Aligning your team

What is a team?

A team can be characterised as a group of people possessing various skills, experience, competencies, and who are jointly responsible for achieving a collective goal. Team members have to work together and in the same direction, concentrating their energy into pursuing the same aims and fulfilling the common goals of the team.

http://www.segroup.de/library/public/Paper_Raue_Tang_Weiland_Wenzlik_The_GRPI_Model.pdf

Why teams?

- Better decisions

- Increased productivity

- More innovation

- Higher levels of engagement

- Greater achievement

- Greater satisfaction

Effective alignment: the wisdom of geese

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rOg4WfNDfM

Lessons?

- Use people's skills and strengths to let them do their best work
- Offer support and encouragement to uplift one another
- Communicate clearly, consistently, constantly
- Maintain trust when times get tough
- Share collective leadership
- Align around common goals and values: be clear about your direction and purpose

What makes a team effective?

- Goals: agreed, committed, understood, with deadlines
- Roles: clear, conflict free, understood
- Processes: effective meetings, decision making, problem solving
- Relationships: communication styles, trust, feedback, learning & flexibility
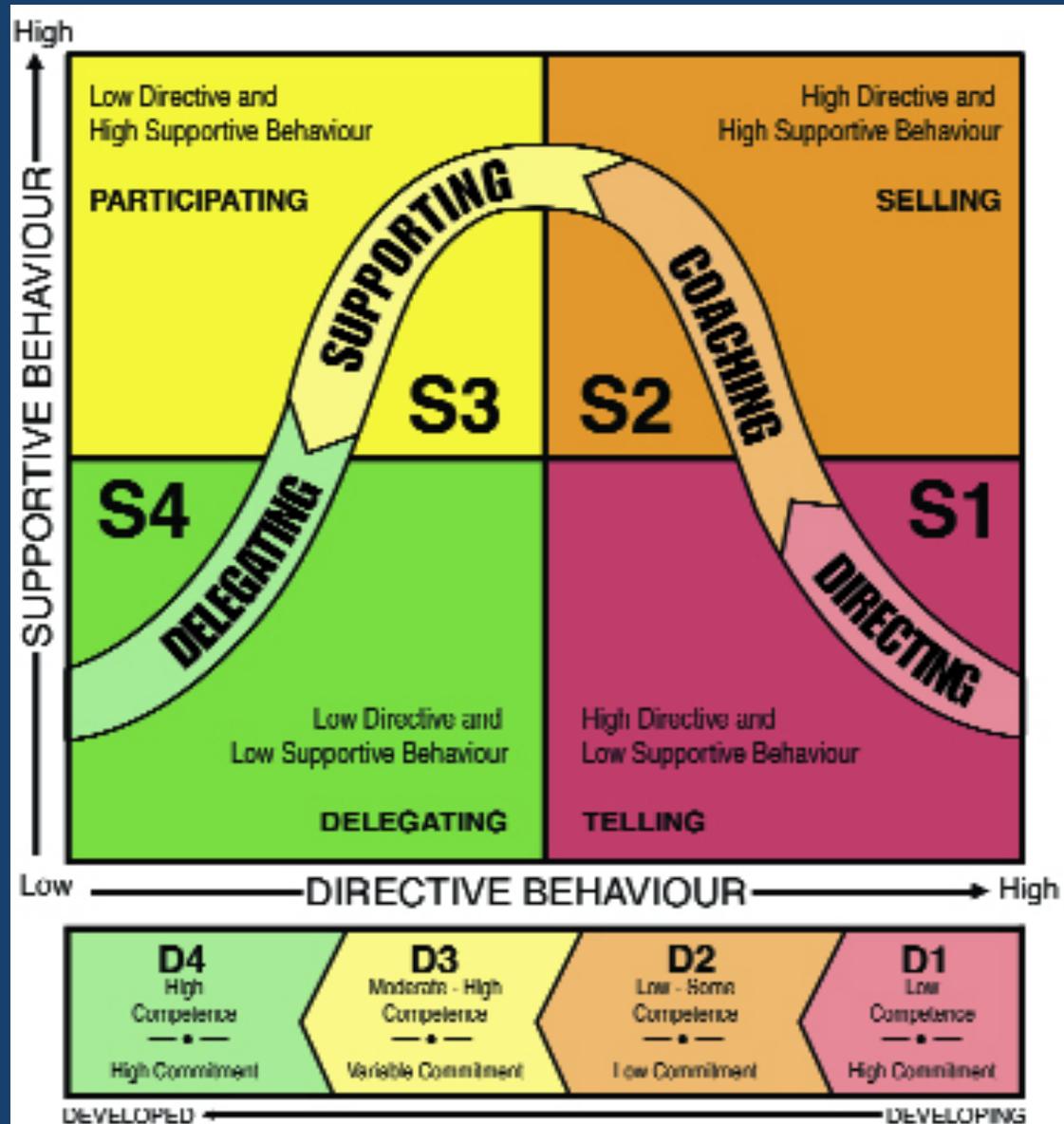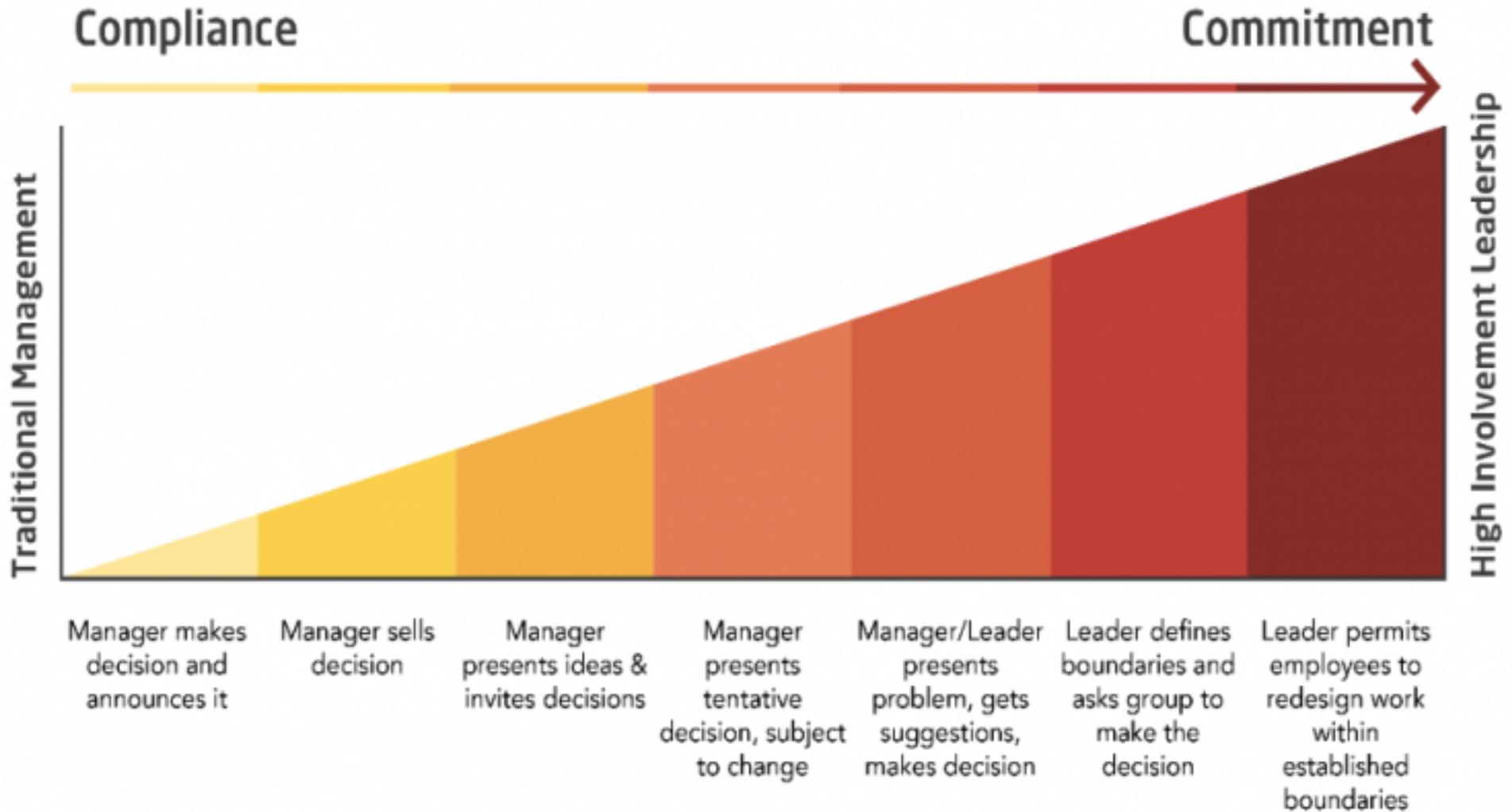
GRPI: Richard Beckhard, 1972

- Choice (commitment – empowered to make decisions etc – voluntary)
- Critical mission – why it matters, why I would want to engage
- Feeling valued – why I matter
- The challenge - excitement
- Recognition – what happens when…

Why are these important?

