

# Tool 9

## Developing our House Rules

*Teams have one distinguishing feature: they replace individual responsibility with mutual responsibility.*

Tool 9 is about building trust and positive collaborative behaviours between the members of your multidisciplinary team, by agreeing 'house-rules', which will dictate the way we work together to lead the change. These house rules should be anchored around:

- How do we share the leadership?
- How do we allocate tasks?
- How do we resolve differences?

Contrary to traditional leadership, collaborative leadership is different. It relies less on power and authority derived from seniority and position, and more on influence and persuasion, relationship skills and trust to get things done.

In other words, in collaborative teams, you all must be leaders and followers in equal measure, willing to step up to the plate and lead when needed, and be prepared to step down and follow someone else's lead.

So how can you build personal working relationships to create the trust that will make the multidisciplinary team working successful?

A good analogy is **sharing the driving** on a long journey. Each passenger must play their part in the driving seat, but to do so, all must agree on how they will conduct themselves on the journey.

In team building parlance we call these the 'house rules'. Like any good set of domestic house rules, they should be co-created by all the team members and mutually agreed.

In short, the 'house rules' articulate how the team will work together and provide the licence for team members to legitimately raise concerns about conduct and behaviours.

Research across 450 private sector managers<sup>1</sup> who had been involved in shared services

<sup>1</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit (2008) *The role of trust in business collaboration*. London. Economist Intelligence Unit Publications

confirmed the following virtues that build good working relationships and trust:

- Honesty
- Willingness to exchange information
- Ethical behaviour
- Shared objectives
- Motivation
- Respect for each other
- Positive attitude
- Ability to do the job well
- Consideration of others
- Expertise
- Communication skills
- Intelligence
- Experience

### Virtues and pragmatism

The menu of virtues above can be used to agree the emotional behaviour between group members.

However, house rules also require pragmatic agreement over some of the process behaviours of the group too.

This co-creation develops commitment and substantially more effective meetings.

As part of our work, Shared Service Architecture facilitated a number of multidisciplinary teams to agree their 'house rules'. Here are some examples:

- Arrive on time for each meeting
- Each agenda is to be set by the group in advance
- Each member must make the time required for the group's activities
- Commit to what was said
- When two colleagues from the same partnership come to a meeting, they

## Step 4: Working in a 'high-trust' team

*The development of your house rules must be done by co-creation.*

should not sit next to each other

- Be willing to mix creative participation in meetings (post-it notes, drawing, open discussion) with formal decision-making meetings
- Give time to listen, before responding

As you can see, these real life examples can appear a bit '*motherhood and apple pie*'.

As statements they can be a bit meaningless, however if you as a multidisciplinary team use the agreed house rules to check and monitor team behaviours, they can be a strong modifying force on behaviours and help build team cohesion and trust.

This is why the development has to be done by co-creation.

So we would advise against giving your team a list, like the one on the previous page, and telling them that this is how to behave with each other from now on.

When co-developing the house rules of an inter-professional team, anchor them around the following areas:

- **How the team shares the leadership** - recognising the role of the chair, facilitator and of the team members.
- **How to allocate tasks** - these should include agreement on roles. As a top tip, you should always encourage team members to buddy up to undertake tasks, rather than allocating these individually.
- **How the team members address their differences** - resolving conflict by co-creating a shared set of conduct, values and behaviours. '*Good news travel fast, bad news travel faster*' - the house rules should also provide the licence for team members to legitimately raise concerns about conduct and behaviours without having to resort to using power and authority.

### How to use this tool:

Tool 9 is about building trust and positive collaborative behaviours between the members of your multidisciplinary team, by agreeing 'house-rules', which will dictate the way we work together to lead the change.

This is only a ten-minute exercise, best done at a first meeting.

**Step 1:** Set the scene by talking through how long the multidisciplinary team may be working together. Suggest therefore that they should agree a set of house rules for that period of time.

**Step 2:** Then ask each person to jot down on a piece of paper the behaviours that members of a group like this should be entitled to from each other.

**Step 3:** After a couple of minutes of their personal reflection, ask each one to read out the top two on their list. Write them on a flip chart. Then when everyone has offered two, ask them again for their next two, going around until their lists are exhausted.

Where there are duplications, maybe just put a tick against the first time it is entered to indicate multiple agreement with the same sentiment.

**Step 4:** Using the suggestions on the flip chart, work as a group to draft up the house rules into the format shown in the tool on the opposite page.

This can be done either during the same meeting, or you can do it afterwards and bring it back formally for 'sign-off' at the next meeting of the group.

By doing this together, you build trust and positive collaborative behaviours between the members of your multidisciplinary team and will have clarity of the way you work together to lead the change.

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## Multidisciplinary/ multi-agency team House Rules

At the meeting of the (name) multidisciplinary team  
on (date) we co-created the following house rules  
to build trust and maintain the momentum of this team  
during the period it is in operation.

### Sharing the leadership

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

### Allocating Tasks

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

### Resolving our differences

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

# Tool 9

## USER LOG

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Project & date tool used	What was the desired outcome of using this tool?	What actually happened?	What would you do differently next time?