

# TEAM-ing with LIFE

## A Workbook for Ministry Teams

Prepared by Presbytery eLM Ministers  
Equipping Leadership for Mission

Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

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This resource was developed in 2023 and 2024 by the Presbytery eLM Ministers, a Community of Practice within the equipping Leadership for Mission Unit of the VicTas Synod.

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# Introduction

This workbook is a resource to help teams have a healthy, joyful, productive and empowered life together.

In this 'Teaming with Life Workbook', a key biblical verse is John 10:10; Jesus offers us life - life in all its abundance. Working in community is at the heart of the Triune God: our God loves, relates and creates in community.

Abundant life includes life lived in community, where people discover a unity of purpose within the group's diversity.

In the Uniting Church, we value the group's wisdom in our decision-making processes and the creation of team ministries. Notably, the Basis of Union, paragraph 2, talks about working together in faith and mission. The Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice 3.1 recognises those people who are colleagues, both lay and ordained, as equals in standing and responsibility when serving in a team ministry.

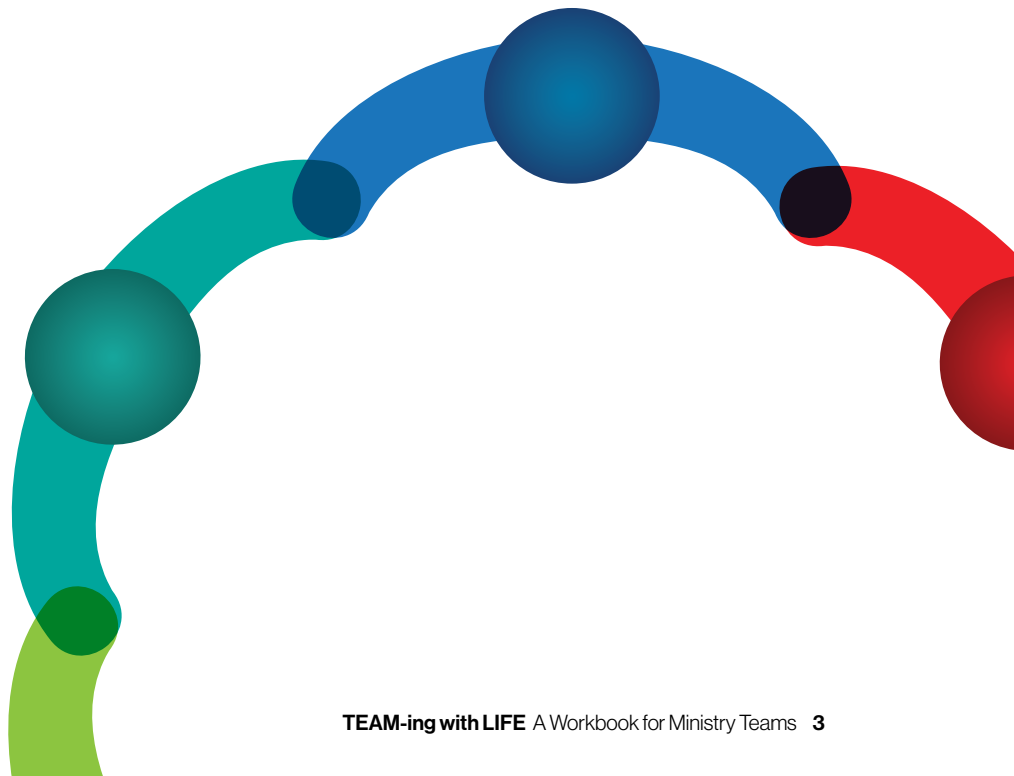
The Uniting Church values team ministry as it allows individuals to work to their strengths, grow in their abilities and empower others. There is synergy in teamwork that can make dreams become realities. Teams do, however, require dedicated work by all who are involved.

Support for ministry teams should come from the 'appointing body' - the Presbytery and/or Synod. Individual and team supervision is expected in all ministry teams.

## How to use this workbook

Everything in this workbook can be used as an exercise for cooperating as a team.

We offer definitions of teams, reasons for working together as a team, scenarios to consider, challenges of team life, and ways to support each other spiritually and practically. You might work through one chapter per month, or choose a chapter that is relevant to you. It is important to begin by creating a 'safe' or 'brave' space where all can contribute fully, honestly and in confidentiality. Ensure each person has contributed. Begin and end in prayer. If the session raises issues for individuals or the team, use your personal or team supervisor to address these.



# Why are we talking about teams?

Not long ago, ministry was often solitary, working as individuals and often with a single congregation.

The situation is different today:

- We have ministers (lay and ordained) who are responsible for multiple congregations to resource those congregations.
- We work in regions where several ministers cover a larger group of congregations.
- We sense that ministers can be safer for themselves and others by being accountable to one another in teams.
- We expect ministers to receive more support and accountability; teams can offer this.
- We can benefit from broader wisdom and perspectives when shared in a well-functioning team.
- For all the benefits of teams, they do not always function well. We want teams to be the best versions of themselves that we can foster.

For all these reasons and more, please take the time to work through this resource and find the parts that are relevant to your situation.