- 80% of conflicts in teams are attributed to unclear goals.
- From the remaining 20%, 80% are assigned to unclear roles.
- From the remainder there is again 80% to be found in the field of unclear processes.
- Finally, only 1% of the conflicts in teams can be attributed to interpersonal relationships.
- If goals are not clear, uncertainties in the individual roles will arise.
- If roles are unclear, this will result in cumulative conflict within the processes.
- If processes are unclear, accumulated conflicts at higher levels will appear at people level.

cp. Pritchett, Tichy, & Cohen, 1998; Tichy, 2002

Hersey Blanchard Situational Leadership Model

Compliance → Commitment

Traditional Management → High Involvement Leadership

| Manager makes decision and announces it | Manager sells decision | Manager presents ideas & invites decisions | Manager presents tentative decision, subject to change | Manager/Leader presents problem, gets suggestions, makes decision | Leader defines boundaries and asks group to make the decision | Leader permits employees to redesign work within established boundaries |

P Turgoose / M LaScola, www.on-the-mark.com

What is your team's goal?

- Ensure you have a common understanding: articulate this as a group – what is your goal, purpose, ambition? Why are you here?

- Challenge your language: is it unambiguous?

- Is it an inspiring goal or purpose? Would you want to get behind it?

- How are you going to deliver your goal? What three areas of work do you need people to contribute for success? What are your most important areas of work?

- Make sure you also communicate what is expected of you and why – how your team contributes to and is affected by the wider organisation's goals, responsibilities and constraints.

- What actions are needed to deliver it? Define your objectives – what , by when, how much, by whom?

Clear roles

- Start from the perspective of "we":
  - None of us is as smart as all of us
  - The whole is greater than the sum of the parts
- Questions to consider for team workshops (not necessarily all at once):
  - What are the 2-3 key objectives or deliverables in your role?
  - What's the most important thing you do?
  - What is the most important thing you could do?
  - What resources / support do you receive that help you do your job?
  - What do you need that **you are not** receiving now?
  - What are you getting that **you don't need**; what is preventing or getting in your way of doing your job?
- Work together to identify gaps, overlaps, opportunities and solutions

Identify key responsibilities

Activities / responsibilities	Rank in terms of importance to your job (1 = most important)	% time you actually devote to this	% time you should devote to this	Does it fit your skill set?	Do you like doing this? 1 = no, 2=somewhat, 3=yes

Questions to ask

1. What stands out?
2. Is anything or anyone missing or overloaded?
3. Is anything skewing your ability to contribute to team tasks?
4. Are you doing something someone else would like to do? Or vice versa?
5. Are there places where responsibilities should be consolidated, exchanged, or eliminated?
6. Is there too much work being done that doesn't align with your identified team responsibilities?
7. How might you restructure your job responsibilities to streamline work, reduce conflict and provide greater team support?

Or the short version...

- If you had 20% more time, what would you spend it on?

Clear processes: are they efficient and understood by all the team?

- Decision making: how and by whom? Consistent? Fair?
- Communication: constant, consistent, clear, two way?
- Email
- Records
- Handover
- Meetings
- Scheduling / annual leave / cover arrangements
- Funding & resources
- Training

As a team, consider where are you spending / wasting most time? What can you eliminate / combine / simplify to release time for the more important stuff? If you are spending a lot of time on something, look at how you can make it a more streamlined process to release time for more important things.

