

Building From Day One: Setting New Staff Up for Success

Research and Resource Guide

Introduction

This research and resource guide summarizes lessons from the session, provides additional topical resources to further develop your application of the topic, and offers research to expand your knowledge.

Lessons from the Session

Building from Day One focuses on communication, teamwork, and problem-solving for supporting new team members and even tenured staff. The skills covered in the session include:

- **Communication Behaviors¹:** There are seven key behaviors for effective communication: clear messaging, confirm understanding, take turns, choose the right delivery method, actively listen, demonstrate self-awareness, and use appropriate body language. Each behavior supports stronger team interactions by ensuring messages are clear, respectfully exchanged, and thoughtfully received. Together, these habits promote a culture of clarity, empathy, and collaboration — critical for successful teamwork and staff support.
- **Enemies of Teamwork²:** Effective teamwork requires shared goals, clear communication, and trust—but common challenges like lack of trust, fear of conflict, avoiding accountability, poor commitment, and ignoring results can undermine success.
- **The Bridge Model³:** The Bridge Model is a problem-solving tool from engineering that helps you move from where you are now (your current situation) to where you want to be (your desired outcome). It helps you to explore possible ideas and solutions—starting with what’s real and concrete and then thinking about future possibilities. The model uses two paths: One moves from the present to the future while the other moves from the concrete (what exists now) to the

¹Moore, C., MBA. (2019, May 21). *15 Communication exercises and games for the workplace* (C. R Wilson Ph. D., Ed.). PositivePsychology.com. <https://positivepsychology.com/communication-exercises-for-work/>

²Lencioni, P. (2005). *Overcoming the five dysfunctions of a team*. Jossey-Bass. <https://icrrd.com/public/media/31-10-2020-090323Overcoming%20the%20Five%20Dysfunction.pdf>

³Adair, J. (2007). *Decision making and problem solving strategies*. Kogan Page Limited. <http://edl.emi.gov.et/jspui/bitstream/123456789/158/1/Decision%20Making%20and%20Problem%20Solving%20Strategies%20by%20John%20Adair%20%28z-lib.org%29.pdf>

abstract (new ideas). To solve a problem, you move through all four parts of the model, using creative thinking to explore options and then turning those ideas into action to reach your goal.

Resources and Tools

While our discussion of strengthening your team through skill building involved a look at three approaches to developing greater proficiency in communication, teamwork and problem solving, there are many other tools and strategies you may benefit from exploring. Here are three more for you:

Communication

- [⁴Inclusive & Effective Communication: 4 Strategies for Education Leaders⁵](#)
- [Effective Characteristics for Leaders in Afterschool Programs⁶](#)
- [Ten Strategies for Effective Communication in Afterschool⁷](#)

Teamwork

- [Creative Team-Building Ideas for After-School Staff⁸](#)
- [5 Characteristics of an Effective School Team⁹](#)

Problem-solving

- [Supporting After-School Staff and Programs¹⁰](#)

⁴Dunbar, K. (2017). Problem solving. A companion to cognitive science, 289-298.
<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=ea7579dcb98512394c9bcd7084c6359885cae6e4>

⁵Inclusive and Effective Communication: 4 Strategies for Education Leaders. (2024, January 9). *New Leaders Blog*. <https://www.newleaders.org/blog/inclusive-effective-communication-4-strategies-for-education-leaders>

⁶Rudd Safran, K. (2019). Effective Characteristics for Leaders in Afterschool Programs (Thesis, Concordia University, St. Paul). Retrieved from
https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1367&context=cup_commons_grad_edd

⁷Garcia, J., & Rushing, M. (n.d.). Ten Strategies for Effective Communication in Afterschool. *National Afterschool Association Talk Tuesday*. <https://edvstaff.weebly.com/uploads/6/7/9/8/67988787/talktuesday-effective-communication.pdf>

⁸Camarena, O. (2024, December 23). *Creative Team-Building Ideas for After-School staff*. AfterSchool HQ. <https://go.afterschoolhq.com/creative-team-building-ideas-for-after-school-staff/>

⁹Aguilar, E. (2015, June 22). *5 Characteristics of an effective school team*. Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/5-characteristics-effective-school-team-elena-aguilar>

¹⁰Kelly, A. (2019, October 15). Supporting After-School staff and programs. Community Psychology: Social Justice Through Collaborative Research and Action. <https://www.communitypsychology.com/supportingstaffprograms/>

- [A Protocol for Collaborative Problem-Solving](#)¹¹

Additional Resources

- [New Year, New Opportunities: How Leaders Can Support Staff Growth and Success](#)¹²

Research and Readings

- [Problem Solving](#)¹³
- [The Secrets of Great Teamwork](#)¹⁴
- [New report: How can afterschool programs support employability through social and emotional learning?](#)¹⁵

¹¹Valenzuela, J. (2023, December 21). *A protocol for collaborative Problem-Solving*. Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/improving-school-teamwork-dynamics-administrator/>

¹²*New Year, New Opportunities: How leaders can support staff growth and success*. (2025, January 29). National Afterschool Association. <https://naaweb.org/news/692317/New-Year-New-Opportunities-How-Leaders-Can-Support-Staff-Growth-and-Success.htm>

¹³Dunbar, K. (1998). Problem solving. In W. Bechtel, & G. Graham (Eds.). *A companion to cognitive science*. London, England: Blackwell, pp 289-298. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228697781_Problem_solving

¹⁴Haas, M., & Mortensen, M. (2016). Collaboration and teams: the secrets of great teamwork. In *From the Magazine*. <https://ombuds.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/pics/30%20Anniv/The%20Secrets%20of%20Great%20Teamwork.pdf>

¹⁵Murphy, E. (2015, December 22). *New report: How can afterschool programs support employability through social and emotional learning?* Afterschool Snack. https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/afterschoolSnack/New-report-How-can-afterschool-programs-support-employability_12-18-2015.cfm