## What is a team?

We often use the word “team” to describe a group of people who work together or share a common bond. We celebrate footy teams, whose supporters are often described as ‘part of the team’. People who work in the same office or meet together as a committee can be called a ‘team’. But is a committee a ‘team’ in the same sense as a football team? Can every situation where people work equally together be called a ‘team’ - or are they better described as a council, a workgroup, or friends? This workbook assumes several factors are always true when using the word ‘team’. This means that some groups are not teams by the nature of their purpose - and some groups can become teams through their shared experience:

- **Relationship** is critical to the functioning or success of the team, and a clear commitment between all members to being a team and being in a community together.
- **Diversity** in skill or giftedness and perspective is necessary, and in the best teams, everyone brings their best to the task, ready and willing to negotiate plans or work through differences and conflict.
- **Change** is an essential dynamic of the life of a team, as relationships and tasks will change during the lifetime of a team.
- **Purpose guides a team.** For a group to be a team, the members need to share a common purpose or direction that can be described, even if that direction changes during the life of the team or extends beyond the life of this team. These can include milestones or waypoints that can trigger a re-evaluation of the purpose or directions. That direction or purpose can be external to the team. Still, the team elements of relationships, diversity, and change are essential to achieving the team's purpose.

Teams take many different forms and consist of a variety of people. There may be a blend of paid and unpaid, lay and ordained team members. Whether paid or unpaid, we are considering people appointed to a role in the church and seeking to serve together as equal members if they work together in a team with a common purpose or direction. For example, a team may include a minister and the chairs of committees, worship leaders, or lay preachers.

We have prepared other resources for committees at work in congregations.

For example, the “Meeting Together” resource and the “PRC Toolbox” are designed to help committees work more effectively. (See Resources on p.21 & 22 for details).

# The team at St Somewhere Uniting Church

This workbook includes case studies and group questions to illustrate challenges and opportunities for teams. Here are the characters you will meet in these case studies.

## **The team consists of:**

Joan: the new minister in placement at St Somewhere, her second appointment after an early career as a primary school teacher. Effervescent, bubbly and intensely pastoral, Joan is at her best in shifting circumstances where change is 'normal'. She responds well to new ideas, often giving new things a go and evaluating them afterwards rather than planning. Joan would be described as a 'feeling' rather than a 'thinking' person.

In the JNC conversation, Joan was told this was a team ministry. She dreamed of a tight-knit group of people working well together, overcoming issues and bringing life and being the Gospel in the community in various colourful and meaningful ways.

Dianne: Church Administrator / Office Coordinator (0.5 part-time paid). She has been doing this role for 20 years, is also secretary of the church council, and runs the office as a tight ship. Everything has a place, the regular tasks have well-honed routines, and weekly tasks are done in a well-practiced order.

Trevor: A non-placement Pastor who leads the ministry in the two local aged care facilities and takes monthly Sunday services for the three rural congregations. Pastor is a second career for Trevor, who spent his first 31 years of work as a farmer, having always lived in the district. As part of his transition to the new ministry, Trevor completed a Cert IV in Ageing Support and has completed one CPE unit. Trevor is a caring person with a high level of empathy.

Amon: A Pastoral Care worker for the congregation (0.5 part-time paid). Amon came to St Somewhere's as a refugee, supported by the congregation. He was a social worker before he came to Australia, and he used these skills as he started in his new home. He was identified through the congregation with gifts for pastoral care and is an elder. Amon is gentle and well-loved by the congregation.

Jeng: Younger Generations pastor for the congregation. Australian-born Jeng is employed for one day a week as a youth leader. Most of their training for this was through the annual presbytery camp. They are a university student studying cultural anthropology and international relations. Jeng is full of energy and ideas and, supporting a growing youth ministry, is passionate about the work that can be done by and with young people in the church and community.

# Seven qualities of a good team

Building a team in any organisation requires commitment and intentionality by each team member to work positively together. The inter-conciliar nature of the Uniting Church implies teamwork. However, teams do not automatically work well together. Team life can be challenging, complex and very rewarding.

There are many resources available to help make good teams better. The Meeting Together Workbook<sup>1</sup> and PRC Toolkit<sup>2</sup> are two resources available from eLM. Another resource worth considering is a personality type test, e.g. DISC, Enneagram or Myers Briggs. (See More Resources on page 22 for more information). These tests help teams to recognise the diversity of team members' personalities and working styles. They help identify how diverse team members can collaborate well as a team. They can highlight how team members may operate when they are at their best or weakest. They can also help team members to understand what their growing attributes are.

So, what makes a good team? Here are seven qualities for a good team, offered as a starting point for discussion within your team.

## Seven qualities of a good team<sup>3</sup>

### 1. COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is essential for any team to work together, regardless of the task.

- For effective communication to occur in teams, each member must know that they are safe from unhelpful criticism and that their voice is heard.
- Each member should be confident that their thoughts, ideas, and opinions are valued and respected.
- Each team member should be able to consider the thoughts of the other team members.
- Listening skills are crucial for any team discussion, and a big part of communication is knowing that at least 50% of effective communication is listening. An old saying goes, "Listen first, talk second".
- Good communication does not resolve the inevitable differences and conflicts that will arise in teams. However, these differences and conflicts can be named and worked through.<sup>4</sup>

### 2. RELIABILITY AND COMMITMENT

Team members are accountable to each other for the tasks or roles within their responsibility in the congregation or the wider church. Accountability implies a commitment to the goals and ethics within the church. This is particularly important in difficult circumstances. When things get tough, it is essential to know that the team will support each other and work together to find the best outcomes for people within and beyond the team.