You might want to consider developing a team charter with your team to summarise:
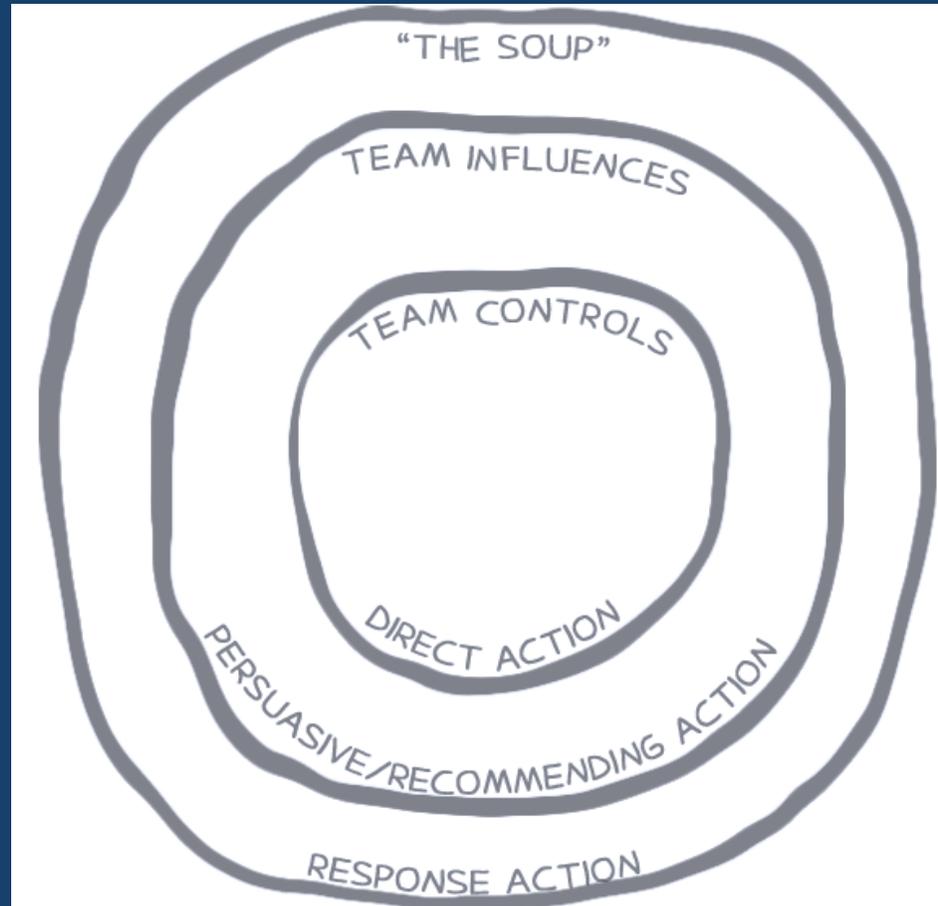
- Context: what we are here for and why it is important
- Objectives: what we will deliver and by when
- Roles: who will do what
- Authority / boundaries: what can / will we do and not do?
- Processes and operations: how we will work together
- Support and resources: what is available to help us do this
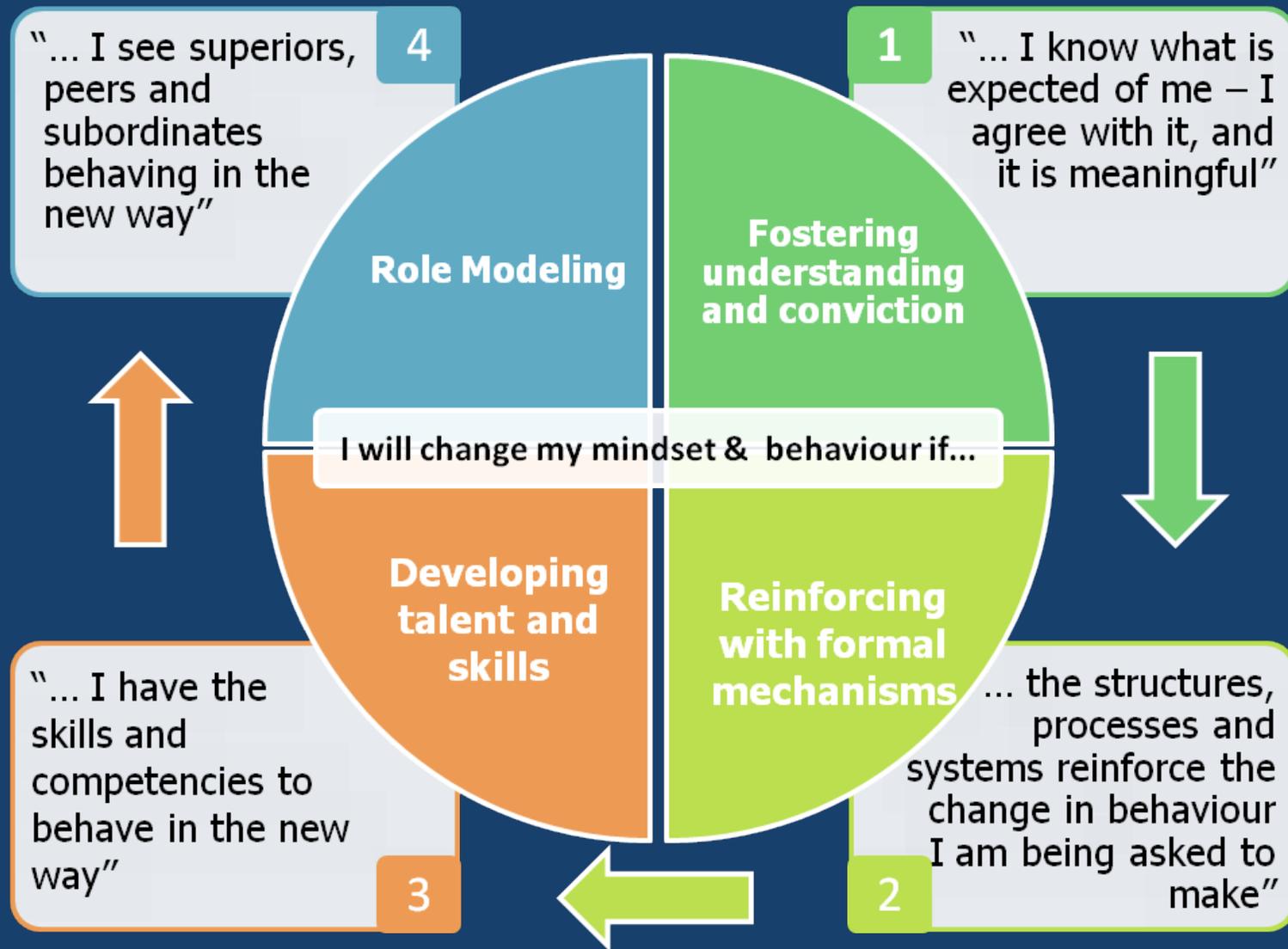- Agreement: our sign up and commitment

