and feelings.

This strong togetherness force, with its tendency to freeze out those who do not agree, or at least not hear any dissenting voice, would have set a poor foundation for later growth. The togetherness pull often relies on a very strong culture, frequency of proximity and a smaller group. As this dilutes when a church grows, you can no longer be in touching and seeing distance with people; it is harder to assert that kind of influence as consistently. Leaders might begin to feel that they are 'losing the room'.

In 2006, Grace Church had grown to 400 and their application for Charitable status required a much larger group of Trustees and, at the same time, they realised they required some skilled expertise in financial, HR and technical areas to help manage a bigger staff team. This meant the leadership structure had to draw from a wider pool in the congregation, which they did.

However, right from the start, there was tension between the leadership and the new trustees. The trustees felt they held a fiduciary duty to take accountability for some of the decisions being made – especially in the field of finances, but the leadership had always made these decisions 'on the fly' before. The team were not enjoying the new 'form filling' which was needed and intended to create greater transparency in the system. There was some rumbling and grumbling at this stage that was not adequately addressed or properly dealt with. Furthermore, a few key early members had left due to theological disagreements around the role of women in leadership.

Once again, if a team has been operating from a place of fusion, the only way they can keep any sense of themselves seems to be to leave. So, rather than a sit-down discussion there might have been you're all-in or all-out kind of message. When people do not feel comfortable with group fusion and with their loss of self, they have only one option: to distance.

The congregation was now much larger, and members of the congregation were approaching trustees about issues that they might previously have approached the leadership with. This caused much distress for the leaders and Trustees alike and each became increasingly stressed.

As we mentioned earlier - stress in the system leads to anxiety, which is a response to a threat to one's sense of self. If at any point, someone had stood up, recognised the increasing anxiety (named it, or called it out) and normalised it, this outcome might have been very different.

It all came to a head when the Jenkins found a piece of land that the church might use to build a larger church building on, but the Trustees felt that it was a financially risky purchase and were not in agreement. This split the church: some felt that they should be led by the vision God had given the Jenkins, others felt the trustees were right and the church should wait until more funds were available. What further exacerbated the split was that one or two of the founding members (Taylors and Osbornes) felt the same as the Trustees. The Jenkins felt that they had been 'stabbed in the back' by the people who were supposed to be their friends and once close confidants.

This feeling of being 'stabbed in the back' when people fundamentally disagree with a viewpoint is quite typical if the team model has been highly fused. Notice how emotional that response is. Whereas, if there had been a more differentiated approach, more reasoned and thoughtful (non-reactive) thinking might have been engaged with. This trickiness could have been negotiated.

The Jenkins retreated into themselves and became less visible to the wider church and, although the rest of the leadership team held the church at this time, there was no proper dealing with the gaping split in the church. Sundays became uncomfortable affairs and people began to slowly drift away.

Eventually the Taylors and Osbornes left the church, finding no way through the awkwardness and discomfort. It was a great loss for some of the children who had spent large parts of their childhood together. This loss of leadership caused more members to leave too, some not even joining a new church because they had been too hurt or upset by the whole process.

When fusion and emotions set the tone, it is extremely difficult to frame the situation in any other way than "they are not for us". Of course, that feels hurtful and further entrenches the gap. However, if reason and differentiation had prevailed, this could so easily have become a more reflective process, more thoughtful and creative outcomes might have ensued. This would have had the opposite effect – although the group might not have all 'been as one,' they could have joined together in the new and creative outcome that might have been different to both camps' original positions. The result would not have been a split. But when your sense of self depends on sameness, this is difficult to achieve.

And so, the Jenkins and the remaining founding members continue in their reduced state, but there is a general feeling that the initial joy and growth and outworking of God's love in their community is somewhat diminished. There is a sadness, a woundedness and an awful lack of understanding about what happened. The Jenkins' report feeling absolutely burned out and that they are hanging on by their fingertips.

B) Self-differentiation in groups

Our first experience of self-differentiation is in our childhood family. The family unit is the first basic emotional unit: the emotional system being different from either feeling or thinking systems, a kind of automatic response shown by natural expressions beyond conscious choice. Later, other emotional units can be formed within groups that work together, but they will react initially in the same way and expect the same 'rules' as the original family unit.

The 'unit' (as in family or group) enables the system to "receive information (from self and environment), to integrate the information, and respond on the basis of it" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988:27) in an efficient manner. By becoming aware of this automatic unit processing - or how we function as a unit/group, one can begin to change one's earlier patterning. Individual members are affected by and affect the unit. Whatever affects one person in the unit, affects everyone.

> ## Anxiety (and other intense emotions) will be 'caught' by the whole unit.

Problems in a unit result from changes to the system, upsetting its sense of equilibrium (Fuller, 2014). When any kind of change happens, it can create anxiety in the system. Members will respond to this anxiety by withdrawing, attacking or emotional flare-ups. These behaviours are a consequence of the anxiety in the system, but if the emotions are dealt with and understood, this serves to defuse the anxiety and leave no need for the behaviours.

Members of a family or organisation (church) thus have a "deep, interconnected way of being with each other in which each affects the other" (Richardson, 2005:385). It also means that members of the unit will trade 'self' into a fusion of selves in the unit as a way of managing their own or felt group anxiety. Units will form between members in churches, usually around interest or function. A staff team running a youth group would be a good example of a Unit within a church.

Remembering from earlier: the two opposite forces of togetherness and individuality are constantly in play. Togetherness being the force that pulls one into the group (safety, approval, protection – less anxiety) and individuality which is being our unique selves. Our unique selves: "Follow(s) its own directives, to be an independent and distinct entity" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988:63). So, we will trade individuality for the sense of being in a group, to be connected and a part of something. The parts that we 'give' to the group are known as our 'fused' parts. Whatever is not fused to the group is our individual self. The trick is to be in a group, be aware of the parts you are consciously giving to the group, but to be able to be yourself in the group, without having extreme emotional responses.

> *It can be easy to see how the Jenkins and their founding members (eventually leaders) became a very close-knit group. They traded a lot of individuality for togetherness and possibly fused more than might be healthy. The individual parts were not respected (as when the Taylors and Osbornes disagreed with the Jenkins and agreed with the Trustees).*

But what would not be evident is how each member of this group had learned to be in their families of origin. It could have been that the members who agreed with the Trustees had had healthier beginnings, where the togetherness force was not as strongly emphasised. It could be that the Jenkins had come from families where togetherness was prized above all else, and thus the 'betrayal' felt by them would have been very real in their eyes. However, by other members this would not be perceived as a 'betrayal'. The perspective we take on these issues will depend a lot on how we frame what is going on. The frame we take depends on our original family systems unless we have done the work to be more observant.

Too much anxiety causes damage to a system and, if untreated, can lead to toxic systems. Anxiety can be acute – a response to a perceived danger or threat, or chronic - background noise generated by imagined threat (not a threat in the here and now). When one family/group/church member feels anxiety, everyone feels it. Chronic anxiety is often a response to existing dysfunctions in the system.

"If a church as a system has effectively dealt with arising anxiety at various junctures of its life, the level of chronic anxiety would be very low" (Son, 2019:13).

However, high levels of chronic anxiety over time will result in system over-reactions, even to relatively small stressors.

Fusions will temporarily solve the problem of felt anxiety (not however on their own while under stress), but fusion also creates its own set of problems. The anxiety and discomfort felt by fusion is resolved in several patterns, which look like the flight/fight/freeze/ submit response humans have to danger. The patterns are themselves not dysfunctional or bad, unless only one is habitually favoured. Fight and flight are in the amber state and freeze is in the red state of the Regulation Traffic Light, each of which is now examined.

C) Patterns we use to diffuse anxiety in the unit/family/team

Reactivity is the emotional response that each person has in the face of a perceived threat. In a family, a parent might get a phone call to come in to school. Their response to this is their reactivity. It does not refer to the strength of their emotion, but rather whether they choose to connect, withdraw, or blame others to deal with the inherent anxiety the threat (news) generates. One parent might reach out to a friend, another might get angry at the check-out lady and yet another might read an article about how to handle the problem (Fuller, 2014: 11).

In churches, when there is any stress in the system, such as two groups that cannot agree, or a difficult issue, people deal with this by either:

- Blaming someone else. When there is a significant difference, for example, individual members may focus on 'the other' as the reason for their anxiety and begin to distance themselves to seek relief.
- Withdrawing entirely. They might choose to disengage from a volunteer team or not come to church for a while. In families this can manifest in silence, staying in a room or generally staying away from family activities.
- Taking sides (togetherness pull). This means that any person who is different to them appears threatening. The stronger this togetherness belief is in a system, the higher the anxiety when differences arise. This means that when chronic anxiety is pervasive, those systems will struggle to manage and contain differences that arise.

In a team, this could look like no one being happy until they all agree with each other, rather than a healthier awareness of one's own feeling but being able to 'agree to disagree' after views have been respectfully shared. In a team where no one can separate their own feelings from those of others, it can often look very fractious and there will be high stress in the system. Each member might feel the need to either ramp up their emotional expressions (Amber traffic light) or to withdraw entirely (Red traffic light) which could sometimes mean to leave the team/church entirely.

Family Systems Theory identifies several patterns commonly used to manage anxiety. We examine four of them: i) emotional conflict, ii) triangles, iii) emotional distancing and iv) under or over functioning (Gilbert, 2004).

i) Emotional Conflict (fight)
Conflict between people is normal and needed to clarify issues, express boundaries, and initiate a repair. However, emotional conflict is when one person/group decides to relieve their anxiety by blaming another person/group. In other words, externalising their own anxiety onto someone/thing else. Emotional conflict is obviously driven more by the emotional than the rational/thinking system and encompasses inherent bias. This is evidenced in daytime TV shows such as The Jeremy Kyle Show in the UK or the Jerry Springer show in the US where members are encouraged to 'let it all out'. This is far more likely to fan the flames of dispute than to reach a factual resolution. Bowen thought that the emotional conflict pattern was designed to hold the anxiety within the immediate system or unit (keeping it in-house), and this is achieved by blaming and creating conflict with the other person/group. Unfortunately, it doesn't help either party to do the work of being open, aware, and owning the anxiety which stems from their own discomfort with difference or conflict. It also stems from one person claiming too much of their 'self' to compromise and co-operate. The work is to make sense of one's own anxiety and to do the boundary work needed. Then to express your discomfort without blaming or shaming another.

In the vignette, the Osbornes and Taylors were involved in an emotional conflict with the Jenkins, Browns and Spicers.