### 3. FLEXIBILITY

Nothing remains static in any organisation, and the church is no exception. Team members need to be flexible as different situations arise. A flexible team will be able effectively to respond to changing conditions effectively.

### 4. INNOVATION AND DIVERSITY

Individual team members bring experience, training, skills and wisdom to any situation. Team members do not have to agree on everything. The key is being able to work together towards a common purpose. Different personality types, cultures, backgrounds, theology and gifts can bring creative, new and varied perspectives to the organisation's life.

Innovation and diversity may spring from a creative contest of ideas. Such contests do not need to imply conflict. They may be valued to bring the best out of people's ideas and values.

## 5. LEADERSHIP

There are many different styles of managing a team. Teams may organise themselves according to the expectations of their accountable bodies, such as a Standing Committee or a Church Council. For example, see Regulation 2.11.3 (b). A Church Council or other appropriate body will designate the member of the ministry team who has responsibility for convening meetings and co-ordinating ministry functions.

Teams may choose revolving leadership, where they take turns leading the team.

Often, natural leaders may emerge based on experience or personality types (e.g. Myers Briggs, Enneagram or DISC).

Each style of leadership has its strengths and weaknesses. Trust is essential, no matter which leadership style is adopted. The bodies to which the team is accountable have a role to play in the team's leadership. Their role is to ensure that the team has regular team supervision and that the team is reviewed at intervals determined by the governing body to whom they report.

Presbyteries and Synod can be asked to provide coaching, mentoring, and professional development opportunities where appropriate. The governing body is responsible for the pastoral care of the team and its members.

## 6. ORGANISATION

Each team member will have different organisational skills. However, to have an organised team is good practice. Often, people come into a team with separate job descriptions or profiles. In contrast, at other times, team members are given broad statements that they are expected to 'live into'.

Team organisation may mean having shared and individual work plans that are known across the team and the accountable body. Although not common practice in the church, a work plan is a way to help the team and the work proceed efficiently. Of course, all work plans will have to be flexible and adaptable. The team's tasks and roles should be revisited whenever there is a change in team membership or a significant change in the congregation or organisation.

## 7. FUN AND APPRECIATION

Part of team building is for teams to work, play and pray together. This may sound easy, but teams are stronger when they find time to meet socially and pray and reflect together. A team needs to laugh together and get to know each other personally, preferably over a team meal or other social event. The team should not be all work and seriousness 100% of the time.

It can be helpful to have team building exercises. This could include team devotions, such as the Gospel reading for the week. Think about what it is that Jesus does: To or for whom? How does it make a difference? How does Jesus use his power to transform? Is there something we can learn about being a leader in the church or being a member of a team? For more team exercises on these questions, see "Sustaining ourselves and our team", page 19.

Within the team it is crucial to support and congratulate each other when deserved. The best teams recognise the strengths and weaknesses of each team member and appreciate each other's work. This creates a work environment that is motivating and creative. Harmful competition amongst the team can be unhelpful and disrupt the focus on the common goal. The creation of a positive and motivational environment is good for the team and the organisation as a whole.

*See over page for further responses.*

<sup>1</sup>Meeting Together [Workbook](#)

<sup>2</sup>PRC Toolkit [2023](#)

<sup>3</sup>Adapted from: <https://peepshr.co.uk/2019/09/09/the-seven-qualities-of-a-successful-team/>

<sup>4</sup>Meeting Together [Workbook](#) Section 10 Elements of Right Relationship page 15

**List some of the ways your team reflects the seven qualities of a good team on pages 6 and 7?**



# A team building activity

## Discussing quotes about teamwork and community.

Choose the quote that you relate to the most, and discuss this with another member of the group.

You might print these one quote per page and lay them on the floor or table to read and choose from.

- 'We are a partnership, or nothing.' - Woodrow Wilson
- 'Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.' - Michael Jordan
- 'One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.' Chinese Proverb
- 'I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.' George Bernard Shaw
- 'I would never belong to a group that would accept someone like me as a member.' Groucho Marx
- 'The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.' Jane Addams
- 'There can be no vulnerability without risk; there can be no community without vulnerability; there can be no peace, and ultimately no life, without community.' M. Scott Peck
- 'In every community there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it.' Marianne Williamson
- 'How does one keep from "growing old inside"? Surely only in community. The only way to make friends with time is to stay friends with people. ... Taking community seriously not only gives us the companionship we need, it also relieves us of the notion that we are indispensable.' Robert McAfee Brown
- 'Come out of the circle of time and into the circle of love.' Rumi
- 'We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.' Sandra Day O'Connor
- 'The love of our neighbour in all its fullness simply means being able to say, "What are you going through?"' Simone Weil
- 'One of the signs of passing youth is the birth of a sense of fellowship with other human beings as we take our place among them.' Virginia Woolf
- 'Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.' Robert F. Kennedy
- 'Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.' Leo Tolstoy

# Team covenants

A team covenant is a promise or an agreement. It is a relational agreement that is binding. It is about setting yourself up for a successful team. This is more than a behavioural covenant. It is about setting up a protocol or a pattern of how we behave towards each other. In the covenant that you are choosing to make, you can collectively select your focus. This could be done in one hour, and your finished document may be one page long. If, at the next team meeting, you want to revisit your covenant to see if it still aligns with the directions and purposes you've set for the team, you can. It is helpful to set a date to revise the covenant annually. Re-covenanting when a new member joins the team will help clarify expectations and what this team has committed to in working together.