Choose where to focus your energy

Inner circle: what you / the team can control or directly manage

Middle circle: actions you / the team can take to move things forward

The Soup: elements you cannot change – the environment you work in and must adapt or respond to: find efficient ways to manage this but don't waste energy trying to change it

Innovationgames.com

"... I see superiors, peers and subordinates behaving in the new way" **4**

"... I know what is expected of me – I agree with it, and it is meaningful" **1**

Role Modeling

Fostering understanding and conviction

I will change my mindset & behaviour if...

Developing talent and skills

Reinforcing with formal mechanisms

"... I have the skills and competencies to behave in the new way" **3**

... the structures, processes and systems reinforce the change in behaviour I am being asked to make" **2**

www.thethoughtleader.com

Dealing with problems

- Instead of healthy innovation, there are fights for one's own ideas, instead of camaraderie there is resentment. Most common of all is a professional passive-aggressiveness, where team members remain silent when together, but then dissent later in private.

- Despite the tired, oft-repeated process of Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing, most teams seem to be stuck in Storming. Or worse, *boring.*

Forbes.com

Dealing with problems

- What sort of problems do you experience?
- What sort of things are they caused by?
  - Inattention to / different interpretation of results or goals
  - Avoidance of accountability
  - Lack of commitment
  - Fear of conflict
  - Absence of trust
  - Disappointment / disillusionment
  - Failure to communicate clearly

How to fix it

- Initiate the difficult but crucial conversations
- Focus on accountability and stopping blaming / bullying
- Work on communication, conflict and problem solving skills
- Be clear about the goals and the bigger picture
- Agree ground rules for how team members will behave
- Accept that disagreement need not be destructive

Confronting problems: SIFT

- SUMMARISE the facts: what happened?

- Explain the IMPACT: what was the result?

- Describe how it made you or other team members FEEL: eg disappointed, frustrated

- State what TARGET you would like to see: how would you like to see the behaviour modified?