Figure 23 Emotional conflict

ii) Triangles/Triangulation (fight)

This involves two people/groups deciding that the cause of any tensions between them is not themselves but caused by a third person/group. The two people/groups in agreement are the 'insiders' and the person/group who is deemed the cause is the 'outsider'. This serves the subtle function of reducing heat in the system by spreading the anxiety. The person/group in the 'outside' position absorbs the anxiety generated by the other two people/groups. The alliance of the insiders is comforting and calming – and if any new tension arises, they project that onto the outsider. The insider's stability is achieved by externalising their anxiety.
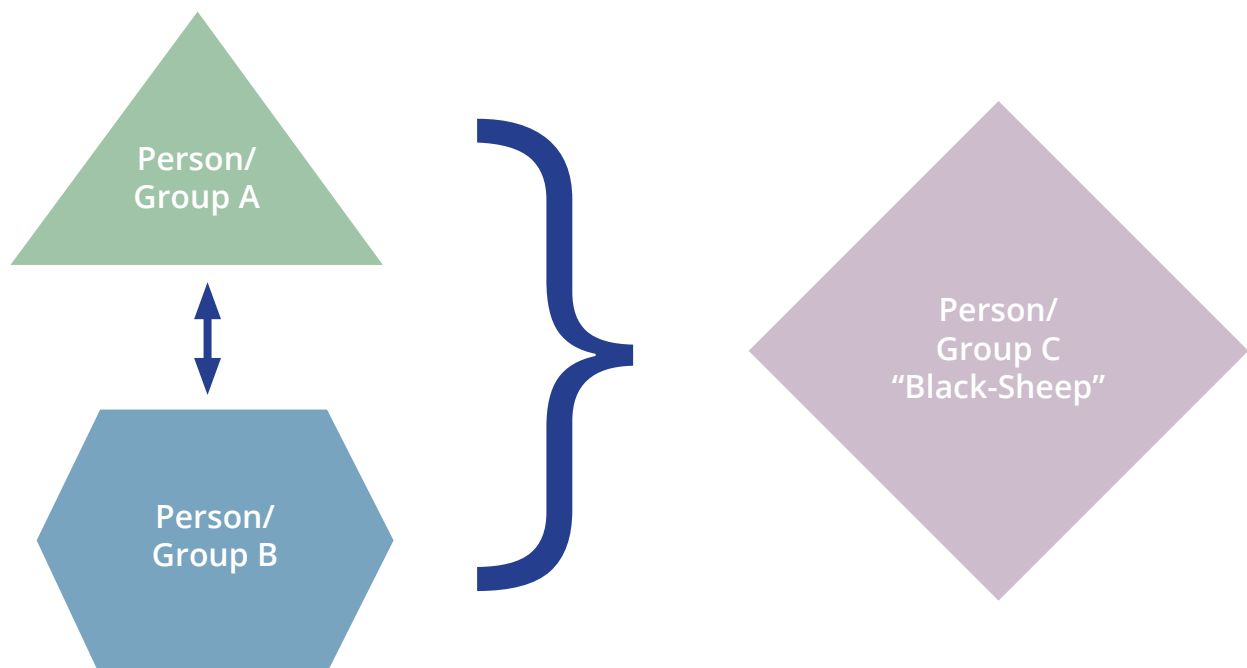
Figure 24 Triangulation

In family therapy, this dynamic is seen when there is unexpressed stress, tension or unresolved issues between the parents and the parents need to reduce the resultant anxiety. A third party (usually a child/mother-in-law/other) becomes 'the problem' and provides a place for the parents to focus and give air to frustrations that they cannot express to each other. The 'problem person' holds the focus and thus takes the heat out of the relationship between the parents, or at least gives it a 'logical' place to go. "Any group member who attempts to step outside what can become a highly malignant process is typically labelled as disloyal and often shunned" (Kerr, 2019:14). This dynamic can also be called the "black sheep of the family", which is needed to regain a sense of calm and stability in the system.

The triangling process seen in family units also shows up in social units of unrelated people (churches). When stress or tension is felt in a team (staff team, for example) the team will find someone else to place that stress onto. The other person/group becomes the deemed cause of the stress. "The less 'self' people have, the more dependant they are on affiliation with a group or groups to support their emotional functioning. People with low levels of 'self' suffering from depression, with no direction in their lives, may join cult groups and improve their functioning dramatically" (Kerr, 2019:14). The reason is that the 'cult' group then chooses 'the outside world' as the enemy and is the cause of all their ills. This makes those in the 'in' group feel vastly better about themselves.

> *Again, this dynamic can be seen in the case study; the Jenkins, Brown, Spicer, Osborne, and Taylor families were a close group. They might have triangled from time to time when there were perhaps 'difficult' church members, but mostly would have remained on side – especially as there was little stress in the system. As the church grew larger, and the demands of the church heated up, the founders would have initially triangled against the Trustees. They were the first 'common enemy'. However, there were early stresses in the system before the trustees arrived, and had these been dealt with well, might not have resulted in any need for later triangulation.*
>
> *Later as the Osbornes and Taylors sided with the Trustees (probably from a more self-differentiated place) they were seen as malignant, disloyal and eventually felt forced to leave.*

It should be noted that triangles, although pervasive, are not always harmful. They are used to compartmentalise anxiety, preventing it from impairing the rest of the system. An example might be when one friend asks another friend if they can process their feelings/reactions to an incident, before meeting the offending 'other' face-to-face. This is for the purpose of making sure their response is fair, trying to gain an objective stance. Sometimes another is needed to help with this.

However, this is not the same as gossiping and trying to gain someone onside. In this instance, there is usually a price to be paid by someone – that someone becomes 'less than' or the black sheep. The answer is not to ban triangles, but to notice when they appear, and use them like an early warning system. This allows us to move toward transparency and address the inherent issue that is causing the conflict and stress in the system.

Team leaders who 'use' triangles and black sheep to their advantage certainly have less stress in the short term – but it always leads to difficulties and problems in the long term.
If there is genuinely a difficult team member that needs to be dealt with up front, in mature dialogue and, where necessary, with HR. Ultimately, due to its impact, this is likely to be a performance management issue. But having a black sheep to relieve stress in the system/team is not professional, never mind Christian.

iii) Emotional Distance: (flight)

Another response to conflict/anxiety is to distance, to completely remove oneself from the situation. This can be an emotional distance or a physical distancing. This serves to reduce the internal personal conflict, as well as group discomfort for a while. Externally, the distanced person might appear to be out of an individual or family's life, but internally, the distanced person is thought about and worried about a great deal. Often in the form of replayed imaginary conversations where one "tells them how it really is". (Gilbert, 2004; Kerr, 2019; Titelman, 2014). This emotional distance can eventually lead to increasing distance and in some cases 'cut off', in which there is no contact at all.
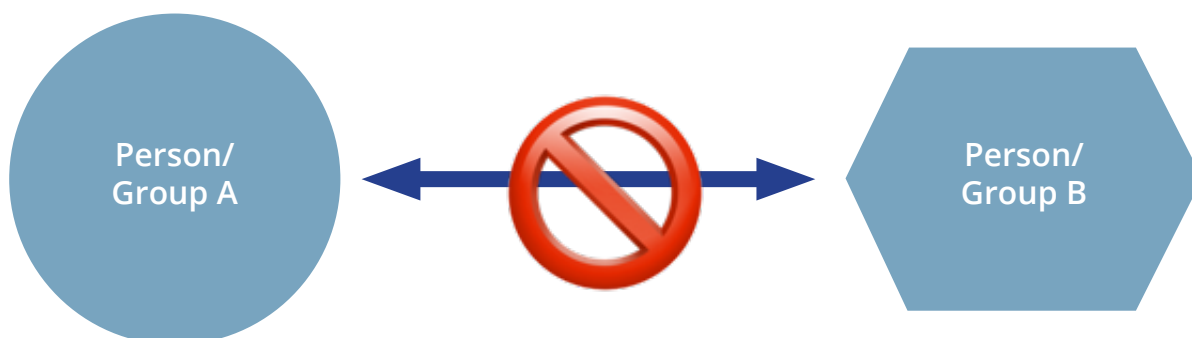
Figure 25 Emotional Distance

A recent case of cut off can be seen in the Royal Family. The move to the USA might at the moment feel like a relief for the young couple. They appear to be expressing their anger and possibly think they are preventing themselves from being hurt again. The problem is, although they now do not have to deal with the unkind comments or the feelings of being left out, they could also not be dealing with their own feelings. They might have squarely placed the blame for their discomfort at someone else's door. Of course, we do not know this – but the example serves to illustrate this distancing phenomena.

In these instances, the wound festers but never heals, and lives might be marked by a similar pattern of dealing with other difficult people. It is a short-term solution that brings short-term relief but leaves people with a lifetime of difficulty. It means they might not learn to deal with the extremely difficult emotions that families always bring – and work through them to resolve them. A mental limp remains unhealed.

The interesting thing about distancing is the impact that it often has on the other person. If a husband begins to subtly distance (less eye or physical contact for example) the wife sometimes has a symptom of some kind (gets a migraine or IBS). In Bowens theory, one person distancing (their response to anxiety) can lead to another's symptoms. As we discussed earlier:

> **The less 'self' available to the person, the more emotional distancing will be used as an anxiety management technique.**

One can only guess at the subtle, but subconsciously noticed, distancing that might be part of our case study. Initially, that might have been in the early days when 'little rumbles' of discontent were smoothed over and not properly addressed (usually all in the guise of 'giving grace' or 'overlooking offences' or 'thinking the best of' and so on). Instead of having an environment where people can honestly explain what ails them without fear of upsetting or de-stabilising the other, this form of anxiety relief via distancing will always take place.

iv) Under or Over Functioning Reciprocity: (freeze/fight)
This is often seen in spouses, where one spouse becomes the more assertive decision-maker, making choices for the fused parts of the couple and the other adapts to this. The problem is that the adapted one loses self whilst the dominant one gains self. The one operating in the adapted function eventually loses capacity to make decisions. This often results in symptoms in the adapted one: physical or emotional illness, acting out, etc.

This acts inversely: the more one over-functions, the more the other one will under-function. There is no win-win here – the under-functioning one is freed from decision making and some anxiety, whilst the over-functioning one feels more in control, and both probably feels that the under-functioner is the cause of the issue (Kerr, 2019). The under-functioner will rely heavily on the other, become passive, allow the other to do more things for them than is needed and asks for unnecessary advice. The over-functioner always knows the answers, tells the other how to think, assumes responsibility for the other.
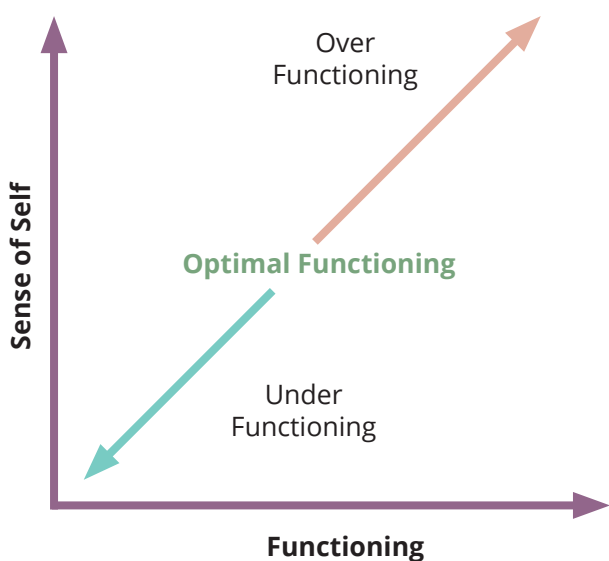
Figure 26 Functioning

Often seen in homes, where one partner will take up the expert stance and 'do all' for the other – making the other almost disappear in ability and character. However, it also plays out subtly in what looks like division of tasks but is one person over-functioning (meal preparation and finances spring to mind).

In group settings, this is often exacerbated when there has been an authoritarian structure in place – so in the church, the congregants have often sat back and allowed the clergy to metaphorically take on 'care of their souls', manage the general reaching into communities and so on. Whereas Jesus revealed the upside-down kingdom of God that indicates we are servant-leaders (washing of feet in John 13) and that we are all equal messengers of the Good News.

At present, this is a particular problem where church bodies are reducing clergy numbers significantly and assuming or hoping that the laity will step in and step up. Some sort of adjustment is needed so that the laity stop under-functioning and the clergy stop over-functioning which in turn demands a more realistic stance taken regarding who does what and where power, laity freedom and accountability lie.