## A helpful Covenant Framework

### When conflict arises:

- Mending fractured relationships where we can.
- Endeavouring to work through our disagreements.
- Being courteous and having safe disagreements.
- Seeking a mediator when needed.
- Accepting full responsibility for our own actions, behaviour, attitudes, and opinions.
- Using restorative justice – it is biblical to speak to the person first, then if not heard, bring a mediator the second time. E.g. Team Supervisor, Presbytery Chair, a Presbytery Minister, Associate General Secretary.
- Refrain from resolving conflict via email.

### Personal growth:

- Working on our personal development.
- Participating in ongoing education.
- Working with diligence.

### Role Boundaries:

- Working under the Uniting Church's codes of conduct.
- Devoting ourselves to everyday tasks and committing to doing them well.

### Spiritual foundations:

- Praying together and for each other.
- Seeking God's wisdom.
- Accepting that this is not our ministry, it is God's ministry.
- Committing to Servant Leadership.

### Accountability:

- Participating in team supervision.
- Using regular personal supervision.
- Committing to confidentiality (what happens in the team, will stay in the team).
- Agreeing who we can share confidences with, e.g. personal supervisor.

### Open communication:

- Participating with appropriate and clear communication.
- Holding courageous and rigorous conversations.
- Sharing all relevant information, and being aware that withholding knowledge that a colleague needs is a work-safe issue.

**Support and encouragement:**

- Inviting for each person to say what they need as part of the team.
- Refraining from criticism of other leaders in ways that are unproductive or unhelpful.
- Not commiserating or agreeing with someone who is complaining about another leader.
- Leading balanced lives, paying attention to self-care, fun and rest among our work.
- Respecting the golden rule: Do to others what you would have them do to you.
- Not keeping secrets about things that are related to the team.

**Unity and humility:**

- Being honest and vulnerable within the team.
- Keeping emotions in check.
- Making 'I' statements.
- Discussing reasonable shared expectations.
- Asking for help if we are feeling overwhelmed.
- Remembering that It's not my ministry, but our ministry.
- Being a team is a role model to the wider church.

**Every covenant should be signed and dated.**

**Are there some non-negotiable areas for consideration?**

**According to the UCA Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice, which commitments would not be negotiable?**

# More team building exercises

The primary purpose of any team building activity is to improve some aspects of how a team works together while bringing everyone together in a shared experience. This might include working on communication, collaboration, alignment, team values, motivation, and anything else that enables a group to work together more effectively. It might also include resolving conflicts, sharing skills, or simply bringing your group together in a shared experience. Any team building effort should be designed to help bring team members closer or find ways to define and then move towards your shared goals as a group. There are many resources available to build teams.<sup>5</sup>

## Organising your team

Here is one idea for developing a work plan. As a team sit around a white board and create a Venn diagram, with a circle for every team member. Each person in the team begins to talk about their own tasks and these may be written in their own circle.

- 1.** Now think about the core events or meetings that you are all expected to partake in.
- 2.** Write these into the middle of the Venn diagram on the whiteboard. Then look at how the roles might overlap between different members.
- 3.** Spend some time talking about the areas of overlap and how you will manage these as a team to avoid crossing boundaries - or give permission to cross boundaries on certain issues.
- 4.** The last task should be to talk about the things in your work that are life giving to you personally - and how you can make more space and time for these!

<sup>5</sup>PRC Toolkit 2023 pages 8,20,11,12 & Meeting Together Workbook Section 17 Community Building Ideas page 24.

# Vision, values and goals

## Team vision

In some parts of the church, you may have arrived at your new position that has a clear vision for the next 3-5 years. In most cases, this is the best place to begin. The team will endeavour to embrace the broader vision of the organisation while implementing it at a practical level. A clear shared vision will focus and streamline decision making and provide a sense of direction.

The team could create a more descriptive narrative of where you are and where you are going or a short rallying cry. In a few sentences, your team vision statement summarises the purposes of your team and answers the question of what you aspire to do. The team vision will be the focus of your individual and collective efforts. When done well, it will help everyone to feel as though they are a part of the greater whole. A vision that is owned by the team can unleash energy, kindle commitment, and generate a spirit of empowerment.

As a team, choose one of the exercises below:

### Exercise 1:

Think about how the wider vision affects your work. Does this give you a sense of focus? Does it help you say no to certain tasks? What freedom is there in this vision? What are the restrictions?

### Exercise 2:

Spend some time as a team thinking about your purpose (you could use post it notes or a white board). Together create a vision statement that is short and realistic. Include a description of the impact you would like to see as a result of implementing this vision.

### Exercise 3:

If there was a Facebook post from someone highlighting all the great work your team have done and how outstanding it is, what would it say?

## Team values

Discuss the values or qualities that will guide you as a team and set the tone for your work.<sup>6</sup> You might start with the fruits of the Spirit, as found in Galatians 5. You may want to spend some time considering specific behaviours that you are looking for as a team and how they fit with these values.

