



# Building Cohesive Teams for Early Intervention Assessments

Bernita Sykes, MS | Kendall Lee, EdD

## How Do You Develop Norms?

- Some teams come together and brainstorm.
- Some teams bring in a facilitator to take them through the process
- Some teams refer to frameworks that are already established

## Creating Your Own Norms for Your Assessment Team

### You can create your norms:

- Prior to Assessment
- During Assessment
- Post-Assessment

### Tips

- It is recommended that teams do not create more than 10 norms (preferably 5-7).
- Ensure that everyone agrees or consensus is gathered
- Uphold your norms
- Revisit your norms
- "Parents, you have a voice"

## Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices

**TC1.** Practitioners representing multiple disciplines and families work together as a team to plan and implement supports and services to meet the unique needs of each child and family.

**TC3.** Practitioners use communication and group facilitation strategies to enhance team functioning and interpersonal relationships with and among team members.

For more DEC RPs: <https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices>

## Five Dysfunctions of a Team

### Absence of Trust

#### Dysfunctional Team

- Conceals weaknesses
- Fears vulnerability

#### High-Performing Team

- Shares vulnerabilities
- Builds mutual trust

### Fear of Conflict

#### Dysfunctional Team

- Avoids healthy debate
- Seeks artificial harmony

#### High-Performing Team

- Engages in constructive debate
- Values diverse perspectives

### Lack of Commitment

#### Dysfunctional Team

- Doesn't make decisions
- Is unclear

#### High-Performing Team

- Commits to decisions
- Embraces accountability

### Avoidance of Accountability

#### Dysfunctional Team

- Shuns responsibility
- Ignores low standards

#### High-Performing Team

- Holds peers accountable
- Maintains high standards.

### Lack of Results

#### Dysfunctional Team

- Prioritizes individual goal
- Neglects team outcomes

#### High-Performing Team

- Focuses on team success
- Celebrates collective results.

## Conclusions

- Our assessment teams do hard work (heart work): We deliver not so good news, we are held to high regard, we hear sad and traumatic information... Caregivers are being very vulnerable/sharing hard information/receiving hard information
- All teams should make time to debrief on heavy topics
- All teams should make time to debrief on heavy topics
- Checking in with the caregivers

## References

Division for Early Childhood (DEC). (2014). **DEC recommended practices**. DEC.

Lencioni, P. (2002). **The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable**. Jossey-Bass ; Wiley.

Saki. (n.d.). **Feeling awful about toddler's early intervention evaluation** : r/Mommit. [https://www.reddit.com/r/Mommit/comments/1c00qbh/feeling\\_awful\\_about\\_toddlers\\_early\\_intervention/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Mommit/comments/1c00qbh/feeling_awful_about_toddlers_early_intervention/)

Winton, P. J., Guillen, C., & Schnitz, A. G. (2019). **Teaming and collaboration: Building and Sustaining Partnerships**. Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children.