Again, this under or over-functioning is not in itself malignant, but serves as a dashboard -warning light for some unresolved stress in the system. We often under or over-function in many areas of our lives. Over-functioning often comes with the best intentions: you see someone struggling and know you can help, so you offer, and then you offer again, and before you know it you notice you're doing it all. But what is the stress that caused that initial response? Is it that you hate seeing things done poorly? That you hate watching someone suffer? Is it that you feel less stress if you do it yourself? All these bear examining.

To the reader - if you answer yes to any of the following questions it would be worth reflecting on what this means for you and your leadership of teams:

1. Are you worried when a job gets done poorly? Does that reflect on you/ your organisation? What might that say about you? What is the feeling that rises in you at the thought of something done poorly? Notice that. Maybe you recognise it – you have had this feeling before. What were the consequences then? Were you punished, made to feel ashamed or perhaps there was an overwhelming feeling of responsibility? All of these would cause your system to respond in stress. So, when it comes up for you in another setting – you step ahead of the stress – you take over to make sure you never feel like that again.

2. Do you hate watching someone suffer? Is it worth taking yourself back to a time when you did have to watch someone struggle, or you had to struggle on your own. That might have been enormously stress-inducing, any memory of which causes stress to rise in your system even now. It is this stress that you are protecting yourself from when you choose to step in for someone else. Instead, it is useful to have this conversation: "This person is not me. They might not find this difficult. Perhaps I can ask them if they need or want help – or let them know that I can help if they require it. They might need to learn something that would be good for them, and if I take over, it might make them feel useless or incompetent. Instead, they might be able to feel good about trying and succeeding if I don't intervene.

3. Do you feel less stress if you just do it yourself? It might be worth examining the feelings that emerge if someone else does it. Are the feelings frustrating because they are being too slow? Are they around the output not being good enough? Are they because you are carrying a greater proportion of responsibility for the outcome of the task? All these questions are helpful to allow you to get to the root of your stress. It could be that the responsibility you carry is too much. Or that you hold a feeling of being responsible that might not be yours to carry?

In all these incidences, the automatic response part of your brain is remembering the last time that went wrong – and your body is feeling stressed even before you deal with the here and now of today's problem. But you will bring the feelings of yesterday's memory into today's problem if you are not taking the time to examine the stress you feel. Further detail regarding the brain/body connection and stress can be found in *Guidance on Preventing Stress and Burnout in Churches and Christian Faith-Based Organisations* (Brown, Edmunds, and Field, 2020)

Furthermore, the patterns of over and under-functioning will be a rough copy (repetitive) or the exact opposite (reparative) of those found in your family of origin. So, if your mum over-functioned and you felt bad for your dad, you might end up under-functioning in your marriage. Or it could be that mum over-functioned and you thought "good on her, nothing would get done otherwise", and you repeat that in your own relationships.

Under and over-functioning can also tie into Transactional Analysis (See section 4.5). The over-functioner will look like the critical parent and the under-functioner the adaptive child. What we require are two adults who can interact in a healthy way.

In the case of the Jenkins, Eliza had over-functioned for a poorly mum in her family of origin and she now expected James to over-function, to solve the issues with his leadership team. James however, had under-functioned in his family of origin, and was quite uncomfortable 'asserting' himself like this. James thus had stress from both Eliza and the members of his team, who had

hoped that he would 'step up' more and take a firmer leadership role in the church (Gilbert 2004).

In our case study, we wonder that if the Trustees had had an inkling of what had been at play with the early team and had themselves already done the work of their own anxiety management, had perhaps been more self-differentiated, that perhaps they might have been the calm presence that enabled the others to take a step back and examine what was at play. Earlier we went over the basics of Attachment Theory (Section 4.2). Some of the ways in which we typically respond (fight/flight/freeze) will also depend on our attachment styles. Our earlier patterning, and the ways we learned as little people to stay safe and regulated, will become evident in our habitual functioning in groups too.

This work does not necessarily require the intervention of psychotherapists, but simply some self-reflection and taking the time to ask, "how might my current response not be a response to this situation, but be based on old events?" or "does the reaction to this situation seem greater than the situation warrants?"

However, if this is too painful to do on your own, and the memories of past events are very upsetting, then it might be useful to talk to someone. Another reason you might want to talk to someone could be that you know you are being triggered (feeling unsafe, highly anxious) by the same kind of event, but you really don't know why.

Table 17 summarises patterns we use to diffuse anxiety in the unit/family/system/group:

	Individual Response	Effect on Teams
Emotional Conflict	Blames other Takes no responsibility	Uncomfortable environment Issues not resolved Fear based culture No curiosity / poor learning environment
Triangulation	Problems placed on third person Issue not resolved No growth	'Us' and 'them' develops Creates division in teams Induces fear to modify behaviour No real problem solving
Emotional Distance	Removal from the relationship Lose attachment	Teams break Collaboration and learning lost
Under/ Over functioning	Over compensating for anxiety or, Retreating from anxiety and losing autonomy	Teams lose vital cross learning One or two 'do it all' Others lose their chance to grow and stretch

Table 17 Summary of Patterns we use to diffuse anxiety in the unit/family/system/group

How Family Therapy differs from Attachment Theory

One could ask the obvious question: How is Bowen Family Theory related to Attachment Theory? In essence, they are not related, but if one looks at a highly differentiated individual, they look very similar to a securely attached individual. The nuance comes when one is not relating one-to-one, but in groups.

Family theory looks at how we function in groups, whereas attachment looks more at how we function individually. However, a securely attached person generally exhibits healthy group behaviour, and is therefore less likely to exhibit some of the more extreme stress responses seen in Family theory.

Tips for success

- Understand how the 'family system' is playing out in your team or organisation – both positive and negative aspects.
- Normalise the 'hedgehog' effect. Let people know that it is OK to feel upset by being pricked, and how they deal with it has positive and negative effects on the whole team.
- Be aware of your own self-differentiation tendency. Do whatever work is necessary to become more self-differentiated.
- Taking the observer stance 'I'm noticing, I feel …'.
- Becoming aware of your tendency towards being feelings-led or thinking-led.
- Notice whether you habitually tend to withdraw from others or move too much towards others.
- Notice whether you 'fuse' or give up self in the interests of peace.
- Notice how much autonomy and difference you encourage in your teams.
- Notice whether the emotion you are experiencing is 'caught' from the unit/group, or in fact your own.
- Notice how balanced your togetherness vs individuality force is – remember the hedgehogs who stay outside will die in the cold!
- Be aware of how anxiety in your system is routinely dealt with. Groups in chronic long-term anxiety become toxic. Do the work required to separate individual anxieties (which are 'caught') from real issues that the group face.
- All it takes is for one person in a conflict to own and work through their own issues of anxiety, to break any of the above mal-adapted patterns. (Become the adult and take ownership for your own feelings).
- Notice the patterns used by your team to diffuse anxiety
- Emotional conflict – Recognise where a person or group is placing blame squarely on another person or group (Blaming other).
- Recognise a triangle and allow people to understand that they are displacing their anxiety onto a third person. The work of the original pair can then take place. The third person has the option of not taking on the stress of the other two and can step away from the triangle.
- Where this is Emotional Distance - consider a simple gesture to reconnect which, however small, goes a long way to soften the inevitable walls between people, especially if the other person has done the work on what made them anxious instead of projecting it away from themselves.
- Where there is under or over-functioning those, involved could both work towards a more equal sharing of tasks and decision making and be prepared to learn from the other (Section 4.3 and 4.5, Boundaries and Transactional Analysis, respectively).
  Continued…

- Make the team aware of these patterns, without shaming. A general 'this is what happens sometimes in teams' is a good way of introducing the concepts. Allow team members to come up with their own examples – both personal and from the team. If this is a common language it becomes much easier to do the work together. Humour helps a lot!
- The big issue in all cases is how to keep anxiety at its source, deal with the issues in oneself and not passing the anxiety or displacing it onto another or others (Gilbert, 2004).

4.5 Transactional Analysis

Purpose of this section/Why read this?

This section is intended to give the reader an understanding of how we communicate with one another and what motivates our responses. When all members of a team are operating from their best and autonomous self, interactions are smooth, productivity increases, and the team flourishes. Autonomy is about a person's ability to make decisions and act with their own volition, based on their values and interests, and is made up of a set of skills and attitudes.

The importance of having and developing autonomy means a person can reason, appreciate other points of view and appropriately debate with others. The autonomous person is rooted in worth and respect for self and others. Autonomy promotes a positive sense of identity and personal responsibility. Some social environments can help us develop our autonomy or leave us feeling undermined. An autonomous person can challenge oppressive attitudes, confront unhealthy social systems, and make meaningful choices for the good of self and others.

Because handling stress and conflict are some of the main difficulties in relationships, people often feel powerless, helpless, anxious, and stuck in certain relational situations, without believing they have choices and options.

Transactional Analysis (TA) has been used to help people communicate effectively, especially in workplace settings. Understanding Transactional Analysis helps us identify patterns of relating and analyse how we communicate. The focus of Transactional Analysis is about developing autonomy and restoring one's freedom of choice to help communicate effectively, resulting in better relationships with others and self. Whilst autonomy can seem a matter for the individual, developing and challenging autonomy is crucial for healthy work environments and personal wellbeing.

Opening example of Transactional Analysis

The following example is a case study based on a combination of stories told to the author.

A newly-qualified pastor holds an early meeting with three members of the Welcome Team. He is unhappy by the way that people are being welcomed to the main Sunday service, in particular newcomers. He says....

'Last week I saw all three of you gathered around the Welcome Table chatting. Several regular members of the congregation had to walk round you to gather their own hymn books and orders of service. Someone I did not recognise came in rather hesitantly and although one of you did welcome them, they were only vaguely waived to a seat - you then resumed your conversation. This is not good enough – we need to be much more focused on people arriving when acting as part of the Welcome Team'.

Elder one responds defensively with a different version of events, 'Actually we were trying to agree how we would share out the jobs to be done that morning. We had not been told in advance about changes to the order of service. As it happens, the person you thought was a newcomer is an irregular attender who knows how things work in our Church'.

Elder two states 'I have been welcoming people into this Church for many years and have never had a

complaint; we are a very friendly bunch here. Anyway, I had been thinking of stepping down'.

Elder three who is new to this role, looks tearful as she says 'I am still finding my feet here, not sure what to do as there are no written instructions – I am beginning to think I am not best suited to this role'.

The Pastor continues....

'It is true that I have high expectations, but this is not a difficult role. Perhaps it would be better if members of the Welcome Team arrived 30 minutes before the Sunday Service to set up, clarify roles, etc. Additionally, I suggest that only the two members of the Welcome Team are on duty each service'.

Elder two states 'Well that will not work for me. My husband does not come to this Church and is often complaining about the amount of time I spend here every Sunday morning'.

Consequences: an over-emotional reaction resulting in all feeling offended and needing to justify themselves, and a fracture in relationship. This might have been avoided if the Pastor believed he had other options to respond to his difficulty. An understanding of TA can offer a solution to this.

Transactional Analysis can be used to check an approach to a conversation, particularly one that might be a little sensitive. Transactional Analysis explores the verbal and non-verbal transactions or communications that occur between "giver" and "receiver". In this example, the Pastor would appear to be operating out of the "Critical Parent" part of himself and, as a result, the team members automatically respond from their respective parts. We will explore this interaction further in Table 19, but first we need to understand TA.