It may be helpful to think of values and their corresponding opposites—for example, honesty versus dishonesty, coaching versus blaming, etc. Individual people have personal values; you are looking for the shared values of your group.

Sometimes, values are difficult to identify because they are not observable. Cultures are made up of behaviours, values, and beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

As a team, give some time to live into these values before sharing them more widely. You may want to engage with one of the following two exercises.

### Exercise 1:

Think about the context you are in right now, its culture and values, and then write down which values are most important for you in your context. Then write down how you can achieve these values. For instance, if your value is transparency, then clear and regular reporting may be important.

### Exercise 2:

Each member of the team is given two or three cards to write a value. In turn each member shares why they have chosen that value and why it is important to them and then it is placed on the table. At the end of this sharing time, everyone can vote for their new top three. At this point eliminate any cards that did not get a vote. Now sort the remaining cards into patterns or groups. If there is a group of cards that are similar, think of another value that they address. Now as a team see if you can come to consensus on the new team values. (Or pick one each).

### List the values of your new team.

<sup>6</sup>Brene Brown Dare to Lead [Values List](#) pp183 – 217.

<sup>7</sup>If you are interested you can read more at Lloyd Kwast What is Culture? [Kwast's Model](#).

## **Team Goals - Some ideas to reflect on to define your goals better:**

**1. What might the future look like?** Dream and think together about what the church might look like in ten years time if you follow your vision. What biblical narrative or parable might describe your vision? You could also talk and pray about what commitment to the vision might look like.

**2. How does your work contribute to the reaching of the goal?**

Identify up to twelve critical areas of ministry and mission that are important to the church at this moment. Name work that is already happening in these areas that we can build on. Group these ideas under headings.

**3. Prioritise.** As a group, rank all of these priorities, and identify the top three goals.

**4. SMART goals** are about setting up Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound goals. Describe one or two SMART goals for the top three areas named above. How do these goals draw us back to the gospel values we have chosen as our guidelines as a team?

**5. Visualise.** Post your goals in your team or church office or somewhere you will see them and help keep them front of mind. Team members can bring photos or images that remind them of the vision.

**6. Plan** some first steps that are easy and attainable and help you move towards your goal. Set targets for three years, five years and ten years.

# Identifying our gifts and strengths

## Scriptures

Using your gifts and talents for God's purposes involves understanding your team's vision and how the gifts and strengths of each team member can best be used.

## What are the spiritual gifts portrayed in the New Testament, and what are their purposes named in these biblical passages?

- 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, 26–31, 13:1–13, 14:1–5; Romans 12:4–8; Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Peter 4:10–11; 2 Timothy 1:6–7.

## Talk about the ways your team may live out these gifts:

- Empowered by God (1 Corinthians. 12).
- Build up the church in love (Ephesians. 4).
- Serve one another (1 Peter 4).

## Here are some quotes from the Basis of Union that relate to spiritual gifts:

- Built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ: (Basis of Union paragraph 3)  
... The Church's call is to serve that end: to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself...
- Gifts and ministries: (Basis of Union paragraph 13)  
The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant. It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ. The Uniting Church, at the time of union, will recognise and accept the ministries of those who have been called to any task or responsibility in the uniting Churches. The Uniting Church will thereafter provide for the exercise by men and women of the gifts God bestows upon them and will order its life in response to God's call to enter more fully into mission.

## Gift Identification

- What do you see as your individual spiritual gifts?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What are the spiritual gifts that you recognise amongst your team?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How do you exercise your gifts in your role?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- If you feel that you don't have the required gifts for your current role, what could you do?

You may want to use the following online tool: Spiritual Gifts and 4 DiSC profiles

<https://uniquelyyou.org/for-comb>



# Addressing conflict

## Conflict in our team

Everyday life will bring up differences when working with others. These differences can range from a contest of ideas (Task conflict) to strong disagreement in work relationships (Personal conflict). Perhaps more than any other challenge in life, our ability to work out these differences with others can affect our ability to live well and be happy.

In human interaction, differences and tensions are inevitable. These are consequences of changes within group dynamics, within the participants' own lives and within their work. Yet most of us get little helpful guidance on how to address conflict.

Bruce Tuckman<sup>8</sup> talks about five stages of group development: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning. These stages describe a path that teams may follow on their way to being effective. Throughout the stages of group development, conflict can arise at different times. It is, therefore, natural for us to speak about conflict in teams, as conflict is an integral part of the process for teams.

## Recognise, Respond, Resolve

When dealing with team conflict, it can be helpful to work with the three Rs: Recognise the conflict, Respond to the conflict, and Resolve the conflict. Conflicts can occur within the areas of task, relationship and process. There are essential differences between conflict detection, conflict management and conflict resolution.

## Conflict styles

Understanding different conflict styles may help address issues. Being open to name the conflict and working towards resolution can facilitate the rebuilding of a team. Well-managed conflict can produce positive results.

There are different styles of conflict, and these styles can cause a variety of responses and even misunderstandings from those in the team. Kraybill identified five different conflict styles: Directing, Harmonising, Avoiding, Cooperating, and Compromising.<sup>9</sup> Kraybill's model shows people's preferred style of conflict management, as well as practical help for dealing with differences. Other words used to identify conflict styles include Accommodating, Competing and Collaborating. As you reflect on your time in teams, you may identify these different styles in different people.