Understanding TA

TA was developed by Eric Berne in the 1960s who noticed in clinical practice that people would visibly change from one state to another. He noticed these changes in facial expression, gesture, posture, vocabulary and physiological changes (like blushing, crying, shallow breathing). He believed that these changes indicated what ego-state we are operating from and responding to. Harris (1995) states that "throughout history one impression of human nature has been consistent: that man has a multiple nature" (1995:1). The common phrase heard during Berne's therapy sessions was "Even though I am an adult (in age) , I feel like a child". As a result, Berne believed that inside of each of us, there were Parent-Adult-Child Ego states. These states of Parent-Adult-Child are "produced by the playback of recorded data of events in the past, involving real people, real times, real places, real decisions and real feelings" (Harris 1995: 18). Our life experiences help define our beliefs, values, and behaviours in life, and at times they can cause conflict due to the different states within us having different beliefs and messages from past situations. Often this internal conflict would be replayed within our present relationships. (This links with our Attachments Styles in Section 4.2 – we respond now based on earlier memories and patterning).

Ego-States:

Ego States are consistent patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that make up our personality and way of being at any given time. These are unique to each of us and comprise of:

Parent: Our Parent part usually repeats messages, tones, and beliefs that we would have heard from parents and authority figures during childhood. They are subconscious (out of awareness) messages from our past that condition our behaviour, sometimes without us even knowing

about it. The Parent part can be identified as Nurturing Parent or Critical Parent. The Critical Parent part embodies phrases such as "should", "ought", "always", "never". The nurturing parent part uses more encouraging phrases. The parent part has interactions that are usually based on nurturing, encouraging, guiding, or criticism/judging and control.

Adult:
Our Adult part is the ability to think, discern, and determine our own behaviour free from the parental voices of our past. Usually, the Adult part can understand the Parent and Child ego states and determine a new way of behaviour based on the data received from the other two states, such as "my child always did this, but my adult part can do something different". Often the who, what, when, why, how type of thinking is working at its best in this state and can hold the person's past, present and future without becoming overwhelmed. The Parent Child relationship is often rooted in the past and needs certainty, whereas the Adult part can think about the future in a flexible and positive way. Transactions from an Adult ego are straight-talking, and able to have appropriate expression of emotion and share their own point of view. The Adult ego state is a whole part and is not often identified into any two parts like that of the Child and Parent.

Child:
Our Child part comprises the internal reaction and feelings to events. This is the "felt-experience" of external events based on the past. When a similar event triggers the past event, the Child remembers the same emotional experience and repeats it. The Child part is referred to the "felt" part because its memory data is taken from the seeing, hearing, and understanding of an experience. During childhood formation, language and communication is the final part of the brain to form and so the emotions are experienced first before we can verbally express ourselves. So, a child would have "felt" the event first. Transactions from a Child ego are usually immature, playful and needs based.

Berne believed when we communicated either verbally or non-verbally, we do so from one of our ego-states. The characteristics summarised in Table 18 can help identify what state we might be operating from. We can shift states at any point, especially if we are triggered emotionally and overwhelmed.

Characteristics of Parent-Adult-Child Ego States		
Nurturing Parent: Considerate, affectionate, kind, helpful, understands, warm, praising, gentle, generous, forgiving, patient, unselfish, encouraging, comforting.	P	**Critical Parent:** Dominant, demanding, forceful, scolding, judging, nagging, bossy, forceful, rigid, severe, authoritarian, negative and harsh.
Adult: Capable, rational, clear-headed, logical, organised, realistic, reasonable, unemotional, fair, alert, stable, flexible, appropriate expression of emotion.	A	**Adult (No split as Adult is integrated):** Approaches life rationally and can make the best choice available.
Natural Child: Fun, adventurous, imaginative, enthusiastic, excitable, uninhibited, spontaneous, affectionate, artistic, energetic, emotional, creative and enjoys being alive.	C	**Adaptative Child:** Anxious, fearful, arguing, apathetic, awkward, dependent, defensive, hurried, moody, arrogant, confused, complains, over-reacts to being judged, shamed, and punished.
NB. Often there can be quick transitioning between each ego state and for ease of processing sometimes it can be helpful to just say Parent, Adult, Child parts without going into further detail of what type of Parent and Child.		

Table 18 Characteristics of Parent-Adult-Child Ego States
(Based on the works of Harris (1995) and Cooke (2021))

Understanding P-A-C Interactions

In the opening example, it appears that the newly-qualified Pastor appeared to be operating from his Critical Parent part, while the Elders responded from a mix of their respective parts. Table 19 analyses the responses from each Elder.

	Elder 1	Elder 2	Elder 2
Statements	"We were trying to agree how we would share out the jobs to be done that morning. We had not been told in advance about changes to the order of service. As it happens the person you thought was a newcomer is an irregular attender who knows how things work in our Church"	"I have been welcoming people into this Church for many years and have never had a complaint, we are a very friendly bunch here. As it happens, I had been thinking of stepping down"	"I am still finding my feet here, not sure what to do as there are no written instructions – I am beginning to think I am not best suited to this role"
Potential Ego States	Critical Parent	Adaptive child	Child (mix of Natural Child and Adaptative child)
Analysis of response	The response here is predominantly Critical Parent, as they are correcting and judging what is being said in defensive tone.	The Child part here is feeling "told off", and believing what was said was not fair, and as a result over-reacts and steps down, so they will not be told off again.	The Child part needs guidance but requires a Nurturing Parent and not a Critical Parent. They need to be guided, and do not want to feel shamed, judged, controlled, or not good enough in the role.

Table 19 Elder Responses

What if the newly-operating Pastor responded out of his Adult Ego State, rather than Critical Parent in the same situation?

Newly-Qualified Pastor	
Potential Internal Dialogue of Ego States	Chosen Operating State – Adult
Critical Parent Part: "They should be welcoming people", "they are not doing what I say". Nip this in the bud asap. **Adult part:** "Check if they know the role and ask if they need support with it. Was this a one-off situation, or normal?" **Child part:** "I am so angry they have not listened to me, they are giving a bad impression of my church."	The newly-qualified pastor attends the meeting in "Adult State" and maintains appropriate expression of emotions and approaches the meeting with a curious, flexible, and open mind-set. *"As you are all aware, I am new to this role, and asking you here for this meeting as I want to get to know you more as team and maybe share a few thoughts of my experience so far. How long have you all been on the team? What have been the best ways you have found that help people feel welcome? I'm also wondering what happened last Sunday when you were huddled together for some time? Was everything ok? I really value every person being welcomed here and sometimes when I spot people not being acknowledged I can feel upset and want to automatically do something about it! I'm learning to manage my own expectations! So, how best can we work together to welcome people in this church? Thank you for all your hard work."*

Table 20 Pastor Response

Imagine how one of the Elders might have responded to the Pastor's Adult chosen operating state which was TA informed. However, even though the Pastor could have operated out of his Adult state, there are no guarantees that he would have received an Adult, fully informed response.
There are different ways we can choose to respond to certain situations and transactions.

Reflecting on past interactions, and how the Parent-Adult-Child ego states have played a part, can help us discover new ways of feeling, thinking, and behaving that have positive and fulfilling outcomes.

The purpose of TA is to enable a person to have considered choice and develop autonomy by strengthening the Adult part. The Adult can understand the Parent and Child interactions, but is able to respond with reasoned thought, taking all the information into account. Even when we do believe we are operating out of an Adult part, it does not mean that others would respond out of their Adult part, as something could have triggered them into believing that they are operating out of another state.

Adapting TA into leadership and Team workplace settings

In Table 21 we tease out and explore how different operating leadership states can affect workplace team settings:

Dominant Operating State:	Impact on culture and power dynamics	Impact on leadership behaviour	Outworking/results
Critical Parent	Top-down and controlling Can at times be seen as authoritarian and could lead to an "abuse of power"	What I say is best and must go	Clear and strict guidelines, rules, and consequences. Can cause shame if not adhered to.
Nurturing Parent	Top-down and encouraging/guiding Sense of "power over" and can often look like rescuing	You need me to help you	Can lead to dependency on the leader and potential underworking of members which can cause poor delegation and the leader overworking which leads to stress and burnout (Under/over functioning).
Adult	Empowering and trusting Collaborative culture and "power with"	I can be truthful, and straightforward in a respectful way	Stable, secure, and flourishing team. Mistakes are corrected and victories celebrated.
Adaptive Child	Immature, game-playing (manipulative) Gains power by holding the attention of others or gives power away in order to get needs met.	Tell me what to do/ don't tell me what to do	Either stays stuck in the same way of doing things and change is a threat or needs to maintain the status quo. Needs certainty.
Natural Child	Fun, loving, playful, creative.	Just let me have fun. I have the best ideas and we need to do them – I'm passionate. Passion is catching.	Team can be engaged in lots of new adventures but can also be found with too many unfinished projects. There is always a need for something "new".

Table 21 TA – Different Operating States

As experienced therapists, our main observation, working with Christians and Christian leaders have been the difficulties of Parent-Child and Child-Parent interactions.

The leader/pastor/vicar is often 'given' the parental role by both the team members and the congregants, which can cause great distress. Whether the Christian leader is operating out of Nurturing Parent (often burning out), or from a Critical Parent style; both hinders an environment that is conducive for personal autonomy and freedom which causes internal turmoil. It also tends to engage more of a childlike response from their team members or congregants. Likewise, if the team member or congregant is routinely operating from a Child mode, this can engage the Parent mode more easily. This can be very confusing and distressing for Christians in whatever role and can affect their faith and spiritual growth.

At its worst, Christians experiencing strong unchecked parental leadership styles can create a culture and environment that is oppressive and rigid and hinders members' personal autonomy which can cause serious emotional, mental, and spiritual harm. If the leader mainly operates out of the Child state, then often they are emotionally led and can affect team morale in both a positive and negative way.

Whether you are a congregational member or Christian leader, the work is to develop the Adult part to engage positively with your emotions. Emotions are signals pointing to a particular operating style and allow us to get to grips with which operating style is engaging. Once awareness of the main style is gained, we can change the style to the more positive Adult one and respond in more positive and effective ways.

Using TA for self-directed leadership and decision making

Harris (1995) noted that "most of our energy day after day is used in decision making" (1995:52). The inability to make decisions is one of the main factors that cripples action either for fear of getting it wrong, wanting to be told what to do or not knowing what to do. According to TA analysis , the internal conflict of making decisions has its roots in the Parent-Adult-Child states and all three egos carry a different set of data with different messages and emotions – thus creating a freeze in decision-making. A good way to illustrate this is through the following example:

Example of Internal P-A-C mode

A 53-year-old pastor has the responsibility of deciding whether their church congregation begins the process of buying their own church building. After coming out of his trustee meeting where they discussed putting an offer in for a building they have seen, he begins to get sweaty palms, heart palpitations and has the feeling of impending doom, despite a few minutes ago being excited by the prospects of this new possibility. If we explore each Parent-Adult-Child state, the following could be happening:

Parent state:
The common tape that is being played is,
"do not bring shame and failure on the family"
"you must accomplish all that you set out to do, and failure is not an option"
"the needs of your family must come first"

The Parent data is full of responsibility as the Pastor was the oldest child in a family of 5. He was told constantly he had to look after his siblings and would get told off if anything would go wrong. What he would say and do was taken very seriously and parents would hold him responsible for the actions of his siblings.

The second state of data during this internal conflict would come from the Child.
Child state: His Child state would feel he was 6 years old and would feel scared when he could not get his siblings to come home for dinner during playtime. His parents would scold him and remind him of his responsibilities. Of course, this 6-year-old would feel scared of disappointing his parents as he would be punished for not conforming to their expectations.

Thoughts might be:
"I will get into trouble"
"I am so scared of the consequences of failing at my task"

Adult State:
He can discern the parts of him that are causing conflict and see they belong to past experiences. Even though those experiences feel very real in the here and now, the outcome can look different in the present. He engages with and soothes the Child part by saying the Adult understands and can and will provide the extra support to process the overwhelming emotions. This stops him staying in a fear-filled Child place. Furthermore, he would have an internal conversation with the Parent part: the trustees are not his parents, and he is an adult and is now able to handle any consequence that might ensue.

As a result, he sits down and begins to write a plan and a set of questions that he feels he needs answers to, to help inform the present-day situation.

Self-directed leadership requires understanding of the different operating states within ourselves. Once the states have been acknowledged, and their voices heard, decisions can be made using all the relevant data, but the Adult is the decision maker.

Tips for Success

- Understanding our ego-states does need persistent exploration - but it is worth it.
- Take time to reflect on a certain interaction and explore what states could be operating during that experience. Understand the triggers that causes you to enter a certain state.
- Explore ways you can access your Adult state that restores freedom of choice and autonomy in love and kindness.
- Next time when you experience a difficult transaction, practise new ways of relating and behaving that was learnt from the experience.
- Be kind and encouraging to self when trying something different.

5. Selfcare for Team Leaders

5.

Purpose of strengthening selfcare

Leading a team is a significant responsibility, one for which leaders often appear to allow insufficient time, are inadequately prepared, and poorly supported. Whilst effective team leadership seems to come quite naturally to some people and rarely cause stress, this is not true for most. Many people we come across who lead teams, find this responsibility to be a personal step too far, often necessary because it comes with a role or promotion and something they would happily lose. Whilst some people avoid roles that include team leadership, in effect topping out their careers, most, for a while at least, accept this responsibility and do the best they can.

Self care

☺

Even apparently able leaders, who have thrived for many years, can suddenly be floored by a change in context, or circumstance, or be 'blessed' with a team member who they experience as challenging. It is our belief that whilst many teams perform at a satisfactory level, their full potential is not realised.

Irrespective of context, performance record, and reputation, at some future point a leader is likely to find they are seriously challenged by a person, event, situation, etc. This is when they will discover the sufficiency of their ability, strength, and resilience and be able to answer the question 'Can I lead through a difficult situation without damaging myself or others, and avoid toxic stress and ultimately burnout? Unfortunately, for many leaders the answer to this question is 'no', and they pay an unacceptable personal cost incurred as they wrestle with team challenges. Sadly, for some this cost will cause toxic levels of stress and even burnout.

Lasting self-care and wellbeing are not achieved through 'one-off' actions when times are difficult, and stress is rising. An 'emergency' meditation session might help calm someone, but much more is to be gained by embedding wellbeing practices in our daily life. It is far better to prevent, or deal with stress before it develops, eliminating the risk of this turning toxic and ensuing burnout. It is possible instead to enjoy life as a healthy all-round leader, leading a healthy team even when difficult situations and challenges arise. Leaders who invest in strengthening their self and others tend to be the ones that change cultures and organisational practices in their workplace. The teams they lead become more fulfilling, satisfying, and productive places to be. The investment really is worth it!

Understanding yourself

Understanding ourselves can bring great strength, clarity, comfort, empowerment, change and joy to our internal and external worlds. The benefits extend well beyond team leadership; for knowing and understanding ourselves with truth and grace is a good gift as it keeps us engaged, motivated, and encouraged to perform from our best and stay connected to self, God, and others. However, frequently we come across leaders who deliberately avoid developing understanding of themselves, believing this to be self-indulgent or unimportant. For others there appears to be a concern about what they might learn and how it might impact them. Sadly, some people do not know how to acquire this knowledge.

In section 3.7 we explored the importance of developing an awareness of self, using feedback received, reflection, frameworks such as Kirton's Adaptor/Innovator Inventory (KAI), etc. We strongly recommend all leaders invest in developing self-awareness before they assume team responsibilities and continue to invest in this never-ending development.

Acquiring, understanding, and accepting information about yourself is central to emotional intelligence, a basis from which behaviour can be flexed to achieve desired outcomes and build resonance with those you lead. The motivation for, and extent to which people understand themselves varies, as does their preferred means. For some it may involve courses, on-line tutorials, or perhaps striving to understand one or two frameworks such Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Kirton's Adaption/Innovation (KAI). Other people will dig deeper, perhaps with the help of a coach or other leadership development specialist and others will go still further, perhaps with the help of a counsellor or psychotherapist.

One such framework that we find helps individuals is understanding driver behaviours, described as follows:

In Section 4.5 we introduced Transactional Analysis, associated with which is the idea of Driver Behaviour. As children we learn ways of behaving that feel comfortable, that seem to work for us and help us stay healthy and safe. These behaviours carry forward into adult life, often become honed and may well account for any success we have in how we work and live. However, in certain situations, these same behaviours can be a double-edged sword and cause significant anxiety and stress in ourselves and others. It is hugely helpful to understand which of these drivers might affect the way we lead and to what extent. Similarly, these drivers account for some of the behaviours we see in others. The idea of drivers is readily understandable by leaders and often used by coaches and other leadership development specialists.

Psychotherapists also use this framework at a deeper level as this gives an insight into how a person's childhood might have been and what conditions they unconsciously/consciously might have put on their self, to experience acceptance and belonging from others.

There are a few common drivers that leaders are likely to encounter on a regular basis, each of which is explained in Table 22 with some of the potential implications in a team context.

Driver	General Description	In a Team...
Please Others	People with this driver like to keep others happy, often putting their own needs second. They believe that this is a good way of living and others will reciprocate at some point. However, if, or more likely when, this does not happen 'please other' people can feel resentful and angry. If a leader with this driver is compelled to behave in a way that they know will not please one or more people this can feel very uncomfortable and be a source of stress.	A team leader, for which 'please others' is a driver can get into all sorts of difficulty when team members have different views on what should happen in a situation and not everyone can be pleased. Similarly, problems can arise where team members believe their leader should challenge more senior people in the organisation and either they don't or come back with a 'poor result'. 'Please others', can end up doing more and going further than is strictly necessary to keep people happy.

Be perfect	Be perfect people believe that everything should be 'just so' and hold themselves to high standards. Where time and activity pressure prove too great they may sacrifice more of their personal time to this activity. Alternatively, they may be forced to come to terms with being less than perfect. Both options are potential sources of stress.	In a team context 'be perfect' people may encourage others to high quality performance. However, they can present as being critical, pedantic, or fussy people for whom nothing is ever good enough. This can also cause team members to believe they are not allowed to make mistakes. 'Be perfect' has the potential to be a significant source of stress for the leader as they cannot bring about a perfect team and for members who cannot hit the required standard and may eventually cease to try.
Hurry up	Hurry up people are constantly on the case, progressing work, juggling priorities, and pushing hard. Working at pace, they may get a lot of things done but usually fail to sit back and enjoy what has been achieved. Often restless, these people find it hard to be still yet often report feeling tired.	In teams, a 'hurry up' leader might press members to achieve high volumes of activity and quickly. This can be difficult for a team member, particularly one driven to 'be perfect'. Hurry up people are likely to evidence this in the speed with which they talk, setting of goals and interim deadlines and there is a risk that the leader 'tires their members out'.
Try hard	Try hard people are driven to achieve and may take on projects and responsibilities, on a basis of 'I will have a go'. A combination of dealing with novelty, getting bored and wanting to move on may mean they do not complete a task which they consider a failure.	'Try-hards' may help create an energetic can-do culture which for some people will be a good fit. However, these teams may take on too much, experience a lack of focus and gain a reputation for non-completion.
Be strong	Be strong leaders are driven to be tough and get on with life, irrespective of the size or nature of the challenge they face. Be strong leaders tend not to show their feelings and while potentially good in a crisis, if their total load becomes too great they may lack the ability to handle feelings which they have rarely experienced. This can lead to depression and illness	In a team context this leader may have a reputation for being strong and resilient. They may however fail to recognise, understand or be able to support team members who are struggling. A person driven to be strong may not understand the early signs of personal failure, be slow to ask for help and suffer shock if they reach a point where they have to admit to themselves and others that they are struggling. Team members may feel they cannot open-up to their leader if they have problems, for example in coping with stress.

Table 22 Common Driver Behaviours

It should be noted that many people are affected by two or more of these drivers, which in combination can result in complex behaviour. This is fine, for many of us find roles that accommodate if not utilise our drivers. However, a change in the operating environment or psychological contract can challenge individuals. Imagine someone with 'be perfect' and 'please others' drivers working for an organisation with a reputation for quality and service, that announces a redundancy programme, at the same time stating the volume of output will be maintained. Implicit within this announcement is that each employee will need to be more productive – does this mean the organisation will accept more mistakes and a fall in quality? Will this employee accept they need to be 'less perfect' themselves, or push to achieve both quantity and quality? How will they deal with a manager who is 'disappointed' by any failure to hit the new targets and/or maintain quality?

When thinking about members of your team having a sense of the drivers in play, you may help modify what they are thinking of doing or at least be alert to early signs of unhelpful behaviour and/or stress.

Invest in understanding tools and techniques

Being aware of self and others can be extremely interesting and may be reassuring, but of itself does not move a team on. To help transfer insights into helpful action, team leaders need a box of tools that can be used either to progress a task or to help the team work well together.

The good news is that there are hundreds of tools and techniques available to support leaders and teams with problem solving, decision making, developing strategy, etc. A basic knowledge of a small number of tried and tested tools such as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), brainstorming, forcefield analysis, etc., is invaluable but there is a need to guard against over-use of one or two tools as boredom tends to set in and sadly familiarity tends to breed contempt. Many a reliable tool fails in the hands of someone who stops following the basic rules associated with its use. Brainstorming, for example, often fails because those involved do not complete a warm-up exercise or forget to be non-critical when hearing the ideas of others. We recommend that in addition to developing a small tool kit of well-understood tools, leaders periodically seek out and experiment with tools that are new to the team which can often lead to fresh insight.
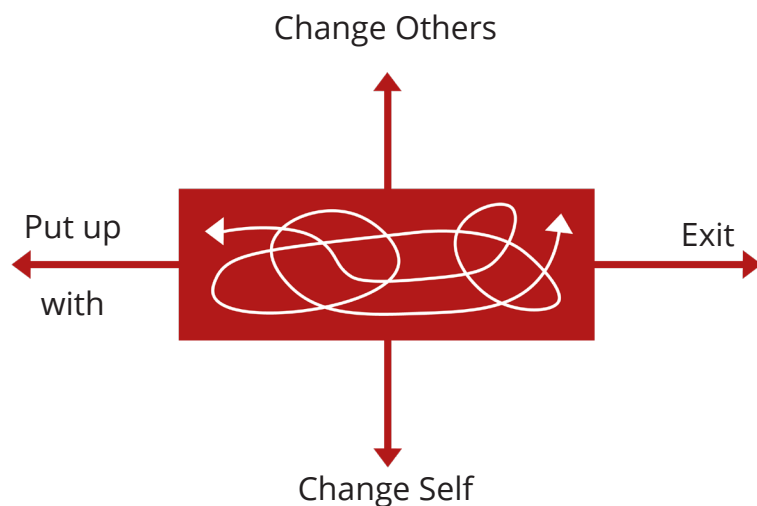
Figure 27 Functioning

There is a case for periodically engaging a leadership development specialist, specifically to introduce new tools to a team to help give fresh insights with real problems.