Having a common understanding as a team of levels or types of conflict can be very helpful and can clarify the dynamics present in any disagreement. This can work for conflict within a team or in a situation raised within the team's mission.

*Take 10 minutes to fill in The Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory as a team.*

**[Click this link to see the Inventory](#)**

Kraybill Style Matters: The Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory A cross-cultural version is also available.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mindtools.com/abvj5fi/forming-storming-norming-and-performing>

<sup>9</sup>Ron Kraybill [FOOTNOTE: Resolving Conflict: Understanding the Five Conflict Styles. <https://meisharouser.com/resolving-conflict-understanding-five-conflict-styles/>

## Conflict resolution

It is vital that the style of conflict resolution reflects the needs of the team. Don't be scared to reach out to an external facilitator to assist with conflict resolution. Sometimes, being closely invested in the issue can close our eyes to the key issues or solutions.

Some conflict resolution strategies for the team leader/facilitator/supervisor can include:

- attending to the work required before any meetings (getting a clear understanding of the conflict and dynamics).
- reflecting on any behavioural covenants agreed by the team/group. (see p.10-11 for a model of a behavioural covenant).
- meeting with people involved in the conflict separately.
- refocusing the group or team.
- meeting together to name the main issues of concern.
- summarising the main issues.
- asking for resolutions or ways forward from the group.
- allowing space for negotiation or mediation.
- giving quieter or more timid members a safe process to express themselves.

Remember, what may feel like a conflict to one person may be considered simply a robust conversation by another. There is a need to share, understand and develop empathy to assist in the resolution.

Some key points to help with successfully addressing conflict:

- **Readiness to communicate.** Open communication is vital in a dispute.
- **Using 'I' statements.** A key aspect that is greatly helpful is for those in conflict to acknowledge their position by using "I" statements rather than "you" statements. This opens a greater understanding of the position the person holds and moves the interaction away from blame and "finger-pointing". For more information, consult the PRC Toolkit.<sup>9</sup>
- **Be aware of triangulation,** when people seek the support of others for their ideas rather than bringing the issues to the whole team for conversation. "Negative Triangles" usually have the complainant as a 'victim', set you up to be the 'rescuer' and accuse the third person as a 'perpetrator'. "Flourishing Triangles" occur when we use this situation to help those involved to learn: the complainant becomes the 'thriller' because they are listened to in positive ways, the rescuer becomes the 'responsible' person, and the third person becomes the 'learner'.
- We can be tempted to 'take sides' rather than listening to the information and being discerning.<sup>10</sup>
- **Actively listen.** Listen to what the other person has to say without interrupting. You may choose to take some notes or ask clarifying questions.
- **Review Options from the discussion.** Talk over the options, looking for solutions that benefit everyone.
- Agreement or consensus is not always achievable. Accommodating or compromising can be a legitimate way of resolving a conflict.
- Try to end with a **win-win solution** where people feel heard. This is likely to call for compromise by all parties. If you have only a win-lose resolution, then you have not yet reached a consensus.

## Exercise

Trevor and Amon have disagreed about who is responsible for pastoral care in the retirement village. Trevor has gone to Joan seeking support. Dianne has proposed a solution (supporting Amon's involvement). This blew up at the Monday morning team meeting. The team agrees that pastoral care is needed and that the current setup isn't working. However, Trevor and Amon both believe it is their responsibility. Jeng wonders aloud how the two men could work together to offer care.

What is the nature of the conflict, and what would you see as helpful in resolving this disagreement?

<sup>9</sup>PRC Toolkit 2023 pages 10 & 11.

<sup>10</sup>The Drama Triangle" <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/6e5efd05/files/uploaded/Drama%20Triangle%20-%20Summary.pdf>

# Sustaining ourselves and our team

## **Spiritual care in team relationships. Why this important?**

Being part of a team can affect us profoundly and spiritually. Team membership offers an opportunity to watch out for and promote each other's spiritual well-being. (Teaming with Life – and Spirit). So, it helps us to think afresh about what we believe spiritual care is and how we would show it to each other.

This section of the workbook explores spirituality in four ways: how we define spirituality, how experience informs spirituality, the role of the Bible in spirituality, and how our own heritage shapes our spirituality.

Each section includes a 'case study' of a ministry team building their relationships by deliberately exploring spirituality together.

## **What do we think spirituality is? A case study**

The ministry team gathered for their monthly team meeting.

The day before, Rev. Joan had attended a professional development session run by Spiritual Care Australia. In that session, they offered this description of spirituality that's often used in the health care sector.

'Spirituality is a dynamic and intrinsic aspect of humanity through which persons seek ultimate meaning, purpose, and transcendence, and experience relationship to self, family, others, community, society, nature, and the significant or sacred.'<sup>1</sup>

The group is quiet for a moment, and then people start to respond.

1. What words arise to express your own view of spirituality?
2. What embodied expressions of spirituality offer meaning for you?
3. What would you affirm from the past, adapt to now, or adopt as an alternative for yourself from any of these views?

## **What have been some of our sources of spirituality?**

It is Pastor Trevor's turn to lead the team input for this month.