One such example is a four option framework (source unknown) which is particularly useful when a person is at their wits' end, stuck in a situation they are unable to resolve. Often this 'stuckness' involves people; another individual inside or outside the team, a sub-group within the team, etc. Typically, over time the leader tries different things, each of which in turn do not work, and the breakthrough they seek is elusive – all very frustrating. Even though there are four

options, early action, in particular, tends to fall within three broad clusters, change the other person/people, change self, and put up with as illustrated in Figure 27. Using a simple example of a team member who frequently arrives after the supposed start of any event, irrespective of whether it is a meeting, service, one-to-one etc., these options are detailed in Table 23.

Options for Action	What might the thinking be?	What actions are typically tried, irrespective of impact elsewhere?
Try to change others	In our experience untrained leaders tend to try this first option first, based on, 'I know what constitutes appropriate, polite behaviour and helps productivity and I need you to conform to my 'reasonable' expectations. This often comes from a sense that the other person is disorganised, disrespectful, does not value those who have to wait for them to arrive, that they might be trying to avoid preparatory tasks, such as moving furniture and making coffee for a meeting.	Reminding everyone that they need to turn up on time. Seeking an apology from the individual, hoping they are so embarrassed they will not do it again. Tell them the meeting starts half an hour before it really does. Trying to discipline or punish them Starting the meeting on time, ignoring them when they arrive and making no effort to help them catch up. Making inappropriate comments to fellow team members.
Try to change self	This is quite a common strategy, especially for individuals who are passive by nature, like to please others and fearful of a difficult conversation.	Make excuses for the individual that would not be extended to other team members should they be late. Try not to let this trouble anyone - make light of it, and ensure that the person involved is not expected to lead an agenda item until later in the meeting. Sort furniture and coffee personally.
Try to put up with	A reaction based on an 'acceptance' that we are different. I cannot change the person and I can't, or am not prepared to, change myself. We are where we are, and meetings will have a rolling start. Anyone late will be caught up.	Pretty much do nothing other than hide feelings of frustration and annoyance and smile!
Leave the situation	Often this does not occur to the person struggling with a problem situation but in most cases it is a possibility. The knowledge that you have another choice and that this is within your power can be very helpful. Whether you are happy to accept the consequences of this choice, including how you frame or 'tell the story', needs to be considered.	Resign from team leadership, excuse yourself from all meetings, maybe leave the Church, attend but not participate.

Table 23: Four options illustrated

Option 1 – Try to change others

The actions associated with changing others mentioned in Table 23 are a mix of child-like behaviours, inappropriately targeted (reminding everyone to turn up on time when you and they know who it is), are dishonest, and potentially harmful to the health of the group. In any case before there is a rush to 'correct' the other person it is worth considering whether a person's behaviour is to do with other factors, such as their personal situation or whether this behaviour is so strong in them that self-modification would involve too high a price, or perhaps even impossible for them – the equivalent to pointing out to someone that they are too short.

Likewise, this problem and your reaction to it may tell you more about yourself than the other person. This is not to say that attempts to persuade others to change should be abandoned – some behaviour is unacceptable, or at least unhelpful given the purpose and culture of the team. In more extreme situations sanctions may even be warranted. Other behaviour might be irritating and possibly unknown by the person concerned. One approach which we see quite regularly is where a problem holder tries to change the behaviour of someone else without talking to them. Apart from obvious, minor actions such as in this example sending clear invitations to a meeting in the hope that the start time will be very clear to the habitually late, there is a risk of manipulation being practised. We find this approach rarely works and is often used where there is an unwillingness to have an honest and, if necessary, robust feedback conversation.

Option 2 – Try to change self

Changing self can be the answer and the capacity to knowingly do so is an important attribute of the leader. There are, however, limits to the extent changing self is a realistic option. Minor or even more significant adjustments that can be made with relative ease are one thing but wholesale and/or long-term shifts in behaviour can be very tiring and stressful, even more so if different flexing is needed to accommodate diverse colleagues.

Option 3 – Put up with

Putting up with a situation may be an acceptable strategy but only if this can be achieved with peace, which a leader might be able to do but perhaps other members of their team cannot. Sadly, a lot of people try to put up with a situation, yet they remain resentful and irritated and continue to try to change others or themselves often in a half-hearted way. If you are going to put up with a situation you have to commit to this strategy and 'let go' of the problem.

Sadly, a lot of people end up in an endurance dance between changing others, changing self and putting up with. This dance can consume significant time and energy, in the process causing serious damage to those involved and adversely affect the health and purpose of the team

Option 4 - Exit

In practice, there is usually a fourth option, which because of its drastic nature may not even occur to those involved. If it does occur, this option will often be ruled out as a serious over-reaction particularly early in the life of a problem. This final option, which is to exit the situation, is difficult, especially in a Christian context where the person doing so might feel guilt, embarrassment, perhaps even personal failure – surely all Christians should be able to get along, after all we have a common belief and purpose, etc. Initially at least, leaving may appear unnecessary, an over-reaction, or just 'running away' and the cost associated might make this very unattractive in the early days. If the problem persists and/or worsens the option to leave may become increasingly attractive, almost inevitable – but what damage has been done by waiting to this point when toxic stress or worse is being experienced? This is not to argue for premature and maybe unnecessary decisions to exit, but for early conversations that might help surface other options or indicate that an early exit might be a good option, which can be done more elegantly and with less collateral damage than were it left until later.

Exiting might mean leaving a Church or other organisation, but it could involve stepping down from a team and staying in the Church, switching to a different role, having a sabbatical, limiting attendance at meetings where frustration is experienced or controlling your participation. The last two options are questionable as regulating contributions might minimise your value to the team.

This might suggest that there is little hope for the future, however understanding the issue and the options available it is often possible to reach an accommodation or compromise where both parties share responsibility for resolving the problem, each agreeing to act to improve the situation, in the process both bridging any gap between them. Hopefully this agreement will hold, certainly during normal times. However, when stress levels are generally high this agreement will be put under pressure and may temporarily fail, in which case a conversation is needed when what has happened can be recognised, lapses acknowledged and forgiven, and parties can recommit to their original agreement.
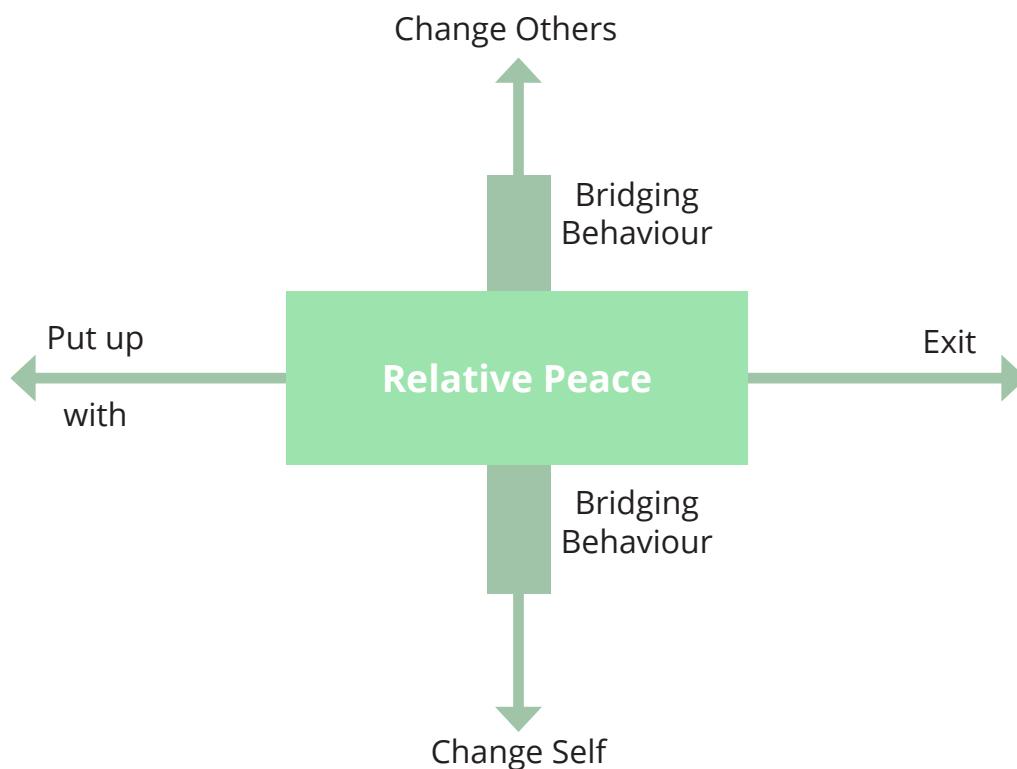
Figure 28: Bridging for peace

Invest in developing yourself, those in your team and the team as an entity

In our Guidance on Preventing Stress and Burnout (Brown, K.; Edmunds, B.; Field, R., 2020) we stress the importance of what we refer to as preventative development and support, recognising that if organisations or individuals invest in developing themselves and others they will to an extent be protected from unhealthy stress. Such development is not specifically aimed at preventing stress, rather the focus is on building competence and confidence, the combination of which enables individuals to function well, even when experiencing reasonable levels of stress. Good quality development and support is not just about being able to do things such as prepare a budget or recruit a member of staff; it should include becoming more aware of self and others, more emotionally intelligent, able to self-care and alert to symptoms of being stressed in self and others.

Form	Preventative	Toxic Stress	Burnout	
			Incident	Recovery
Certificated Leadership Development Programme	✓			Long term
Non-assessed CPD and topic specific development sessions	✓			Medium/long term
Action learning	✓			MT/LT only
Supervision	✓	✓		✓
Psychometric instruments – general self-awareness	✓			✓
Psychometric instruments – deeper, focussed use	✓	✓		Long term
Restorative activity – e.g., sport, leisure, hobbies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coaching	✓	✓		✓
Mentoring	✓	✓		✓
Spiritual advisor	✓	✓	✓	✓
Counselling		✓	✓	✓
Membership of professional bodies – use of forums	✓			✓
Membership of networks of interest	✓			✓
Internal technical advice and support	✓	✓		✓
Facilitators	✓	✓		✓
Consultants	✓	✓		✓

Table 24 Typical Forms of Support

Table 24, which is reproduced from our Guidance on Preventing Stress and Burnout (Brown, K.; Edmunds, B.; Field, R., 2020) identifies many different types of development and support that can help. This table also identifies forms of support that might need to be considered if levels of stress become toxic and sadly if the person experiences burnout.

Invest in personal care and wellbeing

Committing to investing in personal and self-care practices helps us perform at our best in all situations. We do not necessarily need to make a song and dance about strengthening our selves which might mean trading off doing one thing for another, but when we do commit to making decisions that strengthens our bodies, emotions, spiritual life...the results are we do want to 'sing and dance' because of how well and full of life we are! Investing into our personal care and wellbeing can include different areas of our being such as physical, emotional, financial, intellectual, social, spiritual, relational, occupational, environmental. Many people find planning personal care and wellbeing invaluable, as it prompts reflection, identifies what does or does not bring refreshment to them, and helps maintain a healthy life.

Investing in understanding yourself is also about investing into your own spiritual life and revelation from God. One of the duties for leaders in the Church of England is the "care of souls", and yet when was the last time someone asked the leader "how is your soul?". This is a helpful question as, for many people, hearing the language of 'soul' already takes them to a reflective place within their inner realities that brings a deeper discernment of self and faith. It can reveal the fragility of our spiritual life/soul that needs refreshing in God, or healing from the weariness of unanswered prayer, or joy from seeing God at work in places of darkness. Yet for others, the concept of the "soul" is quite hard to grasp and produces little meaning. The purpose here is to simply remember that churches and most Christian organisations have a spiritual purpose to their existence which requires strengthening their soul in spiritual leadership and seeking discernment and direction from God.

Barton (2008) writes, "spiritual leadership emerges from our willingness to stay involved in our own soul - that place where God's spirit is at work stirring up our deepest questions and longings to draw us deeper into relationship with him. Staying involved with our soul is not narcissistic naval gazing; rather, this kind of attentiveness helps us stay on the path of becoming our true self in God - a self that is capable of an ever-deepening yes to God's on our life" (2008:26)

In our preventing stress guidance (Brown, K.; Edmunds, B.; Field, R., 2020), we identified six personal care actions that all leaders should consider and which they should encourage in their staff and volunteers.

Table 25 identifies these actions, some being natural to healthy function, thereby preventing stress, and others related to being exposed to trauma which is more common than perhaps appreciated in Church life, particularly for those involved in pastoral care or exercising pastoral concern.

1.	Be honest about how you are feeling and take responsibility for your own wellbeing.
2	Have a fulfilling personal life and keep connecting to people and activities that bring joy and comfort such as dancing, listening to music.
3	Treat yourself to things you enjoy like massages, cinema trips, etc.
4	Acknowledge that there are limits in hearing traumatic material and take regular time out.
5	Much research says that trauma gets stuck in the body, and it needs to be released. This can be achieved in regular heart-exerting exercises and deep breathing which releases some stress energy. This helps calm the nervous system and helps it switch back to normal functioning.
6	Acknowledge that if self-medicating on drugs, alcohol, gambling, or any act that feels shameful, you might consider speaking to a trusted person and develop healthy ways of coping with stress.

Table 25 Personal Care Actions

There are many other practical actions a leader can take to practice self-care some seem almost universally helpful, others appeal to some people more than others. Examples, include spacing out annual leave across a year, having at least one 'non-duty' day a week, sabbatical breaks once a certain period of service is reached, Christian mindfulness, etc.

Tips for Success

- Be constantly curious about yourself, seeking opportunities to understand who you are, what you excel at, where you could develop.
- Be prepared to use tools, frameworks, and ideas from elsewhere, seeking new understandings and insight.
- Be prepared to invest in developing yourself and your team, not as a duty or as a reward, but because it is the right thing to do as stewards of human resources.
- Focus on development areas where yourself and the team can be strengthened but also allow for general development as individuals.
- Periodically take time to review how you are feeling as a person; identify those things that bring joy, comfort, and a sense of wellbeing. Beware of any unhealthy practices that may be masking low level stress.
- Prepare a plan to improve wellbeing and review regularly.
- Recognise any barriers that can hinder investment in any development areas and plan how to build on self-care practices.

6. Bringing it all together - Team Traffic Lights 6.

This section contains a framework called Team Traffic Lights, which can be used as a guide to assist in understanding and assessing team health, leading to team development. We present team health as traffic lights to give a familiar and simple language to explore team success and health. Included in this framework are team summaries of what we believe Green, Amber, and Red teams might look like, and a more detailed analysis based on each chapter in this text.

This framework draws together the main ideas from each chapter and explores how these can be represented in terms of three states, presented as Green, Amber, and Red, hence the name Team Traffic Lights. The framework is intended for periodic use, to alert team leaders to current or emerging issues regarding how their team is functioning, and to prompt development action. The Team Traffic Lights framework can also help team leaders and members have a shared language in understanding and expressing matters around health and wellbeing which can bring greater unity.

Used well, the framework will help bring greater awareness and insight into the state of a team along with hope, clarity, comfort, and direction.

Introducing 'Team Traffic Lights'

We recommend that team leaders periodically pose the question 'How healthy is my team?' This question is easier to ask than to answer, due to the difficulty of measuring performance, health, capacity, relationships, long-term potential, etc. To simplify this we recommend team leaders focus on three broad team states, (Green, Amber, and Red), recognizing of course that within any team state there may be many variations.

Below are short descriptions for each team state, following which is a team summary for each and then a detailed description.

Green Team
A Green team is the team type to which all leaders should aspire. A green team is healthy at present with good prospects for staying that way and effective in achieving what is expected. Leaders of such teams have a responsibility to keep this team healthy and we suggest every effort is made   to "GO and GROW!".

Red Team
Red teams are in very poor health which is unlikely to improve without deliberate concerted action. Red teams are usually ineffective and dysfunctional with team members who are disconnected from each other, with any performance being due to individual rather than collective effort. Leaders of such teams have a responsibility to 'call it', i.e., "STOP", and be prepared to reconfigure, reboot, personally step aside or dissolve the team.

Amber Teams
Amber teams have a mixture of healthy (green) and poor (red) aspects of team health. Teams that are in amber can either grow and develop into green teams, or left untreated, are likely to decay to become red teams. Leaders of such teams we suggest to "SLOW DOWN"" and take notice of any stresses, pressures and opportunities that can be causing a strain on team health and make positive and timely adjustments.

Using the Team Traffic Lights

Team Traffic Lights can be used in different ways including by the team leader, human resource or leadership development specialist, or the whole Team facilitated by the Team Leader or someone outside the team.

When using this with teams, it is worth considering whether members are given this in advance so those that need it have an opportunity to think about their responses. We suggest that it is used periodically, say once a year and whenever thought necessary. It is important that this assessment is seen as qualitative and subjective with responses likely to be sensitive to recent incidents. For this reason, we encourage those using the Team Traffic Lights to check out responses by asking for examples of when 'this' happened, frequency of incidence and timeframe.

You can use this framework at either a team summary, or detailed level. At the team summary level we suggest you focus on four questions:

- Which of the three team summaries best describe how you experience your team?
- To what extent does your chosen description fully match your team? Some teams for example might be green in all respects, others might be largely green with some amber and maybe a red.
- To what extent is there a shared agreement about the colour match?
- What action might we consider taking regards any amber and red items?

If using this framework at the detailed level and on a line by line basis, areas for action can be identified without needing to reach a view of the overall colour, which in the case of red teams can be a bit dispiriting. Noting that items are not of equal importance, three questions are worth posing with this approach:

- Which if any items are of concern?
- To what extent is their shared agreement about concerning items?
- What actions might we consider taking regards any amber and red items?

Even if a team appears to be green in all respects there is likely to be scope for further development, for example to move from the equivalent of pale green to bottle green, to reverse an emerging drift towards amber or to prepare for a possible or known change in the operating environment which could cause a team to suddenly go 'amber'.

If there is little agreement about areas of concern more time should be invested in understanding why this is the case.

Whichever approach is used where key areas are problematic or resonate with the team we suggest dipping into the associated chapter for insights and tips for success.

Introducing 'Team Traffic Lights'

Green Team Summary	Amber Team Summary	Red Team Summary
Green teams perform consistently well, are safe, enjoyable places to be, with good prospects. With good leadership and just the right number of members, capacity, diversity, and skills to meet the challenges they face. Green teams are a place of growth and development. With a strong and shared sense of purpose underpinned by Christian values and practices, and high levels of commitment and support, green teams are exciting places to be. These teams self-regulate with emerging signs of pressure, conflict, relationship difficulty or stress spotted early and diffused quickly. The team leader and members are emotionally intelligent, resilient, flexible, and give of their best. They take personal responsibility and typically operate as 'adults', collaborating effectively with a wide range of people. The team leader empowers the team to make decisions. Green teams are places where a person is fully accepted and valued, irrespective of whether they are fit, unwell or in crisis. These are places where feedback flows and there are high levels of trust, honesty, and transparency. Above everything else green teams are healthy places.	Amber teams typically lack consistency. They may share some of the characteristics of a green team, at least occasionally, and red characteristics otherwise. Many amber teams are in transition, some on a journey from red to green, gradually improving aspects of how they operate that are currently red, while maintaining green characteristics they already possess. Vice versa can also apply, where for example a change in the operating environment or the loss of a leader causes a green team to dip into amber at least for a short while. Many teams appear 'stuck' in amber, never making serious progress towards green nor drifting towards red. Amber team leaders and members may vary in self-knowledge and the ability to forge productive relationships within and beyond the team boundary. Often members who understand how to be effective lack confidence due to operating in a climate that is not conducive to building trust, being transparent, and giving and receiving constructive feedback. Team leaders allow teams to only make low-level decisions. Amber teams offer glimmers of hope that suggest team potential but above everything else amber teams are frustrating places.	Red teams struggle to perform, with any success that is experienced, normally due to one or two individuals rather than team collaboration. The underlying reasons why a team can be considered red are many. Some teams fail because members would be better managed as a group, not a team. For others a lethal cocktail of negative and interlinked factors is in play and occasionally, one or two very serious problems, cause a red state. Red teams often lack purpose, operate without strong, shared values are unable to self- regulate and thereby experience significant stress and difficulty when dealing with pressure, conflict, relationship problems, etc. The team leader and/or members often lack resilience, flexibility, awareness of self and others such that they fail to create or maintain productive adult relationships. Team leaders often micromanage, not letting the team make any decisions. Red teams are places of secrecy, suspicion, positioning, and game playing. Trust, honesty, transparency and constructive feedback is rare. Above everything else red teams sap energy and hope and are unhealthy places.

Chapter	Topic	Green	Amber	Red
2.0 Introduction to Teams	Team Improvement	Consistently able to grow and make successful improvements, when required.	Inconsistent team growth with limited ability to make successful improvements.	Do not grow as a team, with little ability to make successful improvements.
	Success of Team	Consistently successful, attributed to team collaboration.	Inconsistent success attributed to leader, member or team at different times.	Unable to succeed as a team, any "success" attributed to individuals.
	Team Difficulties	Able to successfully respond to team difficulties in a timely manner.	May delay responding to team difficulties which, when dealt with, may or may not be successful.	Unable to respond effectively to team difficulties.
3.1 Organising, managing, and leading people who work together	Type of team	Fully integrated team that consistently live out a shared commitment and vision.	Splits in team, whether between members/ leaders, paid staff/volunteers etc. and limited shared commitment and vision.	"Pseudo team" at best, more like a "group" with no shared commitment or vision.
3.2 Team size, diversity, and selection	Size	Right size of team to meet workload in timely manner with high engagement and performance.	Size is not quite right to meet workload and engagement falters with lower performance.	Wrong size (too little or too big) and often too much/ too little work with low engagement levels and poor performance.
	Diversity	Appropriate levels of diversity with effective contributions to problem solving and few problems working together.	Satisfactory diversity but with a limited range of effective contributions to problem solving or some problems working together.	Inappropriate levels of diversity, with an inadequate range of contributions or difficulty working together.