He brings Lego in different colours.

Yellow is for **Experience** of God.

Red is for the **Bible**.

Green is for our **Heritage**

Blue is for our use of **Reason**.

If you have building blocks available, you may like to use them while considering these questions:

1. Would you use one 'colour' more than others?
2. Using the Lego, is there a shape you would make or build?
3. Has your experience of spirituality shifted over time: what has been affirmed, adapted, or adopted along the way? Feel free to use the building blocks to demonstrate this.

### **Experience: Finding spirit in our own story**

Jeng, the Intergen leader, is preparing a workshop on spirituality. They want to try out these questions on the team first.

What would be your own responses to these questions:

1. Describe a spiritually meaningful moment or event in your life. What was happening then, and why does that matter to you now?
2. What are some of the feelings you associate with spirituality? For example, laughter, tears, peace, focus, energy.
3. Was there someone 'spiritual' in your family or significant others as you were growing up? Did this encourage or discourage your own sense of spirituality?

### **Scripture's place in our spirituality**

The team is aiming to integrate the mid-week bible studies with the Sunday sermons. Both will follow the Revised Common Lectionary reading, in particular, the Psalm and the Gospel for Term One.

This prompts a conversation among the team members.

1. Are there parts of scripture that are particularly important for you – verses, stories, characters, events?
2. Which themes in the Bible are important to you?
3. Do any of these questions from Jesus open something about spirituality for you?
  - a. "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16:13-15)
  - b. "Do you know what I have done for you?" (John 13:12)
  - c. "Whom do you seek?" (John 18:4)

### **How has our shared heritage shaped our spirituality?**

The team is preparing for their congregation's big zero anniversary. They have put the call out to previous ministers and members to come along. A large number of photographs and descriptions of historical events and previous members and ministers are posted on the church hall walls. Underneath these arrangements, team members start pondering particular threads in their faith heritage.

1. What threads would you still gladly hold on to from the past hundred years?
2. What would you like to release?
3. What other views are life-giving for you nowadays?
4. Are there people from our tradition that you find inspirational for today [or are negative examples?]  
E.g. Denise Champion, Garry Worete Deverell, Anne Pattel-Gray, Augustine, St Teresa of Avila, Martin Luther, Dorothy Day, Richard Rohr, Richard Foster, Macrina Wiederkehr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mary Oliver, Desmond Tutu, Matthew Fox, Ada Maria Isasi-Dieaz, Nadia Boltz-Weber, Diane Butler-Bass, Michael Leunig, Charles Harris, Athol Gill.

# More resources

**Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable** by Patrick Lencioni. In an easy-to-read book, Lencioni describes the five things that pull a team apart: Absence of trust; Fear of conflict; Lack of commitment; Avoidance of team accountability; Inattention to team objectives. A summary can be found here: <https://www.mindtools.com/a60oqev/lencionis-five-dysfunctions-of-a-team>

**From the VicTas Presbytery eLM Minister team:**

**Meeting Together workbook** A workbook written for committees and workgroups to assist with understanding and practicing best meeting practice in a Christian community.

<https://victas.uca.org.au/presbytery-elm-ministers/>

**PRC toolkit** A collection of tools to assist a PRC and it's members in their role and responsibilities

<https://victas.uca.org.au/presbytery-elm-ministers/>

**Imago Vita** A compilation of images to help community building and story telling in groups, committees and congregations. <https://victas.uca.org.au/presbytery-elm-ministers/>

**Conflict resolution:**

**The Kraybill Conflict tool** is a tool which can be used to assess the styles by which various people respond in conflict: [Click this link to see the Inventory](#)

“**The Drama Triangle**” describes a range of healthy and unhealthy ways people react in conflict

<https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/6e5efd05/files/uploaded/Drama%20Triangle%20-%20Summary.pdf>

**Flourishing in Life, Work And Careers: Individual wellbeing and career experiences.** (ch 14) by Peter M Hart, Peter Cotton, and Clare E. Scollay p.286 Talks about turning 'languishing triangles' into 'flourishing triangles', using triangulation as teaching moments. [Click this link to see a summary.](#)

**Spiritual gifts tool:**

There are a lots of books available on spiritual gifts. Choose those that are more creative and modern and include examples like music as a spiritual gift. This website - Uniquely for You for Churches <https://uniquelyyou.org/for-comb> combines spiritual gifting with personality profiling.

**Understanding culture and faith formation:**

Lloyd Kwast describes the ways we see and don't see in a person or group's culture – behaviour, values, beliefs, worldview. [https://senduwiki.org/\\_media/understanding\\_culture.pdf](https://senduwiki.org/_media/understanding_culture.pdf)

**Leadership:**

Heifetz & Linsky 'A Survival Guide for Leaders' looks at leadership in simple, complicated and complex situations – and the need for 'adaptive change' <https://hbr.org/2002/06/a-survival-guide-for-leaders>

Every leader has a different 'style' or leadership personality. If you google “Church Leadership styles”, you will find a wide range. This one from Cary Nieuwhof can be a good start <https://careynieuwhof.com/the-5-kinds-of-church-leaders-were-seeing-right-now-and-their-future-prospects/>

### **Personal dynamics:**

Want to understand what makes your team members tick, why they see the world the way they do, and why they respond to opportunity or conflict in particular ways? What about mentoring, or tools to enhance interaction? Here are some tools that might help:

The DiSC Profile speaks of four profiles: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness.