Chapter	Topic	Green	Amber	Red
3.3 Recruiting and retaining the right people in the right role	Recruitment process	Effective recruitment process - consistently getting the right people, in the right role at the right time.	Inconsistent ability to recruit the right people, to the right role at the right time, i.e., the right person, now the wrong time etc.	Poor recruitment process, often resulting in the wrong person, in the wrong role at the wrong time.
3.4 Creating and inheriting teams	Tuckman's team process cycle (Norming, forming, storming, performing, adjourning)	Able to successfully transition each stage of Tuckman's process in a timely manner. Able to repeat the cycle and flourish from it.	Can get stuck or linger in one or more of the stages in Tuckman's process which causes difficulties. Might not be able to repeat cycle without signs of distress	Unable to complete Tuckman's key stages, the team often getting stuck in storming and may even 'fall apart'.
3.5 Successful teams	Team success	Team members understand what constitutes team success and continually assess and integrate data regarding performance and team health to get a full picture. Team members regularly read the environment to anticipate required future changes in how the team will need to operate. Able to respond to any performance or health problems.	Likely to have some sense of what constitutes success and a limited ability to measure this, normally on ad-hoc basis. Unlikely to have a full, shared view of the current state or what needs to change. Limited anticipation of what needs to change to meet future environment. Capacity to make limited adjustments.	May not understand what constitutes team success. Members do not understand team health but will be concerned/ puzzled if they experience significant problems. No basis for assessing team health and no understanding of the future operating environment. No resources to respond to any performance and health problems.
	Performance	Consistently high performing.	Low and inconsistent performing.	Consistently underperforming.
	Team health	Ensure team remains healthy. The team is evidently bigger than the sum of its parts and adopts team leadership.	Improvements in how the team operate are needed, otherwise performance and team health will suffer. The team is less than the sum of its parts, and mixture of team leadership and group management.	Unable to make improvements to performance and poor health of team The team is not really functioning - more group management of individuals.

Chapter	Topic	Green	Amber	Red
3.6 Resolving difficulties in Teams	Giving and receiving feedback	Able to give and receive honest, constructive feedback, regularly, in a measured way regarding task, process and self-directed contributions.	Able to give and receive feedback when required but might not do so in a measured, honest, and constructive way. May limit the focus of feedback to task related contributions or seek to avoid difficult topics and situations.	Little feedback given or received. Feedback is often unheard, and/or not acted upon, and based more on emotion than thoughtful, careful consideration. Feedback tends not to be measured, honest or constructive.
3.7 Awareness of self and others	Sense of self and others	Team leaders and members know themselves, understand how others might be, and are able to work with a wide range of people.	Team leaders and members might not know themselves and find understanding others difficult. Some members struggle to relate to a wide range of people.	Team leader and members have little sense of self and even less sense of how others might be. Widespread difficulty in working with a range of people.
	Sense of Team	Flexible, adaptable and invest in understanding self, others and overall needs for team using supporting frameworks such as Kirton's Adaptor/Innovator Inventory (KAI).	Some sense of being a team and understanding of what teams need to be successful. May be some individual awareness of team frameworks, tools, etc. but unlikely to use them to good effect.	No sense of team or what teams need to be successful. Little or no investment in the team and low flexibility.
4.1 Inter-personal Trauma	Impact of relationship breakdown in teams and personal health	Highly unlikely that relationship difficulties will lead to trauma symptoms. Health and wellbeing of team and members is likely to remain stable. If anything, the team, and members will flourish.	Highly likely to have relationship difficulties which if untreated, can cause problems and stress for the team and affect the health and wellbeing of team members.	Highly likely to experience relationship difficulties that cause breakdown of team, often with trauma symptoms experienced by leader and individuals. Health and wellbeing of individuals is typically impacted by being part of this group, and vice versa.

Chapter	Topic	Green	Amber	Red
4.1 Inter-personal Trauma	Stress in system	Quick to identify sources of stress and able to deal with this without causing long-term harm to individuals and/or the team.	Struggles to identify the causes of stress accurately and often delays dealing with it.	Unable to identify the causes of stress and almost continually trying to keep their heads above water.
	Type of environment	Safe, pleasant, and stable	Mixture of safe and pleasant and unsafe and unpleasant.	Toxic, unsafe, and unpleasant.
4.2 Attachment Styles	Main type of attachment in leader and team members	Mainly secure attachment. People feel held and heard.	Team has a mixture of attachment styles – secure and preoccupied-anxious, feel worried and stressed.	Mainly fearful, avoidant, and dismissive. Members feel overwhelmed, scared, or numb.
	Team functioning and attachment in group conflict and repair	High levels of trust amongst most of the team which can repair fractured relationships more easily.	Mixed levels of trust amongst team and repairing of fractured relationships can seem a struggle.	Mistrust in teams and members unable to repair fractured relationships .
4.3 Boundaries	Responsibilities	Able to take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and actions in kind and respectful ways that bring empowerment to team and great sense of belonging and acceptance.	At times, members do not take responsibility for thoughts, feelings, and actions as might feel fearful of being judged, and/or not belonging. Will adopt other people's thoughts/opinions to belong.	Blame others for the impact of what they think, how they feel, what they say and do. This often creates selfish ambition/ inappropriate jealousy amongst team members and no sense of belonging.
	Boundary setting	Able to create, maintain and be consistent in boundary setting and adjust according.	Able to understand purpose of boundary setting but inconsistent in maintaining and adjusting boundaries when needed.	No sense of boundary setting. Boundaries are seen more as "rules" or "anything goes". What is in place is inconsistent. i.e., one for rule one, another rule for someone else.

Chapter	Topic	Green	Amber	Red
4.4 Family Systems	Self-differentiation in team	Very well differentiated individuals who can self-regulate, have realistic expectations of self. Functioning and self- image are not affected by either criticism or praise and individuals are able to be high performing without losing sense of self in team.	Less well differentiated individuals who might need help self-regulating require praise/criticism to function and might seek approval from others to be ok with their sense of self in team.	Lowest level of differentiation and unable to self-regulate or be aware of emotions, functioning largely on emotional reactions to environmental cues. Their sense of self can "fuse" with others in their team.
	Diffusing of anxiety	Ensures any sign of conflict and anxiety is kept within the team.	Mixture – some conflict kept within the team, but with some spillage out into other areas.	Conflict which is often not appropriately addressed within the team spills out into other areas.
	When stress enters systems	The whole team can diffuse the stress and regain optimum level of functioning.	Not able to diffuse stress well together, in a timely fashion, and underperforming and overperforming can result.	Poor sense of team and self. Members typically respond to stress, single-handedly or not at all.
4.5 Trans-actional Analysis	Main Operating State	Consistently operating in adult-to-adult relationships. Style of relating can be seen as "power with" and all views, opinions and differences are valued and heard.	Different operating styles occur pending on situation with parent-child, or adult-child causing relational conflict. Style of relating can be seen as "power over" with views, opinions and differences limited in scope .	Mainly operates in critical parent- to-compliant/adaptive child that "needs to be told what to do". Style of relating can be seen as an abuse of power, and one person's views and opinions dominates.
5 Self care for Team Leaders	Investing in Self Care Practices	Members consistently practice self-care, being encouraged, and supported to do so. Self -care is planned by individuals, monitored, and adjusted to meet changes in life circumstances.	Inconsistent self-care practice. Some members invest, others do not. Some practice self-care when times are tough but neglect when normality returns. Others engage when times are good and abandon when times are tough.	Members neglect self-care and may display unhealthy patterns of harm to self, such as addiction. Little if no support from the organisation for self-care.

Concluding Comments

Our writing team has many years' experience of leading or belonging to teams, facilitating team development, and supporting individuals. We are wonderfully diverse in many ways including our Churchmanship, professional backgrounds, experience, personality, and age. The mix of psychotherapists, academics and leadership development and human resource specialists, prompted many fascinating conversations, insights and learning for all of us.

When we started writing this text we had little idea of where it would take us, what we would learn, or how all-consuming this quest would become. What we did know was that teams and team leadership in Churches and other Christian organisation was something that merited attention.

The more we shared stories, discussed, wrote, and reviewed content, the more we became aware of the critical importance of well performing, healthy teams in Churches and other Christian organisations. With this came awareness that many teams are far from well performing or being in good health.

Some of what we learnt caused us sadness, frustration, personal regret, and even anger. Across the land there are hundreds of thousands of people working together to further the purpose of the Church and to the glory of God. This army of gifted, energetic, committed people act with the best of intent, week in week out giving of their best, some paid - many not, some ministers - many not, and their collective potential is immense.

This begs the question, 'How much of this potential is realised? Our experience at Church level, suggests there is a gaping void between what could be and what is, due in large part to difficulties many people experience when working together. How many team leaders, if challenged, could demonstrate good stewardship of the incredible resources within their team, or have they 'buried' this treasure under rules, regulations, oppressive practice or just failed to nurture or support team members? How many teams have succeeded in their collective responsibility to safeguard vulnerable people, resources, and the gospel? How many people would report they flourish when working together? How many people experience joy and wellbeing as a direct consequence of being in a team or group? We don't know the answers to these questions, and we don't need to know, because our experience shows there is considerable scope for improving the performance and health of team members and teams. We offer this text as a gift, recognising that it is work in progress, a contribution towards realising team potential. We have structured the content so that readers can easily dip in and out, according to need and interest.

We pray the Team Framework offered in Section 6, together with over 100 tips across the External and Internal world sections, will help team leaders support each team to be:

'Successful, a healthy place, a place where people willingly, supportively, and joyfully collaborate to achieve their shared purpose, and become the best possible version of their individual and collective selves'.

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Safeguarding Adults Guidance for Christian Faith Organisations

Safeguarding Adults Guidance for Christian Faith Organisations: This guidance provides a comprehensive set of advice regarding how to ensure that any Christian Faith based organisation has appropriate safeguarding polices and procedures in place to safeguard adults. It is written by experts in this field with many years of experience and understanding and will help Faith based organisations and churches ensure that their polices, systems and operations are all conducted in safe and effective ways.
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This guidance considers a range of issues facing older people and challenges churches and Christian faith organisations to do the same. Those living in the fourth age are not a homogenous group; they represent people from different generations, with different life experiences, a range of health issues and different social situations. They are also at different stages of a faith journey. Some will have been life-time Christians and be regular church attenders, some will now only go to church for ceremonies, others will not want to step foot into a church again. The diversity of the fourth age provides great opportunity for churches and Christian faith organisations; this guidance gives some ideas to churches for different ministries, outreach and mission among older people.
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Loneliness in Older People

Guidance on how Christian faith organisations can support older people facing loneliness. By recognising the impact of social isolation and loneliness on the health and wellbeing of those in the Fourth Age, churches can work together and with local community organisations, to identify the lonely and reach out to provide support and help.
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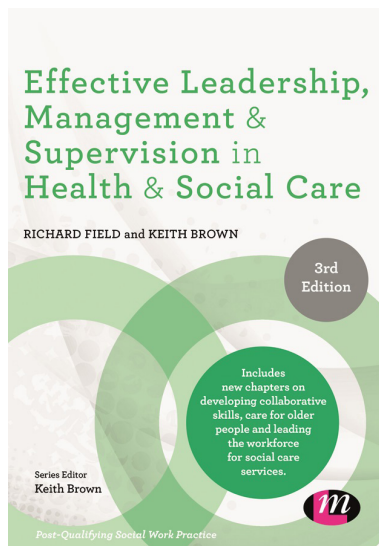
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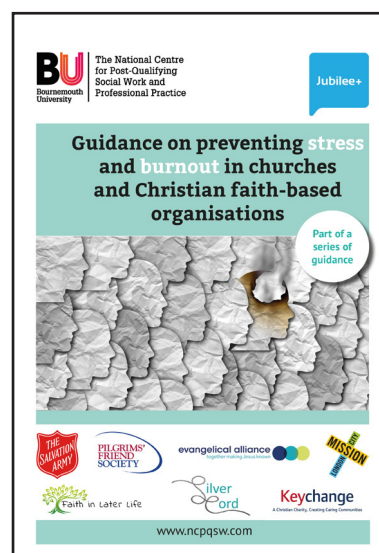
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Notes