<https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/disc-styles>

Enneagram personality assessment - <https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/>

Myers Briggs personality assessment - <https://www.myersbriggs.org/>

John Mallison on Mentoring - <https://www.johnmallison.com/data/Mentoring%20to%20Develop%20Disciples%20&%20Leaders.pdf>

St. Luke's Innovative Resources – Sets of cards with curious questions to get to know yourself and your team members <https://innovativeresources.org/resources/>

Lego serious play - LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® began as an experiential process designed for use in guided workshops with adults to prompt dialogue and encourage reflection, as well as develop problem-solving skills and use of the imagination - <https://www.lego.com/en-au/themes/serious-play>

### **Decision making:**

Sam Kaner Participatory Decision Making Training Manual - <https://www.storypikes.com/workshops/PDFs/Facilitators%20Guide%20to%20Participation%20by%20Sam%20Kaner%20with%20Lenny%20Lind-Catherine%20Toldi-Sarah%20Fisk%20and%20Duane%20Berger-2007.pdf>

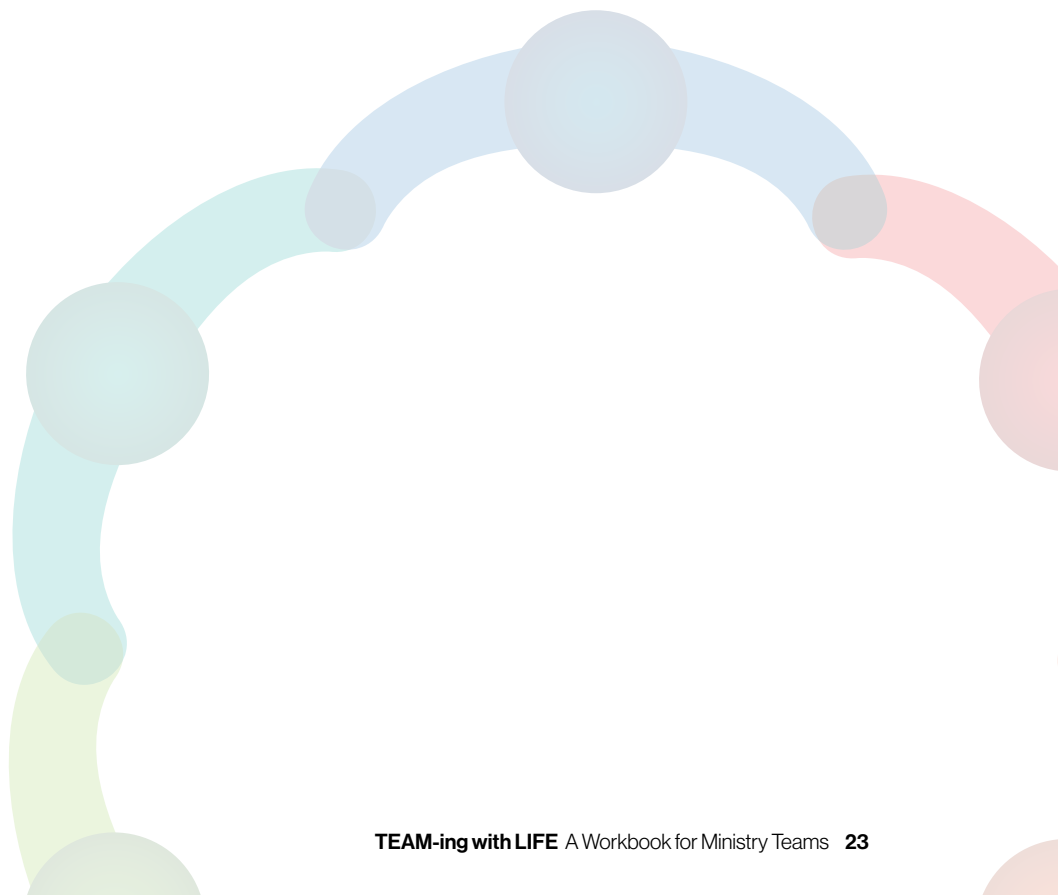
Working on projects or issues is assisted by knowing the best tools or perspectives to use to tackle the uniqueness of each issue. The Cynefin (ku-nev-in), framework can help. <https://www.mindtools.com/atddimk/the-cynefin-framework>

Many of the difficult issues we face are Wicked Problems – unable to be solved in a single decision, or even evading solution altogether. Here's some information that can help to identify and map a pathway towards clear understanding. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/wicked-problems-5-steps-to-help-you-tackle-wicked-problems-by-combining-systems-thinking-with-agile-methodology>

### **Change management:**

"Fundamentals in Transitional Ministry" courses offer a range of change management tools for leadership in your local ministry context. Training is offered annually across the UCA. This coursework also offers the ability to be recognised as an "Intentional Interim Minister" (IIM).

# Notes





# TEAM-ing with LIFE

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[victas.uca.org.au/presbytery-elm-ministers](https://victas.uca.org.au/presbytery-elm-ministers)



equipping Leadership *for* Mission



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA